



2025 ADEA Fall Meetings
October 15–17, 2025
Hotel Polaris
Colorado Spring, CO

ADEA Sections on Dental School Admissions Officers, Financial Aid and Student Affairs
(ADEA AFASA)

Agenda

Wednesday, October 15

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Professional Development Workshop

Thursday, October 16

Theme: Prioritizing Wellness and Supporting Mental Health in Dental Schools

7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Joint Networking Breakfast

8:00 – 9:15 a.m. Understanding and Navigating the Changes to Higher Education
in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act and Its Effect on State Budget
Decisions

Moderator:

Sonya S. Smith, Ed.D., J.D., M.Ed., M.A.

ADEA Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff

Presenters:

Jon Fansmith, M.S.

Senior Vice President, Government Relations and National
Engagement

American Council on Education

Phillip Mauller, M.P.S.

ADEA Senior Director, State Relations and Advocacy

This session will review the changes to higher education contained in H.R. 1, the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)*, Public Law 119-21, and the evolving implementation plans being developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Join an expert from the American Council on Education who will address priority issues for federal policymakers and the unprecedented actions of the new administration. There will be a review of developing trends in federal legislation and regulation

as well as a detailed dive into key issues impacting students, campuses and accreditors.

The session will also review the potential impact of the *OBBA* on state budgets, and the possible impact budget shortfalls may have on future state support for higher education and Medicaid providers and enrollees.

Learning Objectives

- Describe and identify the key changes to higher education contained in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act recently enacted by Congress.
- Explain the potential impact of the current political climate and recent administrative actions on health professions education.
- Identify potential state budgetary changes that may put future pressure on state support for oral health education.

CE Credit: 1.25

9:15 – 9:30 a.m.

Joint Networking Break

9:30 – 10:00 a.m.

Welcome and Introduction

(AFASA leadership will moderate introductions and review the agenda.)

Presenters:

Scott Edward, M.Ed., M.B.A.

Chair of the Section on Dental School Admissions

A.T. Still University Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health

Danielle Harris, M.A.

Chair of the Section on Student Affairs/Financial Aid

University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry

10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Restoring Yourself While Supporting Others: Wellness Strategies for Higher Ed Professionals

Facilitator:

Alice Wittmer, M.S.Ed.

Associate Director of Student Outreach and Support

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus

In the fast-paced world of higher education admissions and student affairs, it's easy to prioritize others while neglecting your own well-being. This session offers practical strategies to help you stay grounded and resilient in a demanding environment. Participants will explore three key areas: recognizing early signs of stress in yourself, expanding your personal toolbox of coping strategies and practicing self-advocacy to support long-term

wellness. Whether you're new to the field or a seasoned professional, this session will provide actionable insights to help you thrive while supporting others.

11:00 a.m. – noon

Predictors of Anxiety and Depression in Dental Students

Facilitator:

Margaret (Xiaojiao) Yang, M.S.

Director of Student Affairs & Engagement

University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

This presentation will provide preliminary data from a nationwide assessment of the predictors of anxiety and depression in dental students. This study was conducted during the spring of 2025 and will provide timely and critical information on the relationship between student resilience, perceptions of faculty support and the prevalence of anxiety and depression in the dental student population. Participants will leave with a comprehensive understanding of mental health challenges faced by the population we serve and contributing factors to anxiety and depression which uniquely impact dental students.

Learning Objectives

- Identify predictors of anxiety and depression in dental students.
- Describe contributing factors to dental student anxiety and depression within the dental school learning environment.
- Articulate dental students' resilience and faculty support within the context of factors impacting dental student mental health.

CE Credit: 1.0

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

Joint Networking Lunch

1:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Mental Health Roundtable Discussion

Facilitators:

Margaret (Xiaojiao) Yang, M.S.

Director of Student Affairs & Engagement

University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

Juliette Daniels, Ed.D.

Associate Dean, Student Services & Enrollment Management

University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry

This session will be a facilitated roundtable discussion to discuss the findings from the presentation, *Predictors of Anxiety & Depression in Dental Students*. This session will be moderated by session presenter, Margaret Yang and Juliette Daniels, Section Councilor. Participants

will be able to reflect upon their own experiences to identify pressing challenges and opportunities for strategies to create more supportive learning environments based upon the research findings. Moderators will provide a series of prompts for discussion and facilitate collaborative dialogue.

