



## OMFS News-1

Dear OMFS Alumni,

Warm greetings from Prince Hall and the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. We, hereby, introduce you to our new, biannual OMFS departmental newsletter. In addition to informing you about news in our department, we would also like for future newsletters to highlight what some of you are doing to impact your communities. We are not married to the title of this newsletter (*Wisdom and Impact*) and welcome title suggestions. Feel free to email your ideas to Carlos Moretta at [cmoretta@llu.edu](mailto:cmoretta@llu.edu). If we don't receive any suggestions, we will continue with the current title, "*Wisdom and Impact*." We hope you enjoy it.

It is our hope and prayer that God has kept you, your loved ones, and your practice, protected during these trying times. It has been over a year and a half since this pandemic began to change the way we live our lives and how we do business. The Department of OMFS here at Loma Linda was one of only two programs that was permitted to operate at the height of uncertainty, between March and June 2020. These few months were particularly challenging for the School of Dentistry since it is one of the few schools on campus that generates funding for much of its own day-to-day operations.

This pandemic has meant a season of loss for everyone—loss of loved ones, staff and faculty (directly and indirectly related to COVID-19), loss of learning and teaching opportunities, and loss of staff and faculty (due to furlough) many of whom never returned to the school. The rich clinical experience that students and residents have enjoyed in the past was severely challenged and only now are we seeing patient encounter numbers begin to climb steadily.

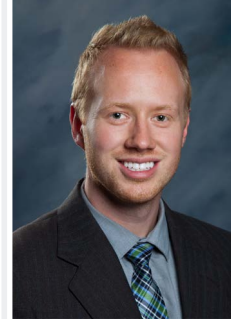
We are not just a little proud of the OMFS department, however, as our staff, residents, and faculty continued to slog through this challenge. From the initial stages of the pandemic to this day, we have continued to see all patients requiring treatment both in our clinics and the various hospitals we serve. Since COVID-19 was an unfamiliar threat with many expert voices saying many different things, we did everything in our capacity to keep our staff, residents, and faculty safe. We tried everything from strapping on multiple masks to room air filters; we even tried modified snorkeling masks with anesthesia circuit filters. And yet, some of us still came down with the virus and took the most undesirable, mandated two-week vacation. Nevertheless, God has brought us to this point—October 2021.

We don't want to forget our residents who graduated last year under the duress of the pandemic: Dr. Michael Pace, Dr. Parker Shiffler, and Dr. Matthew Streelman who are now out making what we expect is a positive impact in their communities.

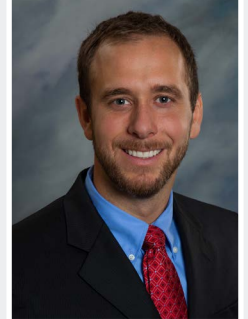
### 2020 Graduates



Dr. Michael Pace



Dr. Parker Shiffler



Dr. Matthew Streelman

This year we are happy to be graduating another trifecta of residents who we are highlighting in this brief newsletter. We are very pleased with all they have accomplished and are eager to see how they reflect our program as they practice. Congratulations, Doctors!

### 2021 Graduates



Dr. Daniel Cantu



Dr. Brian Lee



Dr. William Verlinden

We also are introducing briefly our current chief residents.

**Dr. Sung Han** is one of the chief residents in the six-year combined MD track. He is from Seoul, South Korea, and received his DDS from University of Detroit-Mercy School of Dentistry. His hobbies include cooking (mostly Southeast Asian food), watching movies with his fiancée, and playing video games. For his upcoming chief residency, he intends to gain more perspective on his future, specifically the scope he wishes to practice after graduating. He is excited to find great lessons about leadership and to teach junior residents. After residency he intends to practice privately.



Dr. Sung Han

# OMFS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## Four residents!



Dr. Courtney Kilkuts

**Dr. Courtney Kilkuts** is a chief resident who hails from Corona, California. She was incredibly happy to return home for residency after nearly 14 years away, including four years practicing as a general dentist in San Francisco. Her dad is a fellow oral surgeon and her most significant role model both personally and professionally. Outside of the OR, she can be found tackling 10km nighttime ocean swims without a wetsuit, accidentally

hiking 20 miles through the Montana wilderness, or hanging out with her family struggling to make them laugh and sometimes succeeding.



Dr. Isaac Lowe

**Dr. Isaac Lowe** is a Loma Linda Dental School graduate and is a chief resident of the OMFS four-year program. While surgical and leadership experience are things he constantly pursues, he enjoys food, movies, the beach, UFC, music/podcasts, and competing in several sports. The light at the end of his four-year tunnel is serving his community through a mixture of private practice and hospital dentistry with a sprinkling of outpatient surgery center work.



Dr. Meagan Miller

**Dr. Meagan Miller** is an LLUSD graduate and also one of our four chiefs. Despite her lack of accent, she's a Southern Belle born and raised in Dallas, Texas. After dental school, the opportunity to be the department's Boyne/Geistlich research intern sparked Meagan's interest in hard tissue regeneration. This has led her to focus on the cosmetic and reconstruction aspects of OMFS. Her avocations include cooking,

wheel throwing, and chasing around her French Bulldog, Bijou. Recently married, Meagan enjoys what free time she has with her husband, a Cardiothoracic Physicians Assistant.

OMFS Faculty and Staff (Back left-to-right): Dr. Meagan Miller, Dr. Valerie Saikaly, Dr. William Verlinden, Dr. Courtney Kilkuts, Dr. Adrien Charles-Marcel, Dr. Jeffery Pascal, Dr. Je Dong Ryu, Dr. George Wong, Dr. Samuel Young, Dr. Carlos Moretta. (Front left-to-right): Dr. Chi Viet, Dr. Jayini Thakker, Edmundo Murillo, Crystal Chavez, Elena Cenicerros, Lauri Harding, Marisela Cuevas, Michelle Schavrien, Sobie Smallridge, Liliana Demeza, Tiffany Solorzano, Tammy Davis, Dr. Susan Richards, Dr. Alan Herford

That's right; Four chief residents. Among his many goals, one thing that Dr. Herford set out to accomplish when he completed his training in 2020 and returned to Loma Linda, was program growth. While we have certainly done that, the challenges that come with this growth are part of the package. As I write, we currently have 16 residents in our OMFS program. So, the program has quadrupled since my graduation from dental school in 2001.

If you ever find yourself in the Loma Linda area and are able to drop by for a visit, you will see that many things look familiar and rightly so. But you will also see a good group of residents crowding the small resident lounge often waiting for their co-residents to finish using a computer so they can have a turn. There certainly are not enough workstations or sufficient space for residents to fulfill their duties. Even as our resident numbers have increased, our facilities have remained the same as when most of you trained with us.

This is another reason we are reaching out to you with this newsletter. As you move into the final months of 2021 and are considering potential tax-deductible contributions before the end of the year, we would like you to consider your alma mater. We hop to create a fund specifically geared to support our beloved LLUSD OMFS Department and its staff, residents, and faculty. Your welcome support would enable facility renovation, equipment procurement, and extramural learning opportunities for both staff and residents.

Would you consider donating the production of at least "one case of thirds" to kickstart this fund? Feel free to donate more than a case of thirds if you feel impressed to do so. You would only be hastening the changes our department so desperately needs. We assure you that your tax-deductible donation will go far to impact this program and the specialists we hope will make a significant difference wherever they choose to serve.

Please click this link to [donate](#) and may God bless you richly during this holiday season and in 2022.

