



# Mentoring of SDMUPR Students in Pediatric Dentistry and Academics

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## Abstract

The American Association for Dental Education (ADEA) is working on several initiatives to foster an interest in academic careers. One of these strategies is a student fellowship aimed at allowing the student at the School of Dental Medicine to explore early experiences in academia. In 2016, the School of Dental Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico (SDMUPR), Medical Sciences Campus, began this fellowship. A pipeline of SDMUPR students with interest in pediatric dentistry and academics has evolved from this initiative.

**Keywords:** The pipeline of future pediatric dentists; mentoring in pediatric dentistry

**Abbreviations:** ADEA: American Association for Dental Education; SDMUPR: School of Dental Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico

## Introduction

The School of Dental Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico (SDMUPR), Medical Sciences Campus, began in 2016 an ADEA Fellowship Program in Dental Academic Careers (ADEA/ADCFP) to encourage students to discover and experience the options available in the academic work setting[1]. This initiative began a parallel pipeline. Students with interest in academics and pediatric dentistry applied continuously to the ADEA/ADCFP and achieved successful educational projects in pediatric dentistry with their mentor assistance. This article will relate the SDMUPR 4 years' experience with this pipeline project of future pediatric dentists with interest in academics.

## Discussion

ADEA's Dental Academic Careers Fellowship Program was founded in 2006 to provide students and residents of the USA and Canadian Dental Schools with the opportunity to venture into academia, providing a structured mentoring to be able to observe and reflect on what an academic career requires[1]. The student is required to complete eight components during the ADEA Fellowship Program in Dental Academic Careers. These

components include building an action plan, bi-monthly meetings with a mentor, reflective essays before and after an academic experience, interviews with faculty, academic practice, research practice, presenting a poster, and submitting a portfolio with the evidence of all activities made[1]. In 2016, the SDMUPR began with the ADEA/ADCFP with SDM/UPR students. Since then, every year, at least one student applies to the pediatric dentistry track (Table 1). The mentor is a pediatric dentistry faculty at the SDMUPR, and they work together for eight months on a pediatric educational dentistry track project (Figures 1-3). The number of Applications and First-year Enrollment for Advanced Dental Education Programs continues to rise in the USA[2]. With proper guidance and early experiences, the students can learn and explore their areas of interest in dentistry.

**Table 1:** SDMUPR ADEA/ADCFP Fellows.

2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Five SDMUPR ADEA/ADCFPstudents.	Ten SDMUPR ADEA/ADCFPstudents.	Nine SDMUPR ADEA/ADCFPstudents.	Six SDMUPR ADEA/ADCFPstudents.

One SDMUPR ADEA/ ADCFPstudent on Pediatric Dentistry Track.	Two SDMUPR ADEA/ ADCFPstudent on Pediatric Dentistry Track.	Two SDMUPR ADEA/ ADCFPstudent on Pediatric Dentistry Track.	Two SDMUPR ADEA/ ADCFPstudent on Pediatric Dentistry Track.
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Figure 3: Faculty and student in by-monthly meetings.

### Conclusions

Twenty-six students have completed the ADEA Academic Dental Careers Fellowship Program at the UPRMSC School of Dental Medicine and one of the students who participated in the Program in 2016, currently is a pediatric dentist, from the 2017-2018 cohort, two are pediatric dentistry residents at the SDMUPR, and from the 2019-2020 cohort, one applied to pediatric dentistry programs and is waiting for interviews invitations.

### Acknowledgments

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### Conflict of Interest

The author of this article has no conflict of interest to disclose.

### References

1. American Dental Education Association (2020) ADEA Academic Dental Careers Fellowship Program.
2. American Dental Education Association (2020) ADEA Snapshot.

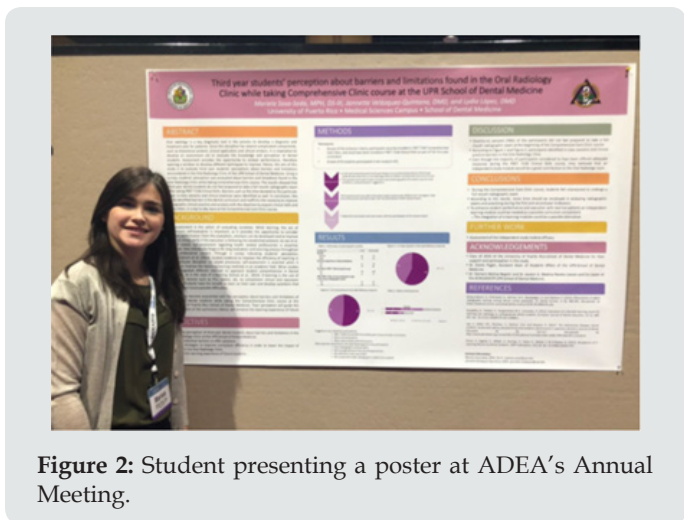


Figure 2: Student presenting a poster at ADEA's Annual Meeting.

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