



2026 ADEA Fall Meetings
October 21-23, 2026
Renaissance Harborplace Baltimore
Baltimore, MD

Elevating Vision, Navigating Uncertainty: Preparing a Future-ready Oral Health Workforce

Meeting Agenda

Overview

The 2026 ADEA Fall Meetings—*Elevating Vision, Navigating Uncertainty: Preparing a Future-ready Oral Health Workforce*—brings together oral health education leaders, faculty, staff, administrators, students, residents, fellows and partners to elevate our shared vision for oral health education in an era of accelerated uncertainty.

Academic dentistry and oral health leaders are navigating myriad interconnected issues and challenges shaped by rising overhead and educational costs, access to affordable health care, rapid technological change, evolving accreditation requirements, social determinants of health, increasing regulatory burdens, workforce shortages, geopolitical vulnerabilities, economic and market volatility and shifting sociocultural dynamics. To succeed, institutions, schools and programs must do more than adapt—they must reimagine strategies and develop the foresight, organizational capacity and leadership capabilities to thrive amid ambiguity and constant change. It is imperative that oral health education develop a new paradigm that approaches uncertainty not as a threat, but a catalyst for spurring innovation and equipping graduates to meet the health care needs of all communities.

The ADEA Board of Directors is proactively adopting initiatives to promote future-based thinking that aligns with ADEA's strategic priorities and resources to ensure that we are positioned to boldly shape the oral workforce of today—and tomorrow. The creation of these initiatives anchors ADEA as an ongoing indispensable resource in support of our members, the health professions and the communities we serve. Two critical groups—the *ADEA Strategic Vision 2035 Task Force* and the *ADEA Task Force on Envisioning and Transforming the Future of Oral Health and Education*—provide essential recommendations to ADEA leadership to ensure that the Association and our members are prepared to navigate future uncertainty and change. A more thorough discussion of both task forces will be shared at the 2026 ADEA Fall Meetings Joint Opening Plenary Session.

All of the 2026 ADEA Fall Meetings sessions are strategically designed to explore the major uncertainties shaping our communities, oral health education and the broader health care environment. Through presentations, moderated interviews, facilitated panel discussions, small-group and scenario-based exercises, participants will explore plausible futures for oral health education and assess implications for the current and future oral health workforce, our members, the communities we serve and the oral health professions. Participants will identify strategic priorities, durable capabilities and leadership choices to ensure ADEA and the oral

2026 ADEA Fall Meetings Agenda (As of 10/20/2026)

health education community continue to thrive in this uncertain and rapidly changing environment.

Through interactive sessions and vibrant discussions with colleagues across dental education, we will explore how artificial intelligence (AI) and related best practices are shaping oral health learning and impacting curriculum design and student assessment will be an integral part of the 2026 ADEA Fall Meetings. As we develop new vocabulary and resources for leveraging AI to innovate in an uncertain world, we will also reinforce key ethical considerations and the importance of embracing and teaching human-centered values as crucial components in preparing a future-ready oral health workforce.

Learning Objectives

By the close of the 2026 ADEA Fall Meetings, participants will be able to:

- Analyze major trends and uncertainties shaping oral health education to determine key implications for learners, faculty, and institutional, school and program strategy.
- Evaluate plausible future scenarios to prioritize strategies and partnerships that facilitate the preparation and graduation of an inclusive, resilient oral health workforce across multiple futures.
- Design future-informed actions that integrate responsible AI and other emerging technologies with curriculum, assessment, educator development and learner success.

Educational Methods: All sessions will incorporate lecture and discussion teaching methods.

Wednesday, October 21

7:15 a.m. **Registration Opens**

7:45 – 8:45 a.m. **Joint Networking Breakfast**

Participants are encouraged to connect across ADEA councils and communities and discuss one question:

What is the most consequential or significant uncertainty facing your institution, school or program as it prepares students for the 2035 workforce?

