



Most Recent Graduates Excel Again!

by Peter J. Robinson, DDS, PhD

The Class of 2001 did exceptionally well in the NERBs! They had the best pass rate since the Class of 1995 with an 86% pass rate on the simulated exercises (91% on the technique bridge) and 97% (one failure/section) pass rate on the other three sections. It appears that we have quickly exceeded our three-year strategic plan goal of being in the upper third (pass rate) of the schools taking the NERBs. To put our results in perspective for this year, the overall, first-time average pass rate for all students participating in NERBs is typically around 50%.

As many of you know, our performance in the onerous simulated bridge exercise had been our Achilles' heel for the past several years (for most other schools as well). Whereas in the other areas (clinical periodontics, clinical restorative, simulated endodontics and the written exam) our students have traditionally excelled in the past five

years (1996-2000), only one year during that period was our students' pass rate above the national average for the simulated bridge exercise.

This is a stunning turnaround in the simulated bridge exercise and many of our prosthetics/restorative faculty are to be thanked and congratulated for their effective efforts. I particularly want to single out Drs. George Paul and Joe Grasso to thank for the many Saturdays they put in with students on preparing them for the bridge exercise as well as Dr. Dan Galindo for his preparatory course.

This graduating class hit the trifecta with their incredible success in the National Boards, the Match and now the NERBs. Our role now is to sustain this wonderful momentum with the classes to follow.

Convocation for Medical and Dental Classes of 2005



A convocation in honor of the entering classes was held on August 20 in the Keller Auditorium. The twin themes of the Convocation were the importance of viewing medicine and dental medicine as vocations of service to others, and the need for doctors to maintain their interests outside of science and medicine to assure a sense of balance and perspective in their personal and professional lives. Adam Gorra (MS'04) served as Master of Ceremonies introducing Dr. Peter Deckers, Josh Osborne (DS'04), Thomas Manger MD, PhD, and Christopher Morosky (MS'04) as welcoming speakers. **Drs. Carl Nissen** (MD'90) and **Jacqueline Nissen** (MD'89) gave the keynote address and are pictured left.



Message from the Dean

Peter Robinson, DDS, PhD

Nationally, dental education is in crisis on several fronts. There is an acute faculty shortage with an estimated 400 unfilled openings. The student applicant pool is shrinking at an alarming rate, few new dental faculty have been able to devote adequate time to scholarship and with all these negative pressures, the dental schools have been called upon across the nation to play a major role in solving the problem of access to dental care for the under-served. Fortunately, the School of Dental Medicine, though not immune to those problems, has been successful thus far in addressing them.

This past year the School of Dental Medicine has had great success in faculty recruitment, hiring fourteen outstanding new faculty. The School has attracted a wonderful collection of research-scientists, dental-scientists and clinical-scholars including a clinical psychologist specializing in motivational intervention, a well-funded sociologist, a periodontist and an oral surgeon who are both boarded, a national award winning clinical scholar in diagnosis, general dentists with expertise in treating special needs patients, pediatric dentists for our outreach program, a world class ceramist, and four prosthodontic faculty who were recruited from our outstanding implant scholar and residency programs.

Though the School of Dental Medicine's student applicant pool is shrinking too, the new class of 2005 has the highest DAT average of any class in memory. Two of the School's dental-scientists are now able to devote the vast majority of their time to research over the next five years because they received special career development awards (Dr. Yu-Hsiung Wang, scholar in the UConn Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Women's Health and Dr. Martin Freilich, an NIH K-23 Award). Finally, through a federal grant awarded to Dr. Steve Lepowsky to enable the AEGD program to expand into community settings and the State grant award in pediatric care to the school, the School of Dental Medicine will be able to increase access to dental care to the under-served to at least six additional community sites.

The School of Dental Medicine's current success can only be sustained if we continue as a community of faculty, staff and students to be alert and work hard to create new and better, opportunities in this challenging environment.

SDM Welcomes New Faculty

In addition to the student Class of 2005, the School of Dental Medicine has welcomed several new faculty. **Robert Aseltine, PhD** (associate professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences) arrived from Boston University in May with research interests in mental health, adolescent development, and health policy. **Ofer Doron, DMD** (assistant professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences) graduated from the School of Dental Medicine in 1998 and works part-time in Dental Clinic #5; **Ruth Goldblatt, DMD** (Class Of 1990) lives in Simsbury and is the course director for the geriatric component of the Human Development & Health course. Additionally she is a dentist at the Hebrew Home and Hospital in West Hartford. **Julie Wagner, PhD** (assistant professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences) recently completed her postdoctoral fellowship at the VA Connecticut Healthcare System in West Haven. Her clinical interests are in cognitive behavioral therapy in addition to research interests in diabetes self-care behaviors and psychological adjustment to chronic illness.

