

**Subject:** 🇲🇦 FITD: From Monaco to Augusta, scholarships, safety, service & more inside!  
**Date:** Friday, October 3, 2025 at 4:14:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** The Dental College of Georgia  
**To:** Hudson, Stacey

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## Schoenbaum speaks at European dental congress

[Dr. Todd Schoenbaum](#), Professor in the Department of Restorative Sciences, was an invited speaker in the country of Monaco at the [European Association for Osseointegration](#) (EAO) Annual Congress, one of the most influential gatherings in global implant dentistry.

Schoenbaum was part of the core team that presented findings from the Global Consensus for Clinical Guidelines (GCCG), a new international initiative focused on developing practical, evidence-based recommendations for complex dental implant treatments. His lecture centered on the rehabilitation of the edentulous maxilla (complete upper tooth loss), a clinically challenging condition affecting patients worldwide.

“It’s an honor to contribute to such a globally impactful project,” Schoenbaum said. “These guidelines will help clinicians deliver better, more predictable care for patients everywhere.”

[Click here to read more and enjoy photos](#)





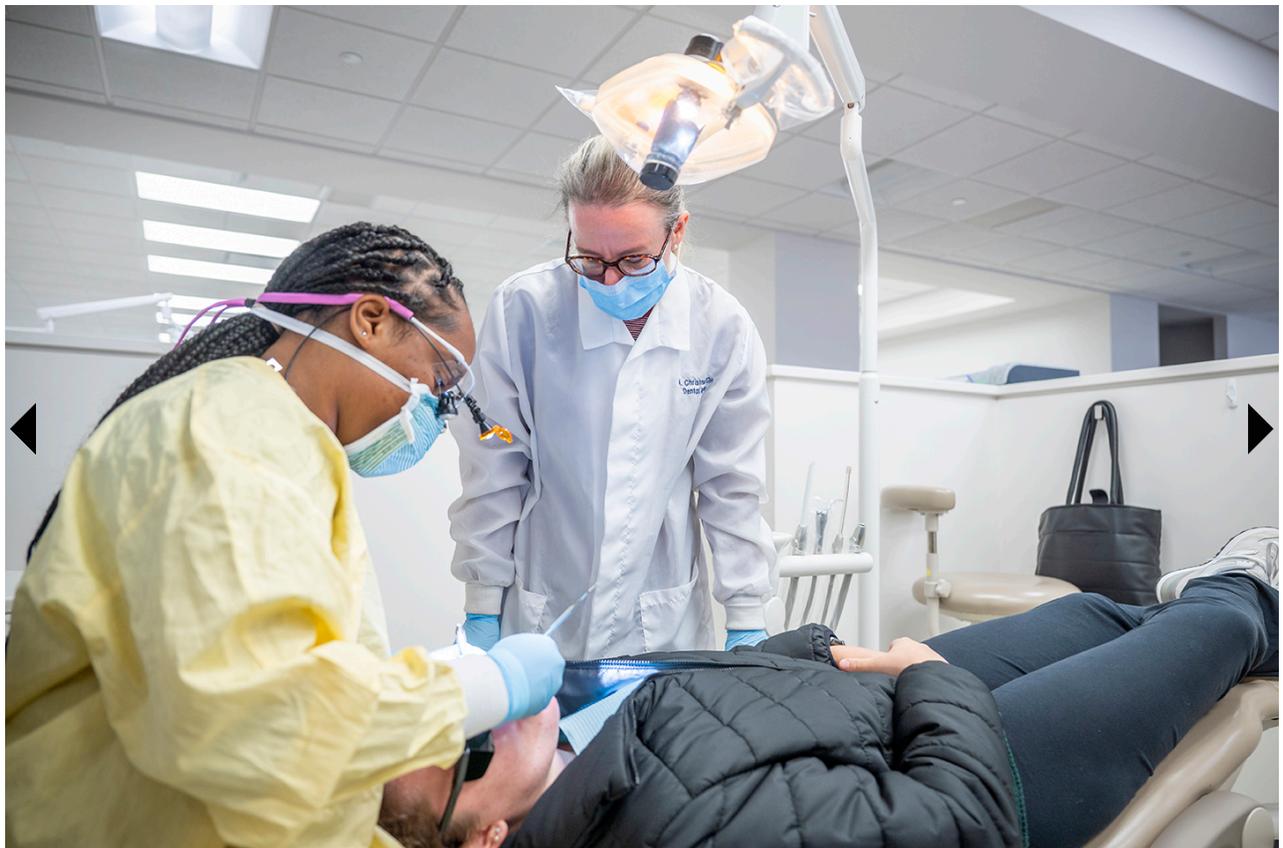
## 2025 Scholarship Ceremony celebrates excellence

