

THE COMPASS

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

VOL. V, ISSUE I

SPRING, 2004

Combined BA/BS and DMD Programs Attracts Top High School Students

by Edward A. Thibodeau, DMD, PhD - Assistant Dean for Admissions

The School of Dental Medicine in partnership with the University of Connecticut has developed a special program that is designed to give gifted and talented high school students, who are certain that they want to become doctors of dental medicine, the opportunity to combine liberal arts and professional education. The eight-year program leads to the awarding of an undergraduate BA/BS degree from the University of Connecticut and a DMD degree from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine. The Program is viewed as a liberating opportunity to help students more fully develop their interests while encouraging students to explore a wide range of undergraduate courses encompassing the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. Combined Degree students are also expected to participate in dental school activities in order to acquaint them with research, clinical, and community service opportunities at the School of Dental Medicine.

Admission to the Combined Program is highly selective. Applicants must present evidence of exceptional performance in a demanding high school curriculum, which may include exposure to advanced mathematics and laboratory sciences as well as other disciplines. Generally, candidates will present with a high school grade point average of 3.5 on a four-point scale, rank in the top 20% of their high school class and have a SAT I combined score of at least 1200. Additional factors considered for admission into the Program include strength of recommendations, maturity, range and depth of extracurricular involvement, and commitment to the health sciences.

As part of their program requirements, all Combined Degree students are expected to maintain a strong undergraduate record

and an average GPA of 3.3. Students are also required to complete at least one year of general biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, general physics (all courses with associated laboratories) and one semester of biochemistry. In addition, all students are required to take the DAT exam and to engage in clinical, research, extracurricular, or community service activities. The School also requires evidence of strong motivational and interpersonal skills as well as interviews and letters of recommendation.

Since its approval by the Dean of the School of Dental Medicine and the Director of Enrollment Management at the University of Connecticut in 2000, the Program has seen a steady increase in interest and number of applications. In 2001, only three students applied to the program. This was followed by 16 applicants in 2002, and 29 in 2003. For the current 2003-2004 admissions cycle, the Combined Degree Program has received 34 completed applications. Within this group the majority of applicants (47%) were from out-of-state and applied from as far away as California, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Connecticut residents represented 29% and New England residents 23% of the applicants. At the present time there are a total of 10 undergraduate students enrolled in the program and the first students to complete their undergraduate degrees are scheduled to matriculate into the School of Dental Medicine in the Fall of 2005.

Currently, the School of Dental Medicine is considering the development of an accelerated program that would allow students with exceptional personal attributes and academic records the opportunity to complete both their bachelor's degree and

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Message from the Dean

Peter Robinson, DDS, PhD

Step Back and Smell the Roses!

The word is out. We have a winning combination of students, faculty and staff. We produce winners, having the most highly sought after graduates for residencies. In an unprecedented situation for any dental school in the nation, the President of our University has featured the School of Dental Medicine in his Annual Report for the second time in three years. His sentiment seems to be shared by many. As I visit with our friends in the Health Center, colleagues on the Storrs campus and folks throughout the State, I am continuously overwhelmed by the amount of pride expressed by others about our dental school being the best in the nation. This is something about which we too in the dental school community should feel pleased and should celebrate.

As you all know, we have been getting our "thirty seconds of fame" hundreds of times a year over the past three years through the State's Lotto ad that features our students and faculty. We are obviously not a well-kept secret. President Austin, in his 2003 Annual Report, describes the reasons we are a "featured school." He points out the School's strategies and tactics have resulted in measurable success including our students' test scores in the National Boards, superb results from our recent Accreditation visit, being ranked in the top 5 in the nation by the Institute for Scientific Information Essential School Indicators for the ratio of dental publications for the University over a five year period, ranked 7th in the nation in the 2002 ADA Survey for Research Funding per faculty member. Additionally, the President noted our multiple citations in ADEA's "Best Practices in Dental Education" publication, the RWJ Award and our demonstrated strong commitment to the oral health of the State's neediest residents.

