

HOW I GOT TO DENTAL SCHOOL

KUNAL MANSUKHANI

Kunal is a second-year student (DS2) in the pre-doc DMD program. He attended Barrett, Arizona State University's Honors College, where he earned his bachelor's in Biomedical Science. Growing up, Kunal looked up to his Dad, who is a Hospital Administrator. Kunal knew that he wanted to give back to his community by being a health professional. In high school, he began to explore his career options by volunteering at hospitals and eventually assisting at a dental office. His experience as a dental assistant sparked his passion for dentistry. "Observing the detail, craftsmanship, and science that went into dentistry piqued my interest. More than anything, seeing patients smiling and pain-free after coming for their appointments was a feeling I knew I wanted to foster," said Kunal.

When looking at dental schools, Kunal wanted to stay on the west coast. With this in mind, his top options were UCSF, University of Pacific, University of Washington, and OHSU. He truly enjoyed attending the interviews and seeing what school would be the best fit. For him, OHSU was an easy choice. "I knew from the moment I interviewed with Dr. Bompolaki and Dr. Jones that this school was the place for me. Both of my interviewers joked with me and made me feel like I belonged at the school. The incredible facilities and friendly staff were the icing on the cake. I'm happy to say that Oregon's food and natural beauty have both lived up to the hype as well," he said.

Kunal's favorite part of being a dental student at OHSU is learning from world-renown dentistry experts who genuinely care about him. Kunal's first year of school was



Pictured above: DS2, Kunal Mansukhani

demanding, but his faculty's support made the experience enjoyable. Like for many, finding a balance between social time and academics is a challenge for Kunal. He often gets tunnel vision when it comes to his studies and is always needing to remind himself to call home and check-in. If he could go back and give his pre-dental-school-self advice, he would encourage young Kunal to get a job in a dental lab during his undergrad. Dental lab skills would have been invaluable during his first year at OHSU.

Now in his second year, Kunal realizes how quickly the first flew by. He admits that there are tough and emotionally draining moments in school. Still, even in those times, he tries to appreciate this once-in-a-lifetime experience as much as possible. He looks forward to the next three years and is excited to learn from and work with SoD faculty, students, and patients.

