

# AO Articulator

## The student publication

### \*Chapter Spotlight\*

### Running Towards Awareness

Michael Gersten  
Nova Southeastern University

This has been a momentous year for our **Nova Southeastern University** Alpha Omega Chapter. We reached 100 members, our largest yet, and had some really great events. We started the year off with our traditional AO Olympics, and recently concluded with our formal spring banquet and new member initiation. In between we held several Lunch-and-Learns, had the privilege of having Dr. Howard Farran speak at NSU, and several other social events. However, the community service event **we are most proud of establishing** this year is our **Oral Cancer Awareness 5K Run and Walk-a-thon!**



Oral cancer survivor,  
Uyen Nguyen

The idea and momentum for the event came from our own past NSU AO Chapter President and third year dental student, **Uyen Nguyen**. Early in the 2012-2013 school year she began to investigate a pain in her upper right palate. After getting a biopsy, it was **diagnosed as a stage two head and neck cancer** called **Central Mucoepidermoid Carcinoma**. Despite the diagnosis Uyen remained positive and continued to stay active both in clinic and with AO.

Thanks to a collaborative initiative from our NSU faculty and other doctors, Uyen was able to arrange the surgery around her school schedule. Due to the surgery and radiation therapy, Uyen lost a lot of weight while maintaining a liquid diet for months because of the ulcers developing in her mouth. Before the surgery I spoke to Uyen and we realized that there was a lack of oral cancer awareness in the community and we began brainstorming ideas.



ORAL CANCER  
RUN/ WALK-A-THON  
CENTRAL BROWARD  
REGIONAL PARK  
FEBRUARY 23  
2013

Since we live in sunny South Florida, we decided a 5K would be a great idea since it can be held almost anytime during the year. Uyen teamed up with the **Truth Outreach Project**, a non-profit organization that is devoted to helping the public become more aware of oral cancer, and their president, one of our dental

faculty at Nova. Together they began to organize the many logistical aspects of the 5K. We soon realized exactly how much work was involved, but Uyen's dedication and passion for the mission helped

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Immediate Past President Michael Spector (center) pictured with **AO's 2013 International Student Representatives** Jeremiah Granados (left) and Jessica Boudaie (right)



Shout out to our 2013 grads!  
Congrats! You made it!

# EUROTRIP : Dental Edition

Monica Hall and Elena Petrova (University at Michigan, Chi Chapter)

It has been a while since the Chi chapter had students participate in the **Alpha Omega International Externship Program**. As D3 students, we were eligible and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to apply. **Dr. Luria**, the Chairperson of the AO Externship Committee and an active member of the Detroit Alumni Chapter, spoke at our January 2012 Lunch & Learn about the program. Months later we were ecstatic to learn that our applications had been **accepted** to participate in the **London externship**, led by **Dr. Mervyn Druian**!

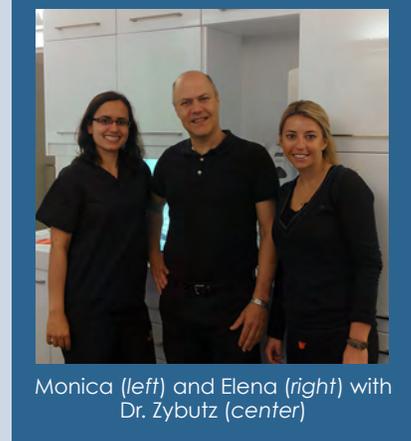
On April 19<sup>th</sup>, we packed our luggage and arrived at the Metro Airport.

On Saturday afternoon, we arrived at the International Hall at the University of London, our home for the next 10 days. Most of the dental offices we visited were just a short ride away on the London Underground. We quickly became well-seasoned metro riders.

Dr. Druian's wonderful administrative assistant, **Leslie**, set up an individual schedule for us. Each day we traveled to different specialty clinics. **Dr. Jeremy Kaufman** welcomed us to his pediatric practice in a predominantly Jewish area on the north side of London. It was interesting to observe how Dr. Kaufman managed children during the treatment. He was very creative in explaining the procedures and making kids comfortable in the chair.

**Professor Andrew Eder**, a private-practice prosthodontist and a full-time faculty member at the UCL Eastman Dental Institute, was very meticulous and organized. We were pleasantly surprised to recognize many of the brands of dental materials and equipment, realizing American and British dentists utilize many similar treatment approaches.

**Dr. Michael Sultan's** practice was very tech savvy and a great place to learn most modern endodontic techniques while observing the treatment through the intraoral camera. He made sure that all of his patients were comfortable during the root canal procedures by providing them with a good explanation of each step and answering all of their questions before starting the treatment. Of course, the super cool video display glasses were a great help!



Monica (left) and Elena (right) with Dr. Zybutz (center)

We also visited **Dr. Michael Zybutz**, an American trained periodontist. He started out by quizzing us about nasal-antral communication repairs and atraumatic extractions. Being true Michigan ambassadors, we answered all of his questions correctly!!! We learned about Dr. Zybutz's personal invention, PANDA, a computer program that is a unique way to write detailed electronic records in a timely manner.