In the beginning of this year we continued to celebrate new accolades for our students, having a perfect Match Day and recognizing the Class of 2005 achieving a 2nd ranking in Part I of the National Boards.

I know it is not good form to "rest on your laurels," but let's take a moment to congratulate each other and thank all our fellow dental school faculty and staff for contributing to these outstanding outcomes.

As it says in the Lotto ad, "Go Molars!"

STUDENT RESEARCH DAY

On Monday, February 23, 2004, the annual Medical/Dental Student Research Day was held in the Health Center's academic lobby with twelve poster sessions and seven oral talks were presented. The following were awarded by the School of Dental Medicine:



School of Dental Medicine students who gave oral presentations at the annual Medical/Dental Student Scientific Research Day, from left to right: Tara Pimblett ('07); Amy Gardner ('05); Brendan Hallissey ('06); Kathryn McCollum ('06); Jonathon Rogers ('06); Kelly Endsley ('06). Missing from the photo is Jessica Costa-Guda ('06).

Jessica Costa-Guda was given the Dean's Award in recognition of an outstanding presentation demonstrating clinical application and technique relating to dentistry. The award consists of an expense-paid trip as the School of Dental Medicine representative to the Hinman Student Research Symposium, and the student's name engraved on a plaque.

Ritu Bahl was given the ADA/DENTSPLY Student Clinical Award in recognition of an outstanding presentation. The award includes round trip coach fare to Orlando, Florida for the annual session of the American Dental Association as school representative, allowance for lodging, food and other expenses, and ADA/Dentsply plaque.

Mark Ludlow is the recipient of the UConn section, AADR Student Research Award of \$100 given to a UConn dental student presenting an outstanding project in clinical or basic science research relating to any aspect of dentistry.

The Gustave Perl Memorial Award was given to **Ryan Dowling** for outstanding original research with a monetary award of \$100, and his name engraved on a plaque.

Sara Curcio was given the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine Society of Alumni and Friends for original research having a direct application to dental practice. She received a monetary award

of \$150 and her name engraved on a plaque.

Jonathon Rogers was awarded the Listerine Excellence Award in recognition of an outstanding research project relating to the field of periodontology. This award consists of an

engraved plaque to be displayed at UConn, a small plaque for the recipient, and a text relating to the field of periodontology.

Milos Janicek was given a \$100 from the Department of Biostructure and Function for the presentation of basic science concepts in dental research by predoctoral dental students and postdoctoral graduate students.

The Dental Student Research Society gave **Michael Caban** an award of \$100, for excellence of science presentation by an undergraduate student.

Amy Gardner received a one-year subscription to Archives of Oral Biology as the Elsevier Science Research Award.

The Connecticut Holistic Health Association annual award was established to recognize excellence in the presentation of scholarly work within the field of Integrative/ Complementary and Alternative Medicine. **Michael Capalbo** will receive a monetary gift of \$100 and will have his name engraved on a plaque displayed in the academic entryway.

Finally in recognition of excellence in the art, science, and literature of dentistry, Omicron Kappa Upsilon, the national dental honor society, presented \$25 gift certificates to the UCHC Bookstore **to all students** who participated in Research Day activities.

The School of Dental Medicine Celebrates Black History

by Cynthia E. Hodge, D.M.D.

The UConn School of Dental Medicine Office of Community and Outreach Programs and the UConn Office of Diversity Programs co-sponsored an all-day program as part of the university's Black History Month celebration. On Thursday, February 19, 2004, a special reception for faculty, staff, students and volunteers was held during the noon hour. Many dropped in to meet the guest for the evening program, Dr. Elizabeth Daniels.

Dr. Daniels was the guest speaker for an evening program. She is the first African American woman to graduate from the SDM. She spoke to a standing room only crowd, recalling experiences she encountered as a black woman in a mostly all white, male environment. But the highlight of her presentation was a discussion of molecular medicine and the need for research. Dr. Daniels challenged the young predoctoral students to think about molecular medicine and consider research in this area. A PhD organic chemist, her area of interest is basic science application to clinical care.

