Our Mission

To increase awareness in the importance of dental research, promote more student participation in dental research and provide networking opportunities among students and faculty members.

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Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. —Warren Bennis

2017–2018 Officers

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Victor Chan

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Geena Valdes

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Class of 2021
Representative
Catherine Baitinger

Class of 2021
Representative
Emily Waikem
Thank you for your service!

The AADR SRG FL was re-established in 2010 with Shannon Wallet, Ph.D. and she has served as the AADR SRG Faculty Advisor until 2017, when she decided to go on a new journey taking on the role as the Director of Basic Sciences at the East Carolina University School of Dentistry. Below is a little about Dr. Wallet and what it means for her to be involved in AADR as well as with the students. We cannot thank you enough for all your leadership and mentorship!

What motivated you to join AADR?
The first time I heard about the AADR was when I was getting Ph.D. in oral biology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I joined as a student member and I’ve been a member ever since. Then I was recruited to the University of Florida to perform research on the epidemiological link between poor oral health and diabetes. It was during this time that I really became involved, as AADR has always promoted amazing research in the field of immunology and oral inflammation. Here I fell in love with overall oral immunology and integrated into this research niche. Through these interactions, I also became a student research group advisor and began really engaging students into dental research.

What is the best way for other members to become more involved in AADR?
Having a local chapter is the best way for other members, especially student members, to become more involved in AADR. This promotes and strengthens your local dental research community, and further encourages attendance at the national and international meetings. Having a student chapter, not only engages students but other faculty as well.

What do you want to see in the future for AADR?
Because of my heavy involvement with students, I would like to see a lot more alignment with dental education. AADR has done a great job of supporting students and I hope they continue to do that. I would like to see more encouragement of the concept that you can be a researcher as a part of a team as opposed to the sole driver of research. With so much cross-collaboration these days, you can’t always be the sole driver or the one who gets all the credit — I think team science needs to be more recognized and appreciated.

What do you find to be the most valuable benefit of AADR membership?
Networking is definitely the biggest benefit for me — I’ve met most of my collaborators through AADR. AADR has helped with my career development as I went from my postdoctoral research to a faculty member. I’ve also enjoyed my interactions with the students, especially helping them find great mentors and moving their careers forward.

“Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.” — John Crosby
The NIH is one of the world’s foremost medical research centers. Every year, they release rankings of top performing dental colleges. The University of Florida’s College of Dentistry has consistently outranked other institutions. The tables below are a snapshot of where UF has placed on these rankings. The first table gives insight into how UF’s College of Dentistry ranks compared to other health science centers/colleges at UF. The second table displays UF’s rankings among other academic institutions and dental schools, as well as the respective funding received from the NIH.

### Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research NIH Rank by UF HSC Peer Colleges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank/No. of Ranking Institutions</th>
<th>Federal Year</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UF/HSC College Rank</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DENTISTRY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 / 48</td>
<td>7 / 45</td>
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<td>7 / 46</td>
<td>9 / 46</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NURSING</strong></td>
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<td>48 / 67</td>
<td>36 / 69</td>
<td>56 / 66</td>
<td>57 / 63</td>
<td>43 / 75</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHARMACY</strong></td>
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<td>16 / 74</td>
<td>13 / 77</td>
<td>18 / 75</td>
<td>21 / 72</td>
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<td><strong>PUBLIC HEALTH</strong></td>
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<td>15 / 60</td>
<td>16 / 60</td>
<td>17 / 61</td>
<td>21 / 58</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VETERINARY MEDICINE</strong></td>
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<td>7 / 30</td>
<td>9 / 29</td>
<td>11 / 28</td>
<td>14 / 28</td>
<td>16 / 28</td>
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Source: [http://www.birimr.org/](http://www.birimr.org/)

### University of Florida College of Dentistry NIH Rankings

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<tr>
<td>NIH/NIDCR Rank for Academic Institutions</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (out of 137)</td>
<td>$9.3</td>
<td>9 (out of 120)</td>
<td>$7.8</td>
<td>11 (out of 135)</td>
<td>$6.5</td>
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<td>NIH/NIDCR Rank for Dental Schools <em>Forsyth is not a dental school</em></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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<td>5 (out of 47)</td>
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<td>7 (out of 46)</td>
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<td>7 (out of 46)</td>
<td>$6.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research NIH Rank and Funding Amount</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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<td>Funding ($) in Millions</td>
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UF AADR Student Group Wins National Award

The University of Florida College of Dentistry’s American Association of Dental Research, or AADR, Student Research Group, or SRG, received the “2018 Outstanding Local Student Research Group Award” during the AADR Annual Meeting on March 23. The award is aimed to recognize local student research group chapters, LSRGs, for their achievements throughout the year that continue to foster awareness of research in dentistry.

