

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

A History of the College of Dentistry

As we celebrate NYU Dentistry's sesquicentennial, marking the establishment on March 31, 1865, of the New York College of Dentistry – today's NYU College of Dentistry – it is worth noting that the 175-year history of formal dental education in the U.S. is replete with dental schools that opened, merged, but mostly closed. Historically, a total of 183 dental schools have opened in the U.S. over the past 175 years, and 55 percent of these schools no longer exist, including 46 schools that lasted less than 10 years.

To date, only two other dental schools have celebrated a sesquicentennial: the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, founded in 1840 in Baltimore as the Baltimore Dental College, and Temple University School of Dentistry, founded in 1863 in Philadelphia as the Philadelphia Dental College. In 1865, when New York College of Dentistry was poised to open, there were six other dental schools in the U.S., including the schools at the Baltimore Dental College and the Philadelphia Dental College. The other four schools—in Cincinnati, Syracuse, New York, New Orleans, and a second school in Philadelphia—no longer exist.

The New York College of Dentistry held its first session in 1866. The academic year, consisting of didactic and clinical training, lasted approximately five months – from early October through early March. Through spring and part of the summer, another three months were dedicated to clinical training in the "Infirmary." Each student was assigned a clinical preceptor. There was no high school or other prerequisite and no specific age requirement for application. It was not until 1900 that the New York State Board of Regents mandated that a student must be at least 21 years of age to be eligible to practice dentistry in New York. Prior to that time, students who applied to dental school were as young as 16. Some required their parents to vouch for them so that they could apply. Anyone with eight years prior experience in the practice of dentistry could be admitted to an Advanced Standing Program, which was one session in duration.

In fact, the practice of dentistry with or without formal education or apprenticeship was widespread. The 1860 U.S. census lists 5,606 dentists. Only about 10 percent of those had graduated from a dental school. At the outset there were 10 elected professors and 18 clinical instructors (part-time faculty) in the following disciplines: general and dental anatomy, dental histology, physiology, chemistry, metallurgy, dental pathology and therapeutics, oral surgery, operative dentistry, and dental art and mechanisms. During the first session, professors were elected, rather than appointed. They all had formal dental and/or medical training. Many of them were quite famous. For example, Eleazar Parmly, DDS, MD, president of the Board of Directors of NYCD from 1866–69, was one of the founding members, a past president of the American Society of Dental Surgeons, and a past provost of the Baltimore Dental College (1851–52). He was close friends with President Lincoln, who entertained him at the White House; was received by Napoleon III and Pope Pius IX; and was briefly engaged to Mary Astor (of the famed Astor family).

Other early professors were leaders in organized dentistry. Dr. William Henry Atkinson, one of the founders of NYCD, was the first president of the American Dental Association (1859–61), and the only one to serve two terms. All professors held either DDS, MD, or dual DDS, MD degrees.

The first elected dean was Dr. Norman W. Kingsley (1865–69), considered the father of orthodontics.

A total of 31 students were enrolled in the first session. Attrition was 35 percent in the first decades, compared to two percent today, and during the first 10 years, tuition was \$150 per year, a large sum for the day.

On April 1, 1867, the first nine graduates of the New York College of Dentistry received their DDS degrees.

NYU Dentistry TODAY

Today's NYU Dentistry has never been more prosperous or more highly regarded among its alumni, the public, peer institutions, and national and international organizations. NYU Dentistry is more selective in its admission policies than ever before; its impact on dental education, patient care, and research has never been greater; and our students' performance on national and regional standardized exams is at an all-time high. We celebrate NYU Dentistry's 150th anniversary with a sense of accomplishment and optimism about the future.

Our Mission

The mission of the NYU College of Dentistry is to partner with students in achieving academic excellence, providing the best oral health care, and engaging in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors to improve the health of the highly diverse populations in New York City and around the world.

Education & Training

The NYU College of Dentistry is the third oldest and the largest dental school in the United States, educating nearly 10 percent of our nation's dentists. The College has nearly 1,900 students in its various pre- and postdoctoral programs from all over the United States and 40 foreign countries. Nearly 50 percent of all currently enrolled students are women and minorities. NYU Dentistry offers specialty training in the following dental specialty areas: endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics, as well as in implant dentistry; conducts an extensive continuing education program; and is home to the only dental school-affiliated dental hygiene program in New York State.

