

Potential Mentors 2026-2027

The following table contains information from previous year's mentor list as well as recently updated information provided by faculties – empty cells in columns 1-4 likely indicate that information was not yet provided by faculties in our recent survey at the time of creating this table (Mar 9, 2026):

Name, Title, Department Email, and Lab website (if provided)	Brief research summary/interests	Keywords about research	Available to serve as a mentor for the 2025-2026 year?	Previous or current fellows
Kamal Al-Eryani, DDS, PhD Oral Medicine Orofacial Pain Chief, Sol Silverman Oral Medicine Clinic Kamal.Al-eryani@ucsf.edu	Dr. Kamal Al-Eryani focuses his research on understanding the causes and progression of oral squamous cell carcinoma and orofacial neuropathic pain. His work aims to improve diagnosis and develop more effective treatments for these conditions.			Khushboo Gupta, Dania Alkoraishi
Sepideh Banava, DDS MSc MBA MPH Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences sepideh.banava@ucsf.edu			yes	Eric Lin, Madalyn Phan
Jeff Bush, PhD Associate Professor, Department of Cell & Tissue Biology jeffrey.bush@ucsf.edu bush.ucsf.edu	Our lab studies mammalian morphogenesis, with a particular focus on craniofacial development. Projects include the study of gene function relating to craniofacial structural birth defects.	development, morphogenesis, signaling, mouse, genetics, trachea, craniofacial, lip, palate, cleft	Yes	Alina Hyunh, Jothan Sadan
Benjamin W. Chaffee, DDS, MPH, PhD Associate Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences	Early childhood caries, oral health disparities, caries management by risk assessment, adolescent tobacco use, epidemiology and population health		yes	Dylan Holder

benjamin.chaffee@ucsf.edu				
Wenhan Chang, PhD Professor, Department of Medicine wenhan.chang@ucsf.edu	My lab investigates perform translational research to understand the molecular actions of Ca ²⁺ and its receptor (CaSR) in mediating (1) parathyroid gland functions; (2) skeletal development and maintenance; and (3) induction of dementia using transgenic mouse models, aiming to develop new therapies by targeting this receptor to treat aging-related hyperparathyroidism, osteoporosis, bone fractures, and cognitive declines.	hyperparathyroidism, osteoporosis, bone fracture repair, calcium-sensing receptor, CaSR, dementia, aging diseases, animal models.	Yes	
Jing Cheng, MD, PhD, MS Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences jing.cheng@ucsf.edu	Epidemiology, genetic and environment association studies, and causal inference in oral health			Soo Lee
Kelsey Collins, PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery kelsey.collins@ucsf.edu	Delineate fat-cartilage signals that contribute to osteoarthritis susceptibility and pain to generate a new class of regenerative medicine-based therapies.			Celine Ngo, Mansi Shah
Stephen "Thad" Connelly DDS, MD, PhD, FACS HS Clinical Instructor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon stephen.connelly@ucsf.edu	Temporomandibular joint surgery, botox for tmj/facial pain, advanced tmj imaging, sleep apnea, oral cancer, facial pain			
Elizabeth Eve			Possibly in the future	Chung-Wei Jasmine Chien

Assistant Health Sciences Clinical Professor, Division of Orthodontics Elizabeth.eve@ucsf.edu				
Stuart Gansky, MS, DrPH Professor, Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences stuart.gansky@ucsf.edu	disparities; health equity and health policy; health disparity measurement; health literacy; behavioral economics; precision population health; biostatistics; data science		yes	Kathy Tran
Akshay Govind, DMD, MD, MPH Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Akshay.govind@ucsf.edu	Benign pathology, dentoalveolar surgery, maxillofacial trauma, neurosensory recovery and repair, surgical education, temporomandibular joint disorders			Isabelle Lao-Ngo
Rishi Jay Gupta, DDS, MD, MBA Staff Surgeon/Assistant Professor Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery rigupta@ucsf.edu	Research related to OSA and TMD	OSA, TMD, Reconstruction	Yes	
Sarah Knox Professor, Cell and Tissue Biology Sarah.Knox@ucsf.edu	The Knox Lab studies the cellular and molecular mechanisms that regulate epithelial organ development and regeneration, particularly in organs such as salivary glands, lacrimal glands, pancreas, prostate, and the eye. Their research focuses on how interactions between nerves, immune cells, and epithelial stem cells control branching morphogenesis, stem cell fate, and tissue repair.		yes	Alyssa Kong, Devansh Sapovadia