UF DMD/PhD student, Kyulim Lee, the AADR SRG FL Chapter president, shared remarks at the NSRG Faculty Advisors’ and SRG Presidents’ luncheon at the AADR.

The AADR SRG FL was re-established in 2010 with Shannon Wallet, Ph.D., associate dean for faculty affairs and an associate professor in the UF Department of Oral Biology, serving as the faculty advisor. Since 2010 the UF chapter has had between 20 to 40 DMD student members. In 2012 the AADR SRG FL received national awards for the ‘highest percentage of AADR student members relative to dental school enrollment and ‘recruitment of the most new AADR SRG members.’ AADR SRG FL student members have served at the national levels as well. In 2012 Danny Kalash was elected as an NSRG councilor; in 2016 Kyulim Lee was elected as the Advocacy Representative; and in 2017 Yandy Gonzalez Marrero was elected as NSRG secretary, and Natalie Atyeo was elected as Member-at-Large.
Expanding our training outside of clinics

**Root Canal Instrumentation and Irrigation: Past, Present, and Future**

Technological advances during the last decade have brought new rotary file systems and agitation devices for disinfection of the root canal system. Effective instrumentation and irrigant delivery are prerequisites for successful endodontic treatment. **Dr. Roberta Pileggi and Dr. Kathleen Neiva** presented a lecture that gave an overview of rotary file systems, irrigation solutions, and irrigant agitation methods. Following this, students were given the hands-on training opportunity to clean and shape a root canal system using cutting-edge technology for instrumentation and irrigation!

**Implant dentistry**

Dental implants are widely being used to restore function and esthetics in many patients. With this, clinicians need to learn biologic, mechanical and technical complications associated with dental implants. **Dr. Hardeman and his chief residents: Drs. Hambrook, Kuhns, and Maskas and an implant representative from the Straumann AG company** gave us a lecture on these topics and presented several complex and interesting cases. After the lecture, the students were given the hands-on experience to place titanium implants on plastic mandible casts.
Expanding our training outside of clinics

A Colgate representative visited our AADR SRG Chapter to give us updates on their newest products! The representative also discussed the science and the research behind the development of the products.

Evidence-Based Dentistry: Finding, Synthesizing, and Communicating Dental Science to our Patients and the Public

A lunch & learn with Dr. Scott Tomar, offered our dental students the opportunity to learn about evidence based dentistry. Students learned how to differentiate between high-level and low-level evidence to answer a clinical or public health question in oral health. Students were also provided with resources that could help in rapidly identifying high level evidence to answer clinical or public health questions in clinical settings. We were also introduced on how to take a systematic approach in communicating the important messages to the public and to your patients.

Digital dentistry: The Future of Dentistry

Through the dinner & learn with Dr. Frederico da Silva, students were offered the chance to learn about digital dentistry, and get the hands-on opportunity to use Blue Sky Plan, an advanced treatment planning software for computer guided surgery, developed and distributed by Blue Sky Bio. Students also got to learn how to use the FormLab 2 digital printer.
The young investigators

Last summer, eight D1 DMD students participated in the UF College of Dentistry Summer Research Program. This 10-week program provided the students with the opportunity to not only participate in a research project and get structured research experience, but also meet faculty and network with other dental students! The UFCD Office of Research asked the students about their experiences this past summer:

Carson Smith: The Summer Research Program has been a truly educational and transformative experience. Working alongside amazing faculty members, such as my mentor Dr. Papp, as well as the other participants has been more rewarding than I had ever expected.

Hyunseo Lee: “The Summer Research Program has been the perfect transition into dental school, allowing me to adjust to Gainesville, meet my future classmates and engage in research that piques my interest. I’m so grateful for this program; it has provided me with valuable mentors and many resources for continuing research in dental school.”

Alexandra Cabrera: “Learning from and collaborating with experts from different specialties (prosthodontics, chemical and materials engineering) was one of my favorite parts about the program. I’ve met so many amazing and talented people; it’s been a blessing to start building my support network before dental school starts.

Yara Abdelaziz: Before the summer program, I had no idea how many options I had in dental academia, even while practicing as a clinician. My PI and mentors in lab are all incredibly helpful and encouraging! I am new to Gainesville so I had the pleasure of familiarizing myself with the campus, the city, some upperclassmen and some future classmates. This program was a great introduction to where I will be spending my next four years and I’m really glad I had this chance!

