



Virginia Commonwealth University

# Medical Center

In the tradition of the Medical College of Virginia

MCV Campus

## School of Dentistry

Office of the Dean

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### VCU School of Dentistry Update for the Northern Virginia Dental Society by Dr. David C. Sarrett, Dean

#### Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How many students do you have enrolled in the School of Dentistry?* We have approximately 400 DDS students, 60 BS in Dental Hygiene students, 50 residents in advanced education programs, and 5 PhD students.
2. *How diverse is your student body?* Our DDS program has 45% female students, 15% Asian, 3% African American and 3% Hispanic/Latino. Our dental hygiene program has 95% female students, 16% Asian, 11% African American and 2% Hispanic/Latino.
3. *How many applicants do you receive for dental school?* We receive nearly 2500 applications per year for the 95 first year class seats. 250-300 are from Virginia residents and the remainder from non-resident students. The first year class has 60 Virginia resident students and 35 non-residents. Nationally about 11,000 total students apply to all dental schools so 22% of everyone applying to dental school applies to VCU.
4. *How many of your students stay in Virginia?* This is hard to know exactly but based on alumni records about 50-60% of VCU DDS graduates have addresses in Virginia.
5. *I have heard tuition and fees are very high and student debt is very high, is this true?* VCU dental students graduate with an average debt of nearly \$200,000. Tuition and fees for Virginia residents is \$34,000 per year and for non-resident students it is \$58,000. VCU dental school ranks low compared to our peer schools in both tuition and student debt. For example, University of Maryland is \$45,000 and \$75,000. Our top fund raising priority is for student scholarships.
6. *What does it cost to operate the dental school and isn't the state paying for most of it?* The annual operating budget (not including building maintenance and utilities and university administrative support) is \$40M. Our revenue equals expenses and 41% of the revenue comes from tuition & fees, 37% is generated by patient care delivered by students, residents and the faculty, and 10% come from the state/VCU. The remaining 12% comes from multiple sources like gifts, endowments, grants, and contracts. The VCU School of Dentistry operates more like a private school than a publically supported school.
7. *What are some of your key new initiatives?* We are focusing on clinical and research programs in oral and head & neck cancer, bioengineering, oral and general medicine, and new instructional methods.
8. *What are your biggest challenges?* The average size of our faculty is about 20 faculty members less the schools with comparable enrollments and faculty salaries are low compared to private practice. This makes faculty recruitment and retention challenging, particularly for specialist. The Wood and Lyons Buildings are way past time for renovations and building systems improvement and we need a much improved "patient front door" and modern clinical facilities for several departments to better serve our patients.
9. *How can dentists help the school?* More than anything else, understanding these facts and spreading the word to your colleagues, friends, political leaders and patients. Help support student scholarships.