Potential Mentors 2025-2026

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 (Jan 9, 2025):

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**
Tamara Alliston, PhD Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery tamara.alliston@ucsf.edu	Molecular pathways controlling mesenchymal stem cell differentiation, how these pathways coordinate with physical cues to influence mechanical integrity of normal skeletal tissue, and how they can be harnessed to repair tissue damaged in degenerative skeletal disease			
Sepideh Banava, DDS MSc MBA MPH Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences sepideh.banava@ucsf.edu				Eric Lin
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	Early childhood caries, oral health disparities, caries management by risk assessment, adolescent tobacco use, epidemiology and population health			Dylan Holder

Associate Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences 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 Ca2+ 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			
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
Stephen "Thad" Connelly DDS,MD,PhD,FACS HS Clinical Instructor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon stephen.connelly@ucsf.edu	Tempormandibular joint surgery, botox for tmj/facial pain, advanced tmj imaging, sleep apnea, oral cancer, facial pain			

Elizabeth Eve Assistant Health Sciences Clinical Professor, Division of Orthodontics Elizabeth.eve@ucsf.edu			Possibly in the future	Chung-Wei Jasmine Chien
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			
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 rjgupta@ucsf.edu	Research related to OSA and TMD	OSA, TMD, Reconstruction	Yes	
Stefan Habelitz, PhD Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences stefan.habelitz@ucsf.edu	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.	Biomineralization, self-assembly, polymer-induced liquid precursor method.	Yes	Deborah Tan, Hannah Mora

Phillip Harrison, DDS, MD Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Phillip.harrison@ucsf.edu	Benign pathology, dentoalveolar surgery, malignant pathology, maxillofacial trauma, reconstruction			
Sunita Ho, MS, PhD Professor, Division of Biomaterials and Bioengineering Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences sunita.ho@ucsf.edu	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.			
Erica J. Hutchins, PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Cell & Tissue Biology erica.hutchins@ucsf.edu www.devbiorna.com	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. 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.	Neural crest, developmental biology, chick embryology	Possibly in the future	
Christine (Yeumin) Hong, DMD, MS Associate Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences, Division of Orthodontics Yeumin.Hong@ucsf.edu	Orthodontic research lab, interested in investigating the epigenetics that regulate cartilage and bone development. Current ongoing projects include characterizing an epigenetic signaling pathway that regulates cartilage growth, and studying how specific genes regulate orthodontic palatal expanders.	Chondrocytes Osteocytes Palatal expansion Epigenetics	Yes	Jey Kim

Cristin Kearns DDS, MBA Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive and Restorative Dental Sciences cristin.kearns@ucsf.edu	Sugar industry influence on public health research and policy			
Matthew Kutys PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Cell and Tissue Biology Matthew.kutys@ucsf.edu kutyslab.org	Modeling human developmental processes in engineered systems	organ-on-chip, morphogenesis, vasculature, cell adhesion	Yes	Tara Boroumand
Brent Lin, DMD Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences linb@dentistry.ucsf.edu		Clinical Research, Pediatric, Public Health.	Yes	
Ricardo Lugo, DDS, MD Assistant Clinical Professor, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Ricardo.lugo@ucsf.edu	Benign pathology, dentoalveolar surgery, malignant pathology, maxillofacial trauma, reconstruction, simulation teaching, surgical education, social determinants of health, healthcare workforce disparities.			Ricardo Alcantar
Ralph Marcucio, PhD Professor, Department of Orthopedic Surgery ralph.marcucio@ucsf.edu	Cell and tissue interactions that regulate stem cell differentiation during skeletal development and repair			
Elizabeth Mertz, PhD	At Healthforce Center, we believe that people are the most important element in health	health workforce, health quality and	Yes	Lia Inadomi,

Professor, Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences elizabeth.mertz@ucsf.edu healthforce.ucsf.edu	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.	equity, delivery system design		Roaa Saadeh
Snehlata Oberoi, DDS Professor of Clinical Orofacial Sciences, Department of Orofacial Sciences sneha.oberoi@ucsf.edu	Clinical research	CBCT, cleft lip and palate, craniofacial, orthodontic treatment	Yes	Iris Lai
Joel Palefsky, MD Professor, Department of Medicine joel.palefsky@ucsf.edu	Virology: papillomaviruses and Epstein Barr virus			
Richard Schneider, PhD Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery rich.schneider@ucsf.edu https://orthosurgery.ucsf.edu/research/laboratories/Schneider-Lab-at-UCSF	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.	neural crest biology; craniofacial development; avian model systems	Yes	Emily Yang, Yilin Piao
Jean Star, DDS, MPH Assistant Professor, Department of Orofacial Sciences, Division of Pediatric Dentistry	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	Caries, pediatric dentistry, health disparities.	Likely Yes	Kimia Tavassoli

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				Susi Le, Iris Lai
Yan Zhang, PhD Department of Orofacial Sciences yan.zhang2@ucsf.edu				Alexia Campbell

Other Faculties who have previously mentored students:

- Kamel Al-Eryani, DDS, PhD
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Dania Alkoraishi
- Kristin Hoeft, PhD, MPH
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Lia Inadomi
- Sarah Knox, PhD
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Hope Berry, Alyssa Kong
- Ophir Klein, MD, PhD
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Alyssa Kong

- Tejal Desai, PhD
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Deborah Tan
- Diana Nguyen, DDS
    - Previous/current fellow(s): Madalyn Phan