Orthodontic Faculty Development Fellowship Award

Dr. Kathryn Preston, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Dr. Kathryn Preston is a full-time Assistant Clinical Professor in the UCLA Section of Orthodontics, Division of Growth and Development. She also serves as the Program Director for Pre-Doctoral Orthodontics and is active in both the pre-doctoral and graduate residency clinical, laboratory, and didactic educations. As a fellowship-trained Craniofacial Orthodontist, she also serves as the lead Craniofacial Orthodontist for the UCLA Craniofacial Team at Ronald Reagan Hospital. In 2021, Dr. Preston was awarded the American Association of Orthodontists Foundation's Eugene E. West Memorial Fellowship Award for faculty development.

Of particular interest to Dr. Preston is craniofacial care and education. The research and teaching components of this project involve evaluation of patient assessment protocols by cleft teams. The goal is to determine what protocols and efforts are already in place to identify if certain barriers to care exist and assess the degree to which existing protocols are supported by existing high-level evidence. In order to support development of an evidence-based graduate curriculum in craniofacial orthodontics, this information needs to be ascertained and serve as the foundation for the educational evolution of this important subspecialty. This will be established through rigorous interdisciplinary and multi-site mentorship and exploration of research and curriculum-development fundamentals.

The findings from the current project will benefit orthodontic education because of all areas of pre- and post-doctoral instruction, craniofacial curriculum appears to be one of the least regimented and emphasized components. However, these can be some of the most complex and demanding cases providers of all disciplines encounter. Not only do they require specific knowledge and considerations in management, but they also necessitate experience in high-level inter-provider communication. Dr. Preston hopes this project will lead to development of an evidence-based, prescribed didactic curriculum at the graduate level to not only impart the skills necessary for optimal craniofacial care but also the team communication skills to be used across all aspects of multidisciplinary orthodontic treatment.

The Foundation's support of this project is invaluable in allowing Dr. Preston to promote craniofacial education and investigate how an evidence-based interdisciplinary curriculum can be developed. The funding for this project supports time to collaborate with colleagues of multiple disciplines within the School of Dentistry and in schools of medicine and allied health to advocate for improved patient care and educational opportunities for students and post-graduate residents and fellows. The Foundation's recognition of this project validates its importance and

underscores the need to solidify education in this area. Dr. Preston is immensely grateful and deeply appreciative that the AAOF has acknowledged her potential as a promising junior faculty and supports her efforts in expanding opportunities for multidisciplinary craniofacial education presently and in the future.