

ORTHODONTICS

PROGRAM HISTORY

The Department of Orthodontics at The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston was established in June 1956 and offered the first postgraduate orthodontic department in Texas. Our graduates have contributed greatly to the development of dentistry's oldest specialty. The first clinical orthodontic faculty members were Dr. W. J. Schoverling and Dr. Milton Yellen. Both received orthodontic training at the University of Washington in Seattle. They joined the UTSD department chair, Dr. A.P. Westfall, to form the department. The first students of the program were Dr. Ira Shannon and Dr. Ressler, who began training in 1956 and graduated in 1958.

Dr. Westfall continued his role as chair until 1973, when Dr. Dan West assumed the role and kept it until 1995. In 1997, Dr. Marion L. Messersmith took over the responsibility, and the current chair, Dr. Jeryl D. English, assumed the role in 2001.

Class size has ranged from the initial two students in 1956 to a high of 15 in 1971. Since 1981, the number of students has been limited to 6 and an optional PhD candidate. In 2005, the maximum number for students was raised to 7 with permission from the American Dental Association.