8:45 – 8:55 a.m. **Welcome**

Presenter
Cherae M. Farmer-Dixon, D.D.S., M.S.P.H.
ADEA Chair of the Board

Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.
ADEA President and CEO

8:55 – 10:15 a.m. **Joint Opening Plenary: Vision Elevated, Impact Amplified – Plenary I**

Understanding Uncertainty: Seeing the Landscape for Oral Health Education

Presenter
John Austin, Ph.D.
Dean of the Honors College and P.D. Merrill Endowed Chair of Business in the College of Business Leadership
University of New England

Moderator and Facilitator
Sonya Smith, Ed.D., J.D., M.Ed., M.A.
ADEA Chief Operating Officer; Chief of Staff

Panelists
Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.
ADEA President and CEO

John Austin, Ph.D.
Dean of the Honors College and P.D. Merrill Endowed Chair of Business in the College of Business Leadership
University of New England

Oral health education is being shaped by rapid and interconnected change—from emerging technologies and

workforce pressures to affordability, changing learner needs, evolving models of care, regulatory expectations and shifting community needs. In this environment, leaders do not need to predict the future perfectly, but they do need ways to recognize change, make sense of uncertainty and ask better questions about what may lie ahead.

This interactive opening plenary introduces uncertainty intelligence as a practical way to remain thoughtful, steady and constructive when the future is unclear. Participants will explore how signals of change can help leaders identify uncertainties that may affect oral health education, institutions, learners, faculty, staff, communities and the future oral health workforce.

Through brief framing, live polling and facilitated table discussions, participants will identify uncertainties they are observing, name signals that suggest why those uncertainties matter and consider how they connect to two major ADEA future-facing efforts—the ADEA Strategic Vision 2035, which is focused on ADEA’s future role, value and impact, and the ADEA Task Force on Envisioning and Transforming the Future of Oral Health and Education (ADEA TF-ETFOHE), which is focused on the future of oral health education.

This morning session is designed to create a shared vocabulary and starting point for the day. Participants will not be asked to solve the uncertainties they identify. Instead, they will practice noticing change, naming what is unclear and beginning to determine which issues deserve continued attention and conversation. Table submissions will be captured through Slido and upvoted; the highest-ranked uncertainties will be carried forward as the starting point for the afternoon plenary.

Learning Objectives

- Explain briefly uncertainty intelligence and how it can help leaders, educators, students and organizations respond constructively when the future is unclear
- Identify an uncertainty and a related signal of change that may affect oral health education or the future oral health workforce.
- Connect evolving uncertainties to the ADEA Strategic Vision 2035 Task Force’s future-facing work regarding ADEA’s viability, capabilities and long-term value.
- Align emerging uncertainties with ADEA TF-ETFOHE initiatives to build an adaptive oral health education ecosystem that graduates a future-ready workforce that can meet the changing health care needs of all communities.

2026 ADEA Fall Meetings Agenda (As of 10/20/2026)

CE Credits: 1.25

10:15 – 10:45 a.m.	Joint Networking Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Individual Council/Group Meetings
12:30 – 1:30 p.m.	Joint Networking Lunch
1:30 – 3:00 p.m.	Joint Council/Group Meetings
3:00 – 3:30 p.m.	Joint Networking Break
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Joint Afternoon Plenary: Vision Elevated, Impact Amplified – Plenary II

From Uncertainty to Strategic Conversation: Asking Better Questions About the Future

Presenters and Facilitators

John Austin, Ph.D.

Dean of the Honors College and P.D. Merrill Endowed Chair of Business in the College of Business Leadership
University of New England

Tolga Vural, M.B.A.

Senior Corporate Strategist
Aegean Associates

The afternoon plenary builds directly on the morning's exploration of uncertainty by moving from noticing and naming change to asking better strategic questions about what comes next.

At the close of the morning plenary, participants will have surfaced and upvoted the uncertainties they believe deserve continued attention. The highest-ranked uncertainties from that work will be brought back to the room in the afternoon as a shared starting point. Rather than beginning with a new generic poll, tables will select from these participant-generated priorities—or identify a closely related issue that they believe requires attention—and use that uncertainty to frame their discussion.

Rather than attempting to develop solutions or action plans, participants will consider which uncertainties deserve further conversation, who needs to be part of those conversations and what questions could help move the dialogue forward. Each table will identify one useful “next conversation” that could help ADEA, institutions, schools, programs or other stakeholders learn more and prepare for the future.

Through facilitated discussions, live engagement and table-based reflection, participants will practice developing strategic questions that are broad enough to encourage new thinking but focused enough to guide meaningful conversation. They will also consider whether the issues they identify relate primarily to ADEA Strategic Vision 2035, ADEA Task Force on Envisioning and Transforming the Future of Oral Health and Education (ADEA TF-ETFOHE) or both.