<p>Stefan Habelitz, PhD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences</p> <p>stefan.habelitz@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Understanding biomineralization in dentin and enamel. My lab performs in vitro studies on collagen and amelogenin proteins and their ability to control mineral formation. Current applications involve repair of dentin caries through remineralization.</p>	<p>Biomineralization, self-assembly, polymer-induced liquid precursor method.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Deborah Tan, Hannah Mora</p>
<p>Phillip Harrison, DDS, MD</p> <p>Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery</p> <p>Phillip.harrison@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Benign pathology, dentoalveolar surgery, malignant pathology, maxillofacial trauma, reconstruction</p>			
<p>Sunita Ho, MS, PhD</p> <p>Professor, Division of Biomaterials and Bioengineering Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences</p> <p>sunita.ho@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Temporomandibular Joint and Jaw biomechanics in patients with TMJ disorders, Oral Surgery and Orthopedics, Schools of Dentistry and Medicine. Acquired skill set - MRI and X-ray CT, Ultrasound, Human motion capture, correlate measurements with physicochemical properties of the temporomandibular discs.</p>			
<p>Erica J. Hutchins, PhD</p> <p>Assistant Professor, Department of Cell & Tissue Biology</p> <p>erica.hutchins@ucsf.edu www.devbiorna.com</p>	<p>The goal of my lab is to parse how post-transcriptional regulation controls developmental pluripotency and cell fate decisions in vivo, using vertebrate neural crest as a model and through the lens of craniofacial development.</p> <p>Current research projects explore how RNA-binding proteins and their targets control cranial neural crest epithelial-to-mesenchymal transition and cell migration during early embryonic development.</p>	<p>Neural crest, developmental biology, chick embryology</p>	<p>Possibly in the future</p>	
<p>Kristin Hoeft</p> <p>Associate Professor, Preventive & Restor Dent Sci</p>	<p>Dr. Kristin Hoeft conducts research focused on oral health literacy, health education, and reducing children's oral health disparities,</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>Lia Inadomi</p>

Kristin.Hoeft@ucsf.edu	<p>particularly in underserved communities. Her work aims to improve access to effective home oral hygiene and dental care by implementing evidence-based practices in community settings.</p>			
<p>Christine (Yeumin) Hong, DMD, MS</p> <p>Associate Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences, Division of Orthodontics</p> <p>Yeumin.Hong@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Orthodontic research lab, interested in investigating the epigenetics that regulate cartilage and bone development.</p> <p>Current ongoing projects include characterizing an epigenetic signaling pathway that regulates cartilage growth, and studying how specific genes regulate orthodontic palatal expanders.</p>	<p>Chondrocytes Osteocytes Palatal expansion Epigenetics</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Jey Kim, Josh Chen</p>
<p>Cristin Kearns DDS, MBA</p> <p>Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences</p> <p>cristin.kearns@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Sugar industry influence on public health research and policy</p>			
<p>Brent Lin, DMD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences</p> <p>linb@dentistry.ucsf.edu</p>		<p>Clinical Research, Pediatric, Public Health.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Ricardo Lugo, DDS, MD</p> <p>Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery</p> <p>Ricardo.lugo@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Benign pathology, dentoalveolar surgery, malignant pathology, maxillofacial trauma, reconstruction, simulation teaching, surgical education, social determinants of health, healthcare workforce disparities.</p>			<p>Ricardo Alcantar</p>

<p>Ralph Marcucio, PhD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Orthopedic Surgery</p> <p>ralph.marcucio@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Cell and tissue interactions that regulate stem cell differentiation during skeletal development and repair</p>			
<p>Elizabeth Mertz, PhD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences</p> <p>elizabeth.mertz@ucsf.edu healthforce.ucsf.edu</p>	<p>At Healthforce Center, we believe that people are the most important element in health care. Our mission is to equip people with the workforce knowledge, leadership skills, and network connections to create a collective force for health, equity, and action. We envision an effective and responsive health care ecosystem that is driving progress toward more equitable health outcomes for all. We provide research, programming, consulting, and evaluation in support of these goals.</p>	<p>health workforce, health quality and equity, delivery system design</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Lia Inadomi, Roaa Saadeh, Erica Okine</p>
<p>Flora (Fatemeh) Momen-Heravi, DDS, PhD, MPH, MS</p> <p>Professor and Division Chief of Periodontology, Department of Orofacial Sciences, UCSF</p> <p>Fatemeh.MomenHeravi@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Flora (Fatemeh) Momen-Heravi leads a research program focused on cancer biology, oral immunology, and periodontal disease, studying how immune cells and the tumor microenvironment interact to drive inflammation and cancer progression. Her lab uses genomic technologies, engineered exosomes, and precision therapeutics to identify biomarkers and develop targeted treatments for cancer and inflammatory diseases.</p>		<p>yes</p>	<p>Danial Pirooz</p>
<p>Yukiko Nakano</p> <p>Associate Professor, Orofacial Sciences</p> <p>Yukiko.Nakano@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Dr. Nakano studies the molecular and cellular mechanisms that regulate the formation and mineralization of bone, dentin, and enamel. Her research investigates how genetic factors, signaling pathways, and microRNAs influence craniofacial mineralization and contribute to defects in mineralized tissues</p>		<p>Yes</p>	<p>Rozana Shemirani, Siyoon Lee</p>

