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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
FALL 2012 - SPRING 2013
EVENTS FOR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI
DUS Welcome Back BBQ Garden & Yearbook Pick-Up
September 14, 2012 (Friday)
Annual Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament
September 18, 2012 (Sunday)
UBC Dentistry Family Day & BBQ Lunch
September 22, 2012 (Saturday)

MORE EVENTS FOR ALUMNI
Open Wide Community Clinic Day
September 15, 2012 (Saturday)
Alumni Reception
Northwest Dental Expo
September 21, 2012 (Friday)
Taste of Vancouver Island Alumni & Friends Reception
October 13, 2012 (Saturday)
Alumni Wine Reception
TODS Meeting, Kelowna
October 26, 2012 (Friday)

Annual Alumni Reception
Pacific Dental Conference 2013
March 8, 2013 (Friday)

More information about these events can be found on pages 36 – 37 in this issue of Impressions or at www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni

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This year marks 50 years since the province of British Columbia approved the establishment of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of British Columbia. These past 50 years have seen some dramatic changes in the way oral health care is delivered and in the way our students master their graduation competencies. The John B. Macdonald Building, which was constructed a few years after the provincial approval, is now being renovated to meet the current educational requirements of our programs. New space suitable for study clubs and small-group learning, a computer centre, a new plaster lab and a new student lounge have all been completed. Additional renovations are underway to further enhance the space for the benefit of our students, faculty and staff. The change has been extensive, and we invite all our alumni and colleagues in the oral health professions to visit us on campus to see first-hand what is occurring.

The major articles in this edition of Impressions focus on some significant accomplishments in research and community service. You can read about Dentistry’s Dr. Edward Putnins and Medicine’s Dr. Fabio Rossi, who have made advances using stem cell technologies to regenerate oral hard and soft tissues. Stem cell approaches have tremendous potential for new therapeutic strategies, and it is important that UBC has a leadership role in their development. We also highlight three of our PhD graduates—Dr. Anuk Iamaroon, Laisheng Lee Chou and Bjorn Steffensen—who have used the foundation of a UBC PhD to establish internationally recognized careers. Our PhD graduate program has had many graduates go on to productive academic careers, both at UBC and other institutions.

UBC Dentistry has become a very desirable location for international students. To demonstrate the international reputation that we have achieved, we take a look at Dr. Ravindra Shah’s approach to international relations and the programs he has developed. The interactions between UBC students and their international colleagues provide a very rich environment for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

I hope you share my excitement about our current accomplishments and the progress towards achieving our strategic goals. We have outstanding students, staff and faculty members, who are leading our profession into the future.

All the best,

Charles Shuler, DMD, PhD
Dean and Professor, Faculty of Dentistry

Graduate Endodontics and Dental Hygiene Programs Now Accredited by CDAC

The Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) has conferred accreditation upon UBC Dentistry’s Clinical Specialty Graduate Program in Endodontics and Dental Hygiene Degree Program. CDAC is the autonomous body responsible for accrediting dental, dental specialty, dental residency, dental hygiene and dental assisting education programs across Canada.

The graduate endodontics program at UBC was launched in 2008, with preliminary approval for three years—a time allowance for new programs to assemble all the components required to meet accreditation guidelines for eligibility. The dental hygiene program was launched in 2007 with preliminary approval for four years.

After CDAC conducted a thorough analysis of supporting documentation for both programs and paid a site visit to UBC in February 2011, full accreditation was granted for each program in November.

With full support of faculty and staff, program director Dr. Jeff Coil led the process of accreditation for graduate endodontics, while Prof. Bonnie Craig, director of the Dental Hygiene Degree Program, led the process of accreditation for dental hygiene.

Both processes culminated in hefty documents detailing curriculum development, including research and clinical courses, administration structure and staff support levels; infrastructure, such as space allowance and technological equipment; teaching resources, specifically part-time and full-time faculty; and support from the greater endodontics and dental hygiene communities.

Coil notes some key strengths remarked on by the CDAC reviewers: “The commission was impressed by the commitment and generosity of part-time and full-time faculty to endodontics teaching, and they were equally impressed by the support the program enjoys from the local endodontics community, the British Columbia Society of Endodontics, and UBC’s leadership role in their area of specialization.”