The Department of Prosthodontics welcomes **J. Robert Kelly, DDS; Elena Nazarova, DMD; Dimitri Perdikis, DDS** and **Theodora Vogiatzi, DDS**. Dr. Kelly was appointed as Professor and Director, Dental Clinical Research Center. These appointments follow a 21-year career with the U.S. Navy, culminating with a tour as Commanding Officer, Naval Dental Research Institute. He received his dental degree from the Ohio State University, and his current research focuses on elucidating and modeling failure and damage mechanisms limiting the survival of dental prostheses. Dr. Nazarova graduated from UConn SDM in 2000. From July, 2000 to June, 2001 she was a Straumann Implant Research Fellow in the UConn Prosthodontics Department and at present she is working as a part-time faculty in the

Department of Prosthodontics and Operative Dentistry. Dr. Vogiatzi graduated from Aristotelion University of Thessaloniki in 1994 and was in private practice in Germany from 1995 to 1998. She also was a Straumann Implant Research Fellow in the UConn Prosthodontics Department 1998 to 2001 and presently is working as a full-time faculty in the Department of Prosthodontics and Operative Dentistry. Dr. Dimitri Perdikis graduated from Columbia University School of Dental and Oral Surgery in 1997. He was a resident here in the Prosthodontic Residency Program from 1997 to 2000 and is now working as a part-time faculty member in the Department of Prosthodontics and Operative Dentistry as well as in private practice.

Christina Zervou, DMD has joined the Department of Pediatric Dentistry as a full-time faculty member. She received her DMD from Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary, a certificate in Pediatric Dentistry in 1999 from Tufts and her MS in Dental Research in 2000 also from Tufts. Dr. Zervou also provides direct patient care at the University of New Haven School of Hygiene dental clinic. Her interests lie in prevention and esthetics.

Jeffrey Kingsbury, DDS, MD as been appointed to Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. He recently transferred from SUNY at Buffalo to the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. His research and clinical interests include oral oncology, wound healing, oral cancer, TMJ disease, reconstructive and cleft palate surgery.

Nancy Nie-Shiuh Chang, DDS, MS is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Periodontology. She is interested in the treatment of periodontal disease and behavioral modification of

Dental Screening at Camp Courant

by Deborah Redford-Badwal, DDS, PhD

Several years ago I became involved in helping Michael Perl, DDS, a local periodontist perform oral screening examinations of seven- and eight-year old children at Camp Courant, a summer camp for inner city Hartford children. Dr. Perl distributed toothbrushes obtained from the Hartford Dental Society. Examinations identifying children with potentially urgent needs were referred for further care. Subsequently, we developed a screening form allowing us to document each child's needs and a copy of the completed form was sent to the parents. This form contained the telephone numbers of the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Pediatric Dental Clinics (Burgdorf and CCMC clinics) and other clinics or offices which could be contacted for pediatric dental care.



Pictured at top left are Umar Haque (DS'02) with a young camper. Top right: hygienist Lurlene Williams, Dr. Richard Skinner, David Song (DS'02), Aravind Menon (DS'02), Umar Haque and Dr. Deborah Redford-Badwal; Center: Umar Haque; Bottom left: Lurlene Williams; Bottom right: Dr. Redford-Badwal.

children, in addition to the seven- and eight-year olds previously screened. Children identified to have immediate and urgent needs were placed on a list whose parents were contacted by our clinic. This past year, with additional help from another faculty member in Pediatric Dentistry, Dr. Richard Skinner and several dental students, all the children attending Camp Courant were screened. The health director for Camp Courant, Mr. Joe Garcia was responsible for sending the forms home to the parents. Again we will attempt to personally contact the parents of the children identified with urgent needs. Other long term goals are to evaluate the efficiency of our screening and intervention methods used in this camp, to determine an effective means of decreasing

Two years ago we expanded the program by including another hygienist, Lurlene Williams from our Burgdorf Clinic. This expansion allowed us to include five- and six-year old

ing the number and severity of oral health needs in children returning for camp in subsequent summers.

SDM New Faculty

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patients and had recent appointments in the Department of Geriatric/Periodontic/Preventive Dentistry at the University of Michigan Dental School and at the Dental School of Taipei Medical College.

The Department of Oral Diagnosis welcomes **Rajesh V. Lalla, BDS, PhD**. Raj completed a clinical certificate program in Oral Medicine and a PhD program in Oral Biology here at UCHC in February this year. His research interests relate to oral mucosal injury. In March, 2001 he received the Hatton Award from the American Association for Dental Research.

Forty-One New Dental Students Arrive at UCHC

by Edward Thibodeau, DMD, PhD

The School of Dental Medicine is pleased to welcome 13 women and 28 men into the Class of 2005. The Class presented with excellent undergraduate academic records and the highest standardized admission test (DAT) results in recent years with scores above 20 in both the Academic Average and Total Science sections of the examination. Two students, interested in careers in research and academic dentistry, have been accepted into the Schools NIDCR-funded combined DMD/PhD program.

In addition to their strong scholastic preparation, the Class of 2005 represents a diverse range of interests, backgrounds and talents. Almost half of the students in the class are Connecticut or New England residents who are participating in the New England Regional School Program. Others come to the School from as far away as California, Utah, Texas, Arizona and Idaho. The Class also benefits from diverse cultural backgrounds with students born in Vietnam, Jamaica, Cuba, Bulgaria, Poland, Taiwan, Ukraine, Canada, Iran, and India. While the majority of students are recent college graduates, others come from careers in nursing, research, the pharmaceutical industry, and related dental healthcare fields. In addition, over 20% of the incoming class are children of dentists practicing in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, and Utah.



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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.

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