

THE



# COMPASS

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

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## Dr. Hodge Accepts New Position in School of Dental Medicine

The UCONN Health Center School of Dental Medicine welcomes **Dr. Cynthia Hodge** as Associate Dean for Community and Outreach Programs. She will head the Office of Community and Outreach Programs with primary responsibility for all School of Dental Medicine community programs, as well as those involving dental students and dental residents. Dr. Hodge will assume the role of principal investigator of the school's *Pipeline, Profession and Practice* grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and will take a leading role in implementing all aspects of this project and in other related community initiatives. Dr. Hodge's academic appointment is in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Community Health.



Dr. Hodge received her D.M.D. degree from Oregon Health Sciences University. She completed a General Practice Residency and earned an M.P.H. degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She recently received the M.P.A. degree from Harvard University and earned a certificate in Minority Health Policy. Her academic appointments include Chairperson of the Department of Hospital Dentistry, Meharry Medical College and Director of the Meharry

Medical College's Dental General Practice Residency. Just before accepting the appointment in the School of Dental Medicine, she serves in the US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as a Harvard University research fellow within

the Bureau of Health Professions.

A staunch public health advocate, in accepting this position, Dr. Hodge stated, "This position will allow me to fully participate in community health promotion, as well as providing a direct role in shaping the knowledge and attitudes of students related to community health and community health care."

In addition to Dr. Hodge's impressive academic training and experience, she has held a number of distinguished positions in organized dentistry as well as being past President of the National Dental Association. She has been quite active in providing support to people with HIV/AIDS as evidenced by being on both the ADA and NDA (Chair) Task Forces on HIV/AIDS. In addition, her scholarly work has focused on promoting comprehensive, oral and systemic, approaches to the health care of medically compromised patients.



### Message from the Dean

Peter Robinson, DDS, PhD

#### On Being a Welcoming Community

A recent publication, "From Their Perspective: The Pathway to Dentistry for Minority Students," commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, provided insights from focus groups and interviews with minority students from a number of schools. There were many eye-opening observations reported in this study including some of the minority dental students' statements that they feel alone in a "white" environment without the support of faculty and with access limited resources. It was also reported that most minority dental students do not view faculty as a source of support and guidance. Though these interviews were not done with our students at the School of Dental Medicine, it should give us pause and a need for self-reflection. On the surface it appears as if the School of Dental Medicine is a very welcoming community by simply looking at the array of welcoming activities we have with the new students including a robust, friendly orientation, "Family Day," wonderful ASDA activities and the "Welcoming Reception." Though these are very positive activities for the first-year students the question is, do we truly sustain this "welcoming" environment for all the students throughout their four-year experience. What about minority staff and faculty?

A concern I have, as well as being expressed by many others, is whether or not we are truly a welcoming organization for all students, staff and faculty at all levels regardless of color, culture or faith. To this end two major, initial steps have been made at the School. First, we have a new position in the administration, Associate Dean of Community and Outreach Programs. Dr. Cynthia Hodge has accepted this position and, among her many responsibilities, will help guide our organization into being more culturally sensitive and welcoming. Secondly, we received a substantial three-year grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation to conduct a cultural audit of the School, as well as the whole Health Center, and to develop a strategic plan to enhance culture competency. Once we have achieved these goals of developing a welcoming organizational climate, we can then state that we are a truly welcoming community to all people.

## Scholarships Awarded at Welcome Reception

by Sandra M. Krawczynski

The School of Dental Medicine held its annual Welcome Reception on Thursday, September 11, 2003. The Welcome Reception heralds the beginning of a new academic year and presents an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the School of Dental Medicine to gather, socialize and celebrate the accomplishments of the past year. This occasion especially recognizes the many accomplishments of our students and their contributions to the academic, research and service missions of this institution. A number of students were specifically honored while recognizing that each and every one of our students is a valued member of the UConn family and, to some measure, share in each award and the achievements of their class and fellow students.

The School of Dental Medicine is very appreciative of the donations of our many

benefactors, including alumni, friends, affiliated organizations and societies, and faculty. This support makes the Welcome Reception and its celebration of achievement possible.

Dr. Edward Thibodeau (Year 1 Director) presented awards totaling \$20,500 to 11 first-year students, prior to matriculation, based on strength of academic record and other entrance criteria as considered by the Admissions Committee. The recipients included:

**Larissa Gardner Hammer** (University of Tennessee); **Toni Hacek** (Loyola University, Chicago); **Xia Gong** (Xuzhou Normal University, China/UConn); **Nick Higson** (Salem State College, MA); **Lewis Jones** (Brigham Young University); **Lisa Lanzillotti**; (Worcester Polytech Institute); **Deborah Munoz** (University of Pennsylvania); **Ivelina Nedelcheva** (Medical University of Sofia, Bulgaria); **Omit Shah** (Bowdoin University); **Keri Stucenski** (Boston College); and **Vincent Steniger** (Sacred Heart University).

Dr. Arthur Hand (Pediatric Dentistry) pre-



sented the J. and E. Greenberg Award of \$1,000 to **Michael Goldkind** ('06) in recognition of academic achievement during the first year, and the Alumni Scholarship Fund Merit Award of \$1,250 based on scholarly achievement and contributions to the School's academic program and environment to **Michael DiMarzio** ('06).

Ms. Nancy Dean, representing the UCHC Auxiliary awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to **Brian Shaughnessy** ('06), **Anand Maharathi** ('05), **Dutran Do** ('04), and **Michael D'Occhio** ('04). Ms. Dean also presented the The Dorothy Brunoli Achievement Award of \$500 for volunteer achievements to **Eric Granquist** ('04) and **Crista Massaro** ('04).