The DCG proudly recognized student achievement, professionalism, and service at the 2025 Scholarship Ceremony. This year, more than \$400,000 in scholarships were awarded to deserving DCG students. The awards are made possible through the incredible generosity of alumni, faculty, dental professionals, organizations and friends across Georgia, the region and beyond. Their ongoing philanthropic support plays a vital role in helping us educate and train the next generation of dental professionals.

In particular, the [Hinman Dental Society](#) showed blanket support for oral health in Georgia by gifting all of the Class of 2026 \$1,000 scholarships. Every member of the class received this honor to help propel them towards graduation in their senior year.

Several students received multiple scholarships or recognitions, celebrating excellence in academics, leadership, service, and more. Their achievements reflect the strength, talent and dedication that define the DCG student body.

[Click here to read more and enjoy photos](#)



## DCG honors hygienists as frontline defenders' of health

This October, the DCG proudly celebrates [National Dental Hygiene Month](#) by recognizing the essential work and lasting impact of dental hygienists, who are the frontline defenders of oral and overall health.

“The impact of dental hygienists measures far beyond ‘cleaning teeth,’” said [Kathleen B. Cantey](#), MEd, RDH,

Assistant Professor in the Augusta University Dental Hygiene Program. “They are the frontline professionals essential for prevention, education, early detection and improving both oral and overall health.”

As licensed healthcare professionals, dental hygienists play a critical role in preventing disease, promoting wellness and empowering patients with the tools they need to care for themselves. Hygienists are often the first to detect signs of oral disease. They provide vital treatments like fluoride applications and sealants along with oral cancer screenings. And at each clinical visit, hygienists deliver personalized education that helps patients maintain healthy habits for life.

Their work has wide-reaching effects. According to the Centers for Disease Control, poor oral health is linked to serious conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and pregnancy complications. By providing preventive care and early intervention, dental hygienists help reduce these risks and improve both smiles and lives.

“Hygienists are also advocates. They build strong patient relationships and help to ease dental anxiety,” Cantey said. “They serve as a vital link between the patient and the broader healthcare team.”

In every setting - whether they work in private practice, public health education, or community clinics - dental hygienists provide prevention, education and compassion.

As we celebrate National Dental Hygiene Month, the DCG salutes the hygienists in our halls and in our communities. Their impact extends far beyond the dental chair, and we are proud to train the next generation of these vital healthcare professionals.



## SNDA hosts Drill and Fill

The DCG chapter of the [Student National Dental Association](#) (SNDA) recently hosted one of its popular “Drill & Fill” study sessions. The sessions are designed to support dental students through collaborative learning and peer engagement.

Playfully named after the common dental procedure, Drill & Fill offers dental students an opportunity to review challenging material, ask questions and practice hand skills in a supportive, peer-led environment.

Kudos to SNDA for continuously promoting academic success, mentorship and community among students.





## DCG hosts CEDR annual international conference

The DCG hosted the [Consortium for Electronic Dental Records](#) (CEDR) Conference, drawing more than 150 participants for two days of innovation and collaboration in healthcare technology.

CEDR creates space for real-time exchange among experts committed to advancing digital solutions in dentistry, focusing on clinical records. Attendees joined interactive panels, participated in lectures, explored a vendor fair and listened to keynote speaker [Dr. Rafael Pacheco](#), DCG Associate Dean for Digital Technologies.

