

Fall 2019



African American Women in Dentistry



Creighton
UNIVERSITY
School of Dentistry



Mission

The mission of Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs is to promote Creighton University as a recognized leader in the training and development of a multicultural health care workforce that serves to reduce health disparities in underserved and diverse communities through research, culturally proficient education, community interaction and engagements through Ignatian values.

Vision

Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs will be recognized and respected as an innovative department that pioneers and synthesizes community, education, research and the development of future healthcare professionals who are culturally aware and work toward the elimination of health disparities.





Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, MD, MSPH, MBA
Associate Vice Provost – Health Sciences
Professor of Surgery (Ophthalmology)

In the 18th and 19th centuries, dentists were trained through apprenticeships and preceptorships. The dental profession received a boost in 1840 when the world's first dental school, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, was founded in Maryland. There were few trained black dentists in the early 19th century. However, preparation and training of African American dentists increased in the late 1800s with the establishment of Howard University's dental college in Washington, D.C. (1881); and the dental department of Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee (1886).

Black women dentists also have made notable advancements since Ida Gray Rollins, D.D.S., the first African American woman graduate (1890) of the University of Michigan and the first black female practitioner in Chicago, Illinois. Jeanne C. Sinkford, D.D.S., Ph.D., the first American female dental dean at Howard University; Eugenia Mobley McGinnis, D.D.S., M.P.H., the first black woman dentist to earn a degree in public health and the second female dean of a U.S. dental school; Cynthia Hodge, D.M.D., M.P.A., the second woman NDA president, and associate dean of the University of Connecticut; Juliann Bluitt, D.D.S., former associate dean at Northwestern University Dental School, the first female president of the prestigious American College of Dentists; and Marsha Butler, D.D.S., director, Global Oral Health Improvement, Colgate-Palmolive Co.

"In this fall newsletter, we celebrate the African American women at Creighton University Dental School. Most of these students were recruited through our Creighton University post baccalaureate and pre-matriculation programs and all are on one scholarship or the other, provided by the Dental School Dean's office. We hope you will agree with us that Creighton University's Postbaccalaureate and Pre-Matriculation programs have successfully contributed positively to increasing the number of African American women in Dentistry in the US." – Sade Kosoko-Lasaki

"If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, you must be the one to write it. – Toni Morrison





Creighton University School of Dentistry Administration from L to R: Mark A. Latta, DMD, Dean CUSOD and Neil S. Norton, PhD, Associate Dean for Admissions



Colette O'Meara-McKinney, M.Ed.
Assistant Dean, Office of Student Affairs



Gregory L. Davis, BA, DDS
Assistant Clinical Professor, CUSOD
Faculty Advisor, SNDA

Thank you to Creighton University School of Dentistry for their support of our department, our students and the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Program.

- HS-MACA

BLACK DENTISTS MATTER



(L to R): Yemi Ajayi, Tyresha Pitts, Kyla Combs, Ladijah Woods, Karina Bethea, Chidi Ezeokoli



African American Women in Dentistry

Silvia Nweze-Okudo, D1



Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

There are a variety of reasons I chose the field of dentistry. Dentistry is a medical work of art that brings immediate results. As a career, it is a promising field with tremendous opportunities, growth, and can provide a balanced lifestyle, for a woman, a wife, or a mother. is a field that requires organized skills that follow specific procedures, and this requirement gives me a sense of control and organization. As a dentist, one needs to be empathetic, have good leadership skills, and be culturally competent because society look up to dentists. Dentists also serve as mentors to many. In my case, will serve as a mentor to women, more specifically to African American women like myself. As stated earlier about immediate results, dentistry brings an immediate gratitude because you can see the instant result of the work you have done on a patient. For example, alleviating a patient's excruciating tooth pain through treatments like medication, extractions, filling, root canals, etc. You can even positively alter or completely change their physical appearance through either a placement of composites, veneers, or through orthodontic surgery. Diagnosis can also be made regarding their overall health through oral exams. Lastly, regarding serving as a mentor to the society, the field of dentistry unfortunately lacks diversity currently.

Lack of diversity in sex and even more so in race. Thus, as a black woman it gives me a higher purpose by showing other women, especially minority women, that they can achieve what they set out their minds to do. These and several other positive reasons are why I chose dentistry.

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution

There is only a few number of African American students in my institution, so my experience as an African American female in a majority institution has had some of its challenges due to not having as strong of a representation, peer support group, or bond as I could have, nor having an African American female instructor that I could easily look up to. Typically, being around people that look like you and are relatable to you, has a tremendous and positive effect on how much of a genuine help and support they can be. But if that is lacking, it can certainly make ones experience tougher. However, there are students who have become my friends without discriminating, and some professors

like Dr. Davis, Dr. Markham, Dr. Russell, Dr. Higginbotham, Dr.

Little, and Dr. Sanchez who have been supportive in my journey. In addition, to being one of the minorities in the school makes me unique, stronger, and enhances my purpose to serve as a mentor to other African American women like myself so that in the future, more will be inspired to pursue a career in dentistry. My goal remains to keep working hard, to keep persevering, and to keep striving to succeed in dental school.



African American Women in Dentistry

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

My African American female role model is my older sister who is not a dentist but an emergency medicine physician. I have watched my sister journey through medical school, which is like dental school in some respects. I have never met anyone as resilient as her. In fact, her experience is the reason I am as resilient as I am and have risen above the challenges that I have faced in my dental journey. Another role model of mine who is also in medicine, Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki, who directs the Post-baccalaureate program, a program that prepared me for dental school. She and the faculty of HS-MACA have shown me unending support and encouragement through the years and I am very grateful for them. With a slowly but surely growing number of African American females in dentistry, I hope to serve as a role model to someone else.

Any advice to other female African American students in the pipeline?

My advice to other female African American Students is to keep being yourself and keep believing in yourself because you can accomplish whatever you set your mind to with God who strengthens you. Also, lead by examples, strive to be a testimony for others because people are looking up to you. Impacting one person, is the same as impacting thousands. You might not get to be surrounded with people that look like you, but you are capable of impacting others who do not look like you. Lastly, Dentistry does not choose who gets to be a dentist, YOU get to choose to be a dentist and can in fact be one of the best in the field.



Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2016-2017

African American Women in Dentistry

Yemi Ajayi, D3

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

A part of me was always intrigued by dentistry as I progressed through my education and seeing the effects of health disparities in my community, I knew I wanted to be a healthcare advocate. I explored other professions in healthcare, but dentistry always seemed to capture my interest in various ways. While working on my Bachelor of Science degree, I worked for an orthodontist and shadowed a few general dentists; there I witnessed dentists expressing their artistic sides by creating smiles. Seeing patients completing treatment and gaining a new sense of confidence from their new smile is an indescribable feeling of joy and accomplishment. My journey to matriculate into dental school was far from simple but my desire to become a dentist pushed me for years until Creighton University Health Sciences-Multicultural and Community Affairs' Post Baccalaureate program believed in me and saw a potential in me and I am forever grateful.



My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution?

My experience as an African American female in a majority institution is one that I anticipated. There are not a lot of people who look like me whether students or faculty and it comes with its challenges, but I believe it is an opportunity for me to show other African American females that you also can succeed in a majority institution. Being 1 out of 7 African American females in the dental school makes me value the support we provide for one another because we all have the same common goal; to succeed and create a path for the next African American female who has dreams of becoming a dentist as well.

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

My African American female role model in dentistry is my mentor Dr. Elizabeth Simpson, DMD who attended Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. She is someone who has experienced some of life's blows but still never gives up and is constantly working to improve herself daily. While she was in dental school, her father battled cancer and passed away three days after she took NBDE part II exams

but she persevered. She remains a source of inspiration to me through her kindness, generosity, intelligence and faith. In addition to mentoring young women as they pursue a career in dentistry Dr. Simpson is a court appointed special advocate, actively volunteers with Patachou Foundation- an organization that provides meals to underprivileged kids in Indianapolis. She also finds a way to gather women together to work with Girls Love Mail, an organization that promotes women empowerment by having women gather and handwrite letters of encouragement to women recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Dr. Simpson is my role model in dentistry and overall seeing how selfless she is; I aspire to have such an impact in the lives of others as she does.