Craig points to the numerous small group conference rooms in the John B. Macdonald Building as outstanding educational facilities that made an impact during the site visit.

Based on the site visit, Coil adds, the assessors were particularly impressed with the clinic facilities in the Nobel Biocare Oral Health Centre and the Faculty’s current technology for endodontic treatment. Craig points to the numerous small group conference rooms in the John B. Macdonald Building as outstanding educational facilities that made an impact during the site visit.
Dr. Karen Gardner Wins U21 Award for Fostering International Student Dialogue

Universitas 21, a network of 23 research-led universities around the world, awarded Dr. Karen Gardner its inaugural U21 Award for Internationalisation on May 10, 2012, during its annual presidential meeting held at Lund University in Sweden. The award recognizes initiatives to enhance global links and relations between U21 members. Gardner is being honoured for creating a website called diastemas.net, which fosters collaboration, learning and exchange among dental students across three continents.

“I am honoured to receive this award from Universitas 21 and grateful for their support for diastemas.net, my concept of a Web platform to encourage dental students to prepare for a lifetime career in a global society,” says Gardner, an associate clinical professor of oral health sciences and dental education research.

“The richness and fulfillment of working with other faculty around the world on this project has allowed me to consider myself a global citizen, and it is my desire to impart the feeling of belonging to a global society to all of our students,” says Gardner.

For more information about Gardner’s project, read the fall 2008 Impressions article “Dr. Karen Gardner Works Towards Global Standards in Dental Care” online at www.dentistry.ubc.ca/go/glob_stand

UBC Dentistry Gains $1M to Enhance Patient-Based Research and Knowledge Transfer

The Faculty of Dentistry has opened a clinical research centre focusing on best practices and evidence-based patient care thanks to a $1-million donation from Frontier Dental Laboratories.

Named the Frontier Clinical Research Centre, the new initiative allows researchers and industry participants to generate and evaluate scientific data for existing procedures and materials.

“This gift will ensure that BC continues to maintain the highest standards of dentistry,” says Dr. Charles Shuler, Faculty of Dentistry dean. “The Frontier Clinical Research Centre will be an important resource for oral health providers, industry professionals and patients.”

“The rate of change in approaches to oral health care will continue to increase,” says Shuler, “and it will be imperative for all dentists to have access both to the information and to the experts who can help them choose the best approaches in treating their patients.”

Over the past 40 years, the progression from basic science findings to new dental procedures, new materials, new therapeutics and improvements in oral health has been dramatic. Given the speed of change, the materials and procedures used for routine dental practice are an often-overlooked part of the clinical research cycle.

“We’re very excited to work with UBC on this commitment to the highest standards of clinical research,” says Paolo Kalaw, CEO of Frontier Dental Laboratories and a UBC alumnus who studied microbiology. “Products need to stand up to claims. For that, we need exacting analyses and robust data.”

The Frontier Clinical Research Centre will provide contracted services, including protocol review, statistical consultation, budget planning, regulatory compliance, recruitment of subjects, data collection and maintenance, data analysis and report preparation.

Per Dr. Ricardo Carvahlo, director of the new centre: “We encourage individual investigators, research teams, industry and corporate sponsors in general to explore the possibilities that the centre has to offer, to both facilitate and increase the value of their studies.”

Frontier Dental Laboratories is a full-service, state-of-the-art dental laboratory specializing in all ceramic and ceromer composite restorations. For more information, visit www.frontierdentallab.com

To find out more about the Frontier Clinical Research Centre, visit www.fcrc.dentistry.ubc.ca

On the Cover—New Book by Faculty Member

Oral Wound Healing: Cell Biology and Clinical Management, edited by Dr. Hannu Lasjoki, professor and chair of the Division of Periodontics and Dental Hygiene, brings experts from around the world together to provide an authoritative reference on the processes, principles and clinical management of wound healing in the oral mucosa.

This new resource draws together thinking on the basic biological processes of wound healing in the oral environment, as well as more detailed information and discussion on processes such as inflammation, re-epithelialization and angiogenesis. The book goes on to examine the effective clinical management of oral wound healing, with chapters on large dento-facial defects, dental implants, periodontal regeneration and pulp healing.

An essential synthesis of current research and clinical applications, Oral Wound Healing is an indispensable resource for dental specialists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, and researchers in oral medicine and biology.

