

February 13, 2023

Dear colleagues and friends,

Since it was founded in 1945, the University of Washington School of Dentistry (UWSOD) has been a leader in education, research, patient care, and community service. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our school community, we have a local, regional, national and international impact on oral health. While our foundation is strong, we must continue to be strategic in our approach to the future, focusing on our strengths and opportunities, as well as ongoing and future challenges.

Strategic planning is important for establishing strategic priorities. I also believe that the strategic planning process creates an opportunity for all of us to have conversations about our purpose, our values, and our vision for the future of the school. To that end, I am happy to share that the UWSOD is about to create its next strategic plan. This will be the blueprint that guides our future growth and decisions. It must accurately reflect our mission as a school, the values we hold dear, and our vision of the future we hope to influence.

Our school now finds itself at a critical juncture in its history, facing fundamental questions: Is our model of clinical training sustainable? How do we address the issue of rising student debt? What lessons should we carry forward from the COVID-19 pandemic in anticipating future public health crises? How can we best execute our role in the oral public health safety net? These and other issues affect not only those of us at UWSOD but will, by extension, reach into every corner of our state's dental community. To meet these challenges, a robust strategic plan is essential.

I have appointed a Strategic Planning Oversight Committee (SPOC) to help develop this new plan. Members of the SPOC are:

- Dr. Sara Gordon, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Committee Chair
- Dr. Douglass Jackson, Associate Dean for Equity, Diversion, and Inclusion; Committee Vice-Chair
- Dr. Ana Lucia Seminario, Associate Professor, Department of Pediatric Dentistry
- Dr. Melanie Lang, Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- Dr. Alireza Sadr, Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Restorative Dentistry
- Mr. LaMar Lowe, Director, Patient Revenue Cycle Operations
- Janelle Brewer, Dental Clinic Supervisor
- Mr. Chao (Teddy) Dong, Predoctoral Student, Class of 2025
- Ms. Maggie Helsel, Director of Marketing

The Academy for Academic Leadership (AAL) is helping us with the Strategic Planning process and will advise the SPOC while they develop the new strategic plan. AAL is an Atlanta, Georgia-

based consulting firm that specializes in helping universities and more specifically, dental schools. AAL's lead consultant is Dee Ramsel, Ph.D., MBA, AAL Senior Consultant. Working with Dr. Ramsel will be Dr. Felicia Tucker-Lively, AAL Vice President and Dr. Judith Albino, another AAL Senior Consultant. The Strategic Planning Oversight Committee will follow a planning process designed by AAL and aims to complete the final strategic plan by no later than the end of this coming spring.

While the SPOC will be the core of the process, the SPOC will require communication and input from our entire dental school community. It is a consensus-building process. The SPOC will ask everyone - faculty, students, staff, alumni, University administrators, and other major stakeholders - for input while developing our plan. The committee will keep the School of Dentistry community informed about the strategic planning process and give you opportunities to express your views. They will consider many points of view and collect information from those wishing to provide their thoughts and feelings during interviews, surveys and focus groups. The committee will then form our vision of the future into a forward-thinking plan and the path we'll follow to get there.

I have asked the SPOC to create a bold strategic plan, one that will bring the school to a new high level of success. It will reflect our school's unique position and align with the University's overall strategic plan. As a public institution, we will want everyone to see it. That is how we will make the vision come true.

We intend this strategic plan to be a living document that reflects all of us in the school and how we will work together to create a new and exciting future for UWSOD as a regional and global leader and innovator in academic dentistry.

I look forward to your input on the creation of this plan for our future.

André V. Ritter, DDS, MS, MBA, PhD (*he/him*)  
Professor & Dean  
University of Washington School of Dentistry