

2018-2019 UCSF: UC Carbon Neutrality Initiative Student Fellowship Application

**Applicant Name: Claire Skach**

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Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) Candidate  
Class of 2021

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***Applicant Letter: Project Proposal***

The dental field has a significant carbon footprint. Providing safe dental care involves an enormous amount of natural resources: barriers (paper and plastic), supplies, product shipping, water, and electricity. As a dental school, UCSF treats hundreds of patients a day therefore creating an even larger footprint. No part of the first-year dental education relates to dentistry's impact on the environment. As I am independently interested in sustainability and environmentalism, upon entering UCSF, I immediately wanted to help change the School of Dentistry's (SOD) current practices to decrease our carbon footprint. In order for the dental school to achieve the UC-wide goal of zero waste by 2020 and zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2025, extreme measures must be introduced to change dental practices. I am applying to be a 2018-2019 Carbon Neutrality Initiative Fellow with the goal of implementing more sustainable practices within the SOD clinic and more changes in the SOD to train and graduate environmentally conscious and eco-friendly dental practitioners.

The main goals of this fellowship will be fourfold: to gather information about the SOD's current environmental footprint, to research more sustainable options for use in practice, to convince SOD administration to embrace the UC Carbon Neutrality Initiative (CNI), and begin implementing changes in current clinic practices. The larger impact of this fellowship will be an eventual collaboration with faculty, staff, and educators to begin teaching sustainable practices at the beginning of students' dental education. This will be achieved by designing lectures focused on sustainability and providing training within the curriculum on the utilization of environmentally-friendly resources introduced during this fellowship.

A short list of areas I plan to investigate in order to reduce SOD waste follows. Implement additional recycling and compost systems within the dental simulation labs. Provide information about proper discarding of dental materials. Investigate ways to make the dental clinic more sustainable (understanding that additional complications regarding to space, training, and biohazardous materials exist). Introduce recycling of the current plastic barriers. Incorporate recycling of current paper products. Purchase reusable autoclave bags for equipment sterilization. Provide resources and seminars for students and faculty about sustainable options in the dental field.

This proposal is the first of its kind within the current SOD. It will be one of the only organized and dedicated acts by the SOD to participate in the UC's CNI. I know a number of SOD faculty members have voiced an interest in sustainability, however none have taken the initiative to make a change. As a fellow, I am passionate and ready to advocate for environmentalism within the SOD and pioneer changes to impact the field of dental education, and the sustainability of our students who very soon will become independent providers. In this way my proposal aims to help achieve UC's CNI goals and begin to promote sustainability within dentists practicing nation-wide.

June 1, 2018  
Claire Skach, Jerry Liu

***Letter of Support:***

Please see separately emailed document of a letter of support from UCSF Faculty member Dr. Jeffery Eaton.