

What one student has to say about the Mentor Program

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You know, it seems like a few days ago I was up in lab 305 pouring up this alginate impression in gypsum stone and my cast was just not working out. I was getting voids and bubbles. I would try to fill the holes with this slurry mix of stone, but nothing worked. I was so frustrated I looked around me and thought, "What AM I doing?! Why am I doing this?! This was NOT in the brochure!" I was kind of disillusioned with my chosen field.

A few days later I attended my first mentorship dinner and I got seated next to this guy named Dr. Moser. And the first thing he asked me was, "What do you like best about dentistry." After 305 I had nothing to say, I just looked at him with a blank face and gave him the dental student mantra. Which as you know is, "*I like working with people.*" Yeah, you know the one.

I don't think he believed me, but we kept talking and got to know a little bit about each other. And soon I was telling about what was really going through my mind. I told him it wasn't really what I expected and I was having trouble in a few areas. I complained about all the work we had, all the projects, the deadlines, everything. But he sat there and listened as if I was the first person and the only one going through the rigors of the first two years. He's been there, done that, He knows how difficult it was. But he sat and listened and even told me what he got in biochem and then I didn't feel too bad. Then he told me what he got in neuroanatomy and then I felt kinda stupid.

After that first mentorship meeting my attitude changed. From that first day that I met Dr. Moser till today I have become much more excited about dentistry because he has let me into his life and has shown me what awaits me 8 months from now. (Hopefully just 8 months).

This man has taken me and his other protégés out to dinner an umpteen number of times and we have gotten to know each other as friends and colleagues in addition to the mentor student relationship. We discuss sports, movies, music, women, the packers and sometimes even dentistry.

We have gone on bike rides together, we did the Miller Ride for the Arts, we did Al's run, the Trek 100, we have been to hockey games, and we've been to basketball games.

I have been to his practice a number of times. And he has taken time out to explain the business side of dentistry and even discussed investment strategies for my future. He has taught me to be cognizant of how much material I am using in school so I get in the habit of controlling my overhead from the very beginning. I have even assisted him on a number of occasions and he continues to teach even with his patient in the chair. This man loves to teach and share his knowledge and it is evident every time we meet.

I have attended every annual session of the GMDA and WDA with him and he has instilled in me an understanding of the importance and power of organized dentistry. The highlight was probably when he used his frequent flyer miles to fly all his protégés down to Washington DC for the annual ADA Session. That was the first time I witnessed how much dentistry had to offer and what a great profession it was that I was lucky enough to be part of.

One of the reasons Dr. Moser is such a great mentor is because he had a great man guiding him when he was just starting out. His mentor is Dr. Brickbauer, class of 1930. It is such a delight talking to this man because he has seen dentistry change over some many decades. He was a great mentor to Dr. Moser and I just hope I will be half as great a teacher as these two men have been.

I am going to be the first dentist in my family. So there is no one I can talk to about 'glass ionomer cements' or polyvinylsiloxane.' So the simple things like a phone call from Dr. Moser asking us how things are going, or even just meeting for dinner once in while to touch a base really means a lot. We bounce ideas off each other and he treats me like a colleague, which is really nice.

It is such a great tradition in dentistry where we learn from those who have gone before us. And I urge all of you to exploit that because not many other professions have that luxury. I sincerely hope that all of you have the kind of experience I am having and I know I will continue to have for a long time.

I wish the mentors and the protégés best of luck and have a good time because there is so much you can learn from each other. Thank you.