

HOW I GOT TO DENTAL SCHOOL

TYLER GIMENEZ

Tyler Gimenez is a student in OHSU's pre-doc DMD program. He grew up in Olympia, Washington - home of the tallest self-supporting masonry dome in the United States. For Tyler, the career choice of dentistry didn't present itself through a single monumental moment but rather a collection of experiences that built on one another. One of those experiences was in Balad, Iraq. There, he worked for the United Service Organizations (USO) and would spend his free time volunteering at the war hospital. Within the hospital, there was a dental wing where he saw firsthand the positive impact of dentistry. "The field combines my passion for scientific inquiry, allows me to work with my hands, and fulfills my desire to learn about and help people," said Tyler. In this wing, in a war zone, he decided that he would become a dentist.

When he got back stateside, Tyler began the dental school application process. He applied to a handful of schools across Washington, Oregon, and Arizona. Being from the Pacific Northwest and living in Portland at the time of his dental school search, OHSU was one of his top choices. The program's strong emphasis on clinical skills was also very attractive to Tyler.

This is now his second year of dental school, and when asked what the most challenging part of being a dental student, Tyler replied, "Like any pursuit that is worthwhile, there are times that you will not succeed and have to learn from your mistakes. Dentistry is a practice, and building the necessary skills takes time and effort. As a student that always strives to be the best, it can be a challenge to overcome those instances of failure, recognize that you have learned something from it, and then move on."



Pictured above: DS2, Tyler Gimenez, climbing at Cerro Aconcagua in Argentina

The supportive environment that the School of Dentistry fosters is Tyler's favorite part of his dental school experience. "I love the collaborative nature of our community, with students and faculty working together.

While we're all striving to do our best, it never feels competitive, and I know I can turn to any one of them for advice or moral support," he shared.

Tyler's advice to anyone right now is, "...there is no shame in asking for help." He points out that times are tough, and people should not be embarrassed or anxious about reaching out to others for help or support. He encourages his fellow students to utilize the **wellness resources** that are available to all OHSU students and to reach out to peers or faculty if they need assistance.