Published by Wiley-Blackwell, it may be purchased at Amazon.ca

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Dr. Karen Gardner, seen with UBC president Prof. Stephen J. Toope, received the U21 Award for Internationalisation in Lund, Sweden.
Almeida says. To illustrate the importance of the registry—to be hosted at UBC—she cites Dr. B. Gail Demko, a diplomate of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine. Demko has pointed out that long-term data are required to determine the characteristics of patients who do or do not respond to OAT treatment.

Almeida brings a wealth of expertise to this project. Along with teaching, doing research and co-leading the Sleep Apnea Clinic at UBC with Dr. Alan Lowe, she has a private practice treating patients with sleep-related breathing disorders and works closely with the Faculty of Medicine’s Vancouver Sleep Disorders Clinic. Almeida is the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine 2011 recipient of the Pierre Robin Academic Award—one of the highest distinctions among peers—for her outstanding work in the field.

Other UBC people involved in the ORANGE Registry, and Dr. Alan Lowe, professor and chair, Division of Orthodontics, and a pioneer in the field of dental sleep medicine, and Drs. Hiroko Tsuda and Satoru Tsuiki, former postdoctoral fellows at UBC’s Dental Sleep Medicine Group, were chosen to chair the steering committee with Dr. Olivier Vanderveken, a physician and researcher from the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

The first international meeting of leading international researchers in the field of oral appliance therapy (OAT) took place in March 2012. Delegates at the meeting called for the establishment of a registry to compile long-term data, with an overall goal of gaining a better understanding of outcomes, side effects and effectiveness of OAT while detecting variations that may exist around the globe.

“Once the registry is established and disparate and complex data and cultural challenges are ironed out, and possibly after its first findings are published—all of which will take a few years—we hope that dentists who have an interest in research and OAT will contribute to the registry,”

New Appointments: Full-Time Faculty

Members of the Oral Appliance Network for Global Effectiveness (ORANGE Registry). Almeida co-leads the initiative with Dr. Olivier Vanderveken, a physician and researcher from the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Oral Appliance Network: UBC Prof to Chair International Steering Committee

Dr. Fernanda Almeida, assistant professor and a renowned dental sleep medicine researcher, was chosen to chair the steering committee for a revolutionary new initiative: the Oral Appliance Network for Global Effectiveness (ORANGE Registry). Almeida co-leads the initiative with Dr. Olivier Vanderveken, a physician and researcher from the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

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“Once the registry is established and disparate and complex data and cultural challenges are ironed out, and possibly after its first findings are published—all of which will take a few years—we hope that dentists who have an interest in research and OAT will contribute to the registry.”
Dr. David Sweet OC and a Diamond Jubilee Medal Honour

Each year the College of Dental Surgeons of BC (CDSBC) recognizes individuals from across the province at an annual awards ceremony. This year on March 8 at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Vancouver, Dr. David Sweet OC received the college's highest accolade, the Honoured Member Award. This award is presented to those who have made outstanding contributions to the art and science of dentistry, or to the dental profession over a sustained period of time.

The CDSBC recognized Dr. Sweet, a professor and the Faculty of Dentistry’s associate dean of Students, for his enormous contribution to dentistry on a provincial, national and international level. He is credited with inventing the process for extracting DNA from teeth or bones for body identification.

In 2008 Sweet was invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada for enhancing Canada's reputation as a leader in forensic odontology and to dentistry on a provincial, national and international level. He is also the lead forensic odontologist for Disaster Victim Identification Canada and former chief disaster victim identification scientist on the INTERPOL Disaster Victim Identification Standing Committee.

Sweet’s contributions to Canada have also been recognized this year as part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s accession to the throne. In 2008, Sweet was invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada for enhancing Canada's reputation as a leader in forensic odontology and to dentistry on a provincial, national and international level. He is also the lead forensic odontologist for Disaster Victim Identification Canada and former chief disaster victim identification scientist on the INTERPOL Disaster Victim Identification Standing Committee.

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Dr. Ravindra Shah Receives Honorary Degree From University in Taiwan

Chung Shan Medical University in Taichung, Taiwan, bestowed an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy degree on Dr. Ravindra M. Shah, director of UBC Dentistry international relations. Shah received this honour during the Taiwan university’s Golden Jubilee Anniversary Celebration on November 12, 2011.

