

# THE COMPASS

Charting  
New Directions  
for the  
University of  
Connecticut  
School of  
Dental  
Medicine

VOL. X, ISSUE II

SPRING, 2009

## Student Research Day

The 19th Annual Medical/Dental Student Scientific Research Day was held at UCHC on February 23, 2009. The day began in the Academic Lobby with introductory remarks by Dr. Cato Laurencin, Dean of the Medical School and Vice President for Health Affairs. Twelve dental students, including one student from Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry in Nashville, TN, and 18 medical students, made oral or poster presentation of the results of their summer research projects, conducted with UConn faculty preceptors. The Guest Speaker was Dr. Anne Hiskes, UConn Associate Professor of Philosophy, Director of Research Ethics and Education

for Stem Cell Research and Chair of the Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee. Following Dr. Hiskes's talk, faculty and student participants, along with friends and families, gathered for a reception, buffet dinner, and awards program. Seven dental students received awards for outstanding presentations. Coveted awards went to Jennifer Niles, who will represent the dental school as the ADA/Dentsply Student Clinician at the American Dental Association meeting in Honolulu, HI, and Vina Zinn, who will represent the school at the Hinman Student Research Symposium in Memphis, TN, as the winner of the Dean's Award.



(Left): Vina Zinn explains her research to Dr. Cato Laurencin. (Top): Jennifer Niles explains her poster to Dr. J. Robert Kelly.

Photos by Jim Heidenreich, D'10



### Message from the Dean

Monty MacNeil, DDS, MDS

About 20 years ago a commercial by a certain fast food chain made the question "Where's the Beef?" part of everyday conversation. If you recall, a seasoned and discerning customer (and character) noticed that, within an unusually large serving dominated by a hefty bun, there was very little meat. This reminds me of what our students and faculty face in today's information age where we are inundated with data often described to us as the latest earth-shaking scientific finding, practice-changing technology or life-altering clinical discovery. Those who apparently know tell us that the amount of new scientific discovery and publication in the next ten years will outpace the last one hundred years. But let's be clear...that's information, it's not necessarily evidence. As professionals, we have to constantly ask the question, "So where's the Beef?", or "Where is the Evidence?"

I'm not so sure we are all that good in doing this, at least in a consistent, systematic way. Just as importantly, when new evidence does exist, we know that dentistry like other health professions is very slow and ineffective in moving important change into practice. So what do we do? I was very impressed during a recent site visit to a peer school by their approach to bringing evidence-based teaching, learning and clinical decision-making into the mainstream school. By 'mainstream' I mean not just into the basic science curriculum, but into the entire curriculum and student clinics. I'd really love to see such a dedicated, programmatic approach to this important aspect of 21st century dental education here at UConn. Consequently, I've asked Dr. Steve Lepowsky to start discussions about this with those groups that direct our curriculum and clinical programs. It only makes sense as the adoption of evidence-based processes is a core goal in our new Strategic Plan. In our own unique way, let's make it happen!

## Visiting Dignitary from Nigeria

by Izabela Rak, Service Manager,  
Oral Pathology Biopsy Service

I recently interviewed Dr. Ozoemene N. Obuekwe about his four month visit to UConn Health Center, which began the first week of December, 2008. Dr. Obuekwe came from the Department of Oral Surgery and Pathology, School of Dentistry, College of Medical Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.



