

Programs Encouraging Academic Careers Offered in the School of Dentistry

Institutional Dentist Scientist Award

Between 1996-2004, the UCSF Institutional Dentist Scientist Award program provided support for dentists pursuing a PhD degree and a dental specialty program. PhD options included Oral and Craniofacial Sciences, bioengineering, or Epidemiology in cooperation with the School of Public Health at UC Berkeley. The program had seven appointees. Of these, six completed the program. One trainee withdrew after completing the PhD qualifying exam and specialty training to pursue private practice in orthodontics. One trainee is now an Associate Professor at UCSF, and four are currently Assistant Professors (three at UCSF and one at the University of Illinois in Chicago). The sixth is a part-time faculty member at the University of the Pacific and also practices part-time.

Dental Scientist Training Program (DSTP)

In 1996, a second dual degree program was instituted by NIH/NIDCR as the Dental Scientist Training Program (DSTP or DDS/PhD). This program integrates the DDS program and adds a fourth option for a PhD in Bioinformatics, in addition to the three PhD options available in the Institutional Dentist Scientist Award program.

Students admitted to this program follow the DDS curriculum for the first three years while working on research in the summer and doing laboratory rotations. In year 4, they begin a program of 20% clinical practice and 80% research and graduate study. When DDS requirements are met and the student is licensed, this pattern continues in UCSF clinics (such as faculty practice) until the PhD is awarded.

The program pays most expenses and provides an escalating stipend. The starting stipend is determined annually by Congress. This stipend is supplemented by UCSF funds during the graduate education phase. NIH currently restricts payment of tuition/fees to 60%, but the school makes up the difference during the DDS-intensive phase. Graduate scholarships do the same for the PhD-intensive phase. In addition, a number of loan repayment plans are available from NIH that can be used to repay debts incurred in pre-dental education.

Two students have completed the program and are in specialty training. Two others will finish in 2008, and others are now in the earlier years of the program.