**Hello PDCer’s!**

Thank you for coming to our third general meeting on October 1, 2015, where we had dental students and ASDA members from UIC College of Dentistry come in and host a question and answer panel. Here are some of the questions and general advice they shared with us:

**How was your first year of dental school experience like?**

-The first year is like drinking from a water hose. So much information will be thrown at you but you’ll eventually learn time management as you get used to your schedules.

**What is your opinion on commuting to dental school?**

-Commuting is not recommended but possible. One of us tried to commute from the suburbs, but only did that for a week. It was hard because you would have to wake up around 5am to get to class at 8am and the hours spent on driving is draining. If you take the train, it wouldn’t be as bad as driving because you can study on the train. Commuting is definitely possible, but we recommend living close to campus since you’ll be in school from at the minimum 8am-4:30pm.

**Did you find research beneficial in undergrad and where did you find research opportunities?**

-For starters, don’t do research just because you think it’ll look good. Research will not compensate for not having a strong GPA. Research is a supplement. GPA and the DAT are the most important thing. Most of our class didn’t do research. Those that did do research got a position at the UIC College of Dentistry. That was really helpful because you get used to the school and the facility. It gets you into a different realm in research. Clinical research is also helpful. It can help you develop working with people and being confident. Having a background in research in dental school helps you out, but it’s not necessary. You will, however, most likely be asked during your interview if you’ve done research before, especially if the person interviewing you is a researcher. If you are interested in finding research, email your professor if they know any available ones. They can help you get started in a project if you don’t have any experience at all.

**During your D1 year, did you have a job?**

-Most of us didn’t have a job. We don’t recommend you to have a job during dental school because if you are already paying so much in dental school that it’s not worth having additional stress and possibly not do well in your classes. If you really want to have a job, though, find easy jobs. One of us works at a pharmaceutical and she works twice a month. Some of us teach DAT prep classes. We don’t need to prepare for that since we’ve already taken the DAT. Take very low-level stress jobs if you must work. UIC College of Dentistry also offers jobs. Those jobs are worth it.

**How is the SGL (Small Group Learning) like?**

-SGL isn’t like studying in undergrad with a group and working on a project together. In SGL, you are doing research on your own at home and when the group come together, each person will present what you’ve researched. Think of it more like a discussion. You pretty much work on each other.

**Do you have any tips for preparing for the DAT?**

-Keep yourself accountable. Know your own study habits. Are you the type of person that needs someone to be on your back to make sure you are reviewing or are you able to review independently? We recommend taking three months off to review for the DAT. Take the DAT when you think it’ll work out the best for you. If you must push the date back, do it. Although, don’t keep pushing it back. One of us recommends taking your DAT the summer of sophomore year. That was, you have time to prepare and retake your DAT again if you don’t like your score. Also, junior year is usually when undergrads start to take upper level classes. Summer of junior year is also when some students apply for dental school so that can be a stressful time. If you’re already passed your sophomore year, that’s okay! Take it when you are ready. Some of us didn’t use Kaplan to study since it cost almost $2,000. You can go to studentdoctor.net and you can find questions on there that showed up in past DAT. Also, there are some websites and DAT prep resources that we recommend you use:

-StudentDoctor.net

-DAT Bootcamp (great practice exams)

-DAT Destroyer

-Crack the DAT

-Chad’s Videos

-Course Saver

-Cliff’s AP Bio

-Kaplan

Don’t throw in your money in all of these books and resources only to not use it. Get a lot of practice exams and do those. Make time to review and figure out what way works best for you.

**Do you have any tips regarding the application process?**

-Submit your application early! It really makes a difference. UIC College of Dentistry have rolling admission. If 100 applicants apply in June, they won’t even look at applications sent on August. Submit your AADSAS early! Even if you have to take your DAT later, submit your application first.

**Do you have any tips for Interviews?**

­-Make sure to go on studentdoctor.net to find a list of interview questions. That way, you can think about what to answer if you get asked those questions. Don’t memorize your answers, but just think about it. When you go into your interview, make sure to listen for the question carefully. Try not to sound like you’ve practiced exactly what you’re going to say.

**Any last advice?**

-Take human anatomy and physiology (KN 251 and 252). We understand that it’s a hard class. Most of us went to UIC too. It’s not required for some dental schools, but we feel that it should be because it can really help you out. If you still have time to take the class, take it. It will save you so much time in dental school because you will have to take that class again, only it will be harder.

-Make sure to do something else that you’re passionate about in undergrad. Don’t just do academic and dental related activities. During your interview, they might ask you for one thing you are really passionate about and one experience in which you were placed in an uncomfortable experience.

-We recommend working or volunteering as a dental assistant. It’ll give you some experience in what you will learn in dental school.

-In dental school, you don’t get summer break. You get two weeks of winter break and one week break between first and second semester. Take advantage of your breaks!