Any advice to other female African American students in the pipeline?

If I could give one piece of advice to other female African American students, is to remain confident and your hard work will pay off. There are challenges and obstacles on the road to becoming a dentist but remember that there were students just like you at some point in time in the same position and if they made it through, so can you also.

African American Women in Dentistry

Tyresha Pitts, D2



Why did I choose a career in dentistry?

From a young age, I observed the dental care provided to various family members as they dealt with oral health issues. These experiences varied so significantly from my own and the psychological impact that they had on my loved ones was astounding and left me with a lasting impression. I cared for my mother when she received corrective Temporal Mandibular Jaw(TMJ) surgery in which her mouth had to be wired shut; I encouraged my brother throughout his recovery from surgery to correct his overbite and crowding; and I supported my aunt during her diagnosis and treatment of advanced periodontal disease at a young age. Through these experiences, my interest in dentistry blossomed subtly and subconsciously. I developed a love of art, a strong call to help others, and a penchant for power tools. In college, I also realized the impact that dentistry can have on people and that it is a profession that provides the opportunity to satisfy and combine my interests.

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution.

Dental school has been an extremely daunting endeavor, with a curriculum that makes anyone want to bury their head in the sand and hide. As a non-traditional, minority student of both gender and race, the feat of achieving a D.D.S. often appears impossible. I

am one of three black students in a class

of one hundred and sixteen. Initially, I found myself reeling in waves of excitement, displacement, joy, and isolation. There have also been times where I have felt extremely 'othered' and longing for spaces that provide familiarity and inclusivity. While there have been a few less than savory experiences, overall, I've found a largely welcoming and friendly environment that is supportive of my time here. Fortunately for me, I also have the support of the HS- MACA family, which includes a wonderful balance of faculty, staff and students who serve as mentors/mentees, classmates, and friends. This community not only reassures me when the inevitable imposter syndrome attempts to creep in but also celebrates with me when I exceed my own expectations and crush my goals.

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

I did not see any dentists who looked like me growing up, and I never really considered it as a career option until my early years in college. Over the years, I have collected a few dental role models while at CUSOD as well as on social media. Drs. Leneshia Haynes, Bre'on Anderson, and Angel Ogbeide are all CUSOD graduates and continue to encourage me throughout my time at Creighton as they have all recently graduated from the institution and have a recent and intimate knowledge of what it takes to navigate the experience. Dr. Simone Ellis - a thriving business owner in Houston, Texas - has the art of practice ownership down to a science; Dr. Amira Ogunleye - an ambitious cosmetic dentist in Miami - remembers to have fun while serving her community and making sure to take care of her mental and physical health; and student Dr. Faith Tolu-Ade - who is currently working toward a dual M.D./DM.D. - reminds me that there is always someone somewhere doing more. Each of these women gives me hope that it is possible to thrive in the dental field while having fun as minority women.

Any advice to other female African American students in the pipeline?

I have had Deans of Admissions count me out, people assume that I mean dental hygienist instead of dentist when I tell them that I am in dental school, and faculty tell me that "it's going to take more than a pretty face to make it out of dental school". I will never know if those individuals intended to motivate or discourage me, but I say these things now to remind you to use everything as motivation and remember why you started. If you believe that dentistry is your calling, do not be deterred; go for it. As a mentor often puts it to me, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time."

African American Women in Dentistry

Kyla Combs, D3



Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

Dentistry offers the invaluable gift to provide each patient with an esteemed sense of confidence that is reflected in each smile. This part of dentistry – enhancing the confidence to smile in an individual – is what drove me to pursue the profession.

Throughout my life, I have struggled with low self-esteem due to an unfortunate accident I experienced as an infant, which left a third-degree burn on the upper left side of my face and subsequently a scar. I am more than aware that the first thing that captures an individual's attention, upon meeting me, is the scar on my face. However, I am also aware that when I smile, it not only takes attention away from my scar, but my smile also acts as an open invitation for the individual to look past my outer appearance and focus on who I am as a person and a professional.

My experience as an African American Female in a majority Institution Within my class, I represent one of three African American female students. The paucity of African American female representation in dental school is alarming. Representation can be encouraged for those that are applying to dental schools. My challenges are not only wrapped in ethnicity but may be further depicted in the fact that I am the first in my family to pursue a career in

dentistry. In dental school, I must work hard to seek out the mentor and guidance that others get so easily from practicing dentists who are family members. Not having a family member that has gone through dental school, pushes me to be a trailblazer on this path in my family and encourage others who are pursuing a career a dentistry.

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

I have envisioned dentistry intertwined within different career fields, and my Microbiology professor, Dr. Gifty Benson, showed me just how dentistry has passed barriers in science in order to help those in need. Dr. Benson is a pediatric dentist from Ghana, who utilizes forensics processing in bite mark analysis in cases relating to child abuse. I have an interest in the incredible field of forensic odontology and plan to incorporate the application of dental science in the identification of unknown human remains that cannot be identified using face recognition, fingerprints or other means. Dr. Benson taught me how to take my current interest and mold it into my career passion.

Any advice to other female African American students In the pipeline?

To the female African American students in dental school, you do have what it takes to become a dentist. You need to learn to take pride in and celebrate the small achievements, such as prepping your first Class 1 impression on a manikin, and the large achievements like passing a Competency or National Boards Exam.

To the female African American dental school applicants and interviewees, you cannot afford to quit. Over the course of my journey, I received several denial letters towards entrance into dental school. I made the decision to apply for a post-baccalaureate program – and was accepted into Creighton University's Pre-Dental Post-Baccalaureate Program; which helped me enhance my academic record; and opened the door to my acceptance into Creighton University's Dental School. Your transcript depicts your dedication to the field of dentistry, it shows how through each year, you learned to adjust your learning style and mastered the material within the course. May you remain encouraged that you will overcome any hurdle placed in your career path.

African American Women in Dentistry

LaDijah Woods, D1 Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?



I made the conscious decision to become a dentist when I was about 3 years old. All it took was a visit to the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry's pediatric dental clinic for me to be sold on dentistry. I can remember thinking that the dentists made people smile all day and I wanted to do the same thing. As I got older and leaned more into my calling, I saw gaps that existed in the field, specifically within my community. I witnessed people letting their oral health take the backseat because it wasn't a priority. I noticed the lack of emphasis placed on oral health education in my community because it would seemingly fall on deaf ears. In addition to other disparities I realized where impacting my life and the lives surrounding me, I realized that I was created to be created to be a dentist to teach people to be advocates for their own oral health as well as bridge the gap between quality and affordable care. In addition to becoming a leader in the field of oral health equity, I want to use dentistry as a platform to encourage others to be unapologetic in the pursuit of their passion. As a child, I never saw a black woman in dentistry, let alone a black person as a dentist so I thought that they didn't exist. I was determined to become a dentist so that someone else could look at me and decide that if I was bold enough to believe in my dream, then they can give themselves permission to be bold too.

My Experience as an African American Female in a majority Institution

It has been interesting being a double minority in a majority serving institution. As a proud graduate of an HBCU (Historically Black College/University), I experienced a bit of culture shock coming to Creighton. In the CUSOD Class of 2023, I am the only African American female so it was a little difficult figuring out how I would be able to culturally relate to my classmates. Luckily, I have the support of the women in the D2 and D3 classes. Not only can I relate to them culturally, but we all share the experience of being former post-baccalaureate program students. It's one thing to be able to relate to someone on a conversational level but I can directly relate to them academically. They have all been where I have been so there's nothing that I could encounter during my time at CUSOD that they would not be able to speak to. In a way, it has become a sisterhood where we all want to see each other be great!

