

# APICAL SCOOP

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR PITT DENTAL MEDICINE  
ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM

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Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee (2021): Raisin ('22), Shelly ('22), Anisha ('22), Gauri ('22), Vera ('21) and Vicente ('21) - Meet the people behind the masks in page 3.

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## Message from the president of Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee

by Anisha Chandramouli

It is my pleasure to bring to you readers the third issue of the Advanced Standing Newsletter for the year 2021. This committee was the brainchild of alumni Salil Kawatra and Satya Upadhyayula (Class of 2020) who initiated this in an effort to help represent the Advanced Standing students and alumni in the Pitt Dental community. Even with COVID-19 hindering their efforts, Vicente Telles and Vera Liu (Class of 2021) have done wonders the past year and set the bar high. They have introduced the world to the Advanced Standing Committee here at Pitt through Instagram and Facebook.

This year, Gauri Velankiwar and I, join the bandwagon to bring to you plenty of interesting events and more from the Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee. We are excited to have our classmates Raisin Saini and Shelly Wu (Class of 2022) from the regular batch joining the committee to help integrate the incoming advanced standing students into their batch and make the transitioning smooth. I would like to thank Dr. Potluri, our program director for being supportive of our efforts and motivating us to keep this going. Keep your eyes peeled and your spirits high for announcements and events that will be coming your way!



Anisha Chandramouli  
President of Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee



Vicente Telles, Noura Arwani  
Vikas Sharma, Vera Liu, Hasini Nelakurthi  
Meer Ahmed, Inderpreet Singh

## Saying goodbye to the Class of 2021

by Vicente Telles

What a crazy year 2020 was. When we started our journey to revalidate our diplomas, none of us expected the hardships ahead of us. Sure, dental school was bound to demand our time and dedication, but having to do part of it virtually? We did not sign up for that! I still remember the date shutdown started for us: March 13, 2020. And I remember Meer messaging us with information that other dental schools were going to close until June. My response: "Meer, there is NO WAY! This is impossible!" Little did I know that almost one year later, here I would be, glad to have a class picture on this newsletter where we are not wearing masks. Yes, it is an old one, but we use what we have.

Although this was not the experience we were waiting for, we can all agree it was something unique for us and we powered through. On May 15, 2021 we are graduating and moving on with our lives, knowing that we can overcome a lot more than any of us thought possible.

Congratulations Class of 2021! See you soon... hopefully without masks on!

## Welcoming the Class of 2022

by Vicente Telles

If it was hard for the Class of 2021, it almost didn't happen for the Class of 2022. Pitt Advanced Standing Program starts in May every year and it was not different in 2020. With so much content to cover in such a tight schedule, there was no delaying the beginning of the Summer Course. Thankfully, online classes allowed our new advanced standing students to start their program wherever they were. Even if that meant having classes at 02:00 AM in the morning for Anisha and Atul, who were in India. However, when time came for in-person preclinical work to start, Dr. Potluri measured no efforts to leave no one behind and get everyone to Pittsburgh. And this meant overcoming U.S. travel bans! In July, thanks to Dr. Potluri and their own perseverance, they were all ready to go at Pitt Dental School grounds.

Their experiences and challenges are unique to their class and they have shown that they are ready to beat any adversity. Pitt SDM is lucky and proud to have such a strong class of advanced standing students. We welcome them to our Pitt family and wish them the best of luck in their journey.



Atul Chauhan Sood, Gauri Velankiwar, Kamatchi Sukumar, Siddhi Sinha,  
Anisha Chandramouli, Pavithra Davanapelly, and Gurminder Johal.

Meet the people behind the masks in page 3

# Meet the people behind the masks

## Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee - year 2021



Raisin Saini  
Class of 2022



Shelly Wu  
Class of 2022



Anisha Chandramouli  
Class of 2022  
President of Pitt ASDA  
AS Committee



Gauri Velankiwar  
Class of 2022  
Vice-president of Pitt ASDA  
AS Committee



Vera Liu  
Class of 2021



Vicente Telles  
Class of 2021

## Introducing the Class of 2022



Atul Chauhan Sood  
Class of 2022



Kamatchi Sukumar  
Class of 2022



Siddhi Sinha  
Class of 2022



Pavithra Davanapelly  
Class of 2022



Gurminder Johal  
Class of 2022



On top: Virtual meet and greet between the classes of 2021 and 2022.

To the right: first day of the Class of 2022 on site at Pitt SDM. They were divided in groups to be able to attend school while still social distancing. Learn more about the Class of 2022 at our Facebook and Instagram pages.



