

6 August 2025

Dear WSDA Leadership and House of Delegates Members:

I bring you greetings from the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences—School of Dental Medicine (SDM) in Yakima. I am happy to share that the school welcomed its inaugural class, the Class of 2029, on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for a week of orientation and began classes on August 4<sup>th</sup>. More about the inaugural class below.



### **Accreditation:**

The SDM received Initial Accreditation from the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) on August 8, 2024. Our second site visit by CODA is scheduled for April 20-22, 2027. The SDM team has begun preparing our self-study for this visit. A third and final visit will occur in spring 2029.

### **Fundraising:**

Efforts over the past five years have concentrated on fundraising to support capital construction and operational costs. With the completion of the final building on campus (see below), capital fundraising is now finished. A big thank you to the WSDA for its support with the Washington Legislature and for the \$1 million donation to support the simulation lab.

Over the past three years, we have increased our scholarship fundraising efforts. For the fiscal year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, we set a goal to raise \$1 million in scholarship funds, including both

direct and endowed grants. We managed to raise just over \$700,000 and distributed more than \$160,000 in scholarships to 28 students in the Class of 2029. Our goal for this fiscal year is to raise scholarship funds to \$2 million. In light of recent changes to Federal Financial Aid for health professional students, scholarship fundraising has become even more important due to concerns that the lack of Federal loan funding will discourage the students we are trying to recruit to apply to dental school.

### **Construction:**

The ribbon cutting for Delta Dental Equity Hall took place on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Dr. Chris Dorrow represented the WSDA, and ADA president Dr. Linda Edgar joined us for this milestone in our program, delivering remarks during the event. Construction of the Dental and Occupational Therapy building (DOT) started last summer and is on track to receive a certificate of occupancy by mid-September. This building will house the dental school's administration, faculty offices, and teaching spaces. Once completed, the DOT building will mark the completion of campus construction plans for PNWU.



Our FQHC partners (Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, and Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic) began construction of their respective student clinics in

June and July of 2025, with completion in May/June of 2026. Students report to the community clinics in August 2026.

### Faculty Recruitment:


I am pleased to report that we have secured commitments to fill all our full-time academic positions, and approximately 95% of our part-time positions are filled through 2026. The faculty is a diverse group in terms of experience and background. We will continue recruitment efforts to fill the remaining positions and start recruiting for faculty who will begin in 2027, sometime in late 2025. You can view our current faculty [here](#). If you or someone you know is interested in teaching, please have them contact me.

This past May, we hosted our third annual booth at the Pacific Northwest Dental Conference (PNDC). I hope you had a chance to stop by and visit us! We were busy throughout the entire meeting. It's a great opportunity to meet practitioners, staff, and potential students. We look forward to continuing our participation in 2026, when we will also bring students to the conference on Friday.

### Admissions:


We completed our first admissions cycle in December 2024. We received over 550 completed applications between August and November. The admissions committee did an excellent job selecting the class. Here is a snapshot of the class:

## Class of 2029



**Where are they from:**

Washington	22
Montana	3
Florida	2
California	2
One each from UT, ID, CO, TX, OK, AK, MI	



**GPA:**

Overall: 3.40

Sciences: 3.31

**From Rural and Medically Underserved Areas: 72%**

**Gender:**

23 Females (64%)

13 Males (36%)

**Prior Dental Experience:**

12 Dental Assistants

9 Dental Hygienists

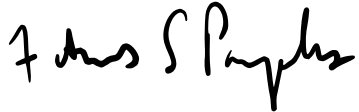
**Race (self-reported):**

Hispanic	15
Native American/Alaska Native	4
Black	6
Asian	2
White	23

For this admissions cycle, which began in June, we have had 460 completed applications submitted as of the date of this report. The committee has already started interviewing, and final decisions will be sent to candidates on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

In conclusion, I want to thank the WSDA leadership, the HOD, and its members for backing our new program. We couldn't have achieved the success described without your support.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fotinos S. Panagakos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Fotinos" being more prominent.

Fotinos S. Panagakos, DMD, PhD  
Dean