Dr. Druian and **Dr. Ken Spektor's** cosmetic dentistry office was a modern and welcoming facility. The full mouth reconstruction cases we observed were very impressive. One of Dr. Druian's patients had flown in for her appointment from another country, and we enjoyed seeing how happy she was when Dr. Druian and his assistant, Nina, showed her how her smile would look after placing veneers. The patient did not hesitate to schedule her next appointment! To produce such fine outcomes as we saw, it takes a skilled clinician and a highly qualified laboratory.

The private practices we visited in London were a good representation of exclusive 'high-end' dentistry in the UK. **Dr. Nigel Pitts**, world-renowned cariologist at the University of London, whom we were able to meet, familiarized us with the National Health Services clinics.

**In the evenings we explored the city**, had tea and crumpets, and shopped at Harrods. After our externship was over, we traveled British sites like Stonehenge, Stratford, Oxford and Bath. The Eurostar train conveniently went from England to France, so we also visited Paris for a couple days. Our trip was a perfect blend of education and exploration, and we appreciate the efforts put forth by AO alums to make this possible.

To help promote AO externships, **our student chapter has decided to gift \$100 to each student who participates in the program**. We hope future AO students seize this opportunity, because this experience has truly been one of the most memorable parts of our dental education.



Dr. Spektor (left), Monica, Elena, Nina, and Dr. Druian (right) representing AO



Monica and Elena in front of Big Ben

# AO's Mentoring Program Debut

Virginie Forestier  
AO Association Manager

**In January 2013, Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity reached out to 22 member dentists and students who would be interested in participating in a beta test for the Alpha Omega Mentorship Program.**

The beta test was to set up 11 mentor/mentee teams, follow them for 3 months as they built a relationship with one another, and gather some feedback in order to implement this program on a much larger scale as a part of Alpha Omega's member benefits. Mentors received a mentee inquiry sheet filled out by their mentees to get a better impression of their mentee's interests and relationship expectations before initiating contact.

Mentors and mentees either chatted on the phone, Skyped, or met in person depending on geographical circumstances. **Conversations** ranged from family, education, involvement in Alpha Omega, to dental procedures, techniques, practice management, and the future of dentistry. Once the mentoring relationships began to develop, the office received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the beta test teams.

**Glendale Lim**, a first year student at the University of Michigan, commented on her mentor: "I truly enjoyed talking to **Dr. Larry Rotman** today. He was so kind and humorous and very willing to help me to explore my profession! Dr. Rotman shared his personal experience in dentistry. I can really feel his passion for the profession."

**Dr. Susan Rifkin**, a member dentist from Atlanta, described her conversation with student **Stephen Bench**: "We had a lengthy discussion about everything he wanted to know: advantages or disadvantages of

going directly into practice or to apply for a general practice residency, where to buy supplies, what labs to use, and more! Stephen had very intuitive questions."

Montreal dentist member and past international president **Dr. Michael Tenenbaum**, said of his mentor/mentee relationship with student **Shelly Zeituni** from Israel: "It is both humbling and educational to see the challenges younger members face today and hopefully from the experience of older members, these challenges can be lessened." Some mentees also had the opportunity to shadow their mentors.

As we neared the end of the Beta program, feedback was also gathered for the **future implementation of this mentoring program**. The office is now in the process of reviewing this mentoring program beta test, and brainstorming on the future steps to take in order to run it effectively on a much larger scale. Various suggestions included setting up a website page to match mentors and mentees not only geographically but rather by specialty and interest; broadening the mentorship program so that the mentor/mentee relationship could involve not only practicing dentists and students but other types of mentor/mentee relationships.

As for the 22 participants, the goal was for them to stay in touch and keep their relationship thriving once the beta test ended, and that seems to be the case! We are excited about the future of this program, and hope that our members will stay tuned and get involved in it as soon as we implement it. **It truly is a valuable opportunity for mentors and mentees to learn from each other and grow together as a team and as a part of the Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity family.**

## Doing something fun or interesting in your chapter?

We want **YOU** to be featured in the Fall Edition of the AO Articulator!

Send an article to the Articulator Editor, Sarah Kaplan.

Contact information:  
[sarahkap@buffalo.edu](mailto:sarahkap@buffalo.edu)

# TRANSITIONS : From 'Student' to 'Young Adult'

Shawn Groyeski, DMD (Boston University, Class of 2012)

**Grand AOventure 2012 was my fourth consecutive convention.** At each local and international Alpha Omega event I have attended over the years, I have had the pleasure of interacting with countless dedicated alumni. These role models whom I, and many others, have come to love as part of the AO family, have reached out to me and are eager - and willing - to share their story of how they developed into the seasoned dentists they are today. Each has provided me with immeasurable advice, mentorship, and networking skill.