Leronne Perera: The Summer Research Program was a great way to see the research side of academic dentistry, which most students do not get to experience in their four years here, due to a heavy emphasis on didactic courses and clinical practice. I would highly recommend this program to any incoming dental students who don’t have other plans or obligations in the summer.

Priya Sabharwal: The Summer Research Program has been a wonderful learning opportunity. I gained valuable information on the different research projects conducted at UFCD, while getting hands on experience in a laboratory setting. I am now more prepared for my transition into UFCD as a first year dental student.

Callahan Kashmira Katrak: The Summer Research Program has provided me the opportunity to learn how vital research is to dentistry, about different types of research at UF, and to experience a variety of ways that research can integrate into my studies as a dental student. The program also introduced me to the Abranches-Lemos lab, where I enjoyed oral microbiology research and the skills needed to continue doing research by taking a more scientific approach in dentistry.

Rosemarie Torres-Medina: I had a great experience in the Summer Research Program at UF’s College of Dentistry. In Dr. Holliday’s lab I became part of a small family celebrating each other’s accomplishments, while continuously teaching and inspiring one another. I have learned so much and have truly gained a deeper appreciation for science and the efforts put into research.
Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill, February 27, 2018

Each year, the AADR and Friends of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR) host Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill. The event brings together researchers, patient advocates, dental students and dental school faculty to inform members of Congress about the importance of oral health research. In a political environment of discretionary spending cuts and an uncertain federal budget, AADR/FNIDCR members play a crucial role. In February, Dean Isabel Garcia and DMD student Natalie Atyeo represented the Florida contingent of oral health research. They visited House and Senate members to explain the need for increases in NIH and NIDCR funding in fiscal years 2018 and 2019 as well as a return to the normal appropriations process. The voices of AADR/FNIDCR members were heard! In March 2018 the president signed appropriations legislation that will increase spending for both the NIH and NIDCR in 2018 as well as the CDC Division of Oral Health.

Your Oral Health Advocates in D.C.

Although politics is not one of the nine recognize specialties of dentistry, a few ambitious DMDs have transitioned from the dental office to a much larger office in Congress. Five members of the House of Representatives are licensed dentists. The House of Representatives also contains an Oral Health Caucus, chaired by Representative Mike Simpson, which works to advance the oral health of Americans through support of key legislation.

From Left: Dr. Mike Simpson (ID), Dr. Brian Babin (TX), Dr. Paul Gosar (AZ), Dr. Drew Ferguson (GA), Dr. Jeff Van Drew (NJ)
The Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee has proposed a $2 billion increase for NIH and a nearly $9 million increase for its National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) in fiscal year 2019. The AADR has reached out to lawmakers to thank them for their support.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) released a report which concluded that sexual harassment in the academic workplace is pervasive, and affects retention of females in STEM fields. In response, the AADR, in collaboration with Boston University released a survey to assess perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment at research conferences.

July: The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) hosted a briefing on E-Cigarette use. Panelists concluded that more research is needed on the deleterious effects of e-cigarettes and vaping.

Have you ever thought about careers in Science Policy?

Interested in making a difference in oral health research outside the lab? There are many opportunities to pursue a career in science policy. While legislation is often dictated by attorneys and politicians, scientists have the unique opportunity to provide evidence-based guidance in crafting science policy. There is no straight path to a career in policy. From serving as a voice for a patient advocacy group to directing in a government-funded research agency, you can provide your scientific background to shape the future of scientific advancement.
Dentists Play Vital Role in Addressing Opioid Crisis:
A July 25 commentary by NIDCR Director Martha J. Somerman, DDS, PhD, and National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora Volkow, MD, notes the important role dentists can play in helping to address the nation’s opioid crisis. Published in the Journal of the American Dental Association, “The Role of the Oral Health Community in Addressing the Opioid Overdose Epidemic” outlines NIH-funded efforts that aim to inform clinical decision making related to opioid prescribing. The coauthors also highlight the importance of partnerships between clinicians and researchers.

JAMA Viewpoint Highlights Integrating Oral Health with Overall Health
NIDCR Clinical Director Janice S. Lee, DDS, MD, MS, and NIDCR Director Martha J. Somerman, DDS, PhD, coauthored a JAMA Viewpoint titled “The Importance of Oral Health in Comprehensive Health Care,” published online on May 3. The Viewpoint links to NIDCR’s companion video The Concise Oral Exam, which demonstrates how a 5-minute oral exam can help physicians recognize poor oral health and detect clues to systemic conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, HIV, and other conditions that can manifest in the head and neck region.