### What prompted you to come to the US and to UConn particularly?

"The idea has been on my mind for some time now. As an academic, one hopes that there will be a point in your career where you can step out to see what others are doing, to share knowledge and to gain knowledge." "The reason I came to UConn was prompted by my interest in working with Dr. Ellen Eisenberg, as she is Section Editor for Pathology of the Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (JOMS), to which I am a subscriber. I have read many of her articles and commentaries. This was my first exposure to Dr. Ellen Eisenberg, as she is affiliated with UConn, not only as faculty but as a well known diagnostician in the field of Oral Pathology. As an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon, I felt that shadowing Dr. Ellen Eisenberg and her associate, Dr. Easwar Natarajan, would be a valuable experience for me as an OMF Surgeon, and that this interactive time would give me a fresh perspective about my own work. I wrote to Dr. Ellen Eisenberg about my great interest in her work, so she invited me to come to the U.S. to spend time at UConn, sharing ideas and exchanging knowledge. Dr. Ellen Eisenberg also arranged for me to spend time with the OMFS faculty and residents, where I have learned some new techniques and contemporary approaches to practice within the world of OMF Surgery. Now having had the chance to spend time with the oral pathologists immersed in what they do on a daily basis, it is obvious that our respective specialty areas do go hand in hand.

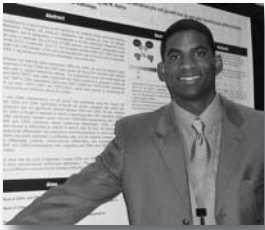
### What have you learned about UConn?

"The UConn Health Center is a place where I met people who went the extra mile to make me feel very welcomed and comfortable. From my host Section, Oral Pathology, I was also able to spend time with staff and faculty in Anatomic Pathology, OMFS and OMF Radiology. I also met with the Dental Dean, several Associate Deans, and other UConn Dental Faculty. I was kept quite busy and stimulated."

### What have you shared with UConn about your country?

"Part of what I intended to share with UConn, is to bring another, very different perspective concerning the treatment of patients with oral-maxillofacial diseases. I also hope that our relationship will be a lasting and fruitful one. I have had many discussions with Dr. Eisenberg, other faculty, and the Dental Dean with regard to future collaborations between UConn Dental School and my University of Benin, Nigeria. Ideally, I hope that this will bring the knowledge of new technology to my country; and I eagerly anticipate the prospect of a very long-lasting friendship between our institutions."

## Michael Woods Presents at N.E. Science Symposium



The Harvard Medical School Office of Diversity and Community Partnership and the Biomedical

Science Careers Program (BSCP) notified **Michael Woods** (D'10) that he has been selected to make a poster presentation at the eighth annual New England Science Symposium to be held on Friday, April 3, 2009 from 7:45 AM to 5:30 PM at The Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School.

Established in 2002, the New England Science Symposium promotes careers in biomedical science. The aim of the symposium is to encourage postdoctoral fellows; medical, dental, and graduate students; post-baccalaureates; college and community college students (particularly African-American, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native individuals) to present their research projects through oral or poster presentations, to exchange ideas that can further their career development, and to expand their professional network.

## Research Award to be Presented to Dr. Mukherjee



The Council on Scientific Affairs of the American Association of Orthodontists has chosen **Dr. Padma Mukherjee** (Department of Craniofacial Sciences) as the winner of the "Thomas M. Graber Award of Special Merit."

The AAO will present Dr. Mukherjee the research award on May 3 2009, at the Excellence in Orthodontics Awards Ceremony at the Annual AAO Session in

Boston. Additionally, she will present a lecture on her winning research paper, *Cherubism Gene Sh3bp2 Is Important for Optimal Bone Formation, Osteoblast Differentiation and Function*.

Dr. Mukherjee is an assistant professor in the Division of Orthodontics, Department of Craniofacial Sciences. She is also the program director for undergraduate orthodontics education and the co-director of the Pedo-Ortho Seminar Course.

## Dr. Kuhn Receives Women of Innovation Award

On January 30, 2009, The Connecticut Technology Council announced the winners of the fifth annual Women of Innovation awards Thursday, recognizing key executives, researchers and educators.



**Dr. Liisa Kuhn** (Department of Reconstructive Sciences) was the winner in the Academic Innovation and Leadership category. Dr. Kuhn studies the engineering of biomaterials that can help cure cancer or regenerate bone.