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

My African American Female role model in dentistry is my mentor Dr. Courtney Barrett. I met her when I first graduated from college while she was working at the Oklahoma Health Care Authority. Prior to meeting her, I had only met one other black woman in dentistry when I was 18 years old. Growing up and aspiring to be something that you have never seen is an interesting place to be in. When I met Dr. Barrett, she was everything that I need in a mentor and more. She wasn't afraid to tell me things that were hard for me to hear. She consistently encouraged me to follow my dreams, whether it involved dentistry or not. My most notable memory with her was volunteering for Give Kids A Smile Day. Prior to that moment, I had only seen her in an office setting but seeing her practice dentistry and provide care to the children with a spirit of excellence made my dream of becoming a dentist more real. Dr. Barrett impacted my life in ways unexplainable and I will always be grateful that I have someone as amazing as her cheering me on while I'm on this journey.

Any advice to other female AA students in the pipeline?

Regardless of what field you want to go in to, I hope that you know that you are more than capable. Even if you don't see anyone in the field that looks like you, know that it is ok for you to be the first. It may feel uncomfortable at times and the pressure may feel unbearable, but you all have the power to withstand the pressure that comes with your calling. Whatever it is that you want to do in life, do it with passion and a spirit of excellence. Never forget to look back and see how far you've come and when you reach that pinnacle in your life, I hope you don't forget to create the opportunity for someone coming behind you to be successful. We're each a movement by ourselves, but we are a force when we're together.

African American Women in Dentistry

Karina Bethea, D3

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

The field of dentistry is both an art and science combined with a passion for serving others. I chose the field of dentistry with a desire to serve others, to treat, and educate patients on their oral health while making an impact on their lives. Dentistry allows me the opportunity to interact with numerous people from all over the world, while working with my hands, in order to reach a goal of improving someone's oral health and smile.

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution

As an African American female in a majority institution, you are constantly being observed and watched. You are expected to meet the standards, show up always, and look presentable "professional". If you fall short in an area, very few times is it excused; many times, you just face the consequences, whereas our other counterparts may receive slaps on the wrist or additional help. But I have learned that you are helping to pave the way, so although there is a tremendous amount of pressure whether it be from peer's family members, or society it is an important role, and you must keep striving and push through for others who come after you.

Who is my African American Female role model In Dentistry?

My African American role model in Dentistry is Dr. Kimberley Perkins-Davis. Dr. Perkins-Davis happens to be one of my mentors. She is a retired Colonel in the United States Army and has served over 20 years practicing as an Oral Surgeon. She has paved the way, not only for minority students in dentistry, and specialty programs but in the military as well. I aim to gain much guidance from her throughout my career as an African American female military dentist.

Any advice to other female AA students In the pipeline?

Some advice I would give to female African American students in the pipeline program is to never compare yourself to others, because your story and plan in life is individualized, which is why God made us all different. I would also tell students that you are responsible for your own success and must be proactive and take initiative for your education and anything you want or need in life. Lastly, I would encourage students to branch out and work with others to learn from each other to perform efficiently and effectively.



African American Women in Dentistry

Why Did I choose the field of Dentistry?

I became interested in dentistry as a young child who frequented the dental office. I was never scared or dreading the dental office but instead eager to go and ask various questions about equipment, the office, and many other things. As I got older, my desire to become a dentist grew when I learned about the health disparities that plagued many communities of color in the United States and the overall lack of oral healthcare knowledge in developing countries—particularly Nigeria. I had the opportunity to shadow in different dental offices where I witnessed the transformation of people's smiles, their oral health, and overall happiness. I have always wanted to have a meaningful career where I am helping others. Dentistry is a career where I can do that and more. I can help people discover or re-discover their self-esteem that has been diminished because they have a smile they are not proud of. Dentistry also allows me to fulfill my dream of helping people in my home country, Nigeria, develop good healthcare practices and improve their quality of life. Dentistry is the perfect combination of art and science that will allow me to offer compassion to my patients and devote my life to providing and teaching excellent oral health practices—which is truly a rewarding experience.

My Experience as an African American Female in a majority Institution

My experience as an African American (Nigerian) woman at a predominantly white institution (PWI) has been interesting yet challenging. I am originally from Chicago which is a very diverse city thus moving to Omaha was a different experience. Creighton University was also very different because it was my first time attending a Catholic and private institution and overall the campus is much smaller than my alma mater. At my alma mater, the University of Illinois, there is a strong African American and African community where I felt like despite being a minority, there was somewhat of a haven that I belonged to. Here at Creighton, as 1 of the 2 African American females in my class, I have often felt out of place and misunderstood. I sometimes struggle to connect with my peers as well as my professors who are predominately older Caucasian males. Mostly, I feel that I constantly must prove myself as equally smart, competent, and professional, as my non-Black peers, because I am a Black woman who enrolled in dental school through a non-traditional route. Despite all of these sentiments, I appreciate my experiences at a PWI, at both the undergraduate and graduate level. I believe that it has given me the opportunity to learn more about myself, grow, gain confidence, strength, and show different sides of myself that I may not have been able to if I had been surrounded by people that looked like me.

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

My African American female role model is Ida Gray Nelson Rollins. Rollins was originally from Clarksville, TN and became the first African American woman to graduate from a dental school in the United States. Like me, Rollins did not come from a dental professional background. She worked in a dental office and eventually went to graduate from the University of Michigan. After dental school, she moved to Chicago and provided oral healthcare to the African American community and served as an advocate, encouraging African Americans to become dentists. I find Ida Rollins' story to be an inspiration because she broke barriers for all African Americans, women especially, and she made a lifelong commitment of being a leader in her community. This is something that I hope to do not only when I am a dentist but also as a dental student through extracurricular activities such as serving in the Student National Dental Association, Multicultural Health Science Student Association, and participating in dental missions in developing countries. Currently African Americans make up less than 4% of the total population of dentists in the U.S. Thus, I think it is vital that we adopt the mindset of Ida Rollins and continue to reach back in our communities and help to inspire more African Americans to become dentists for the sake of representation in the field and for improving oral health disparities that communities of color encounter.

Chidi Ezeokoli, D2



African American Women in Dentistry

Any advice to other female AA students in the pipeline?

My main words of advice to any and all African American women pursuing a career in dentistry would be: always have confidence/believe in yourself and do not compare yourself (strengths or weaknesses) to others because your path is YOUR path therefore you will have your own unique experiences that shape your life. The dental field needs more diversity and representation in its providers, and I would love to see, over the coming years, more African American women in the field continue the works of Ida Rollins—breaking barriers and serving as advocates and leaders in their communities.



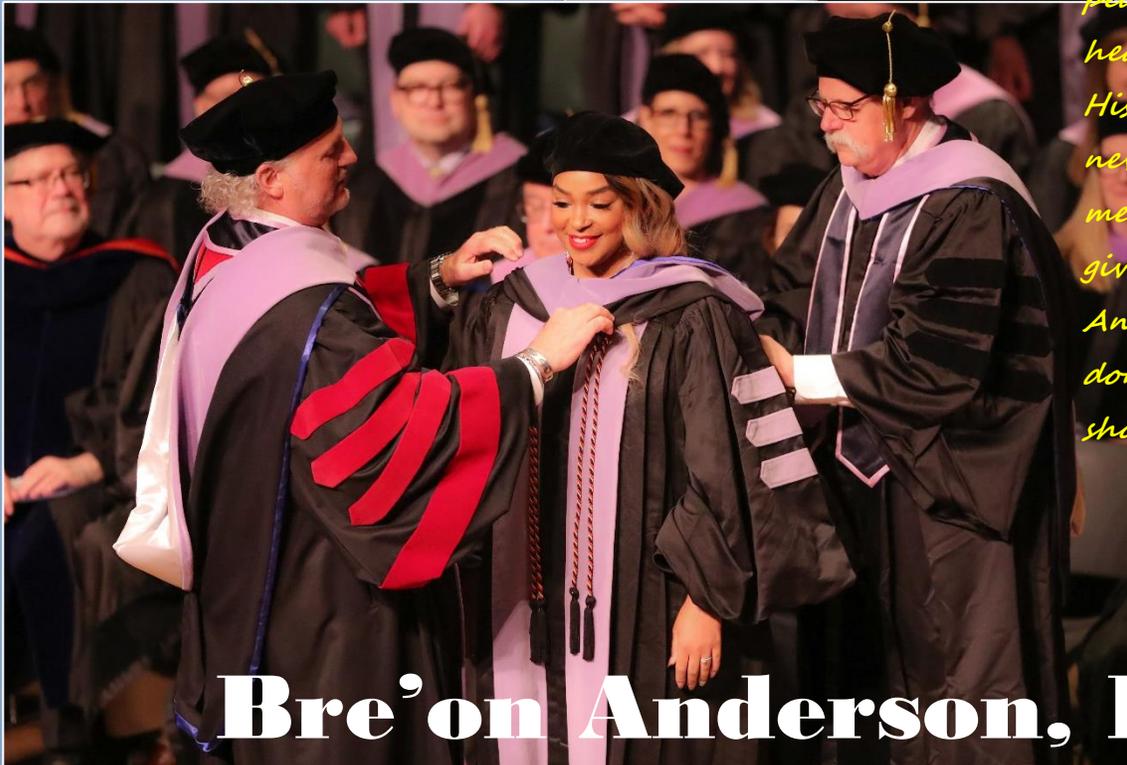
Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2018-2019

