

Fast Forward

a college update from **A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H.**
Dean, UF College of Dentistry



To: UF College of Dentistry,

I hope that everyone is enjoying the cooler fall weather, or should I say “slightly cooler” fall weather? It has been a long, humid summer but I know I will appreciate living in the deep south when my friends and former colleagues in the Washington, D.C., area are shoveling snow off their driveways while I am adding more ice to my tea.

One of the hallmarks of fall for our college is Dental Fall Weekend, when we welcome alumni and friends back to our campus. This year’s alumni weekend coincided with UF’s Homecoming on November 6 and 7. The college’s Office of Development & Alumni Affairs coordinates several events designed to update alumni leadership about accomplishments and future plans for the college, a continuing education course, tour of the dental tower, DMD class reunions, and the signature event – the UF football game preceded by a tailgate with the Psi Omega dental fraternity.

These events are supported by many others in the college. I want to thank Dr. Matt Dennis and the Office of Continuing Dental Education for presenting the annual continuing education course. The UFCD Dental Ambassadors supported all of the events and I can’t thank them enough for their professionalism and positive energy as they helped host our alumni, family and friends during the weekend. I also appreciate Dr. Nini Sposetti and Dental Ambassadors for joining me on Saturday morning as I led a group of alumni for a tour of the dental tower – it was great to have an expert at my side who knows all of the history and nuances of the building and the perspective of students who ‘live and work’ in the building.

Friday night DMD classmates and their families gathered at the historic UF President’s house to celebrated milestone reunions for the classes of 1985, 1990, 2005 and 2010. More than 100 people



attended the reunions and planning is already underway for 2016 reunions of the classes of 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011.

The college reserves a block of seats at the football game for DFW, so a nice crowd of 200 were able to enjoy the UF win over Vanderbilt, surely the highlight of the weekend for many attendees.

Another important event coordinated by development and staff with support of our Dental Ambassadors was the annual phone Thank-a-thon. On November 13, 14 hardworking and dedicated dental students took their time to gather in a room at the UF Foundation where they spent the evening making phone calls to 350 alumni and friends who gave to the Academy of Alumni & Friends Annual Fund during the 2014-15 fiscal year. The fund is used to support student activities, travel, scholarships, tutoring and other aspects of student life, and I have no doubt that the alumni really appreciated hearing directly from current students. I certainly appreciated the event and the ongoing support the dean's office receives from the ambassadors.

The first 10 months of my service with the college was focused on preparing for accreditation, and I am really enjoying having the time to meet and get to know a growing number of our college's alumni and friends. Without a doubt, the spirit of this college becomes embedded in our alumni. They are proud to be Gator Dentists and certainly continue to exemplify the excellence of this school during the rest of their career. During the next 12 months I will be traveling to many areas of the state and other parts of the country to meet more alumni, share information about the college, and also listen to their input about how we can continue to refine and improve in all areas of our mission.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, I want to share my thanks for the welcome my family and I have received from the Gator Dental Nation. It was September 25, 2014, that the announcement was made that I would be joining the college as dean – I can't believe that it has been more than a year. It has been a busy time and we have accomplished a great deal, individually and as a team, and I look forward to sharing future successes with you all.

My best wishes to everyone for a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Kind regards,
Dean Isabel Garcia



**For more photos of
2015 Dental Fall Weekend,
visit the gallery on our website.**

