

## **Faculty of Dentistry Alumni of Influence Award – Sample Nomination Package - Dr. Saida Rasul**

### **Summary of Nomination (Impact and Significance – 500 words max)**

Dr. Saida Rasul exemplifies the pinnacle of professional excellence, humanitarian service, and global oral-health leadership that the Faculty of Dentistry seeks to honour through the Alumni of Influence Award. A graduate of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Dentistry, Dr. Rasul has built a remarkable career that bridges clinical practice, health-equity advocacy, international education, and philanthropic leadership. Her work has impacted communities across Canada, East Africa, South Asia, and beyond.

Beginning her career in Vancouver, Dr. Rasul established a successful private practice in 1981, demonstrating a high standard of clinical care and community connection. After two decades of practice, she made a profound professional pivot: stepping away from full-time clinical work to devote her expertise entirely to community service and global health capacity-building. This transition reflects her deep belief that oral health is integral to overall well-being and that access to oral care is a matter of equity and dignity.

Her most groundbreaking contributions have emerged through her work with the Aga Khan University. As Senior Lecturer in the Section of Dentistry and an architect of oral-health capacity-building programmes, she has played a key role in establishing preventive dental-hygiene programmes in East Africa and Pakistan. Recognising the severe shortage of dental care in rural and underserved populations, Dr. Rasul helped develop training pathways for dental hygienists, oral-health technicians, and community educators. These programmes have significantly improved access to preventive care, early detection, and oral-health literacy for communities who would otherwise face major barriers.

Dr. Rasul's leadership extends beyond dentistry. Her community service portfolio in British Columbia is vast and impactful. As a champion of the United Way, she contributed to securing major government support for early childhood development programmes. Her work with the BC Children's Hospital Foundation and major philanthropic contributions with her husband, Firoz Rasul, have advanced healthcare, education, and community development across the province and internationally.

Her contributions to higher education governance—most notably through her role on Simon Fraser University's Board of Governors, where she helped steward over \$200 million in philanthropic and capital projects—demonstrate her strategic leadership and commitment to strengthening institutions that serve the public good.

Dr. Rasul's distinguished honours—including the Order of British Columbia, the CDA Distinguished Service Award, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, and an Honorary Doctor of Science—affirm the magnitude and longevity of her impact. She is

widely recognised as a visionary who has elevated oral health as a pillar of global health strategy.

As an alumna of the University of Toronto, Dr. Saida Rasul stands as an extraordinary example of how a dentistry education can catalyse change across continents. Her legacy reflects not only professional excellence, but also compassion, foresight, and a lifelong commitment to service. For these reasons, I proudly nominate Dr. Rasul for the Alumni of Influence Award.

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## **Short Biography or CV**

Dr. Saida Rasul earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from the University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry before relocating to Vancouver, where she established a private dental practice in 1981. After two decades in practice, she transitioned to full-time community service and global oral-health development, becoming a Senior Lecturer in the Section of Dentistry at the Aga Khan University.

Her professional focus includes the creation and expansion of community-based dental-hygiene programmes in East Africa and Pakistan, development of oral-health curricula, and training of dental hygienists and clinic staff serving remote areas. She has served on the Board of Governors of Simon Fraser University, participated actively in United Way initiatives, supported BC Children's Hospital Foundation, and contributed significantly to Aga Khan Foundation initiatives.

Dr. Rasul is a recipient of the Order of British Columbia, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Canadian Dental Association Distinguished Service Award, and an Honorary Doctor of Science from the University of Alberta. Her career reflects exceptional leadership, philanthropy, and dedication to improving global oral health.

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## **Professional Activities, Awards, and Distinctions**

- **Dentist and Owner, Private Practice – Vancouver, BC (1981–2001)**  
Established a successful clinical practice in Kerrisdale before transitioning full-time to global health and volunteer service.
- **Senior Lecturer, Section of Dentistry, Department of Surgery – Aga Khan University (AKU)**  
Delivered clinical instruction and helped develop oral health teaching modules across East Africa and Pakistan.
- **Architect and Leader, AKU Dental Hygiene and Oral Health Capacity-Building Initiatives (2000s–present)**  
Key figure in establishing preventive dental programmes, oral-health technician

training, and community-based hygiene curricula for underserved populations in Tanzania, Kenya and Pakistan.

- **Provincial and National Community Leadership**

Major volunteer contributions with:

- United Way of the Lower Mainland (including securing an \$18 million provincial grant to expand early childhood programs such as “Success by 6”)
- BC Children’s Hospital Foundation
- Rotary Club Vancouver
- Aga Khan Foundation Canada

- **University Governance and Philanthropy**

Served on Simon Fraser University’s Board of Governors, contributing leadership in stewardship of over \$200 million in major projects, institutional advancement, and community engagement.

- **Awards and Distinctions**

- **Order of British Columbia (2015)** – the province’s highest civilian honour for outstanding community service
  - **Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012)** – for significant contributions to community and country
  - **Canadian Dental Association Distinguished Service Award (2013)** – for exceptional service to the profession
  - **Honorary Doctor of Science (D.Sc.), University of Alberta (2017)** – for transformative impact on oral health education and global health equity
  - Recognised nationally and internationally for leadership in oral health capacity-building and humanitarian service.
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