African American Women in Dentistry



"Lord promised if I keep my mind on Him, He would keep me in perfect peace. With a sincere heart, if I called upon His name, He would never turn away from me. He said He would give me everything I need. And God has always done just that... nothing short of faithful."

on Monique Anderson



Bre'on Anderson, DDS

It was so challenging to be away from home and away from all your family and friends. Overtime you learn and discipline yourself to ask God, "don't do it without me." That alone can mean so many different things. You learn more and more to depend on God for everything. Even when you are going as planned or going places that made perfect sense; it was always important to me to lean on God while accomplishing my goal. Thank God I was in the post bacc program with my at the time boyfriend. It was an amazing feeling supporting each other, leaning on each other for anything that came our way. In any situation its always amazing to stay grounded. Being out of my comfort zone was an understatement.

Being an African American female in a majority institution has been a great experience. Before Creighton University, I was a part of Health Science Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) Post Baccalaureate Program. where I met other students across the world with similar goals in mind. My grew as we learned about each other and our respective cultures. Being culturally aware and culturally competent, gave me a more humbled outlook on life. Learning to be more selfless and understanding what it means to serve my purpose in life as God worked on and through me. Once I got into the dental school, I met more amazing friends where we were able to travel, hang out and learn so much about each other while getting through dental school together. Perseverance has been a major key in my aspiration of becoming a dentist. I had to make a coup attempts to get into dental school. But throughout it all, I've stuck with it. So, determined to make things happen. I've earned my Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry; Master's Degree in Medical Science; A certificate in HS-MACA's Post Baccalaureate program; then later earning my Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree. I didn't let anything stop me in my pursuit. I was determined to get where I wanted and I'm forever grateful to those who have helped me along the way.

Choosing the field of Dentistry seems strange to some people, because some individuals can't understand why someone would have a love for teeth or even being in a person's mouth. Passion trumps all those odds. Making sure patients are happy not only with life, but with their appearance and their smile. The smile alone for most builds' confidence. Not only is confidence restored, but overall health for patients is one of my main goals. A lot of times we, as dentist, are helping patients with their health, not knowing that things are pre-existing. It could be something as small as an ulcer. Patients stating, "oh I have this little something here that's been here for a while, it hurts sometimes but not all the time." When patients are not educated or not understanding what is going on inside their mouth, it is my duty to share knowledge and educate them to help aid in a better quality of life. It's very refreshing knowing that helping others has been my purpose in life.

Paving the way for women in general is so inspiring. It's hard to say I have one African American female role model in dentistry. Each and every one of us have the opportunity embrace our own uniqueness and symbolically illustrating to the world what dentistry means to us and more importantly, what impact we have on dentistry. While going through dental school it was no doubt that while in my studies I've seen so many women thriving every day in their passion while taking a moment to say to myself "I can't wait to start practicing like her"...or "that's exactly how I want to be when I become a dentist."... or even "I can't wait to graduate from dental school so I can start living my passion".

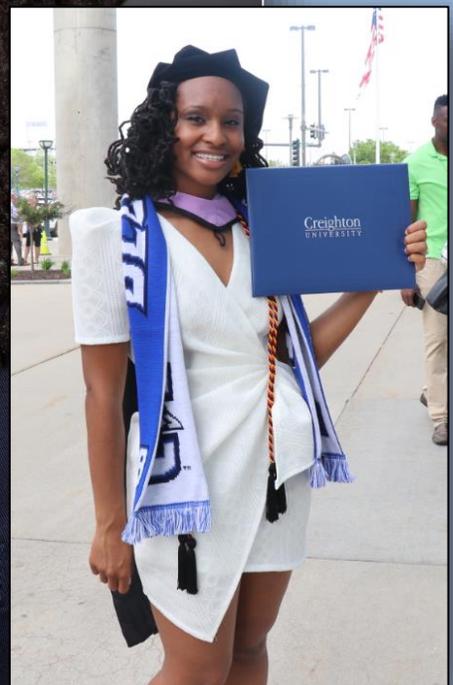
When you aspire to become something, you tend to want more and more for yourself each second. I remember praying for moments like this. Being in those moments, enjoying it, then praying to be in new moments. As I practice now, I find myself in groups with friends, talking about dental topics or how we are being great at what we do, and bouncing ideas from and to one another. Whether it's friends from Creighton, friends I've met from conferences or even friends I've met through the social society of dentistry. it's always refreshing to see what's new, what others are up to in their pursuit to change the lives of others in dentistry and try to implement that into how I can change and impact the lives of others. I've had so many amazing women come before and after me where we've all built friendships that go beyond dentistry. Whether it's us talking about dentistry, life, girl stuff, or just being ourselves...I'm forever grateful for what we share.

Through all of this I have learnt that God places us in the most uncomfortable places. This allows us to grow, learn, mature and fight against all odds. Because at the end of the day, I desire to become closer with God while living in His image. But the most important lesson I've learned is that after praying to God and asking him to show me why I am here, he assures me and said, "you want to be closer to me right? This is where I am!" God says, in Me you have everything! God gives us the confidence and strength along with love, joy and peace. So many of us are motivated by one another. We are inspiring people, we don't even know! Life is about living in your purpose; the purpose God has for you. It's about giving back to others and paying it forward! You were chosen for this life. The vision will always pull you. Always hold the vision and trust the process. People always say, "life is only as good as your mindset". Your purpose explains what you are doing with your life. Your vision explains how you are living your purpose. Your goals enable you to realize your vision. Never forget to remain humble and praise your way through.



Post- Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2013-2014
Howard Family Dental
Savannah, GA

African American Women in Dentistry



Leneshia Haynes, DDS

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

I chose the field of dentistry during a crossroads in my life, as my career in pharmacy was halted by an unfavorable experience working as pharmacy technician. Fortunately, as a student at Xavier University of Louisiana, I was exposed to various medical professional programs by my advisor who suggested the field of dentistry. In order to ensure that this was the right decision, I shadowed a local dentist who was an African American woman, who ultimately became my mentor. This opportunity introduced me to an entire new world of health science professionalism, which motivated me to continue to pursue a career in dentistry.



Post- Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2014-2015
Doctor of Dental Surgery
General Practice Resident at LSU School of Dentistry
New Orleans, LA

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution?