## Pitt SDM Advanced Standing Program Highlights



- Academic Career Track - Area of Concentration Program (ACT ARCO)
- Total integration with third year class
- Continuous changes and improvements to the program - new curriculum
- Competitive tuition
- Pittsburgh is one of the most livable cities in the US
- Summer program - preclinical calibration
- No visa restrictions
- OKU induction
- Strong research institution (7th in NICDR or NIH funding)

## Fun Facts - Diwali

by Gauri Velankiwar

Diwali/ Deepavali, also referred to as the Festival of Lights, is an auspicious occasion that symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and hope over despair. This is one of the most popular festivals celebrated in India. The festival usually lasts five days and is celebrated during the Hindu lunisolar month Kartika (between mid-October and mid-November). This year Diwali will be celebrated from 4-8 November.

This festival commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile. The main deity worshipped during this time is Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, abundance, and well-being. Across India, it's traditional to light oil lamps around the house to entice Lakshmi to visit people's residences, and many Hindus will perform rituals called pujas, to pray to the goddess. Families dress in new clothes and go to the temple or host worship services in their homes. They celebrate with family and friends by sharing sweets and delicacies prepared especially for Diwali. The night sky glitters and lights up from the spectacular firecrackers. The fireworks symbolize a way to let things go and help release negative emotions and the joy and festivity, signify the victory of divine forces over the wicked. Visual decorations like rangolis (an art form using coloured sand, flowers, or other materials) are also popular ways to celebrate Diwali. These designs are often placed near the entrance of the family home and are believed to welcome the deities prayed during Diwali. Each year on Diwali day, one lamp lights another and like a flame burning steadily on a windless night, it brings a message of peace and harmony to the world.



## Alumni Spotlight - Interview with Dr. Satya Upadhyayula

Dr. Satya Upadhyayula is a Pitt Dental Medicine Advanced Standing Program graduate from the Class of 2020. Dr. Upadhyayula is originally from Hyderabad, India. He received his Masters in Oral Biology degree from the University of Louisville and is currently doing an internship in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

While at Pitt, he led the creation of the Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee to help prosper relations between traditional and advanced standing students and to develop leadership opportunities for our group. He published the first issue of our newsletter, back in 2019, showcasing our program achievements to Pitt alumni and current students. He also served as a national leader for ASDA advanced standing students. Through ASDA's advocacy and leadership, he was instrumental in voicing concerns of the international students during the pandemic. Before graduation, Dr. Upadhyayula was invited to become a member of the Omicron Kappa Upsilon (OKU award), the national dental honor society. He has continued to stay involved with Pitt Dental Medicine by being a mentor to current students and participating in educational fairs to showcase Pitt Advanced Standing Program to prospective candidates.



### 1. What is your favorite part of the school experience as an advanced standing student at Pitt?

At Pitt, I enjoyed interacting with my fellow students and the friendly, approachable faculty. I made some amazing friends while gaining well-rounded education.

### 2. What do you like to do in your free time?

I like hiking, bird photography, badminton, and spending time with my friends. I also enjoy mentoring prospective advanced standing students.

### 3. How did you come up with the idea of creating the Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee?

While serving as a national committee member for advanced standing students, I realized the importance of leadership and advocacy to protect our interests and to connect the students on local and national levels. Advanced standing students hail from different parts of the world and face special circumstances, so I wanted to create a group to represent them. At first, Salil Kawatra (fellow classmate) and I created an independent student group to celebrate diversity, develop relations with the traditional class, and network with advanced standing alumni. Later, this group was integrated to Pitt ASDA with the help of their officers board, my junior classmates Vicente Telles and Vera Liu, and the encouragement of the program director Dr. Potluri. This is how the Pitt ASDA Advanced Standing Committee was born.

### 4. What advice do you have to the current advanced standing students?

Make the most out of the program: Pitt provides amazing opportunities to hone your skills in research, innovation, leadership, and to learn new techniques. Make long-term goals and make your way through by accomplishing short-term goals. Also, don't forget to try out amazing food in Pittsburgh and make good friends - this combination makes dental school seem much easier and makes it memorable.

**We would like all our alumni to connect back with Pitt SDM with any exciting news and achievements. Help us celebrate you! Please, consider mentoring our current students and new graduates by offering advice, consultation in career pathways and job opportunities.**

Reach out to us at [as-applicants@dental.pitt.edu](mailto:as-applicants@dental.pitt.edu)