

Personal Statement
Johnny Cash, Match #00000

I was taught to “be all that I could be” – to work hard, to strive for excellence and to help others. These are my values. To be an oral surgeon would allow me to realize these values in a special way - to reach for a high work standard, to grow as a professional and to serve others.

I believe in the law of the harvest – good things come from hard work. Although the pathway to oral surgery may be difficult, it leads to achievement and an opportunity to contribute. I want a career that brings the challenge of excellence. I want to reach high. As an oral surgeon I can build on the knowledge of dental school to increase my diagnostic skills, expand my scope of treatment and develop a practice that is both clinical and hospital based. In the process, I can improve the quality of my own life through service. For me, this means helping and healing others. As a dental student, I’ve enjoyed the special relationship I’ve found with my patients. It has been a tremendous experience to relieve a patient’s pain and take them toward recovery. I have become more than a technician - but a healer, confidant and friend.

While on a service mission to Ecuador, I had a defining experience translating for the volunteers of Operation Smile. I saw health care professionals that wanted to do more than acquire expensive cars and fancy homes – *they cared about people*. They donated their time and resources to help those who couldn’t help themselves. I assisted an oral surgeon repair a bilateral cleft lip in a forty year old man. I stood in the recovery room as this man saw his new face for the first time. It left an indelible impression on me. I resolved to become an oral surgeon myself one day.

Oral surgeons have the capacity to change lives. My research in orthognathic surgery showed me that I not only correct asymmetry, and improve function and esthetics, but self-image and confidence as well. When I complete my oral and maxillofacial training, I plan to help the underprivileged. I want to return to South America, and help the humble and less fortunate. My South American experience allowed me to understand, communicate with and relate to the growing Hispanic community. I want to help the underserved community obtain the dental and craniofacial care they could not otherwise receive.

I’ve experienced “healing” in my life. I’ve experienced the influence of a “Divine Hand,” and I’ve also been treated, “stitched”, “fixed-up,” and operated on by health professionals. These professionals helped me *get better* when I desperately wanted to *get better*. I was grateful to them. I wanted to be like them. I remember what it was like to be self-conscious of my teeth. I’m grateful to those who straightened them. But an oral surgeon does even more. Surgeons can restore what was lost and give patients a second chance. That is something to smile about.

Some people put themselves in a place to really make a difference. I want to be a professional that can make that difference. From complete facial reconstruction to removing a wisdom tooth, oral surgeons offer the full scope of patient care. Finally, I want to be an example that my children and other young people can look up to. As a student dentist, I’ve learned that I can make a difference. As an oral surgeon, I want to expand that circle of influence, and build a practice that permits me to be someone who can help and heal others.