This most certainly is a loaded question, so I must give some background. All the schools I attended, prior to Creighton's School of Dentistry, were predominantly African American from kindergarten throughout undergrad. I truly believe this experience allowed me to focus solely on my education and not worry about being the "token" black girl. Frankly, I had my reservations moving from Chicago's Southside to Omaha, Nebraska, and so did my family. However, I quickly realized I was thoroughly prepared academically, but nothing could prepare me for some of the experiences I encountered while attending a predominantly white institution. As I previously stated, my focus was always my education, but that was not always the case for me once I became the only African American female in my dental class. Aside from the stark differences in culture, hair, and vernacular, these differences became miniscule as compared to my abilities being questioned or feeling ostracized. Instead of feeling defeated, I worked even harder to refute anyone's opportunity to doubt my intellect or work ethic. Now as far as the questions about my hair, or the dangers of Chicago, and the ones I can't seem to forget like someone said, "I see black people, I get scared and I don't know why?", I quickly realized that those were distractions. I was not at Creighton University to answer anyone's inquiries about the African American experience, I was there to learn how to become a dentist.

Who is my African American Female role model In Dentistry?

My African American female role model in dentistry is my mentor Dr. Chernara Baker. Dr. Baker and I have very similar backgrounds as we both were products of the Chicago Public School system, Xavier Alumni and now both African American Female Dentist. These similarities gave me the confidence to push through adversity and continue to pursue a career in dentistry. The guidance given to me by Dr. Baker was and still is a testament to how much representation matters. Dr. Baker gave me insight, motivation, support and is now someone call a good friend.

Any advice to other female African American students In the pipeline?

There will be times that you feel like giving up, like you don't belong, and that nobody understands what you are going through. At that moment of vulnerability, reach out to a mentor or someone who will pick you up and give you a boost in the right direction. Lastly, always express yourself, do not dim your light, speak positively about your dreams, stay consistent, and remember you are a special type of woman, a Black Woman.

African American Women in Dentistry



Angel Ogbeide, DDS

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

I had always had an interest in dentistry, but in undergrad I volunteered at a free clinic near my university and realized how much of a conduit dentistry could be for helping marginalized populations.

My Experience as an African American Female in a majority Institution

Oh boy, that's a loaded question. I think being the "only" for most of my life prepared me for professional school, at least in that sense. Through the post-bacc program I did have a network of students who looked like me to support and encourage me, but still, it brings an added layer of stress. Dental school is hard for the stereotypical, upper middle-class white male. So, adding the pressure that I not only need to do well for the sake of doing well, but that I also must do well to combat all the stereotypes that certain faculty members have held to be true for most of their lives? That's exhausting. From the problematic questions about my hair, to assuming I'm from the inner-city (I'm not, but even if I was, why does that matter?)- there were so many things I had to be the "bigger person" about. The hardest part is the racial undertones. We all know they are there. Like the banana peel joke- I didn't laugh, because it wasn't funny. But who can I tell? Who in the administration would stand up for me?... But it's not all bad. I was lucky to have a close group of faculty that were not only great instructors, but were also great mentors who advocated for me. I think that's what it comes down to in being one of the few. Knowing that even if the majority were not for me, there still were some that were FOR me.



Post- Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2013-2014
Advanced Education in General Dentistry
NYU Langone - MO

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

My mother. She's not a dentist. To be honest, prior to coming to dental school at Creighton, I had only ever met 1 African-American Female dentist in my life. But my mother immigrated to the US at 18 for college, by herself. So she wasn't just an only in having brown skin, she was an only in coming from a different culture, from a different part of the world. And the lessons she taught me, stories she told me, and encouragement she gave me were the most pivotal part of my journey to becoming a dentist.



Siblings - Matthew Ogbeide, MD (Post-Bac Class of 2012-2013) with Angelo Ogbeide, DDS (Post-Bac Class of 2013-2014)

Any advice to other female AA students in the pipeline?

Stay encouraged. I mean that. I know it sounds cliché, but if you can learn to encourage yourself, and to surround yourself with people who will also encourage you and pick you up when you're low, you can conquer any giant you want.

African American Women in Dentistry

Tye Barnett



Post Baccalaureate Pre-Dental
Class of 2019-2020
Class Leader

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

My very first brush with dentistry occurred at age nine. My younger siblings were even kind enough to allow me to practice on them at my very “first office – Oceanside Dental Clinic”. It was there in “my clinic” that I was able to teach them how to properly brush their teeth, I even offered “overnight services” where I would read bedtime stories about oral health. Providing care to my siblings came naturally, it was how I was raised. There is an immense amount of confidence that stems from having a beautiful and healthy smile and I hope to become the person who can do that for others.

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution

In 2011, I was awarded a presidential scholarship to Philander Smith College, a historically black college and universities (HBCU) located in Little Rock, Arkansas. This institution fostered an environment that celebrated and provided a connection to Black history and its rich culture. That experience helped me to develop a strong foundation that I use in my daily life to navigate majority institutions. Now that I currently attend a majority institution, I feel it is my duty to make space for others to feel welcome.

Who is my African American Female role model in Dentistry?

An African American female who inspires me is Dr. Catrise Austin, a cosmetic dentist who currently resides in New York. She is a role model because she has found her niche and continues to dominate in an area that historically was not open to people like myself.

Any advice to other female African American students in the pipeline?

The advice that I would give other African American females in the pipeline program is to be kind to yourself and be confident that you have earned your place in this program. Everyone has their own challenges to overcome and there is nothing wrong with accepting help along the path to accomplish your dreams.



African American Women in Dentistry

Mahogany Eaton

Why did I choose the field of Dentistry?

At the age of eight, I had an overbite and wore braces. During this time, as I wore my braces I enjoyed going to get my bands changed and being able to see my teeth straighten over time. After this experience, it elevated my confidence and made me want to be able to give that confidence to others. Ever since, dentistry has always been on my mind. I finally made the decision to pursue a career in this field half way through my undergraduate career. Soon I began to shadow different dentists and realized how dentistry was more than just cleaning and extracting teeth it was a form of art. In addition, the lack of oral health care in my community was my true motivation. My county is one of the many underserved counties in Georgia that lack oral health care. This encourages me to go back to my community and surrounding communities to help serve. Furthermore, I will like to educate people on the importance of oral health care. Many people do not realize how important going to the dentist on regular basis is a requirement to remain healthy. Not to mention, many insurance companies do not cover countless dental treatments that people need.



Post Baccalaureate Pre-Dental
Class of 2019-2020

My Experience as an African American Female In a majority Institution.

This is my first experience being at a majority institution. I graduated undergraduate school from an HBCU, Fort Valley State University. Being the minority instead of the majority is eye opening. My experience at Creighton thus far has been very welcoming. Especially, being in the Post-Baccalaureate Program. To know that I am in a program that caters to help me succeed and be admitted into dental school is truly uplifting.

Who is my African American Female role model In Dentistry?

My African American Female role model in Dentistry is Dr. Courtney Chapman, she is a fellow alumna from Creighton's School of Dentistry and an alumna of the post baccalaureate program. Where I am from there are not many female dentists, especially African American. Dr. Chapman guided me throughout my experience in applying to dental school and after not being admitted, she encouraged me to apply for Creighton's Post-Baccalaureate Program. I am forever grateful for her help.

Any advice to other female African American students in the pipeline?

My advice to future African American students in the pipeline is not be afraid to ask for help or advice. Make connections with other African Americans students who have been through the pipeline program and ask about their experience. Use them as your allies, they are there to help you. Also, they can relate to most experiences that you may encounter through the pipeline or help you to not make the mistakes that they made. In addition, find other students besides African Americans who have been through the pipeline that can assist you as well.



Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2019-2020

Recruitment and Retention: African American Women in Dentistry

The underrepresentation for Black dentists is extraordinary, and the Black dentists that are in practice are shouldering a disproportionate share of dental care for minority and underserved communities. Underrepresented minorities (URMs) together make up almost 30 percent of the US population, however, they comprise only about 6 percent of U.S. dentists. URM's are not only underrepresented in the dental workforce, they experience large disparities in oral health and access to dental care.