Patient Care

In addition to educating health professionals, NYU Dentistry endeavors through its faculty, students, and alumni to improve the health of the highly diverse populations in New York City and around the world. The College provides approximately 300,000 visits annually to the most multiethnic, multicultural patient population in the nation. NYU Dentistry conducts a mobile dental care program, *Smiling Faces, Going Places*, which travels to dentally underserved areas throughout New York City to provide critically needed dental services; sponsors free oral health and oral cancer screenings for thousands of New Yorkers annually; and has established a global outreach model that delivers essential care to populations in need and provides participants with a unique service-learning experience, opportunities to conduct critically-needed research, and an increased awareness of access to care issues, while fostering a passion for volunteerism and social responsibility. NYU Dentistry has also established a global network of dental colleges to foster worldwide research collaborations and program initiatives.

Research & Innovation

NYU College of Dentistry has one of the strongest, largest and most rapidly growing research programs in the country. At the heart of the College's research program is a commitment to collaboration. An important part of our research strategy is translational research. We firmly believe that in today's world, groups of researchers must work together synergistically in order to move fundamental basic science research into practice. This collaborative, integrated approach drives the majority of the research conducted today at the NYU College of Dentistry.

The College's distinguished dental faculty includes more than 735 full- and part-time clinicians and researchers, including many who have made pioneering contributions in the areas of caries research across the age spectrum, salivary diagnostics, cancer, especially oral cancer, bone health, especially osteoporosis research, behavioral research, HIV research, pain control, implant dentistry, the development of new dental materials, the use of fluoride and dental sealants to prevent caries, bonding techniques to restore the appearance of damaged teeth, the correction of facial deformities, and orthodontic services for adults.

Above and Beyond

Only at NYU do you find a community of scholars, scientists, clinicians, and researchers who contribute so significantly to the dental profession, public health, and oral health worldwide.

The initiatives featured below speak to the innovative thinking and creativity they bring to our academic community and to the public we serve.

- NYU Dentistry Oral Health Center for People with Disabilities (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_OHCPD_111521.pdf)
- NYU Oral Cancer Center (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_NYUOCC.pdf)
- WHO Collaborating Center for Quality-improvement, Evidence-based Dentistry at NYU Dentistry (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_WHOCC.pdf)
- NYU Dentistry's Personalized Learning Platform: Leveraging Memory Science to Benefit Students' Learning and Retention (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_Cerego.pdf)
- HEED: NYU Dentistry's Innovative Model of Dental Education (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_HEED.pdf)
- Metro Community Health Center at NYU Dentistry (https://dental.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyudental/documents/about/leadership-administration/WhitePaper_MetroCHC.pdf)

Institutional Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Environment

Since the founding of New York University in 1831, the Institution has held a mission that is in and of the City and in and of the world. The College of Dentistry shares this philosophy and commitment to continually strive to foster a dynamic and rigorous teaching and learning environment that represents a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and approaches to engage in ongoing systematic and focused efforts to attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds, and to systematically evaluate comprehensive strategies to further

enhance the institutional climate for diversity. The College has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion within the structure, curriculum, and institutional climate of the College, and works intentionally across the many areas of the institution to provide resources, programs, and support services that help to cultivate and maintain an educational environment that is inclusive of divergent backgrounds and historically underrepresented groups across the areas of race, ethnicity, culture, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, socioeconomic status, national origin, and educational background.

NYU Dentistry articulates its expectations regarding diversity across its academic community in the context of local and national responsibilities through its mission statement, "to partner with students in achieving academic excellence, providing the best oral health care, and engaging in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors to improve the health of the highly diverse populations in New York City and around the world."

Programs

- Biomaterials Science (MS) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/biomaterials-science-ms/>)
- Clinical Research (MS) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/clinical-research-ms/>)
- Dentistry (DDS) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/dentistry-dds/>)
- Endodontics (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/endodontics-advanced-certificate/>)
- Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/oral-maxillofacial-surgery-advanced-certificate/>)
- Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/orthodontics-dentofacial-orthopedics-advanced-certificate/>)
- Pediatric Dentistry (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/pediatric-dentistry-advanced-certificate/>)
- Periodontics (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/periodontics-advanced-certificate/>)
- Prosthodontics (Advanced Certificate) (<https://bulletins.nyu.edu/graduate/dentistry/programs/prosthodontics-advanced-certificate/>)

Accreditation

NYU College of Dentistry is fully accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, and its educational program is conducted in conformity with the policies of the commission.

The Commission on Dental Accreditation can be contacted at:

Commission on Dental Accreditation
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 440-4653

See Commission on Dental Accreditation (<https://coda.ada.org/>) for more information.

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