AU faculty and students brought their insight to the program. Speakers included [Dr. Kevin Frazier](#), DCG Vice Dean; [Dr. Ray Jeter](#), DCG Interim Chief Dental Officer; [Dr. Robert Kaltenbach](#), DCG Associate Professor; **Orris Knight Sims**, DCG Director of Compliance; [Dr. Jason Orlosky](#), Associate Professor in the School of Computer and Cyber Sciences; and [Alireza Taheritajar](#), Ph.D. candidate in the AU School of Computer and Cyber Sciences.

[Click here to read more and enjoy photos](#)



## SNDA and MCG offer free head and neck exams

The DCG chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) partnered with [MCG's Empower Clinic](#) to offer free head and neck exams to the CRSA community at the Byllsby Center.

[Dr. Geoffrey Thompson](#), Professor in the Department of Restorative Sciences, generously volunteered his Saturday morning so that the event could provide valuable hands-on experiences for D1, D2 and D3 dental students.

Participants conducted head and neck and intraoral exams, shared resources from Christ Community Health, and connected with physician assistants, medical students, dental students and medical residents. This rewarding collaboration marks the first of monthly sessions, with the next clinic scheduled for Oct. 18.

## Mansouri praised for compassionate approach

Third-year dental student **Dorna Mansouri** (Class of 2027) recently received enthusiastic praise from both a patient and a faculty member for her approach to patient care.

During a recent visit to the periodontics clinic, a patient specifically asked to speak with a faculty member after treatment. [Dr. Celine Cornelius Timotheus](#), Assistant Professor in the Department of Periodontics, responded to the call.



“She couldn’t stop talking about Dorna,” Cornelius said. “She felt heard, respected and well cared for. She told me Dorna’s skill, communication and kindness stood out. She even wanted to know how she could share that feedback with someone.”

Mansouri explained that she approaches each appointment with the goal of building trust. She focuses on clear communication and patient comfort before beginning any procedure.

“Our patients often walk in with anxiety or questions,” Mansouri said. “I take time to listen. If a treatment plan feels overwhelming, I break it down step by step. That way, the patient feels confident and in control.”

[Click here to read more](#)



## COP connects families to care at health expo

*(L-R): Akecia Neal, Elyse Jones, Brian Parks and Ashley Roberts (BSDH, Class of 2026)*

On Sept. 27, DCG Community Outreach joined the New Exodus Baptist Church Health Expo, connecting Hephzibah-area families to health resources and services.

COP and dental hygiene student volunteers provided oral health education to attendees, while adults and children received customized oral health essential kits to encourage healthy smiles. In addition, families seeking a dental provider were recruited as potential patients for the DCG.

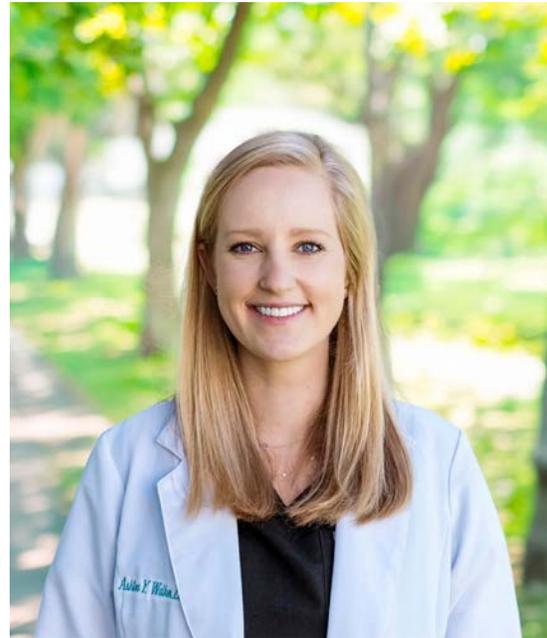
We thank our amazing team of volunteers for their commitment to service. A special thanks goes to the COP leadership team - Director Ketarya Hunt Bass, and Oral Health Outreach Coordinator Steve Huston - for their guidance and support in making this event a success.

## Double-Jag joins Savannah hometown practice

Dr. Ashton Young Walker (DMD, 2020; GPR, 2022) has joined [Medical Arts Dentistry](#) in Savannah, Georgia.