<p>Snehlata Oberoi, DDS</p> <p>Professor of Clinical Orofacial Sciences, Department of Orofacial Sciences</p> <p>sneha.oberoi@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Clinical research</p>	<p>CBCT, cleft lip and palate, craniofacial, orthodontic treatment</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Iris Lai, Elena Sacchetti</p>
<p>Joel Palefsky, MD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Medicine</p> <p>joel.palefsky@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>Virology: papillomaviruses and Epstein Barr virus</p>			<p>Olakunle Ogunbayo</p>
<p>Licia Selleri</p> <p>Professor Program in Craniofacial Biology</p> <p>licia.selleri@ucsf.edu</p>	<p>the genetic and regulatory mechanisms that control tissue patterning during embryonic development and evolution, particularly in cranial and limb morphogenesis. Using mouse and other animal models, the research focuses on identifying genes and regulatory networks such as the Pbx transcription factor family that influence developmental processes, morphological variation, and congenital diseases.</p>			<p>Tony Qu, Keira Nguyen</p>
<p>Richard Schneider, PhD</p> <p>Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery</p> <p>rich.schneider@ucsf.edu https://orthosurgery.ucsf.edu/research/laboratories/Schneider-Lab-at-UCSF</p>	<p>Our lab is focused on understanding how individual components of the craniofacial complex such as bones, cartilages, muscles, and tendons achieve their proper size, shape, and functional integration during development and evolution.</p>	<p>neural crest biology; craniofacial development; avian model systems</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Emily Yang, Yilin Piao</p>
<p>Jean Star, DDS, MPH</p> <p>Assistant Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences, Division of Pediatric Dentistry</p>	<p>My research focuses at the intersection of pediatric dentistry and public health. Overarching aims include innovating pediatric dental care delivery to improve access to care and enhance oral health outcomes for children from undeserved</p>	<p>Caries, pediatric dentistry, health disparities.</p>	<p>Likely Yes</p>	<p>Kimia Tavassoli</p>

jean.star@ucsf.edu	groups such as those with special health care needs, low socioeconomic status and children with a history of severe early childhood caries.			
Sharof Tugizov, PhD Professor, Department of Medicine sharof.tugizov@ucsf.edu	HIV and HPV interaction with oral mucosal epithelium			
Torsten Wittmann, PhD Professor, Department of Cell & Tissue Biology Torsten.Wittmann@ucsf.edu	Role of local cytoskeleton control in cell dynamics and neuronal morphogenesis using optogenetics and live cell microscopy			
Nathan Young, PhD Department of Orthopaedic Surgery nathan.young@ucsf.edu	Dr. Nathan M. Young studies phenomic variation in craniofacial and skeletal development using 3D medical imaging and geometric morphometrics. His research integrates evolutionary developmental biology with clinical applications to better understand craniofacial anomalies, including cleft lip development and brain–face interactions.			Susi Le, Iris Lai
Yan Zhang, PhD Department of Orofacial Sciences yan.zhang2@ucsf.edu	transcriptional regulatory mechanisms that guide dental epithelial cells to differentiate into ameloblasts responsible for enamel formation. It also examines how these cells transition into junctional epithelial cells and their role in protecting the gingival sulcus through innate immune responses against periodontal pathogens.			Alexia Campbell, Charles Met
Apoena Ribeiro, DDS,MSc, PhD Apoena.ribeiro@ucsf.edu	Pediatrics research and oral microbiome.			

Other Faculties who have previously mentored students:

- Ophir Klein, MD, PhD
 - o Previous/current fellow(s): Alyssa Kong
- Diana Nguyen, DDS
 - o Previous/current fellow(s): Madalyn Phan