



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)

Preliminary 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. Joint Plenary Session

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: 1.0

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

Garien 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: 1.25

4:15 – 4:30 p.m.	Joint Networking Break
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Joint Plenary Session
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.

CE Credit: 0.5

9:30 – 10:30 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
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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:

Menty Bayleyen, M.S.Ed.
Senior Associate Director of Admissions
University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

Stan Constantino
Assistant Dean, Admissions, Student Affairs, and Diversity
University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry

Abel Gilbert, M.S.M.
Assistant 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!

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The American Dental Education Association designates this activity for up to 6.75 continuing education credits.

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

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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.
