

Marine Corps Vet Grateful for Scholarship, Finding New Purpose

Ryan Doyle, Dental Assistant Student at UEI College in Ontario, Awarded \$5,000 Scholarship from Pacific Dental Services Foundation



Ryan Doyle enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps right after high school. He was nearing four years of service when he was injured while deployed on active duty overseas, and although he recovered and wanted to continue serving, Doyle had to leave the military.

Returning to civilian life was a struggle as he tried to figure out what he would do next.

“It was hard because I was a good Marine, which was really the only job I knew how to do,” Doyle said. “When you’re leaving the Marine Corps, you’re leaving a lifestyle behind. It was more than just a job to me. I had to completely change my life.”

“After I left the Marine Corps I was jumping between jobs because I couldn’t find what I wanted. None of them really seemed like something I wanted to do for a career,” he said.

While exploring different employment and career options, Doyle decided to enroll in an online university program that would prepare him to be a history teacher. But the experience as an online student wasn’t a good fit.

“I am a hands-on learner. I didn’t like the online only program and it seemed too costly for what I was getting,” Doyle said. “And if I’m being honest with myself, I’m not the type of person who can sit behind a desk all day.”

Doyle’s frustration with that experience put his education on hold for a while. Then, as the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the nation, he was laid off from his job as a Volvo salesman.



“I knew that wasn’t going to be what I would do long term, but I still gave it my all every single day,” he said. “It was difficult and kind of depressing to be unemployed all of a sudden.”

The 25-year-old husband and father of a 3-year-old son, with another baby on the way, decided that continuing his education would be the best option for his growing family, so he did a lot of research. That’s when he found UEI College in Ontario.

“At first I was interested in HVAC, but when I came to see campus and learned more about the programs, that’s when dental assistant caught my attention,” he said. “It appealed to me

because it would be a great way to be active in the community, helping people with oral health and improving smiles.”

“I decided to go for it. And I’m glad I did,” he added.

“Ryan is a great man and father, and I was very impressed with him from the beginning. He had a bigger purpose for himself and his family,” said Zenon Vargas, Senior Admissions Representative at UEI Ontario.

“With every new module, I become more and more fascinated with dental. It was all just so interesting and now I’m engulfed in it, and so glad to be on this career path,” Doyle said. “I’m all in.”

“By the way, I had no idea it was a mainly female-dominated field but that doesn’t bother me. I kind of like being one of the few,” he added.

According to data compiled by the Oral Health Workforce Research Center, about 90% of dental assistants in the U.S. are female.

“Ryan is such an amazing student. Since day one he has showed so much dedication and desire to become the best dental assistant. I know he will excel in anything he puts his mind to. I am extremely proud to be a part of his dental journey,” said DA instructor Marisa Garcia.

“It’s been such a blessing to be here. Everyone is rooting for you to succeed – all of the staff and instructors. I love coming to school and I am grateful for everyone here supporting me,” Doyle said.

Doyle has yet another reason to be grateful: he was selected as a 2020 recipient of the Dr. Carolyn Ghazal Dental Assistant Scholarship, awarded by the Pacific Dental Services Foundation.

Recognizing the importance of dental assistants to the future of dentistry, the Pacific Dental Services Foundation created the Dr. Carolyn Ghazal Dental Assisting Scholarship to provide students with need-based financial aid, mentorship, and on the job training. Named after Dr. Carolyn Ghazal and her heart for service, the scholarship aims to mold the next generation of passionate, servant-hearted, dental assistant leaders. Over the past few years the Pacific Dental Services Foundation has given over \$450,000 in scholarships to DA students.

“The scholarship provides students with financial support and mentorship as they pursue a career in dental assisting,” said Dr. Carolyn Ghazal, Chair of Associate Dentist Development at PDS University – Institute of Dentistry. “My hope is that it will make a significant impact in the life of a DA student and foster their professional and personal development.”

Doyle was awarded \$5,000.

“I am beyond grateful and humbled for this scholarship, which is helping me and my family tremendously,” Doyle said. “Thank you to the Foundation for this honor and wonderful blessing.”

Doyle applied for the scholarship with an essay and submitted letters of recommendation. The Pacific Dental Services Foundation notified him that he was a finalist, and invited him to join a Zoom video conference with the other finalists for the announcement of the winner. As it would turn out, they picked all finalists to receive a scholarship.



“When it was announced that all of us were getting a scholarship I was absolutely speechless,” Doyle said. “Although, I have to say that I was up late the night before the announcement studying just in case they were to ask dental questions, so it was kind of a relief, too.”

Doyle will finish the dental assistant program at UEI in the spring of 2021 and he plans to start working in the field, as well as continue his dental education.

“In the short term my plan is to get a registered dental assistant job and gain experience while I work towards becoming a licensed hygienist, but I’m the type of person who is always thinking about long term goals to grasp. I see myself going to dental school, becoming a dentist, and then eventually going into maxillofacial surgery one day,” he said.

“Congratulations to Ryan on being awarded the Pacific Dental Services Foundation Dr. Carolyn Ghazal Dental Assistant Scholarship! We seek students who have a passion for the field and a heart for service and we saw that in Ryan. It is a pleasure to support students on their journey towards their dreams,” said Kyle Guerin, Executive Director of the Pacific Dental Services Foundation.

“I applaud Ryan for his personal determination and perseverance – traits that are undoubtedly influenced by his training and service in the Marines – and all of us at UEI College are proud that he found a new purpose here. Congratulations on being selected for this wonderful scholarship, and we wish him continued success throughout his dental career,” said President and CEO Fardad Fateri, PhD.

About Pacific Dental Services Foundation

The Pacific Dental Services Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization whose mission is to improve overall health by improving oral health, through opportunities to serve locally, nationally, and internationally. By creating opportunities to serve, the PDS Foundation positively enhances the lives of those in need, and in turn, those who serve. The Foundation provides access and advocacy to disadvantaged and underserved communities in four key

areas: PDS Foundation Mobile Dental Clinic, Special Needs Advocacy and Training, Dental Assistant Education Scholarships, and International Trips. For more information, visit www.pdsfoundation.org.

About UEI College

Founded in 1982, UEI College is an employee-owned and accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). The institution provides students with post-secondary career education programs in high-demand verticals such as healthcare, trades, business, and criminal justice. Each of the hands-on training programs offered are designed to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and training they need to be successful in their futures. Programs are tailored to meet the needs of students and focus on smaller classes to ensure each student can learn and get the attention they need. Students can train for entry-level careers and start building their future in as few as 10 months at campus locations throughout California. For more information visit www.uei.edu.