NIDCR Symposium Explores Promise of Autotherapies
NIDCR hosted a symposium, “Autotherapies: Enhancing Our Innate Healing Capacity,” to explore the potential of autotherapies—treatments based on the body’s natural ability to heal and protect itself. A panel of experts presented on topics including the use of small molecules to reprogram endogenous stem cells; response and resistance to cancer immunotherapy; use of biomaterials to re-engineer immune response; and clinical autotherapies to repair craniofacial abnormalities. After the presentations, NIDCR staff held a day-and-a-half-long workshop, where experts and staff discussed opportunities for future research directions.

NIDCR Announces New Postdoctoral Fellowship to Enhance Diversity
NIDCR recently announced the NIDCR Director’s Postdoctoral Fellowship to Enhance Diversity in Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research. NIDCR’s goal for this fellowship program is to achieve one or more of the many benefits that flow from a diverse scientific workforce. Postdoctoral students selected for this fully funded fellowship will spend up to five years working side by side with NIDCR’s leading scientists in an environment devoted to dental, oral, and craniofacial research.

Source: https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/news-events/e-newsletter#nidcr-news
Reaching out to our alumni

One of the benefits of being part of the AADR SRG is the ample networking opportunities we have not only with faculty but also with fellow colleagues. We reached out to some of our UFCD AADR SRG alumni to learn about their career paths and how research has helped them succeed!

1) What year did you graduate and where are you now in your career? I graduated from UFCD in May 2018 and have since started my orthodontic residency at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, TN.

2) Were you involved in research throughout dental school? I started my research in undergrad at UF. I worked with Dr. Shannon Holliday studying the effects of a certain drug on the movement of teeth using rat subjects. I always knew I wanted to put braces on people, but I never imagined I’d ever put braces on rats! This fueled the fire for my orthodontic passion and I was soon introduced to another orthodontic research project with Dr. Shannon Holliday, but this one hit even closer to home.

Right around when I was looking for a research project to put more time into, my grandmother (I called her “Dammaw” and she was my best friend in the whole world!) was diagnosed with stage 4 peritoneal cancer and was given a time frame of 2 months to live. After lots of prayer and grace, Jesus gave us another 3 years with my Dammaw and sparked an interest in cancer research mixed with my original passion orthodontics. I started my research on the effects of a drug created in Dr. Holliday’s lab on murine breast cancer cells in hopes of it being used as a future therapeutic agent for the treatment of bone cancer and continued that research throughout dental school.

3) Why did you stay involved in research? The research really hit home for me. It felt as though I was trying to help other people’s “Dammaws” by conducting this particular research. Just thinking about the pain my Dammaw endured was enough to motivate me, and I’m sure it would motivate anyone else who has seen family in similar situations.

4) How did research help you in your residency and clinical training? The research I performed really helped to evolve my detail-oriented mindset as well as my speaking ability. I had the opportunity to present my research at multiple conferences all over the country and these opportunities of speaking in front of people more qualified than myself on such a challenging subject matter, is a very humbling, yet growing experience. My past research will help me in presenting complex treatment plans to patients and their families, think critically as I learn to master the discipline of orthodontics, and finally continue to motivate me to discover more about our world that God has so masterfully designed.

Taylor Vracar, DMD (C/O2018)

1) What year did you graduate and where are you now in your career? I graduated with the class of 2014 and am completing my final year in the dual degree Periodontics Residency/PhD program at the University of Michigan.

2) Were you involved in research throughout dental school? I loved doing dental-related research during dental school with UFCD’s incredible research faculty! I started in June 2010 working with Dr. Burne studying the resistance profile of everyone’s favorite caries bug: S. Mutans! From there, I completed the research certificate in 2014 studying the epithelial cell mediated host response to the red complex periodontal pathogens with Dr. Wallet.

3) Why did you stay involved in research? I have always been an inquisitive person. When I was younger, I was the kid who would read a single sentence from a textbook and then ask a million questions about it. I don’t think I have really changed much, because I still have a lot of questions left to answer. I feel very lucky to be in a career that gives me the opportunity to answer these biological/chemical/systems related questions well into the future and then apply these findings to improve the quality of care for patients. I have also had the privilege to have incredible mentors along my research journey, who have supported me the entire way. Our academic faculty is really an incredible group of individuals; they are superheros.

