

# WHY CONSIDER ACADEMIC DENTISTRY AS A CAREER?

Academic careers in dentistry offer a substantial and highly viable option to full time private practice. Here are some specific examples from UCSF.

## What are the Options?

- A **part-time appointment** ranges from volunteering up to part-time salaried appointments of as much as 20%-time. Faculty are primarily involved in clinical teaching of either general dentistry or one of the dental specialties and conduct private practices outside the university.
- A **high commitment part-time appointment** consists of a salaried appointment at 50%-time. Faculty members divide their time between a private practice outside the university and clinical teaching of either general dentistry or one of the dental specialties within the university. Such faculty members often participate in other university activities. They typically receive 50% of a base salary plus the full benefit package of health insurance, retirement programs, and other benefits.
- A **full-time career appointment** includes all the core university activities of teaching, research or other creative activities, professional activities (including clinical practice), and university service. These activities may be based in clinical practice, a field of clinical or laboratory research, or occasionally a combination of those two. Faculty members in these positions participate in the school's Compensation Plan, which allows them to receive supplemental salary from non-university sources such as clinical income from their faculty practice, research grants or contracts, or consultation income.

**Contacts:** John S. Greenspan, BDS, PhD, Dean for Research [GreenspanJ@dentistry.ucsf.edu](mailto:GreenspanJ@dentistry.ucsf.edu)  
Troy Daniels, DDS, MS, Dean for Academic Affairs [DanielsT@dentistry.ucsf.edu](mailto:DanielsT@dentistry.ucsf.edu)  
Charles Bertolami, DDS, DMedSc, Dean, School of Dentistry [BertolamiC@dentistry.ucsf.edu](mailto:BertolamiC@dentistry.ucsf.edu)  
Mark Jacobs, MA, MBA, Admin. Dir., Office of Grad. Affairs [JacobsM@dentistry.ucsf.edu](mailto:JacobsM@dentistry.ucsf.edu)

## What are the Career Advantages?

- The **excitement and variety** attendant to working in a first-class university.
- **The ability to relearn practice skills** through teaching them to others and the interest and intrinsic value of contributing to educating the next generation of professional colleagues.
- The opportunity to have a much **broader scope of practice** than is generally available in private practice.
- **The chance to participate in university programs** often without the need to be concerned about the staff or financial management of the unit in which you are working.
- **Working at the leading edge** of our profession.
- The opportunity for **continuous professional growth** through daily interactions with colleagues, development of or participation in a progression of teaching or research projects, and changing university activities and responsibilities.
- **Access to formal continuing education** through the school's comprehensive programs and personal and professional education through numerous campus-wide programs.
- The opportunity to **participate in professional organizations** while in paid leave status.

## What are the Financial Advantages?

- **A secure salary with regular increases** coming from state funded annual cost-of-living adjustments, eligibility for merit increases every two years or three years (depending on rank), and promotions in rank.
- **After only five years of employment, faculty members become fully vested** in the outstanding University of California Retirement Program, which is one of the few remaining defined benefits retirement program in the country, which is offered along with other retirement benefits.
- An excellent group of **medical, dental and vision health insurance programs**, which cover all members of the beneficiaries family, along with disability and life insurance benefits.
- Full time faculty **have 13 paid holidays each year and earn 24 days of paid vacation per year**. As noted above, paid administrative leave also is provided for faculty members when they participate in appropriate professional meetings.

## How Does that Compare?

Income from private dental practice is regularly surveyed and reported by the American Dental Association (ADA).

- In the 1999 ADA Survey of Dental Practice (1), which is the most recent edition, the median annual net income from private practice for independent general practitioners (i.e. owners or part owners of practices) was \$106,000 with 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile values of \$57,000 and \$175,000, respectively, for those who had practiced less than five years since graduating from dental school.
- For that same group of private practice dentists at their peak earning range of 25-29 years after graduation, the median annual net income was \$140,000 with 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile values of \$96,000 and \$210,000 (1999-2000), respectively. (See chart below)
- For comparison purposes, shown below are sample salaries from a hypothetical UCSF academic career. Compensation would include income from a faculty dental practice as well as outside research funding sources. The assistant professor would likely have been a member of the faculty for up to five years; the full professor between 20 and 25 years.

	Private Practice 0-5 Years	Private Practice 25-29 Years	Dental Faculty Asst. Professor	Dental Faculty Full Professor
1st Quartile (Minimum)	\$57,000	\$96,000	\$66,025	\$128,400
Median	\$106,000	\$140,000	\$77,850	\$136,800
Median Practice Set-Up Cost (1999) (3)	(\$150,000)	(\$150,000)	\$0	\$0
3rd Quartile	\$175,000	\$210,000	\$89,775	\$159,300

- However, from their net income, dentists in private practice must cover the costs of staff, rent and equipment. They must also fund a retirement program health insurance for themselves and their families, and disability and life insurance. (see "Set-up Costs" above). They must also absorb their office overhead for holidays and vacation leave days, as well as days for professional development leave when they participate in continuing education or attend professional meetings. *Additionally, academic dentistry offers several avenues of partial or total debt forgiveness.*

### References:

1. ADA. The 1999 Survey of Dental Practice: Income from the Private Practice of Dentistry. American Dental Association, 2000, Appendix Table 5.
2. Bertolami CN, *et al.* Report of the AADS President's Task Force on Future Dental School Faculty. American Association of Dental Schools, 1999.
3. ADA. Survey Center, 1998. Survey of New Dentists on Impact of Student Debt

T. E. Daniels  
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