

THE COMPASS

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

VOL. VIII, ISSUE I

SPRING, 2007



OMICRON
KAPPA
UPSILON

2007 Inductees

The Phi Chi Chapter of Omicron Kappa Upsilon held its tenth annual Induction Dinner and Ceremony on May 9, 2007 at Avon Old Farms Hotel. OKU, the national dental honor society, welcomed the following new alumni members of the Class of 2007: **Adam Cohen,**

Larissa Hammer, Lewis Jones and Priscilla Pickens-Larson. New faculty inductees were **Drs. Sarita Arteaga and Ruth Goldblatt** (Department of Craniofacial Sciences). **Dr. Michael Freedman** (Department of Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences) was elected as the 2007 honorary member. Inductees were presented with keys and certificates by **Dr. Jackie Duncan** (Department of Reconstructive Sciences), President of Phi Chi Chapter, and **Dr. Deb Redford-Badwal** (Department of Craniofacial Sciences) President-Elect.



Front row: Ruth Goldblatt, Michael Freedman, Sarita Arteaga. Rear row: Priscilla Pickens-Larson, Larissa Hammer, Lewis Jones, Adam Cohen.

OKU was founded in 1914 to honor graduating students who had demonstrated outstanding scholarship and exemplary traits of character and potential qualities for future professional growth and achievement. Faculty and honorary members are selected in recognition of contributions to the art, science and literature of dentistry.



Message from the Dean

Monty MacNeil, DDS, MDS

FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS . . .

The past six to twelve months have certainly been a period of brainstorming, evaluation and change for me and, I suspect, many others in the School of Dental Medicine. Since last May when President Austin visited us as a faculty, we have been considering the future path the School will travel and best strategies to make that journey as successful, timely and yes, enjoyable, as possible. Questions that we have asked ourselves include:

- What sort of school do we aim to be ten years from now?
- What is our role and responsibility in the Academic Health Center?
- How can we stabilize our economic ship so we can continue to excel in our main missions?

In all this activity, it becomes very easy to lose focus and become comfortable working in the theoretical realm. I suggest it is time for us now to "roll up our sleeves" and concentrate on several endeavors that have both pressing immediate need and long-term implications.

From my perspective, our three most important "hard work" endeavors at this time are:

- **Accreditation, October 2008.** Was it actually six months ago when we met as a faculty and talked about all the time we had to conduct our self-study? Where has that time gone? The clock now sits at 17 months and I know we still have much to do over that period. Let's all get involved with the various committees that are working under the leadership of our Accreditation Self-Study Chair, Dr. Bob Kelly. At this stage, we should clearly know where our efforts should be targeted; let's focus on those areas and tasks.
- **Research Strategic Plan.** Thank you for a great faculty response, including action by our Dental Council, to this recent UCHC request. Some great ideas and concepts have emerged. Let's focus on making the best of these possibilities for our faculty and school.
- **401 Curriculum Change.** Undoubtedly, this must be one of our priorities. We must take this seriously as it is a critical building block for our future and something that can define us nationally. There is already a working group addressing the Year 4 (and "01") concept of 401, and we must now focus on those changes that should occur in Years 1 through 3 to make this all work. We should aim to establish a pilot for this concept in our curriculum as soon as possible.

I want to thank all of you for your support over the past four months. Together, I know we can do all of these things and more, if we work together in a focused, cohesive manner.

Department News



Dr. Elie Ferneini (SDM 2002) a resident in the six-year OMFS residency recently received a \$1000.00 scholarship from the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Foundation to support travel for him to attend the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Second Research Summit. Dr. Ferneini has been very involved in research both as a dental student and resident at UConn. He most recently presented a poster at the

AADR meeting in March in New Orleans - "Incidence of Alveolar Osteitis with Intraoperative Tetracycline."



Endodontology resident **Dr. Takashi Komabayashi** has been notified that he was selected as the third recipient of the John & Joyce Ingle Fellowship in Endodontics. According to Dr. Ingle, "We were most impressed with your resume! It is also comforting to know that you have two of the finest mentors in endodontic academia. I look forward to meeting you at the AAE Philadelphia meeting and following your career over the years. I hope that Drs. Aboushala and Khan, the previous recipients, will be there as well. You three

will make up a triumvirate of the future in our specialty."



The UConn Center for Regenerative Medicine and Skeletal Development has hired a new postdoctoral fellow, **Symone San Miguel, DMD, PhD**. Dr. San Miguel comes to the Health Center from the College of Dentistry Centro, Escolar University in Manila, Philippines. He graduated with a PhD degree in Dental Science at Tokyo Medical and Dental University in 2000. Thereafter, he pursued his fellowship under the sponsorship of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany to

work as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Leipzig until 2002. He also became a Golda Meir Research Fellow at the Institute of Dental Science, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJI) from 2002-2005. After his postdoctoral studies, he went back to teach at the College of Dentistry, Centro Escolar University in Manila until March 2007.