Walker brings advanced clinical training and a strong commitment to patient-centered care back to her hometown.

In addition to her professional activities, Walker is an active member of the American Dental Association, the Georgia Dental Association and the Academy of General Dentistry.



## Coffee connects DCG community with AU Police

On Oct. 1, the [AU Police](#) hosted another successful Coffee with a Cop event in the DCG first floor lobby - so successful, in fact, we ran out of coffee!

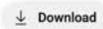
The Coffee with a Cop program is an

ongoing initiative that offers the AU community an informal opportunity to connect with campus officers over a free cup of coffee. Whether it's discussing campus concerns or simply getting to know the people who help keep AU safe, these casual meetups foster stronger relationships and open communication.

We look forward to hosting more dates in the future!



What's New at AU



## AU unveils campus upgrades for new academic year

As students, faculty, and fans return for a new academic year, AU is ushering in a new era of growth and momentum, marked by major upgrades across its campuses.

The centerpiece of the transformation is a complete renovation of Christenberry Fieldhouse on the Forest Hills Campus. The nearly 35-year-old home of Jaguar Athletics and the Department of Kinesiology has been modernized with bold new AU-themed metal paneling, a digital signage board, and upgraded facilities including a multipurpose room and the Alvin and Ivette Harris Sports Performance Center.

These enhancements are part of a broader initiative by AU's Facilities Services, which has also led exterior improvements to Annex I on the Health Sciences Campus and completed a new parking deck to improve accessibility.

[Click here to read more and enjoy photos](#)

## Jaguars: stay alert, stay connected and stay safe

Campus safety is a shared responsibility, and it starts with awareness and action. While the [AU Police Department](#) works around the clock, they can't be everywhere. That's why your voice matters. Follow the principle, "If you see something, say something."



Your attentiveness plays a critical role in keeping AU safe. Reported promptly, a small observation can make a big difference - such as an unattended bag, someone behaving unusually, or a situation escalating.

**What to Watch For:**

- Unattended packages, items in odd locations
- Suspicious behavior, attempts to access restricted areas
- Harassment, stalking, someone being followed
- Escalating arguments, confrontations
- Threats of violence posted online or via messaging

**How to Report:**

- Call Augusta University Police: 706-721-2911
- Use the [Rave Guardian App](#) to submit tips or request assistance
- Notify a resident advisor or residence hall staff
- Submit a Care Team Report: [augusta.edu/careteam](http://augusta.edu/careteam)

Speaking up doesn't mean overreacting. It means looking out for one another. By staying vigilant and reporting concerns, you help ensure AU remains a secure, welcoming environment for all.



## Welcome, DCG New Hires!

- **Alexander Gonzales** joined DCG Operations as a Dental Assistant on Sept. 2.
- **Norvinya Wade-Hevi** joined DCG Operations as a Dental Assistant on Sept. 15.
- **Calvin Cyr** joined DCG Operations as a Dental Assistant on Sept. 15.
- **Kylie Casper** joined DCG Operations as a Dental Assistant on Sept. 22.
- **Mandy Atkins** joined the DCG Business Office as a Clinics Support Specialist on Sept 22.

- **Ashlee Moore** joined Academic Administration as a Dispensary Assistant on Sept. 29.
- **Derek Wilsey** joined Academic Administration as Biomedical Equipment Service Technician on Sept. 29.
- **Shannon South** joined Business and Finance as Senior Administrator on Oct. 1.

**DCG welcomes new**



## orthodontics residency program director

The DCG recently welcomes Dr. Soumya Padala as the new Orthodontics Residency Program Director. Padala, Assistant Professor of Orthodontics, is a distinguished orthodontist and educator, known for her passionate advocacy for mental well-being within the professional sphere.

Her extensive experience in both clinical practice and academic leadership makes her an invaluable addition to the DCG faculty team.

"My aim is to cultivate an environment where everyone can thrive - not just in their profession, but in their overall well-being. This includes creating strong partnerships and addressing the critical issue of burnout in healthcare," Padala said. She is a strong proponent of interdisciplinary, patient- and family-centered care.