**I graduated this past May and moved to Chicago to partake in a one-year general practice residency program at Loyola University Medical Center.** Having been an active frater throughout dental school, and having served as the *Beta Epsilon* chapter President, International Student Editor, and International Student Representative, I believed I had an obligation to continue my involvement in the fraternity as a 'Young Alumni' member. I joined the AO board of the Illinois Alumni Chapter, participated in the Alumni Leadership Conference in October, and recently, attended the annual convention.

**In Scottsdale this past December, I saw old friends and made new ones** – which seems to happen almost instantly at AO gatherings. While technically still a 'student' during my residency, I found myself again reaching out to various alumni, this time for advice on seeking associateship opportunities, as my residency concludes at the end of June.

**Nevertheless, what truly made this convention unlike previous ones was the fact that I was looked upon as an 'alumni', both by fellow alumni members, but importantly, from the dental students.** While I am not all that far removed from dental student life, the students looked up to me as one of the aforementioned role models. Many inquired about advice on several topics concerning balancing a dental school curriculum, patient management and treatment, post-doctoral programs including the application and interview process, and continuing involvement in the fraternity beyond a local level – to name just a few. At previous conventions, I was fortunate to have many individuals provide such mentorship to me.

Passionate about the following quote from an inspiring movie, **"when someone does you a big favor, don't pay it back...pay it forward,"** I intend to do just that. I am honored to be looked upon as a role model, and whatever knowledge and wisdom I have acquired thus far in my young career, I hope to pass along to countless others as a Young Alumni: **"You may be only one person in this world, but to one person at one time, you are the world."**

*Shawn Groyeski will complete his one-year general practice residency at Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago, Illinois in June 2013. Groyeski graduated from Boston University in 2012.*

## Paying *It Forward* continued

us put together a huge group of volunteers. We soon had the support of local and national sponsors, including dental companies, restaurants, and stores, and began to get the word out to the community about **free oral cancer screenings** which were to be done by NSU faculty and residents.



5K Participants at the starting line.  
Photo by Dipti Kumar

**We held the race at a local park in late February.** The event was a huge success and included over 200 participants and raised almost five thousand dollars. Next year we hope to increase the size of the event and especially our reach in the community. **Uyen continues to be an inspiration and hero for all us, and this event could not have been possible without her tremendous work!**



NSU faculty provides free oral cancer screenings to 5K race participants. Photo by Dipti Kumar

# What was your favorite part of AO 2012 Convention in Scottsdale, AZ?



AO Student Members at the AO New Years Eve Hoedown



AO Student Convention Attendees

Every AO member that we met greeted us with a smile, asked thoughtful questions, and just **made us instantly feel like family**. I was so pleased to share my first convention with such an **awesome** group of students who I am happy to now call my friends. - *Nathan Light (McGill)*



Student volunteers at the GOHI event on December 25, 2012.

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**Student Web Site:**  
<http://www.ao.org/ao-students>

Convention was **interesting and intellectually stirring**, yet whimsical, bright, and all together a **total pleasure**. Fraters gather from all over the world, and everyone shares the feeling of **belonging to something utterly unique**. - *Shelly Zeituni (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem)*

AO means the world to me because in 1953 the members of **AO founded our school and this year we are celebrating 60 years of excellence!** - *Victoria Yaffe (Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem)*

This year, I participated in the **Global Oral Health Initiative (GOHI) project**. We spent Christmas Day at the Salvation Army serving hot meals and giving gifts to low-income families. Not only were we able to **serve the community**, but it was also a wonderful time for Alpha Omegas to bond with one another. It was a very **heart-warming and rewarding** experience. - *Amy Bastawros (Univ. of Louisville)*



Jeremiah Granados and wife (left) and Nathan Light, wife and child (right)



AO volunteers at the GOHI event on December 25, 2012.

The **camaraderie** among fraters of all religions, ethnicities and backgrounds was exemplified at Shabbat dinner and it became a **signature moment** for me. - *Ebbie Boutehsaz (Buffalo)*

Throughout the week, I attended **business meetings, continuing education lectures, dinners**, and **foundation events**. It was a wonderful experience and gave me a further appreciation for Alpha Omega. - *Faryn Berger (Univ. of Toronto)*

## Community Service Corner

On January 8, 2013, twenty members of the 2016 Pledge Class at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine visited a local nursing home in Washington Heights, New York City. For an afternoon, the students helped the staff of the nursing with one of their more time consuming projects of the year - changing holiday decorations after the Christmas season. **Decorating the main hall** of the center is an important part of the monthly responsibilities, providing the residents with visual stimulation and something to look forward to every few weeks. The staff often spends four days changing decorations after the holiday. This year, Eta Chapter pledge students relieved them of these duties and completed the task in just over **two hours**. The staff was **incredibly appreciative**. Students also interacted with members of the home, playing Bingo and other board games. **Everyone had a wonderful experience.** - *Gregori Gelfand (Columbia University)*

Does your chapter have a Facebook group?

Add Heidi Weber  
(AO Executive Director)