Dr. San Miguel will be working with **Dr. Ivo Kalajic** on identifying the osteo-progenitor cells within the periodontal ligament and determining the stages of these cells utilizing transgenic mice approach.



Pictured left to right are: IADR President Stephen Bayne, Cristina Villar and Unilever Representative Marco Bottarelli.

News from the New Orleans IADR Annual Meeting

As Councilor for the National Student Research Group, **Colin Kong** (D'10) was recognized at the opening ceremony and also was the student representative at the AADR Council Meeting. Perhaps more importantly, he also received the AADR Student Research Fellowship.

Cristina Villar, a PhD student in the laboratory of **Dr. Anna Dongari-Bagtzoglou**, was the first-place winner of the AADR Hatton Award, in the Senior Category, for her project entitled, "A novel mechanism of oral mucosal invasion by *Candida albicans*." This project characterized a novel mechanism of oral mucosal invasion by the fungal pathogen *C. albicans* via secreted aspartyl-protease-mediated degradation of E-cadherin from oral epithelial cell junctions.

Cristina competed at the 2007 AADR/IADR meeting in New Orleans, against a national pool of candidates whose projects were evaluated for originality and scientific merit. This competition is designed for junior investigators (junior, senior and postdoctoral) who exhibit potential for a productive career in dental research. The evaluation process consisted of submission of an abstract for initial selection, submission of a 10-page extended abstract, and oral presentation of a poster followed by a question and answer period at the 2007 meeting. The monetary prize for this award (\$1,000 for first place) was sponsored by a generous donation from Johnson & Johnson Oral Health Products Division.

American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics Meets in Chicago

The 56th Annual Scientific Session of the American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics

was held in Chicago on February 23 and 24, 2007. The mission of the American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics is to foster excellence in the field of fixed prosthodontics through mutual study, participation and cooperation.

Faculty members from the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine are active in the Academy and serve on the board of directors: **Dr. J. Robert Kelly**, Professor in the Department of Reconstructive Sciences, Division of Prosthodontics and Director of the Dental Research Center and **Dr. John Agar**, the current Vice-President of the Academy and an Associate Professor in the Department of Reconstructive Sciences, Division of Prosthodontics and Director of the Graduate Prosthodontics Program at the UConn SDM. **Dr. Patchanee Rungrunganunt** was honored with the Claude R. Baker Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching Pre-Doctoral Fixed Prosthodontics during the 2006 annual session and is a member of the Academy. Additional faculty members were nominated and accepted into the academy membership by the Credentials Committee during this session: **Dr. Sarita Arteaga**, Assistant Clinical Professor,

Dr. Elena Nazarova, Assistant Clinical Professor and **Dr. Sangeetha Raghavendra**, Assistant Clinical Professor all in the Department of Reconstructive Sciences. **Dr. Fei Liu**, a 2006 graduate of the UConn Prosthodontics program and current Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan Dental School, was also recognized as a new member during a luncheon held that weekend.



Drs. Fei Liu, Patchanee Rungruananunt, Elena Nazarova, Sangeetha Raghavendra, John Agar and Sarita Arteaga at the new members luncheon during the 56th Annual Scientific Session of the American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics.

2007 Graduation



Graduation exercises for the Class of 2007 occurred on Sunday, May 13 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. **Dr. Charles N. Bertolami**, an oral surgeon and current

Dean, University of California – San Francisco Dental School, was the keynote speaker. Currently a researcher and author of oral surgery articles and books, Dr. Bertolami was on faculty here in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Dr. Bertolami will become the 14th Dean of the New York University College of Dentistry, September 1, 2007.

UConn Predental Society

The Predental Society of the University of Connecticut (Storrs) traveled to the dental student labs on the Farmington campus on March 15 to interact with first and second year dental students, and to get some hands-on knowledge about what our students do. The purpose of the Society is to provide students interested in a career in dentistry the opportunity to participate in educational, community and social activities that will enhance their knowledge of the profession and assist them in becoming excellent candidates for dental school along with making an impact through community services.



Members of the University of Connecticut Predental Society at the University of Connecticut Health Center dental student labs. From left to right: Jackie Kupper, Kirk Round, Yuri Sirotinski, Michelle Kelly, Anthony Carbonella, Patrick Brennan, Hannah Hughes, Alyssa Bono.



UConn
SCHOOL OF
DENTAL
MEDICINE

Editor: Susan Reisine, Ph.D.
Co-Editor: Monty MacNeil, D.D.S., 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
moulis@nso1.uhc.edu