

Charge to the Graduating Classes of 2020 and 2022
University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry
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To our graduates, families, friends, faculty, staff, and university leaders, it is such a privilege to be with you on this historic day. I am honored to provide some brief remarks.

2022 Graduates... sorry, no more Dean's Brown Bag lunch meetings, Coffee with the Cabinet, town halls, or daily COVID email updates... I know the Class of 2020 must be missing them already.

Our graduates have lived through many history-making moments over the past few years. The journey through school to be excellent oral healthcare providers is challenging on its own.

Adding in a global pandemic, social unrest, and air quality crises from wildfires certainly were unforeseen and unimaginable when the classes matriculated. They have distinguished themselves through COURAGE and PERSEVERENCE.

I am amazed at what our graduates have accomplished during their time at the Dugoni School. In addition to growing as oral healthcare practitioners, they grew as people. They grew as friends, colleagues, leaders, community members, and volunteers. They also grew as mentors to students who are following in their footsteps. Yes, you have heard it already today from Dr. Gallia...at the University of the Pacific's Dugoni School, we grow people...and along the way they become doctors and dental hygienists.

Some of you in the audience may have wondered what the graduates were receiving as they walked off the stage. You hear me mention our Dugoni School family often, and these moments of growth and achievement are bittersweet as we are excited for our graduates, but come to the realization that we will not see them as often... so we started a new tradition this year where each graduate is receiving a personal note with wishes for their future from one of the faculty or employees of the Dugoni School. It is a way for us to share our wishes for their future on this special day.

It was nice that San Francisco City Hall was lit with orange and black on Friday to honor our grads.

Our Dugoni School graduates stand out among dental school graduates nationwide. I think back to March of 2020 when we had to shelter in place. These graduates faced the fear of an unknown virus and uncertainty of how it may impact their education and

clinical training. They started with classes on WebEx and Zoom, online examinations, take home laboratory equipment, and my daily updates about our plans and progress from our Crisis Management Team. Then they were among the first students to return safely to providing much needed clinical care for their patients, and the Class of 2020 was the first in the nation to be fully licensed using the manikin board examination. They learned to transition to more rigorous PPE requirements with N95 respirators and face shields. There were so many changes and pressures, and through all of it, they remained focused on strong values, on their education, and on their patients.

A patient of Dr. Adriana Chan mentioned that, *“Throughout his time at UOP he has had such a positive experiences being a patient that he continues to refer anyone in the Bay Area when they complement his smile.”*

Another patient of this class shared that, *“Your patience, kindness, and compassion has not gone unnoticed as we continue to survive from years of domestic violence...your altruism has deeply touched our lives.”*

Finally, a grandmother of a patient shared that, *“It’s so comforting to know that there are still some healthcare professionals with such compassion and professionalism... Every person we met today (including the admissions clerk and the security guard) embodied the excellence that the Dugoni school strives for.”*

I could not imagine being prouder of our students and residents for the COURAGE and PERSEVERENCE they have shown in reaching this amazing milestone...you can be proud of how our graduates believed in each other and how they believed in themselves. They believed that they could achieve what others would say impossible.

Their clinical expertise and the amount of care provided to patients in the clinics was remarkable. The Class of 2022, in the face of all of the challenges facing healthcare during the pandemic, had more than 80,000 patient visits for patients from all walks of life. What a positive impact they have made in supporting good health and smiles across our region!

To our graduates, your success in the future will, in part, be based on lessons learned during your time at the Dugoni School. You have just completed a rigorous professional program that tested you in new ways. Reflect on these experiences as you grow and face new challenges yet to come. Be humble knowing that there is still much to learn.

Like the graduates who preceded you, it is now your turn to take your education and use it to be leaders and to serve your community... you have the knowledge, skill, and compassion to help those around you live healthier and happier lives.

You have incredible gifts. It is up to you to make the most of them... I have no doubt, that is exactly what you will do.

To quote Nelson Mandela and with your incredible courage... *“May your choices reflect your hopes not your fears.”*

Congratulations again to all of our graduates on what you have accomplished today and in the years that have led up to this important moment in history! We are so proud of you! I will miss you, but please remember that you are always part of the Dugoni School family, and we look forward to welcoming you back home often.

Congratulations, and my deepest wishes for your health, success, and happiness.

Thank you, and how about a final round of applause for the doctors and dental hygienists of the Class of 2022 and the Class of 2020.