For years, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) has been diligently working with U.S. dental schools to reduce this disparity by increasing the diversity of their student bodies. However, with approximately 13 percent of first-year dental students coming from URM groups, the proportion of URM students entering dental school continues to remain significantly below that of the general population. Blacks, Hispanic/Latinos and American Indian/Alaska Natives have a disproportionately lower presence in the dental workforce compared to the United States population overall and are cumulatively referred to as underrepresented minorities (URM).

The table below highlights the disproportionate rate in which minority students have enrolled into Creighton University School of Dentistry.

Table 8.3: School of Dentistry Enrollment by Predominant Ethnic Background Fall 2010 – 2017

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Native American | 8 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ¹ | 3 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Black, Non-Hispanic | 12 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | | | | | | | | |
| Asian | 26 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 36 | 34 | 38 | 37 |
| Hispanic | 19 | 14 | 10 | 16 | 17 | 19 | 20 | 15 |
| Two or More Races | 13 | 9 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 13 |
| Nonresident Alien | 9 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Caucasian | 251 | 241 | 244 | 239 | 243 | 242 | 241 | 246 |
| Unknown | 8 | 26 | 23 | 27 | 24 | 17 | 12 | 6 |
| Total | 349 | 345 | 347 | 343 | 347 | 342 | 341 | 337 |
| % Native American | 2.3% | 2.0% | 2.0% | 1.2% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 0.6% |
| % Native Hawaiian/Pacific Is. | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| % Black, Non-Hispanic | 3.4% | 2.9% | 3.2% | 3.5% | 3.2% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 2.4% |
| % Asian/Pacific Islander | | | | | | | | |
| % Asian | 7.5% | 8.1% | 8.6% | 8.7% | 10.4% | 9.9% | 11.1% | 11.0% |
| % Hispanic | 5.4% | 4.1% | 2.9% | 4.7% | 4.9% | 5.6% | 5.9% | 4.5% |
| % Two or More Races | 3.7% | 2.6% | 3.7% | 2.9% | 2.6% | 3.5% | 3.2% | 3.9% |
| % Nonresident Alien | 2.6% | 2.0% | 1.7% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 2.0% | 2.3% | 2.7% |
| % Caucasian | 71.9% | 69.9% | 70.3% | 69.7% | 70.0% | 70.8% | 70.7% | 73.0% |
| % Unknown | 2.3% | 7.5% | 6.6% | 7.9% | 6.9% | 5.0% | 3.5% | 1.8% |

Ethnic Minority Enrollments, Excluding Nonresident Alien Students

Since the year 2005, HS-MACA has taken pride in addressing this disparity through the academic achievements of our Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental students who have successfully matriculated into Creighton University School of Dentistry and beyond.

HS-MACA advocates for the overall well-being of our students by providing academic and student support while addressing large disparities that exist between the proportions of African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians in the dental profession.

Statistics show that the largest share of Black dentists are male. So, in addition to recruitment strategies that focus on bridging the ethnic achievement gap, emphasis is placed on the recruitment and retention of aspiring African American dentists that are women.

Recruitment strategies that work for traditional students do not always work for racially and ethnically-diverse students, particularly at majority institutions. When recruiting African American

women to majority institutions or male dominated professions the racial environment must be addressed. Minority students are attracted to schools with racially-diverse climates and an appreciation for their presence. The key is to create a campus environment that supports both academic and social experiences for our minority students, thereby decreasing the possibility of “culture shock”.



CUSOD 2019 White Coat Ceremony

In addition, minority-faculty presence at all levels of the institution and the presence of minority students on campus act as an incentive for minority students to pursue their education. A campus that values diversity also provides an atmosphere that encourages minority-student retention. In fact, it is important that faculty members hold all students to the same standards. Students must feel that their efforts are valued. Treating minority students differently can undermine self-confidence and may lead to poor performance. To successfully retain underrepresented minority students, faculty members must support students in all aspects of their education.

With a limited population of minority students, particularly African American women, in dentistry, the success of HS-MACA's recruitment and retention efforts

are contingent upon innovative strategies through non-traditional sources. Minority students are recruited through minority community, professional, and social groups or organizations, churches and other religious groups, minority fraternities and sororities, minority alumni, and minority mailing lists. Encouraging other minority students (alumni) to assist with outreach at any recruitment event is also a sound strategy, since minority students are more attracted to campuses where there is a visible minority cohort. Outreach and recruitment efforts must be directed where minority students are located. Examples would include historically black colleges and universities, minority career and college fairs, and graduate school fairs. The dissemination of racially-sensitive recruitment materials must be advertised in minority-oriented media. Marketing materials aimed at minority audiences must depict people of diverse race and ethnicity achieving success in both school and career in hopes of drawing an attraction and interest in the health sciences schools.

Another successful recruitment strategy is to highlight the social and cultural activities and organizations, such as HS-MACA, Student National Dental Association (SNDA), and other organizations that focus on cultural competency, allowing students to become more involved and expressive about their culture and profession. This reduces minority students' experiences of social and cultural isolation and will have a positive effect on their personal persistence to succeed academically.

HS-MACA maintains a sustained and broad, aggressive outreach strategy that engages students earlier; target groups traditionally underrepresented in the admissions applicant pool and provide mentoring and supportive resources so that students can thrive. As more minority students seek the support of Post-Baccalaureate programs, the essence of good mentorship is imminent. However, success is contingent upon developing a mutual trust between mentor and student. Mentors and students must be comfortable with each other and able to communicate outside of the classroom, particularly as a minority at a majority institution. Retaining students can be attributed to finding that commonality of experiences because of race and gender, maintaining an open-door policy, and creating a relationship that shows we are interested in discussing their well-being beyond the books. HS-MACA's mentoring approach is just one among many possible solutions, but it is one that aids in retaining minority students at Creighton University.

All students have an inherent ability and desire to excel academically. We must set high expectations for our students, while also providing the appropriate help tailored to the needs of everyone. The development of a campus-wide retention program for minority students is a collaborative effort that requires effective leadership, willingness to evoke change on campus, and a commitment to Creighton's values. Success of retaining students also depends on the unequivocal support from the office of the president or provost, the involvement of the entire campus in shaping program operations, and the important practice of keeping ideology focused on servicing others; the student. If any of these factors are missing, the chances for success are limited, leading to low retention rates. HS-MACA has created a model allowing us to bridge the achievement gap and increase the retention of minority students enrolled at Creighton University School of Dentistry.



Mervin Vasser, MPA
Assistant Director
Recruitment & Retention Manager

Diversity in Dentistry: “Brushing” Away Barriers



Pipeline programs in the health professions were formed to generate a path to diversifying the healthcare workforce, improving health equity, tackling educational opportunity gaps and reducing health disparities. More specifically, Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) aims to provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds the access, education and training necessary to become a healthcare professional with the overarching goal of increasing diversity within the healthcare workforce. The program is designed to recruit, inspire and support students from all walks of life who have an interest in health-related professions i.e. medical, dental, pharmacy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.

Yes – all health professions and the diversity they possess are significant to the welfare of all communities; however, let us take a moment to focus on the field of DENTISTRY. According to recent statistics, the field of dentistry has a major diversity dilemma. In 2016, data from the American Dental Association (ADA) indicated that nationally, only 12% of dental students were from underrepresented, minority groups. Even more alarming, is that according to the

population of Douglas County, Nebraska, ONLY 2.7% of dentists are from underrepresented, minority groups. A low percentage of minority students are applying to dental schools across the nation; let alone graduating from dental school and entering the healthcare workforce as fully-trained & licensed dentists. To the benefit of patients and communities nationwide, it helps to have more dentists from diverse backgrounds providing dental services and education. Dentists from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or underrepresented populations have a higher probability of serving communities where need is in high demand which in turn reduce health disparities surrounding dental care and education.

Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) provides a diverse enrichment experience which exposes all students to a number of resources which in turn enhances the learning experience of our future dentists. Engagement plays a huge role in the success of a pipeline program; a student that may be wavering in terms of applying to dental school may finally come to a firm decision to apply by merely recalling a dental school tour, a dental impression demonstration, interaction with a peer mentor (role model) who is currently in dental school, etc. where all interactions helped to boost the student’s interest in dentistry. As a pipeline program, early exposure to the field of dentistry is vital – meaning that high school and undergraduate students need to become familiar with math/science courses such as chemistry, biology, algebra, trigonometry, etc. which will create the first steps on a journey to dental school.

Dentistry is not only a viable career choice but one that with the backing of a pipeline program can be one that has been well-prepared for and successful. Academic and professional success are central to any pipeline program; however, other factors come into play in terms of preparedness. Students that participate in pipeline programs also receive assistance in areas in which they have classified as “barriers” that make a career in dentistry seem impossible. In an effort to address any perceived barriers (low test scores/grades, financial resources, time management, family engagement, college application process, etc.), Creighton University’s Pipeline to Success Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) has made it a part of its mission to ultimately reduce and/or eliminate student barriers that can negatively affect the pipeline to dentistry school. To be an effective pipeline program that has a focus on dentistry - understanding the need of the students, implementing resources and following students along the journey to dental school must be top priorities.



Aminatu Issaka, MS
Program Supervisor, HCOP

In closing, to keep it simple – dentists make the world a better place one smile at a time!!!

HCOP Academic Excellence of the African American Female in Dental School

The *Pipeline to Success* Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP) at Creighton University, like many programs and organizations, is guided by specific mission, vision, and purpose statements. Our purpose statement is “To provide students from disadvantaged backgrounds the access, education, and training necessary to become a healthcare professional with the overarching goal of increasing diversity in the healthcare workforce.”, a sentiment that aligns itself closely with the goal of the HS-MACA department, which strives to increase diversity in healthcare and to mitigate health disparities in underrepresented populations. We recognize that without a diverse healthcare workforce, we cannot adequately meet the needs of a diverse world.

As the United States healthcare workforce stands at the moment, diversity is in short supply. As we focus our lens on the field of dentistry for example, we see that as of 2015, the American Dental Association (ADA) reported that just 3.8% of the population of professionally active dentists in the United States identified as African American. Looking more closely at our home state, only .6% of practicing dentists in Nebraska identify as Black or African American (Chandak et al, 2013). A survey published in the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* found that among reporting black dentists, the majority were male (Mertz, Calvo, Wides and Gates, 2016). As we take a moment to look at the African-American female dental student, we see that the need for representation in this area is also great.

At HCOP, we recognize the need to reduce health disparities by providing our participants with the tools they need to succeed in their journey through health professional school. Looking at health professional students taking part in the current HCOP session here at Creighton University, African American females comprise 40% of the dental students in our program.

When it comes to assuring the academic excellence of our HCOP health professional students, this is achieved through grade tracking and individual academic counseling to ensure that students are given all the support and preparation needed to succeed in their journey. Students meet regularly with me to discuss their current progress and identify any areas of growth. They set goals, both academic and personal, to help ensure accountability and balance as they navigate the world of health professional school. This is in addition to test preparation, study skills workshops, and presentations to help prepare them to enter the world as a new health professional.

According to the aforementioned survey of black dentists, over one-third are first-generation college students; with such a small number of practicing black dentists in the nation, it can be difficult for students to find mentors and role models who relate to their unique experience as a minority, often first-generation student. Throughout the course of participation in the HCOP program, we strive to bring our health professional students into contact with potential mentors and role models who can share their perspective and understand students’ unique situation and provide clarity and support. In turn, our health professional students are able to use their experiences to mentor the younger generation, our undergraduate and high school participants who are also typically under-represented minority and/or first-generation students seeking to succeed in the health professions.

As we look at the numbers, we see that the need for a diverse healthcare workforce is dire. However, when I look at our current and past HCOP participants, I am delightfully encouraged to see so many driven, passionate individuals stepping up and answering the call of the healthcare professions. Each day we at HCOP strive to ensure their academic excellence and to give these future healthcare providers the skills and support they need to be successful in an ever-changing world.

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Christina Jelinek, BS
Academic Success Counselor/Case Manager
HCOP

Providing support to the African American female in dental school

1890. The year the first African American woman received a dental degree in the United States from the University of Michigan. It would take another 6 years for another woman to receive another DDS. Representation matters, especially for African American women. While many women, in general, feel a lack of support on college campuses, women of color face additional issues when searching for mentors or resources within their college communities. Many feel they lack adequate support from faculty and institutions, but this is especially true for African-American or black women. Looking around campus and not seeing someone who looks like you can be an isolating experience.

A study in [College Student Affairs Leadership](#) found that female African American faculty make up only four percent of all professionals in these roles, and percentages are similar for other non-white races. Academic role models who identify as women of color are hard to find, making it a struggle to feel a sense of support on campus. As the Program Coordinator for the Post-Baccalaureate & Pre-Matric programs in the Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA) department, and a black woman, I often find myself being that source of support for the African-American female students on campus. Although this is a part of my role and responsibilities, I find great honor in being a piece of solace and a thought partner for our students. Having someone who is relatable sometimes makes all the difference. Campuses can help with more inclusion practices, such as encouraging and recruiting more black women to apply in such support positions, and by also providing more inclusive curriculums. In addition, faculty, administrators and staff can create a greater sense of equity and diversity throughout the institution.



Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Dental Class of 2016-2017

Mentorship and sponsorship are critical as a support to black women, especially in Professional school. Creating quality mentoring programs is censorious for the empowerment of these students, as are qualified advisors. Pairing newly enrolled black women with those who are further into their programs, can be an additional source of support for academic and interpersonal growth.

My role in the Post-Baccalaureate program, in HSMACA, is to create and maintain a climate that recognizes differences and commonalities, while understanding, and engaging in intentional experiences that nurture these students. HS-AMCA 's walls embrace the African-American women in Dentistry, in addition to others, by providing them a sense of "refuge" when all seems too much. I am part of a team that provides a listening ear, and a helping hand, for our students' success.



Larissa Sanon
Post-Baccalaureate Coordinator

Providing research opportunities to the applicant into dentistry

Good grades and high DAT scores are not enough to get you into dental school. It is important that you are a well-rounded applicant that participates in meaningful activities on your college campus to improve your academic standing and enhance your learning experience. Dentistry is a service-focused profession and dental school admissions officers look for students who demonstrate their promise to learn outside of the scope of traditional education in the classroom. Many dental schools include research as an instrument to increasing their knowledge in the health sciences as a whole in order to provide care to underserved populations in school clinics.

The Health Sciences – Multicultural Affairs Department (HS-MACA) and the Center for Promoting Health and Health Equity collaborate to provide research opportunities to all health science students, including dentistry, through the Summer Research Institute. The Summer Research Institute each year which provides underrepresented students in both high school and undergraduate programs an opportunity to gain valuable research experience to further their knowledge and to create a pipeline of researchers that will address the gap of underrepresented minorities in research positions. There are currently 3 research fields offered in the Summer Research Institute: The Undergraduate Summer Biomedical Research, the High School Health Disparities Community Research, and Project SEED. Since 2010, the Summer Research Institute has included biomedical research for undergraduates, biomedical research for high school students, and community-based participatory research with community partners and organizations for high school students.

Undergraduate Summer Biomedical Research is a collaborative program between HS-MACA and CPHHE to increase underrepresented minority groups' interest in biomedical research and foster their applications to the health science professions. This program, originally funded through the National Institutes of Health and currently through LB692 Nebraska Tobacco funds to the Center for Promoting Health and Health Equity (CHPPE), has provided more than 100 disadvantaged minority students the opportunity to participate in a variety of pharmacology, biology, neuroscience, cancer biology, public health, and exercise science research. Program objectives are to advance students' understanding of the nature and applicability of scientific research methods, enhance their confidence in pursuing careers in biomedical research and other health professions, and expand their knowledge of research career opportunities. The students are assigned faculty mentors in the biomedical sciences (college and high school). The mentors guide the students in research methodology and the results are presented in a colloquium at the end of the summer.

