

WesternU: Expanding Our Roots

This year, our chapter's goal was to "expand our roots" - the coronavirus pandemic gave us numerous challenges. But the students of WesternU believe our roots are deep and there is no reason to fear the wind! After planting our seeds, giving each other enough water and sunlight, we were able to build our garden together and watch it flourish throughout the year.



Health & Wellness

Due to the pandemic, we valued mental and physical health and wellness the most this year; our members did yoga and meditation together, shared healthy recipes and affirmations with each other, planted their own flowers, watched their flowers bloom, and hiked around LA to reach new heights!

Member Engagement

Our ASDA fever week connected the new Dr's and international dental students with our WesternU community through virtual speed friending, plant and sip night, game night, a Colgate lunch and learn, and dental student starter packs. Our dental students engaged with faculty, staff, and our local dental community through our annual golf tournament fundraiser. Our golf tournament had the highest attendance in 10 years (110 people) and raised \$4,000. Additionally, we connected with pre-dentals through webinars that focused on mock interviews, student panels, soap carving/impression taking sessions, and personal statement workshops. Every week, we highlighted our students on our instagram page through Member Monday and supported our members by giving them thoughtful goodie bags during stressful exam weeks!

Professional Development

We made it our mission to develop our student's leadership and interpersonal skills. We provided opportunities to network with colleagues from around the nation. Our newsletters showcased the members that make up our WesternU community, our board's initiatives and efforts, and the WesternU student experience. The Business Series "My Future, By Design" and Lunch and Learn series provided our members with an invaluable entrepreneurial education, insight on unique careers in dentistry, nutrition in medicine, how to land your dream job & beginning your dental journey. Our fundraising team raised \$7,000 by building professional relationships with our dental sponsors and the local community to create our golf tournament and vendor fairs.



Chapter Media

We used our social media to keep our members engaged and active throughout this year. On instagram, we reached 2,240 followers and we highlighted our students, faculty and staff through Membership Monday, their hobbies through Wellness Wednesday, and their homemade recipes through Foodie Friday. Our social media also encompasses our new Spotify advocacy podcast "Uncovery" and our Youtube series "Ethical Issues in Dentistry". We also expanded our social media by creating a pre-dental instagram to keep our pre-dental students connected with our WesternU community.

Advocacy

We expanded our advocacy efforts by launching a Spotify podcast, "Uncovery". This podcast educates students about acts and bills that affect dentistry, student loans, and public health. Our Diversity and Inclusion position helped broaden the dental students' understanding of the systems that contribute to institutionalized racism, health disparities, and socioeconomic inequalities in a safe space where students are heard, valued and protected. Our advocacy team aimed to cultivate empathetic, knowledgeable student doctors and allowed students from different walks of life to feel welcomed into our community.

Community Service

The pandemic limited resources for low-income and vulnerable populations, so we put an emphasis on serving and supporting our community this year. We hosted dental screenings at our local schools, collaborated with local organizations (Helping Hands, Caring Hearts) to distribute food to the community, and cleaned up our the parks and beaches in our neighborhood.