[Click here to read more](#)

## New business manager originates role at DCG

**Jordan Fields-Thomas** has joined the DCG as the new Business Operations Analyst for Business and Finance.

A native of Evans, GA, Jordan brings a wealth of experience from her career within the AU community.

Fields-Thomas's most recent position as Director of Business Services at the Georgia War Veterans Nursing Home gave her extensive experience in financial management, compliance and strategic planning. She was responsible for analyzing financial transactions, managing budgets and generating key reports to improve financial performance.



[Click here to read more](#)



## Former DCG staffer joins college admissions team

The DCG is pleased to announce the return of Matarsha Kendrick as the new Student Recruitment Coordinator in the Office of Students, Admissions and Alumni.

With more than 20 years of dedicated service to Augusta University, Kendrick brings a wealth of experience, exceptional administrative skills and a strong commitment to student success to her new role within the admissions team.

"I've always loved working with students, and with my background in admissions and recruitment, I aspire to help my students achieve the same career growth that the DCG has provided me, leading to a long and fulfilling career," Kendrick said.

[Click here to read more](#)

## New admin joins DCG Business and Finance

Recently, Michelle Prather joined the DCG Office of Business and Finance as the new Administrative Assistant II, after Stephanie O'Dell transferred to the Office of Faculty Affairs as Faculty Liaison.

Prather brings a comprehensive background in administrative support, event coordination and business operations to her new role.

Among her relevant experiences are 11 years working as the Event Coordinator for the University Health Care Foundation.



There, she provided administrative assistance to executives, collaborated with the Foundation Board of Directors, managed critical databases and oversaw accounts payable and receivable to support fundraising for University Hospital (now Piedmont).

[Click here to read more](#)



## Admin joins DCG Patient Services as coordinator

The Office of Patient Services welcomes Abigayle Reed, the DCG's newest administrative professional, who recently joined the department as an Office Coordinator.

Reed brings a wealth of relevant experience to Patient Services, having previously served in the Augusta University Department of Neurology for two years. During her time there, she provided administrative support, managed

physician schedules, handled patient engagement and was recognized for her meticulous attention to detail and ability to prioritize responsibilities.

Those are the skills with which she hopes to add value to the DCG: "I want to improve day-to-day processes and workflows to enhance productivity while also providing effective and logistical support to my team. This not only is an improvement for the people I work with and for but allows me to also improve my own goals of improving problem-solving skills and communication," Reed said.

[Click here to read more](#)



## Two clinical business operations managers join DCG Operations

Please welcome Dallas Swain and Sylvia Hammond to the DCG as two of our three new Clinical Business Operations Managers.

### **Dallas Swain:**

A native of Augusta, Swain brings a strong background in healthcare and business operations, with proven success leading teams and improving office efficiency. At the DCG, Swain plans to use her education and skills to support the college's operational goals.

[Click here to read more about Swain](#)

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**Sylvia Hammond:**

Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Hammond relocated to Aiken, South Carolina, a year ago. Before joining the DCG, Hammond was On-site Practice Manager at Aiken Physician Alliance. She brings with her a dedication to patient care and team collaboration.

At the DCG, she hopes to make a meaningful impact for her team and the patients they serve: “My goal is to make a difference for my team and for our patients,” she said. “Working at the DCG offers an exciting and challenging environment, and I’m looking forward to being part of a group of people who share the same vision and drive.”



[\*\*Click here to read more about Hammond\*\*](#)

## **AU alum designs new career with the DCG**

You’ve seen her smiling face behind the front desk in the lobby, now meet Raneshia Nibbs! Nibbs is the new Office Associate/Greeter for the DCG, under the Dean’s Office.

In her role, Nibbs is the first point of contact for patients and visitors, responsible for providing a warm welcome, directing inquiries and ensuring a smooth and efficient lobby experience. Her responsibilities also include supporting various administrative tasks.



[\*\*Click here to read more\*\*](#)



## Upcoming Events

[Banned Together](#), on Oct. 6 from 4-6 p.m. in UH 170. Enjoy a screening of *Banned Together*, a documentary that follows three students as they work to restore 97 books removed from their school libraries. Discussion to follow.