The Edith and Morris, Jack and Phyllis Opinsky Scholarship of \$500 was awarded to **Vipul Patel** ('05) in recognition of academic achievement through the completion of the second year curriculum.

The James E. Kennedy Award of \$500, awarded to a dental student at the completion of the second year whose performance in the Basic Medical Sciences aspect of the dental curriculum is judged to be outstanding, was given **Jared Brown** ('05).

**Keith Dressler** ('05) was awarded the Alumni Scholarship Fund Merit Award of \$1,250, based on scholarly achievement and contributions to the School's academic program and environment.

The Alec R. & Martha C. Shapiro Scholarship recognizes overall achievement and is designed to provide significant financial assistance to a student(s) during the last two years of their studies at the School of Dental Medicine. The third year student who received this award of \$5,000 is **Christine Abenoja** ('05). The fourth-year student is **Daenya Edwards** ('04).

**Gabriel Kennedy** ('04) was presented with the Foundation of the Pierre Fauchard Academy Dental Student Scholarship Award of \$1,500. This award is presented to a student who is enrolled in the 2003-2004 academic year who has demonstrated the greatest potential of developing into an outstanding leader in the dental profession.

**Robert Goldsmith** ('04), in recognition of academic excellence, was presented with a scholarship of \$300 from the Dr. Gilbert LeVine Mellion and Ruth Berman Mellion Award

The Dr. William DiMeo Scholarship Award of \$1,000 was given to **Hillary Caruso** ('04) in recognition of academic excellence.

The Sidney Rafal Scholarship of \$500 for dedication to community service was awarded to **Cristina Santos** ('04). Ms. Santos was also the year's recipient of the 2003 Award of Excellence from the American Dental Student Association.

Finally, **Matthew Goslee** ('04) was honored with the Alumni Scholarship Fund Merit Award of \$1,250 based on scholarly achievement and contributions to the School's academic program and environment.



## Dr. Tanzer Honored in Sweden

**Jason M. Tanzer, D.M.D., Ph.D.** was awarded the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa, by the Sahlgrenska Academy of the University at Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden, on October 18, 2003. The Academy is the organization of the University which unites its schools of medicine, dentistry, and nursing. Seven other individuals also were granted honorary degrees by the Academy at the ceremonies. The citation in the printed booklet of the ceremony is as follows:

"Dr. Jason M. Tanzer has been affiliated with the University of Connecticut Health Center, in the United States, for more than 30 years. His epoch-making research on microorganisms associated with dental caries has made him a world-renowned scholar in Cariology.

Tanzer was the first researcher to systematically characterize the pathways of sucrose metabolism in *Streptococcus mutans*. He has identified virulence factors of cariogenic bacteria by using genetically defective bacterial strains in his research. These techniques allowed him to explore the synthesis of extra- and intracellular polysaccharides. In most elegant animal model experiments, he delineated how specific genes and enzymes affect the cariogenicity of *mutans streptococci*."

## Oral Diagnosis

**Dr. Douglas E. Peterson**, department head, was recently appointed to the following two Federal agencies:

National Cancer Institute (NCI) Subcommittee E, effective July 2003-June 2007. He had previously served as an ad hoc member for several years, during which time his responsibilities included chairing of NCI study section. NCI Subcommittee E evaluates outcomes of study section reviews of R01, P01 and related grant applications, and submits reports to NCI Advisory Council for final decisions regarding funding. The research critiqued by Subcommittee E is directed to cancer epidemiology, prevention and control.

Advisor, Dermatology/Dental Division of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) beginning October 2003. His work includes providing scientific input into FDA reviews relative to mucosal injury in oncology patients for Phase I, II, III and IV clinical studies.



## Prosthodontics

The recent American College of Prosthodontists meeting in Dallas (Oct. 8-11, 2003) was a spectacular success for the SDM and the Department of Prosthodontics and Operative Dentistry. **Dr. Michael Gulizio**, a recent MScD graduate from our prosthodontic graduate program won second place in the ACP John J. Sharry research competition. Dr. Gulizio's research project was entitled "The effect of implant angulation on the retentiveness of spherical overdenture attachments." **Dr. John R. Agar**, associate professor and director of the graduate program was Dr. Gulizio's primary mentor, and **Dr. J. Robert Kelly** was his primary thesis advisor. Dr. J. Robert Kelly, professor, received the ACP Clinician/Research Award for excellence in academic dentistry and contributing to the advancement of prosthodontics, sciences and the health professions. Finally, **Dr. Thomas D. Taylor**, professor and head, received the most prestigious award the ACP presents--The President's award given to the individual contributing outstanding vision and leadership for the welfare and advancement of the College and specialty of Prosthodontics, and contributions to the sciences or health professions. The simultaneous awarding of major ACP awards to multiple faculty at the same institution is unique in the history of the ACP and reflects very well on UConn and the School of Dental Medicine.

## Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Two OMFS chief residents presented abstracts at the 85th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons in Orlando, Florida September 10-13, 2003. **Heera Chang, DDS, MD** presented her research entitled Analysis of Inflammatory Mediators in TMJ Synovial Fluid Lavage Samples of Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Patients. Dr. Chang received an award of \$1000.00 for her presentation as the best presentation in her abstract session.

**Kevin Butterfield, DDS, MD** also presented his research on the Effect of Platelet-rich Plasma with Autogenous Bone for Sinus Augmentation in a Rabbit Model in the poster session.



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