4) How did research help you in your residency and clinical training? Scientific research is the foundation we use to understand etiologies, make diagnoses, and develop successful treatment plans for the patients that we see everyday in the clinic. This is also the foundation we use to develop new and novel dental technology, treatment strategies, and improve the quality of life for our patients. I enjoy being a part of it all, really. I am applying for tenure-track faculty positions and study bone homeostasis and regeneration.

Ann Decker, DMD (C/O2014)
1) What year did you graduate and where are you now in your career?
I graduated from UFCD in 2018 and I am now a first year pediatric dental resident at UFCD.

2) Were you involved in research throughout dental school?
I first got involved in research during UFCD’s Summer Research Program in 2014 before starting dental school. During this program, I worked on a translational study that measured the alkali production of plaque bacteria in children of varying caries experiences. As we know, cariogenic bacteria in our oral biofilm metabolize sugars from our diet and produce acids that go on to cause caries. Certain bacterial species have the ability to neutralize this acid by metabolizing arginine found in saliva and our diet to produce ammonia, which buffers this acidic environment. Our research focused on providing additional support to the hypothesis that children that are caries free have a high capacity to produce ammonia from arginine (aka more healthy anticariogenic bacteria) compared to children with active caries. Following the conclusion of this study, I furthered my research with a second project with my research mentor, Dr. Nascimento, where we created a novel arginine containing adhesive bonding system. The aim of this study was for the arginine within the adhesive agent to be released into the composite-tooth surface interface where it would foster an environment of healthy alkali producing bacteria and reduce incidence of secondary caries.

3) Why did you stay involved in research?
In my experience, I found staying involved in research provided many benefits. Firstly, it provided opportunities for me to supplement and apply my didactic knowledge in a real world setting and it allowed me to form strong mentorships with faculty, which proved essential throughout my dental school career. Secondly, it can lead to some really fun experiences. Upon completing a research project, you have countless opportunities to present at national and international conferences as well as apply for scholarships and research awards. Best of all, every one of these incentives elevate your dental game to next level professionally (i.e. on residency applications) as well as personally through your unique experiences. Research is hard work. There’s no bypassing that. But I have yet to come across a community that deeply appreciates and celebrates your research efforts- making the struggle absolutely worth it!

4) How did research help you in your residency and clinical training?
In most pediatric dental residency programs, there is a rather significant research component. After talking to many residents during my interview cycle, I quickly learned that research becomes the most dreaded component of any program- especially for those residents who have never been involved in dental research. For this reason, I am grateful for my previous experiences in dental school for I believe they will give me the confidence to complete and enjoy the research component of my residency- and as we all know, having a positive attitude towards a new endeavor puts you already half way towards success. Additionally, my experiences in dental school have taught me what like and what I don’t like about research. I plan to use this insight in order to pick a project that I know I could excel at and be proud of. I hate ending on a preposition, so GO GATORS!
Introducing our new officers and faculty advisor

President
James Seung Jin Jang

Vice President
Geena Valdes

Secretary
Hyunseo Lee

Treasurer
Blake Crosby

Advocacy Representative
Natalie Atyeo

Historian
Callahan Katrak

Class of 2021 Representative
So Hyun Lim

Class of 2022 Representative
Priya Sabharwal

Faculty Advisor
Robert A. Burne, Ph. D.

Staff Advisor
Denise Webb
Events coming up!!!

Spring 2019

Robert A. Burne, Ph.D.
Department of Oral Biology

“Opportunities for dental student research”
January 16th 2019

Summer 2019

Samuel B. Low, DDS, MS, Med
Department of Periodontics

“Perio Laser Clinic”
May, 2019

Fall 2019

Roberta Pileggi, D.D.S., M.S.
Department of Endodontics

“Research opportunities in the Department of Endodontics”
August, 2019

John Neubert, D.D.S., Ph.D.
Department of Orthodontics

“Research opportunities in the Department of Orthodontics and Orthodontic wire bending”
October, 2019

AADR SRG Social
BLUE GILL
February 2019
Date/time: TBA

Joy Wang, DDS, MSD
Restorative Dental Sciences
Prosthodontics Division

“Introduction to CAD/CAM Dentistry”
June, 2019

John H. Hardeman, D.D.S., M.D.,
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

“Implant planning and the technical aspect of implant placement”
September, 2019
Credits

**Content:** Newsletter Committee:

*James Jang*
*Kyulim Lee*
*Natalie Atyeo*
*Victor Chan*

**Cover photo:** Shutterstock.com

**The Mentors:** AADR Strides in Science

**The Funding & The Young Investigators:**
UFCD Office of Research

**The Recognition:** UFCD Main Page

**The NIDCR News:** NIH/NIDCR