Together, the two plenaries create a simple progression from **Notice** → **Name** → **Ask** → **Learn**. By the close of the afternoon session, participants will have helped surface questions and conversations that can inform continued dialogue across ADEA councils, sections, committees, institutions, schools, programs and partner communities.

Learning Objectives

- Translate an important uncertainty from the morning plenary into a focused strategic question that drives dialogue and long-term readiness to help oral health education prepare for future change.
- Identify key member and stakeholder groups required to guide future-oriented conversations on major issues impacting oral health education and expanding ADEA's stakeholder value through 2035 and beyond.
- Connect current and emerging uncertainties with the key focus areas of the ADEA Strategic Vision 2035 Task Force and ADEA TF-ETFOHE to guide strategy and future changes in oral health education.

CE Credits: 1.5

5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Joint Research Poster Showcase and Networking Reception Featuring *Pathways, Purpose and Leadership: A Conversation With Undaunted Trailblazers*

Panelists

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

Associate Dean for Well Being and People and Clinical Associate Professor

University of Michigan School of Dentistry

Donna Grant-Mills, D.D.S., M.Ed., RDH

Professor and Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Howard University College of Dentistry

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

2026 ADEA Fall Meetings Agenda (As of 10/20/2026)

Dean Emeritus
University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

Herminio L. Perez, D.M.D., M.B.A., Ed.D.
Assistant Dean for Campus Life
Rutgers School of Dental Medicine

Moderator
Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.
ADEA President and CEO

Starting at 5:30 p.m., *Pathways, Purpose and Leadership: A Conversation With Undaunted Trailblazers* brings together accomplished oral health educators and leaders with meeting attendees and college students to explore pathways to careers in dentistry and other oral health professions. Moderated by Dr. Karen P. West and drawing on personal stories from the Undaunted Trailblazers book series, panelists will share insights into overcoming challenges, building meaningful connections, finding mentors and pursuing opportunities in clinical practice, education, research and service.

Thursday, October 22

7:15 a.m. **Registration Opens**

7:45 – 8:45 a.m. **Joint Networking Breakfast**

8:45 – 10:00 a.m. **Joint Morning Plenary: Vision Elevated, Impact Amplified – Plenary III**

Reshaping Academic Dentistry: Trends, Artificial Intelligence and the Future Learning Environment

Presenter
Ahmed S. Sultan, B.D.S., Ph.D.
Director of the Division of Artificial Intelligence Research Division
Chief of Diagnostic Sciences
Assistant Professor and Director of the Advanced Program in Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Residency
University of Maryland School of Dentistry

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes embedded in dental education, a critical question sits alongside its promise: What happens to clinical reasoning when trainees offload cognitive work to AI before they've built the underlying skill themselves? This plenary examines “never-skilling”—the failure to ever develop a foundational competency because AI performed the

task first, and distinguishes it from deskilling, whereby an already-acquired skill erodes through disuse. Participants will also be introduced to AI health literacy, an emerging competency describing the judgment and critical-appraisal skills clinicians and students need to use AI safely in health contexts.

Through real-world examples spanning simulation, radiographic interpretation, treatment planning and gamified learning tools, this session offers a practical framework for evaluating AI's place in the dental curriculum. Participants will examine narrow use cases where AI meaningfully supports instructors and students; contrast these with situations where AI use is slower, less accurate or introduces clinical risk; and consider what "opening the Pandora's box" of AI-assisted reasoning means for critical thinking and professional accountability. The session closes on a constructive note—how, when used deliberately, AI can strengthen the cognitive foundations of dental practice and build the AI health literacy today's graduates will need.

Learning Objectives

- Define AI health literacy and differentiate between deskilling and never-skilling, examining how cognitive outsourcing to AI may shape—or short-circuit—dental students' development of diagnostic reasoning and clinical judgment.
- Evaluate AI-driven gamification and adaptive learning tools in dental education, weighing their potential to boost engagement and skill acquisition against the risk of superficial or passive learning.
- Identify narrow, evidence-based use cases where AI meaningfully benefits instructors and students and distinguish these from situations where AI use is slower and less accurate or introduces clinical risk.
- Analyze the "Pandora's box" of AI-assisted reasoning and decision-making and its implications for critical thinking, professional accountability and patient safety.
- Apply strategies for integrating AI into dental teaching and clinical training that protect foundational skill development while capturing AI's genuine benefits for learners and educators.