[Fragile Archives](#), Oct. 7 from 4-5 p.m. on the 2nd Floor of Reese Library. A panel discussion exploring 19th-century culture, politics and the historical record, with a focus on fragile archives.

[AU Brew-N-Que](#) on Oct 17 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the D. Douglas Barnard, Jr. Amphitheater on the Summerville Campus. [Tickets available now](#) for \$25. Children ages 5 and under are free and kid-friendly snacks will be available.

[Open Pedagogy Workshop](#), Oct. 20. Enjoy a lunch and learn overview of open pedagogical practices, types of assignments you can incorporate into your classes, and practical activities to help you brainstorm specific ideas. Please register [here](#).

[From The Classroom](#), Oct. 21 from Noon to 1 p.m. A conversation on what open access projects look like across the humanities, sciences and beyond. Discuss how digital technologies can be used to create and share information.

More upcoming events:

- Oct. 15: Resident Grand Rounds
- Oct. 21: [Introduction to Tinkercad](#)
- Oct. 22: [Art Remix](#)
- Oct. 27: [AU Open Enrollment Begins](#)
- Oct. 29: DCG employee Fall Frolic
- Oct. 30: DCG Flu Shot Clinic
- Oct. 30: Faculty Grand Rounds
- Dec. 2: Giving Tuesday
- Dec. 5: Georgia Board of Dentistry meeting
- Dec. 10: DCG employee Grits & Gratitude
- Dec. 17: DCG employee Forum Day



## AU employee open benefits enrollment begins Oct. 27

Start thinking about your 2026 benefits! Open Enrollment will run Oct. 27 to Nov. 7. This is your annual opportunity to review or update your benefits.

All AU employees must complete their 2026 enrollment elections and any required certifications through [OneUSG Connect Benefits](#) by Nov. 7.

## Enjoy recent DCG and AU media coverage

**Jagwire:** [Outdoor Recreation opens new climbing tower, challenge course](#)

[AU named one of state's top employers by Forbes for seventh straight year](#)

[The Graduate School expands professional development opportunities](#)

[AU Athletics moves to digital ticketing](#)



## From the Dean

One year ago, Hurricane Helene arrived with relentless force. In just a few hours, normal life fell apart. Homes took damage. Power disappeared. Trees blocked streets and neighborhoods. Classes paused. Lives turned upside down.

At the DCG, like many places across Augusta, we stood in the dark, unsure where to begin. Silence settled over our



building and worry haunted in every room.

Now, a year later, the destruction feels distant. What stays with me is not the damage, but the response. The kindness. The teamwork. The steady presence of people who chose to show up. In the days after the storm, the DCG community revealed its heart.

The Georgia Dental Association and the American Dental Association stepped forward with help when it mattered most. Students, faculty and staff found meals and a sense of security. Dental hygiene kits arrived. Emergency grants followed. Messages of support reminded us we belonged to something larger.

Local restaurants brought comfort through warm food and familiar faces. [Fat Man's Café](#), [Sno-Cap Drive-In](#), [Papa John's](#), [Chick-fil-A](#), [Bojangles](#), Jason's Deli and others served without hesitation. Even as their own teams faced losses, they found a way to feed us—hundreds of meals, every day. They gave more than food. They gave relief, connection and a small sense of normal.

DCG leadership moved quickly, guided by compassion. Their focus stayed on people, not buildings. They reached out to alumni. They partnered with churches and local groups. Supplies arrived. Support followed.

Our Admin Army stepped into action with quiet strength. Meals appeared. Resources found their place. Needs were met before they were spoken aloud. I saw your care in motion, and I carry that with me still.

President Russell Keen and First Lady Karen Keen brought steady leadership and presence. Water, food and essential supplies flowed into the hands that needed them. Their visit on our first day back reminded us that DCG does not stand alone. We are part of something greater.

Now, as I reflect on this anniversary, I don't just see recovery. I see resilience. I see a community grounded in compassion. I see what becomes possible when we face hardship together.

To every person, partner, and organization who stood beside DCG this past year - thank you. Your generosity carried us through the storm.





This email was sent to the Dental College of Georgia faculty, staff and students.  
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