Learning Objectives

- Compare current mental health support models used nationally to determine opportunities for improvement.
- Identify challenges within current mental health support models within one's own institution
- Evaluate strategies and implement best practices for supporting the mental health needs of dental students

CE Credit: 0.5

1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Maximizing Application Review and Communication With Prospective Students

Facilitators:

Rachel Katkar

Executive Operations and Student Services Specialist

University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Garlen Hudson, M.Sc.M.

Director of Admissions

The Ohio State University College of Dentistry

In a world of increasing application trends, overflowing inboxes with prospective student questions, and decreasing resources for higher education, how can we meet the demand? This session, led by the ADEA AADSAS® and ADEA CAAPID Advisory Group chairs, will invite admissions staff to discuss creative solutions to tackle these issues.

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Navigating Change: Recent Federal Policies on Student Loans and Repayment

Presenter:

Jon Fansmith

Senior Vice President, Government Relations and National Engagement

American Council on Education

Several changes have occurred recently in the current legislative environment surrounding student loans and the impact of students enrolling in higher education programs. As such, a number of questions remain about the ability of students to obtain the needed financial support to attend and enroll in post-secondary education and/or the health professions. This session will review and discuss the most recent changes to federal student aid policy surrounding student loans and loan repayment.

Learning Objectives

- Identify recent federal policy changes impacting student loans and repayment programs.
- Explore and describe the potential impact of these changes on student access to financial aid and enrollment in higher education.
- Describe key challenges and unresolved questions about the future of financial aid support for students interested in pursuing careers in the health professions.

CE Credits 1.0

3:30 – 4:15 p.m.

Shining a Light on the Black Box of Holistic Admissions

Facilitator:

Jessica Scates, M.Ed.

Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Operations
University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine

Although oral health care has advanced in many ways, significant proportions of the population still lack access to affordable dental care and retain the highest burden of disease. Evidence suggests that health outcomes improve when providers are representative of their communities, yet diversification of our oral health professionals is slow to change. With all schools conducting holistic reviews differently, it is difficult to assess the outcomes and impacts of our admissions processes. What factors correlate with successful dental students? Is there evidence that suggests these best and brightest are also

meeting the unmet oral health needs of our communities? In this workshop, participants will share with one another about their holistic review process. The speakers will highlight a case study from the University at Buffalo investigating what data we collect in our admissions process and how we have used that data to understand which factors are correlated with positive student outcomes.

Learning Objectives

- Describe different holistic review processes and policies.
- Reflect on the role admissions plays in future oral health inequities.
- Consider ways and means of reviewing admissions data to understand which factors play a role in success.

CE Credit: 1.75

4:15 – 4:30 p.m.

Joint Networking Break

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Inspiring the Next Generation Through the Stories of Undaunted Trailblazers

Moderator:

Lisa Cain, Ph.D.

UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

Panelists:

Keith Mays, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D.

Professor and Dean

University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Todd Ester, D.D.S., M.A.

Clinical Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Well-being and People

University of Michigan School of Dentistry

ADEA Chair of the Board

Leo Rouse, D.D.S.

Professor and Dean Emeritus

Howard University College of Dentistry

“There are so many untold stories, and it matters not that we believe the stories to be about a remarkable, average, common, unremarkable, incredible or once-in-a-lifetime individual. What matters is that the story is told and shared with others, as each of the unique aspects of our lives can be a blessing to someone and provide them with the steps necessary to help them reach their goals.”

– Keith Mays, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., Dean of University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Through this riveting panel discussion, co-authors of the new book, *Undaunted Trailblazers II: Contemporary Men of Color Shaping Oral Health*, will share real stories of inspiration, endurance and resilience from trailblazers in oral health education. Despite some challenges and rejections, the men of color featured in this book achieved monumental dreams and reached historic milestones, forging a path for the generations behind them. Whether you are early in your career path or have several years behind you, you will discover how shared lived experiences and stories of motivation will recharge your passion for oral health education and spark the drive to help encourage the trailblazers in your own community.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the historical and systemic challenges facing oral health education and evaluate how your efforts can help improve current initiatives for the next generation's successes in oral health education.
- Compare and contrast the professional journeys of these pioneers with the experiences of underrepresented groups in today's oral health workforce.
- Apply lessons learned from the trailblazers' stories to develop at least one actionable strategy to promote an equitable environment in your educational or clinical setting.
- Reflect on the role of cultural humility in oral health education and assess how this awareness can improve engagement with student and peer populations.