High School Health Disparities Community Research is a collaborative program with organizations in the Omaha community to promote students' awareness and understanding of how to eliminate community health disparities. The students are assigned to the organization and the mentors guide the students in understanding the organizations' missions. The students creatively develop new methodologies to address or eliminate disparities. They present results in a colloquium at summer's end.

Project SEED American Chemical Society Since 2016, we have partnered with the American Chemical Society (ACS) to host Project SEED. Project SEED allows two high school students to take part in chemistry-based lab research projects at Creighton University. High school students must have at least a year of science (preferably chemistry) and meet certain financial criteria established by the American Chemical Society. This opportunity exposes high school student to laboratory conditions and while garnering professional development and career exploration prior to entering college.

If you are a student interested in dentistry or any other health sciences, you can find more information about the Summer Research Institute and apply here: <https://healthsciences.creighton.edu/diversity/research/summer-research-institute>



Errik Ejike, MS
CPHHE Program Supervisor

Introducing Public Health to Professional School Students: the COPC approach

From October 2004 to September 2007, Creighton University, through its department of Health Sciences' Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA), received an endowment grant of \$1,875,000 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to increase Creighton's capacity to train students in public-health research. With this funding, HS-MACA established a COPC Public Health Research Program to increase student involvement in public-health research and to strengthen mentoring and tutoring services. COPC is currently in its fifteenth year of operation.

Community-oriented primary care (COPC) model is a process of improving a community's health by using principles of public health, epidemiology, preventive medicine and primary care that has been shown to have positive health benefits for communities in the United States and worldwide.

COPC was the right model to implement at Creighton University as it complements our goal of educating students to address health disparities in underserved communities because, as a process of providing health care, it fulfills the goals and objectives of providing care to medically underserved population. Creighton faculty in our family medicine clinics have worked with the COPC model (as defined by Nutting et al. 1985) for years. The COPC model has four steps:

- Define and characterize the community
- Identify community health problems
- Modify the health care program
- Monitor the effectiveness of program modifications

COPC reaches Creighton Health Professional student with its own four components: Common Ground, Health Disparities Research, Medical Student Scholarships, and Medical Student Tutoring.

Common Ground

The Common Ground forum provides opportunities for all Creighton Health Science students to collaborate and learn more about quality improvement in healthcare. Introducing forms of communicating and collaborating will demand further training and education of the health professionals, both in undergraduate education and in different forms of lifelong professional training. Students view research and community matters on health disparities from a public health perspective, ultimately creating a more effective healthcare work force that will reduce the disparities in the nation. Every year, 750 students attend weekly Common Ground sessions.

Health Disparity Research

Each summer, three first-year medical students participated in an eight-week COPC health disparity research project. Each student is paired with a faculty researcher with expertise in public health and are required to present their research at Common Ground.

Because COPC health disparities research opportunities are a key component of a comprehensive health disparities curriculum, we use COPC Public Health Research Endowment funds to support a total of 5 medical student each year. The COPC health disparities research program ensures that students who are interested in addressing health disparities in underserved communities through clinical research will have the opportunity to participate in COPC public health research opportunities during medical school. By providing financial support to these students, we will encourage their service-oriented professional goals and help reduce their burden of debt.

Each summer, three first-year medical students participated in an eight-week COPC health disparity research project. Each student is paired with a faculty researcher with expertise in public health and are required to present their research at Common Ground. In addition, two (2) fourth-year (M4) medical students complete a Longitudinal Health Disparities Research each year. During the month-long research, the student finalizes their data analysis and manuscript, abstract, and/or a poster presentation on their chosen health disparity topic. More than 75 students have completed COPC Research since 2007.



2019 CUSOD White Coat Ceremony

Medical Student Scholarships

The COPC Scholarship is awarded to increase medical-school enrollment of health-disparity students interested in participating in health-disparity research. Students are chosen based on academic standing, community involvement, and experience in health disparity research. These students are required to participate in COPC Longitudinal Health Disparities Research during the fourth year of medical school. The COPC Scholarship program supports students who have been involved with or are interested in health disparity research, since these students will more likely carry on with a life-long commitment to primary care health disparity research. Since 2007, the COPC has provided 64 Creighton Medical students a total of \$264,600 in scholarship money.

Medical Student Tutoring

Since, student support services designed for the general undergraduate student population are insufficient to address the needs of students in medical school, the COPC tutoring programs are designed to increase professional level student retention. COPC Tutoring Programs offered included: Training Tutors (Train-the-Trainer method), One-on-One tutoring, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). The SI model is a retention and success strategy that relies on peer-facilitated, collaborative student learning to improve academic performance in traditionally difficult courses. Rather than targeting high-risk students, it targets high-risk courses, thus eliminating any potential stigma that students might associate with remedial academic support services. In the 2018 - 2019 academic year, twenty-two

(22) students were trained as tutors and they provided over 100 hours of tutoring to other medical students. A total of 18 Supplemental Instruction sessions were held in Anatomy, Neuroscience and MCB. Ninety-five (95) percent of the M1 students attended at least one Supplemental instruction session.

In the past 15 years, the COPC Public Health Research Program has helped Creighton University establish an educational culture in which a commitment to addressing health disparities is understood as an integral part of the practice of medicine for all professionals, rather than as a “charitable” choice.



Jennifer Klimowicz, BS
Manager of Programs and Research, COPC



— Health Sciences —
Multicultural and Community Affairs

HS-MACA



Creighton
UNIVERSITY

School of Dentistry

HS-MACA News and Alumni Updates



WELCOME TO HS-MACA

Mado Assani Juarez is the Assistant Director of Academic Excellence-Health Sciences- Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA). Mado was born in Congo DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) and raised in Ivory Coast (West Africa). Mado is fluent in French, Spanish and Lingala.

She received her bachelor's degree in social work from The University of Texas at Arlington in Arlington Tx and her master's degree in Student Development and Leadership from Angelo State University. Prior to coming to Creighton University, Mado worked as an Academic Advisor at Abilene Christian University in Abilene Tx and as a Transfer Counselor at the University of Texas Permian Basin in Midland Tx. Mado is happily married, have 2 beautiful children Ezra (3yrs old) and Veronica (4 months).

Save the date

MAY 28, 2020

POST-BACCALAUREATE & PRE-MATRIC

HS-MACA 2020 REUNION



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, MAY 27TH
NOON-1:00 PM
COMMON GROUND

SATURDAY, MAY 28TH
8:30 AM-10:30 AM
ALUMNI BREAKFAST &
CAMPUS TOUR

SATURDAY MAY 28TH
6:30 PM-7:30 PM
COCKTAIL HOUR
7:30 PM-10:30 PM
DINNER CELEBRATION



HS-MACA News and Alumni Updates

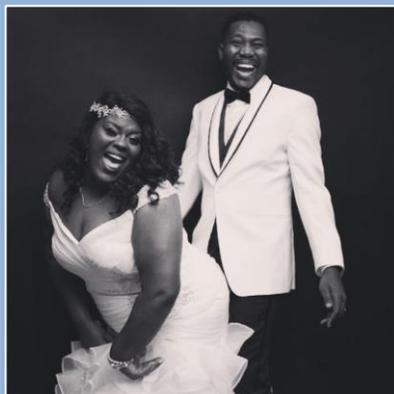


Beau Fry (Post-Baccalaureate Class of 2015-2016) and family. Spouse: Molly Fry, Daughter: Elaine Josephine Fry, "aka" EJ



Dr. Harriet "Banda" Braithwaite, (Post-Class of 2002-2003) and family. Spouse: Marcus Braithwaite, Daughter: Adia

Dr. Danielle "Porter" Stovaw, OBGYN and Spouse: James Stovaw w/Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki



Marie Joseph (SPAHP Pre-Matriculation Class of 2013) and family. Spouse: Jackson D'haiti, Son: Kaj

Post-Baccalaureate



Class of 2019-2020

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To learn more about HS-MACA, visit our website: <https://healthsciences.creighton.edu/diversity>