CE Credits: 1.25

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Joint Networking Break

10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Individual Council/Group Meetings

12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

Joint Networking Lunch

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Managing Student Mental Health Challenges: Identifying Barriers and Building Effective Support Systems in Dental Education
(Joint program of COS, COF, COAEP, AFASA & AA)

Speakers

Margaret Yang, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs

University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

Dawn Roberts, Ed.D.

Dean of Well Being and Engagement

University of Maryland School of Dentistry

Dental students face significant academic, clinical, financial and personal pressures that can affect their mental health and overall well-being. While many institutions offer counseling and wellness resources, students do not always seek help when they need it. Fear of stigma, concerns about confidentiality, lack of time and uncertainty about available resources can create barriers to support.

This interactive session will explore common mental health challenges facing dental students, discuss why students may hesitate to seek help and highlight strategies institutions can use to identify, support and refer students in need. Participants will have the opportunity to share practices, discuss challenges and learn how dental schools can create a culture that promotes well-being and student success.

CE Credits: 1.5

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Joint Networking Break

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Joint Plenary: Vision Elevated, Impact Amplified – Plenary IV

Future-ready Oral Health Education: Preparing for an AI-enabled Future

Presenter

Meredith Bailey, D.M.D., M.B.A.

Clinical Assistant Professor of General Dentistry

Director of Education Support & Performance Evaluation

Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming education, health care and the future of dental practice. As educators, we have the

opportunity to shape the future by providing students with the tools they need to be successful both now and for years to come.

This session explores how academic leaders and educators can use AI to intentionally create future-ready, learning environments while preserving essential knowledge, including critical thinking, educator expertise and ethical principles. Through practical examples, institutional experiences, and implementation strategies, participants will examine how AI can enhance learner engagement and personalized feedback.

Participants will leave with practical strategies for responsibly integrating AI into dental education, along with a framework for preparing graduates who are technically proficient, adaptable and ready to lead the future of oral health care.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss how AI is influencing dental education and shaping the future of the oral health workforce.
- Identify practical applications of AI to enhance learner engagement, personalized feedback and educator effectiveness in dental education.
- Apply practical strategies to develop a future-ready oral health workforce that is adaptable, grounded in critical thinking and ethical principles and prepared to lead the future of the oral health profession.

CE Credits: 1.5

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Joint Reception (Open to all conference attendees)

6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Council of Sections Meet and Greet

Friday, October 23

7:15 a.m.

Registration Opens

7:45 – 8:45 a.m.

Joint Networking Breakfast

8:45 – 10:15 a.m.

Joint Plenary: Vision Elevated, Impact Amplified – Plenary V

Future-ready Oral Health Education: Boundaries, Best Practices and Professional Judgment

Regina Curran, J.D.
Director, Privacy and Cyber Policy

American University

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools have quickly become part of everyday academic and professional life, often without clear guidance on when their use is appropriate, what risks they create or how to evaluate their output. This interactive session explores the practical, ethical and professional considerations of using AI in higher education and administrative work. Participants will gain a foundational understanding of generative AI and related technologies while learning how to make informed decisions about when AI can support their work—and when human expertise, judgment or confidentiality concerns should limit its use.

The session will address common questions about privacy, intellectual property, confidential information, student and health-related data, transparency and disclosure. Participants will examine real-world scenarios involving AI-generated content, consider appropriate responses when AI use may not meet expectations or professional standards and explore strategies for using AI to enhance efficiency without sacrificing accuracy, accountability or authentic expertise.

Rather than offering one-size-fits-all rules, the session will provide practical frameworks and questions that help professionals exercise sound judgment in rapidly evolving environments.

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish among forms of AI (including but not limited to generative AI / large language models) and evaluate when AI use is appropriate for teaching, administration, research and professional work versus when it introduces unacceptable risk.
- Apply practical guidelines for protecting confidential, regulated, proprietary or sensitive information—including student and health-related data—when using AI tools.
- Assess AI-generated content for accuracy and professional appropriateness and communicate expectations around AI use, disclosure and transparency with students, colleagues and other stakeholders—including how to raise concerns when AI output doesn't meet standards.

CE Credits: 1.5

10:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Joint Networking Break

10:30 a.m. – noon

Joint Council/Group Meetings

Noon

Adjourn

Disclaimer

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