

# THE COMPASS

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

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SUMMER, 2006

## Special Olympics



## Special Dentists

Once again **Drs. Reza Kazemi** and **Michael Goupil**, and a group of our dental students participated in providing dental care and patient education at Special Olympics Special Smiles®. Held June 10-12 at Southern Connecticut State University, between 300 and 350 athletes were seen. According to Dr. Kazemi, "I have had the privilege of being a part of the Special Olympics, Special Smiles as a part of our community since mid-1990s. It is a great program and makes you satisfied being a part of this great event, observing the young athletes, with all limitations, expressing themselves with their courage, talent and enthusiasm."

Since its inception in 1993, Special Olympics Special Smiles® has demonstrated remarkable success in its mission: increasing access to dental care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities. Dental screenings are used as a means to increase awareness of the state of the athletes' oral health for the athletes themselves, as well as their parents and/or caregivers.

Providing solutions to chronic dental problems, or providing an athlete with a mouthguard, can enhance the athlete's performance. At a Special Smiles screening, Special Olympics athletes are provided with the following: hygiene education to help ensure they are doing an adequate job of brushing and flossing; a goody bag containing toothbrush, toothpaste and floss; nutritional education to understand how their diet affects their total health; a list of dentists/clinics in their area who will treat patients with special needs (should they have difficulty finding a dentist); and free mouth guards (at most locations) for athletes competing in contact or high-risk sports.

Data are collected for each athlete who receives a dental screening, and compiled for analysis. This generates a snapshot of the oral health of a representative sample of the hundreds of thousands of Special Olympics athletes around the world. These data are used to encourage more dental schools to increase the special needs instruction they offer, and to demonstrate to governments of all levels that access to oral health providers for this population must be increased.



### Message from the Dean

Peter Robinson, DDS, PhD

Recently, the School received some incredibly positive news about capital fund support. The Board of Directors of the Health Center approved \$3 million in funding for the new Implant and Reconstructive Dentistry Center (Implant Center). In addition, nearly \$1 million has been raised in corporate donations for the Implant Center. Thus, the School of Dental Medicine's clinical signature program has been funded. Additionally, because of fortuitive project scheduling changes, funds from UConn 21 for the dental clinics and preclinical lab have been moved up several years. Now, over \$4 million will be made available for the clinic/preclinical lab over the next few years.

Over the past several years, the State has been very generous to the School in capital funding, providing it with funds for the Implant Center, the pre-clinical lab and the new clinic funds coupled with the \$2.5 million for clinic equipment and central sterilization project provided in 2002. Plus, all of the lecture halls and conference rooms are being modernized with new technology and will later be completely refurbished. In the face of all these capital opportunities, the School needs to move forward with these new projects as follows: select architectural plans and build out the new Implant Center, develop a plan to transitionally accommodate the entire Faculty Practice on the first floor, and develop a master plan for the dental clinics. Faculty and staff working groups have been identified to review, craft and approve each step of these projects. This is truly a great opportunity for the faculty and staff of the School to build a physical plant which will serve it well for several years.

## Dr. Mina Mina - An IADR Distinguished Scientist

Dr. Ravindra Nanda, Department of Craniofacial Sciences, announces with great pleasure that **Dr. Mina Mina** (Division of Pediatric Dentistry) has been selected as the recipient of the 2006 IADR Distinguished Scientist Award for Craniofacial Biology Research. An IADR committee has recognized her significant contribution to the field of dental research and she will be presented this honor at the opening ceremonies of the 84th IADR General Session in Brisbane, Australia on June 28th, 2006. The entire Department congratulates Dr. Mina on a job well done.



*Drs. Yu-Hsiung Wang (Pediatric Dentistry) and Reza Kazami (Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials & Development) donate their time at the Special Olympics.*



*Dr. Mina Mina (Pediatric Dentistry) - IADR Distinguished Scientist.*

## CEHDL Awards Initial Seed Grant

The Connecticut NIH EXPORT Center for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos (CEHDL) has awarded its first \$10,000 seed grant to Dr. Julie Wagner to conduct the project "Daily Process Study of Discrimination, Stress and Diabetes Outcomes in African American Women." Dr. Wagner is assistant professor in the Department of Oral Health and Diagnostic Sciences, Division of Behavioral Sciences & Community Health; she will use this funding to collect pilot data needed to develop an NIH R01 proposal.

This 2006-07 health disparities seed grant competition was supported by UConn through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education and the Department of Nutritional Sciences. This was a highly competitive process with a funding chance of only 11%. The grant review panel was formed by nine multidisciplinary members representing public health, medical, biological, social, and behavioral sciences. The panel followed NIH grant proposal review panel rules and included representation from UConn-Storrs, UConn's School of Medicine, The Hispanic Health Council and Hartford Hospital.