A dinner reception followed the program. Several local community dentists attended the program. Among them was a dentist who, prior to attending dental school, worked as a dental assistant to Dr. Daniels. He presented her with a dozen roses and thanked her for the positive influence she had on his life.

The Associate Dean for Community and Outreach Programs and Francine Dew, Director of the Office of Diversity programs plan to co-sponsor other activities aimed at enhancing cultural awareness and appreciation.



Dr. Elizabeth Daniels accepts flowers from Dr. James Franklin, a Hartford dentist, who once worked as her dental assistant in Connecticut.

OMF Radiologists Shine at National Meeting

by Alan J. Lurie, D.D.S., Ph.D.

The Division of Oral & Maxillofacial Radiology, Department of Oral Diagnosis, School of Dental Medicine, was an unusually prominent participant in the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Radiology in Chicago, December 3-7.

- **Dr. Hassem Geha**, a 2nd year student in the combined OMFR Residency/Master of Dental Science Program was awarded the Albert G. Richards Graduate Student Research Grant. Dr. Geha's research proposal is entitled, "Measurements of Thickness and Mass Changes Using Direct Digital Radiography."
- **Dr. Anitha Potluri**, a 3rd year student in the combined OMFR Residency/Master of Dental Science Program was awarded the Howard R. Raper Oral & Maxillofacial Radiology, established to recognize the most promising senior resident/graduate student nationally who demonstrates

an intent to pursue a career in academia.

- **Drs. Guilherme Tosoni**, a visiting international faculty member from Brazil. Dr. Potluri, and **Dr. Mohammed Islam**, a 3rd year student in the combined OMFR Residency/PhD program presented oral and poster abstracts.
- **Dr. Alan Lurie**, Professor and Head of the OMFR Division, delivered the Academy's annual H. Cline Fixott Memorial Lecture entitled, "Radiation Biology, Radiation Risk, and Clinical Significance: Historical and Contemporary Thinking." Dr. Lurie's presentation can be accessed at the Academy's website: <http://www.aaomr.org/54Annualsession.htm>.

Overall the awards are a testament to the division's continued commitment to academics and research and to its stature as the premier OMFR residency program in the country.

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the Doctor of Dental Medicine degree in seven years instead of the traditional eight. Also, in order to help provide a resource for not only the Combined Degree students but all other undergraduate students and graduate students interested in a dental career, the School of Dental Medicine has assisted with the development of the first Pre-Dental Society on the Storrs campus. According to Lauren Mentasti, a junior in the Combined Degree Program and the first president of the Pre-Dental Society, "The University of Connecticut has afforded me a strong science curriculum accompanied by exciting research opportunities. This has provided me with a truly unique experience that will serve as a strong foundation for my future career in dental medicine."

On January 26, faculty, students and staff gathered at a Match Reception to congratulate the Class of 2004 on their successful placement into postdoctoral dental education programs.



MATCH DAY - 2004

Of the 29 students who entered the Match program this year, a remarkable 83% (24) will be entering programs of their first choice. Importantly, all students secured positions in advanced education programs this year. Fifteen of our dental students will remain in Connecticut: ten at the UConn Health Center, three at St. Francis Hospital, and one each at Hartford Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital. Students going out of state will attend one of the following: University of North Carolina, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Tufts University, University of Pennsylvania, Gundersen Lutheran Clinic, Loyola University of Chicago, Northwestern Memorial

Hospital, Hennepin County Medical Center, University of Colorado, VA Salt Lake City, Virginia Common-

wealth University, University of Las Vegas, and Mount Sinai Hospital.

The Class of 2004 will have:

- 4 students entering private practice
 - 1 student in the U.S. Army (AEGD program)
 - 6 students in Advanced Education in General Dentistry programs
 - 12 students in General Practice Residencies
 - 1 student in Endodontology
 - 3 students in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
 - 2 students in Orthodontics
 - 4 students in Pediatric Dentistry
 - 1 student in Periodontology
- Congratulations to the Class of 2004 as they move on to yet another stage in their careers.



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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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