

University of  
Pittsburgh

School of Dental Medicine



## ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

June 2021

### Filling Out Our History: Dental School Trivia

Dr. Nicholas H. Bitar (DEN '28) spearheaded the committee to install which Nationality Room in the Cathedral?

- A. Greek
- B. Yugoslavia
- C. Syria-Lebanon
- D. Poland

*See the answer at the bottom of this email!*

### Reflection from Class of 2021 President

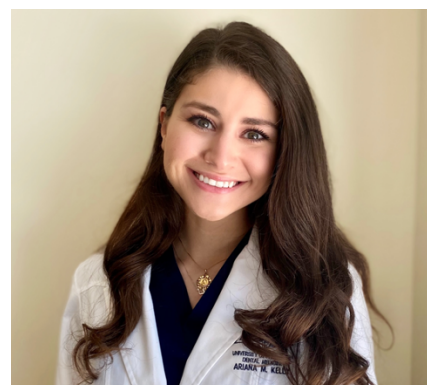


When I reflect on the past four years, only one word comes to mind: challenging. Of course, dental school is no walk in the park, and our challenges have changed me and my classmates for the better. In just four years, we have transformed from novice students to confident, intelligent, and talented dentists. We met amazing friends and colleagues in the process! We would not be where we are today without the help and support of our Pitt Dental Medicine Family, who taught us about dentistry, guided us through the nuances of dental school, and advocated for our education during a global pandemic.

Our accomplishments are just as much theirs as ours. We have come so far as a class, as individuals, and as health care professionals, and we can forever thank Pitt for getting us to where we are now.

Congratulations to the Class of 2021, and Hail to Pitt!

Dr. Ariana Kelly, DEN '21  
President, Class of 2021



### Register for Alumni Golf Outing by June 30

Join us at Shannopin Country Club to play this beautiful par 71 course with views of the Pittsburgh city skyline. There's no better way to celebrate our program's 125th anniversary and support scholarships at Pitt Dental Medicine.

[Register Now](#)

For more information, please contact Becca Anthony, Alumni Coordinator, at [rebecca.anthony@pitt.edu](mailto:rebecca.anthony@pitt.edu) or 412-482-4309.

## Meet our New Director of Development



Please join us in welcoming [Erin Belitskus](#) to our Pitt Dental Medicine team! Erin comes to Pitt Dental Medicine with a diverse background in higher education development, non-profit consulting, and civic engagement. Her strategic mindset, expertise, and enthusiasm will be a great asset to our team.

## Hear from Innovators at TEDxUniversity of Pittsburgh



Sohail Rana is a student in the School of Dental Medicine and a gearhead who co-founded ZeroDK in 2020 with engineers and computer scientists. ZeroDK uses integrated hardware and software to track oral hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rana is passionate about making dental care more inclusive and targeted. Join us at TEDxUniversityofPittsburgh: Leaders, Innovators, and Neighbors on June 17 to hear from Rana and our other stellar panelists.

[Register Now](#)

## Pitt Dental Medicine Community News

- The Pitt Dental Medicine AADMD chapter hosted Love on the Spectrum watch parties throughout April for Autism Awareness Month.
- **Dr. Blake Warner (DEN '16)** published a study pointing to [the role saliva and mouth infections play in transmitting the coronavirus](#).
- Congratulations **Vivian Villasenor (DEN '22)** and **Sean Riazzi (DEN '22)** for winning third place in the Randall Family Big Idea Center competition. By designing sustainable covers for dental equipment, they offer dentists a more efficient way to practice infection control while also protecting the environment.



- Congratulations to **Dr. Emily Chou (DEN '15, '20)** and **Dr. Chris Wollenschlaeger (DEN '15, '18)** on passing the American Board of Orthodontics examination.
- Welcome Class of 2021 Omicron Kappa Upsilon Alumni Awardees: **Drs. Patrick Donnelly, Ariana Kelly, Casey Lally, Hannah Mello, Ellen Piehl, Joseph**

**Runco, Vicente Telles da Silva, Annika Wessel, Casey White, and Jesse Woon.**

- **Dr. Nick Kim (DEN '20)** joined the [Inclusion and Engagement Task Force](#) with the American Association of Orthodontists.

Stay connected to the School of Dental Medicine, no matter where you are in the world. If you are celebrating a life event or career milestone, please share it with this Alumni Newsletter by emailing [dentalalumni@dental.pitt.edu](mailto:dentalalumni@dental.pitt.edu).

## Upcoming Events Calendar

**July 12, 2021:** Golf Outing at Shannopin Country Club

**August 4, 2021:** Living Our Legacy: Champions of Dental Education (Virtual)

**September 9, 2021:** Living Our Legacy: Driving our Mission and Vision (Virtual)

**October 5, 2021:** Living Our Legacy: Women in Dentistry (Virtual)

**November 10, 2021:** Living Our Legacy: Honoring our Legacy of Service (Virtual)

**March 26, 2022:** Dean's Scholarship Ball at the Heinz History Center

*In addition to celebrating our 125th Anniversary, we hope to hold reunions for classes ending in 0, 1, 5, and 6. More information will be communicated as it is available.*

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**Filling Out Our History Answer:** C. Dr. Nicholas H. Bitar (DEN '28) was selected to head the Syria-Lebanon Nationality Room Committee in 1935. When the room opened in 1941, it was the sixth to be installed, joining the Czechoslovak, Yugoslav, Lithuanian, Polish, and Greek rooms. It was the only completely intact antique room to be installed in the Cathedral at that time.

THIS MESSAGE WAS SENT BY  
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