CE Credit: 1.0

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Joint Networking Reception

Friday, October 17

Theme: Professional Development: Building Skills for Growth and Dialogue

7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

Joint Networking Breakfast

8:45 – 9:30 a.m.

ADEA Within and Beyond AFASA

Facilitator:

Emily Rhineberger, Ed.D., M.A., ADEA

Vice President of Centralized Application Services Operations

In this session, discover meaningful ways to engage with ADEA, both within and beyond AFASA. Discover how you can contribute through councils, advisory groups and task forces that not only power ADEA's work but also empower you with leadership experience and professional growth.

9:30 – 10:15 a.m.

Holistic Review: A New Tool!

Facilitators:

Chonte James, ADEA
Senior Director of Predoctoral Application Service

Mark Voortman, Ph.D., Liaison International Inc.
Chief Data Scientist

Ashton Black, Liaison International, Inc.
Senior Data Scientist

Emily Rhineberger, Ed.D., M.A., ADEA
Vice President of Centralized Application Services Operations

Many external factors are impacting how admissions practices are conducted and scrutinized. A new tool, aptly named Holistic Review, has been created to address the changing landscape of higher education admissions; it applies a structured, rubric-driven process that empowers schools to evaluate applicants broadly and equitably. In this session, attendees will be introduced to Holistic Review and discuss its potential use on oral health education.

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Joint Networking Break

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Mastering Difficult Conversations with Students Strategies for Positive Outcome

Facilitator:

Isabel Rambob, D.D.S.
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
Oklahoma University Health Science Center College of Dentistry

This session provides faculty and staff with actionable strategies to handle challenging student interactions while maintaining empathy, clarity, and professionalism. Participants will learn how to approach sensitive topics in ways that preserve student dignity, set clear expectations, and uphold institutional standards. Real-life scenarios and communication tools will be used to strengthen participants' ability to de-escalate tension, build rapport and foster student accountability.

Learning Objectives

- Identify common triggers and scenarios that lead to difficult conversations in the dental education setting.
- Apply structured communication strategies to foster respectful and effective dialogue.
- Establish and communicate clear expectations and boundaries while providing compassionate support that promotes student accountability.

CE Credit: 1.0

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Managing Your Professional Development as a Staff Member in a Health Professional Education Environment**

Facilitator:

Susan Wold, M.S.

Assistant Director

University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Panelists:

Stan Constantino

Associate Dean, Admissions, Student Affairs and Diversity

University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry

Abel Gilbert, M.S.M.

Associate Director of Admissions

University of Florida College of Dentistry

Danielle Harris, M.A.

Director of Student Services

University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry

This facilitated panel discussion will explore the unique challenges and opportunities faced by staff working within health professional education environments—particularly those related to navigating the “double hierarchy.” In academic institutions, staff typically report to faculty, creating a well-established hierarchy. However, in health professional education, an added layer exists between those who hold clinical doctoral degrees (e.g., D.D.S., D.M.D.) and those who do not, resulting in a complex dual hierarchy. Panelists will share their personal experiences navigating this environment, offering insights, strategies and practical advice for professional growth. Attendees will have opportunities to engage in Q&A with the panelists, network with peers through table discussions and develop actionable steps to support their own professional development in the coming year.

Learning Objectives

- Identify common challenges and barriers that staff encounter when managing their professional development within a dual-hierarchy (academic and clinical) structure.
- Establish new professional connections through facilitated table discussions and networking activities.
- Develop personalized action steps to support their ongoing professional growth within a health professional education setting.

CE Credit: 1.0

12:30 p.m.

Adjourn—Safe Travels Home!

The American Dental Education Association is an ADA CERP Recognized Provider.

ADA CERP is a service of the American Dental Association to assist dental professionals in identifying quality providers of continuing dental education. ADA CERP does not approve or endorse individual courses or instructors, nor does it imply acceptance of credit hours by boards of dentistry.

The American Dental Education Association designates this activity for up to 8.5 continuing education credits.

Continuing education credit is awarded for participation in individual designated educational sessions and not for overall 2025 ADEA Fall Meetings attendance.

ADA C·E·R·P® | Continuing Education
Recognition Program

All speakers agree that neither they nor members of their immediate family have any financial relationships with commercial entities that may be relevant to their presentations.