## Dr. Bayarsaihan Joins Center for Regenerative Medical and Skeletal Development

The Department of Reconstructive Sciences announces the appointment of **Dr. Dashzeveg Bayarsaihan** to the Center for Regenerative Medicine and Skeletal Development. Dr. Bayarsaihan came here from the Department of Molecular, Cellular & Craniofacial Biology and the Birth Defects Center at



the University of Louisville. His interests involve The TFII-I Family Transcription Factors in Development and Disease.

## ADEA/Johnson & Johnson Awards Raquel Capote



**Raquel Capote** (D '09) is the first recipient from the UConn School of Dental Medicine of the ADEA/Johnson & Johnson Healthcare Products Preventive Dentistry Scholarship. This is a \$2,500 scholarship and is awarded to support predoctoral dental students who have demonstrated academic excellence in preventive dentistry. Raquel was recognized at the 86th ADEA Annual Session in Phoenix, Arizona during the Bridging the Generations Plenary on Tuesday, March 17, 2009.

## AADR Student Research Award

The American Association for Dental Research National Student Research Group (NSRG) officers and faculty advisors have notified **Dr. Arthur Hand** (Craniofacial Sciences) that the University of Connecticut has won the "Retention Award" for 2009. This award focuses on student IADR/AADR members continuing their membership in the Associations beyond their time in dental school. Our school had 15 AADR student members in 2008 and retained 3 of these students as full IADR/AADR members for the 2009 dues year for a 20% retention rate. The university's Student Research Group will be acknowledged at the AADR National Student Research Group Business Meeting in Miami, on Thursday, April 2, and will receive \$200 for winning this contest.



Left to right: Richard Coba, An Le, Carmen Lammeier, Tinashe Chapfika.

## Match Day 2009

The results of Match Day for the Class of 2009, which took place on Monday January 26, 2009, are in and as in years prior, the our School of Dental Medicine made an impressive showing.

According to the office of Academic Affairs, six students will continue their education in advanced education in general dentistry programs; 17 students in general practice residencies, five students in oral and maxillofacial surgery, four students in orthodontics residencies, one student in Pediatric Dentistry, two in periodontology, and one in a prosthodontic residency. Additionally, two students are entering private practice.


## Commencement Activities


The Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2009 is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. p.m. at the Connecticut Convention Center, 100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut. The speaker is former School of Dental Medicine student, Keith Batchelder, D.M.D., M.D., M.S. He the founder and CEO of Genomic Healthcare Strategies, a company focused on the changes in healthcare resulting from advances in molecular medicine. Dr. Batchelder has long been interested in the intersection of the scientific, business and societal promises and challenges raised by personalized medicine. Dr. Batchelder writes and speaks frequently on the topic of personalized medicine and is one of the first ten volunteers to have their full duplex genomes sequenced and published in Harvard Genetics Professor George Church's Personal Genome Project.

## Final "Hard Copy" Issue of The Compass

In an effort to reduce costs and paper usage, this current issue of the Compass is the last hard-copy. The Compass will continue to be available electronically on the School of Dental Medicine website:

<http://sdm.uhc.edu/compass/index.html>





Julia Lyson (D '10) and her husband, Tyler, announce the birth of their daughter Caroline Anne. Caroline was born on February 5; she weighed 7 pounds and measured 18" long.



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Editor: Susan Reisine, Ph.D.  
Co-Editor: Jacqueline Duncan, D.M.D., M.Dent.Sc.  
Editorial Staff: Christine Moulis

The Compass is written for the dental school. We strongly encourage everyone to participate by submitting articles, events, milestones, etc. If you have any suggestions, please drop us a line.

Telephone: (860) 679-3218  
Fax: (860) 679-1342  
Mail Code: 3910  
E-mail: [reisine@nso1.uhc.edu](mailto:reisine@nso1.uhc.edu)  
[moulis@nso1.uhc.edu](mailto:moulis@nso1.uhc.edu)