*Dr. Brian Shaughnessy*



*Dental students applaud Dr. Collins.*



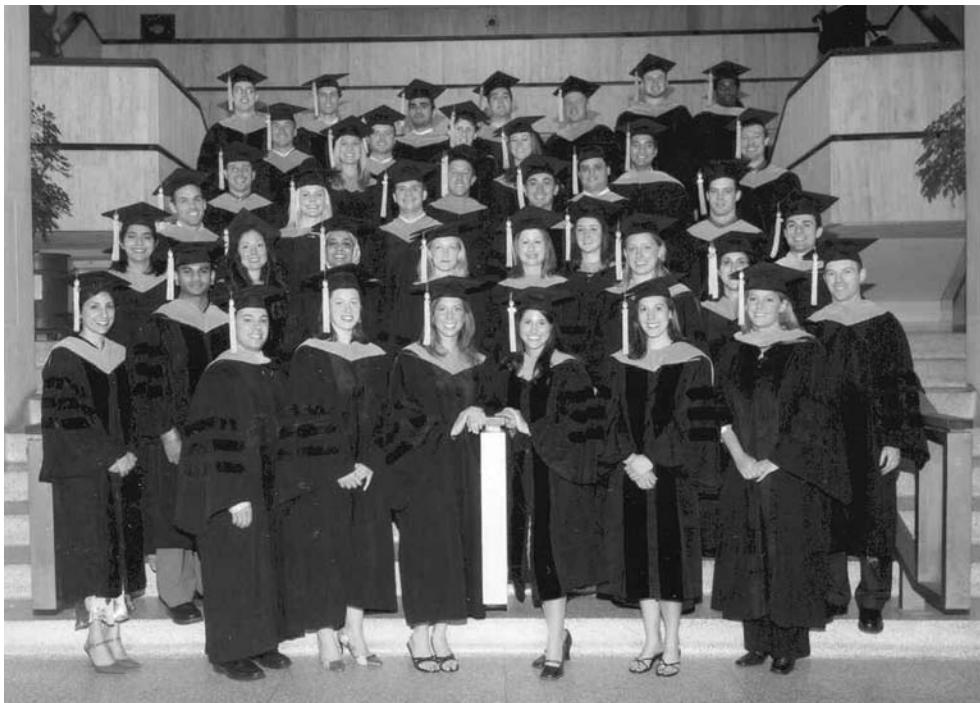
*Dr. Francis Collins concluding his commencement speech.*

## ~ Commencement 2006 ~

Forty-five students received their DMD degrees Sunday, May 14 here at the Health Center. Brian Shaughnessy was the speaker chosen from this year's class. In addition,

the keynote speaker was Dr. Francis S. Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute in Bethesda, who said the study of the genome is "not at the end, but at the end of the beginning." With all the excitement over research and medical science, Collins said, it is important not to forget what he called "the four food groups of a balanced life": the professional side, the spiritual dimension, the area of love, and fun. With that he pulled out a folk guitar and sang about medical student

life (to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "My Way"), during which professors forced him to do it "their way" until he graduated. For that bit of humor, Collins received a standing ovation.



life (to the tune of Frank Sinatra's "My Way"), during which professors forced him to do it "their way" until he graduated. For that bit of humor, Collins received a standing ovation.

Our graduates have made the following plans for their future: Advanced Education in General Dentistry (5), Community Dentistry (5), Endodontics (2), General Practice Residency (9), US Military (2), Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery (1), Orthodontics (7), Pediatric Dentistry (4), Periodontics (1), Private Practice (7), Prosthodontics (1), Public Health (1).

## Endodontology Resident Receives Award



*Dr. Takashi Komabayashi (left) accepting the 2005 Henry M. Thornton/SCADA Fellowship Award from President Michael C. Alfano.*

**Dr. Takashi Komabayashi**, a first-year resident in Endodontology, is a recipient of the 2005 Henry M. Thornton/SADA Fellowship Award. This award from the American Dental Association for graduate study in dentistry is one of more than \$55,000 in Fellowships grants since 1976.

Dr. Komabayashi represented the Hiroshima University in the 1997 Japan Dental Association/DENTSPLY Student Clinician Program. He received his dental degree the next year and in 2002 he graduated from the prestigious Ph.D. program in Dental Materials Research at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University. The following year he entered the International Dentist Program at the University of

California at San Francisco, an advanced standing D.D.S. program for overseas - trained dentists. He graduated in June of 2005 and is now enrolled in a 36-month combined program leading to a Certificate of Proficiency in Endodontics and a Master of Dental Science degree with the Department of Endodontology at the University of Connecticut to which this Fellowship will be applied.



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