

UCSF Academic Senate

— 2024 —

Clinical Excellence Awards

Senior Faculty

“Her unparalleled clinical acumen, commitment to innovation, and fervent dedication to education distinguish her as a standout candidate for this prestigious award.”

—Nominator *Christine Hong, DMD, MS*
Interim Chair, Division of Orthodontics
UCSF School of Dentistry



[senate.ucsf.edu/
clinical-excellence-awards](https://senate.ucsf.edu/clinical-excellence-awards)

UCSF

Mona Bajestan, DDS, MS

School of Dentistry

For her exceptional leadership, clinical expertise, and commitment to patient-centered care, Mona Bajestan has been named the 2024 recipient of the Academic Senate’s Clinical Excellence Award for Senior Faculty in the School of Dentistry. As the Orthodontic Clinic Director, Bajestan has enhanced the clinic’s efficiency while fostering an enriched learning environment for UCSF students.

Advancing UCSF PRIDE Values

One patient remarked: "For you, my treatment was one of your successful treatments but for me, that was a lifetime milestone for which I had lost my hope before seeing you." This testimonial reflects the life-changing impact of Bajestan’s clinical care and her dedication to improving her patients’ quality of life.

Bajestan’s teaching contributions span didactic courses, clinical education, and program development. She has designed many courses to meet the evolving needs of the orthodontic program. Additionally, she supervises the largest number of resident cases among faculty, earning widespread respect and admiration from her residents. Her profound influence has led to her being selected as Faculty of the Year by her residents on three separate occasions.

In 2021, Bajestan was inducted as a Fellow of the American College of Dentists, a distinction recognizing leadership and service in the field. Most recently, she was inducted into the Academy of Medical Educators, further affirming her role as an educator shaping the next generation of dental professionals.

Beyond her clinical and educational contributions, Bajestan advances equity and excellence within the UCSF community. She has served on key committees, including the Committee on the Status of Women and the Committee on Equal Opportunity. She is also actively engaged in professional organizations and serves as a board member of the California Association of Orthodontists.

About the Academic Senate Clinical Excellence Awards

The UCSF Academic Senate advances health worldwide by enabling shared governance, representing faculty voice in critical matters, and promoting faculty collaboration and PRIDE values in graduate education, biomedical research, and service.

Established and reviewed by the Clinical Affairs Committee, the Senate’s Clinical Excellence Awards recognize faculty who have demonstrated excellence in clinical care across all our schools and practice care sites. Awards are managed by the Office of the Academic Senate at UCSF.

UCSF Academic Senate

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Clinical Excellence Awards

Early Career Faculty

“By collaborating with behavioral colleagues from UCSF Psychiatry, Dr. Star has created a model that not only improves access to care but also enhances the overall dental experience for patients with autism spectrum disorder.”

—Nominator Michael S. Reddy, DMD, DMSc
Dean, UCSF School of Dentistry



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Jean Star, DDS, MPH *School of Dentistry*

For her outstanding contributions to clinical education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and pediatric patient care, Jean Star has been selected as the 2024 recipient of the Academic Senate's Clinical Excellence Award for Early Career Faculty in the School of Dentistry. Her work not only improves patient outcomes but is also advancing the field of pediatric dentistry for children with special needs.

Advancing UCSF PRIDE Values

Star's interdisciplinary educational background, spanning economics, public health, and pediatric dentistry, uniquely positions her to bridge clinical practice with public health strategies. Her commitment to pediatric care is exemplified by her leadership in developing the "STAR Smiles Program" at the Parnassus Dental Clinic, a groundbreaking initiative focused on providing desensitization interventions for children with autism spectrum disorder. Through collaboration with UCSF Psychiatry, Star has created a model of care that not only improves access to dental services but also enhances the overall patient experience for vulnerable populations.

As the only pediatric dental attending who speaks Spanish, she plays a vital role in providing care to a diverse patient population. Her focus on children with special health care needs, often from underserved settings and racial minority groups, demonstrates her commitment to equitable healthcare delivery.

Star is a trusted and respected clinician, working closely with families to understand their child's challenges. Her work with teledentistry and the UCSF Virtual Dental Home program is helping extend dental care to children in rural and school-based settings, improving access to care for those who need it most.

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