The chairman of Chung Shan Medical University, Dr. Chou Ju-Chuan, recognized Shah’s “significant contribution and achievement in education and research through international academic exchanges.” UBC and Chung Shan Medical University share a long-term commitment to international relations, and Shah has played an instrumental role in facilitating exchanges between the two institutions.

For close to 27 years Shah has provided leadership to UBC Dentistry’s international exchange program for students. This very enterprising education program hosts students from 41 countries around the world for one-week to three-month exchanges. These students come to gain experience in UBC Dentistry’s undergraduate and graduate programs, and UBC Dentistry has attracted numerous graduate students through this program. Shah is the mentor-host for all the visiting international students, guiding them in organizing their academic pursuits, as well as their social and cultural programs. Shah also organizes UBC dental students’ academic visits to a total of 20 countries.

For more information about Shah and international relations, read the article “Global Education: A Qualitative Rather Than Quantitative Approach” on page 12 in this issue of Impressions.

† See list of countries on page 15.

Dr. Ravindra M. Shah (L) during his honorary degree acceptance ceremony at Chung Shan Medical University. Shah said he sees himself “as a catalyst to connect our institutions and people in this science- and technology-inspired, rapidly globalizing society.”

Meet the Dean’s Advisory Board

The 28-member board is made up of a strong cross-section of the professional dental community. Board members engage with the Faculty of Dentistry dean, Dr. Charles Shuler, to discuss, provide outside-world feedback and advise on the Faculty’s goals, strategies and many projects.

The Dean’s Advisory Board met most recently on March 7, 2012, and October 28, 2011. The next meeting will be in fall 2012.


Missing from photo: Dr. Kan Chow, Bob Coles DMD 1986, Mark Kwon DMD 1997, Dr. Jin Li-Jian (University of Hong Kong), Tsunna Leude (Pharmac), David Parkin (Endolink), Nick Scandol DMD 2005, Dr. Tai Wing and Dental Undergraduate Society members Tony Bao CMD 2011 candidate, Jonathan Hong CMD 2012 candidate and Trish设备 EDS 2012 candidate.

Hamber Foundation Visiting Professorship in Dental Geriatrics Hails From Singapore

Dr. Chao Shu Yao from the National University of Singapore is at UBC Dentistry for two years to help establish a fellowship in dental geriatrics and build links with the general geriatric community in and around Vancouver. She is visiting under the Hamber Foundation Visiting Professorship in Dental Geriatrics.

Trained as a prosthodontist at the University of Adelaide in Australia, Yao was a consultant prosthodontist at the National Dental Centre of Singapore. She is also a past president of the Prosthodontics Society Singapore.

During her time at UBC, Yao will be attending geriatric clinics and palliative care centres and treating patients in Dentistry’s dental geriatrics program. In addition, with Drs. Doug Waterfield and Markus Haapasaalo, she will be exploring possibilities for reducing the burden of infective bacteria in the oral biofilm of frail patients.

This professorship was established by the Hamber Foundation, along with UBC Dentistry alumni and community friends, to assist academics visiting UBC with their geriatric dentistry research.
On January 24, 2012, during UBC Dentistry’s annual Research Day forum—now in its fifth year—several members of the faculty, graduate students and an internationally renowned researcher from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, presented their progressive work on biofilms. Under the day’s theme, “Biofilm Disease Dynamics: From Understanding to Eradication,” presenters covered biofilm dynamics, control, eradication, significance of treatment failures, and community strategies to manage dental caries.

British Columbia native Dr. Bill Costerton, from the Center for Genomic Sciences in Pittsburgh, provided an outstanding keynote address reviewing the role biofilms play in disease. Costerton is widely credited with having founded the field of biofilm microbiology.

Research Day program once again used a clinical case to effectively address the need to conduct basic research and to then translate research findings into patient care applications.

Experts highlight links between basic science research in microbial biofilms and clinical dentistry.

UBC Dentistry speakers included Drs. Jeffery Coil, Markus Haapasalo, Rosamund Harrison, Mark Pashler, Yi Shen, Charles Shuler and Sonya Stojicic.

Dr. Christopher Overall presented at two symposiums during the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting, which took place February 11 to 20, 2012, in Vancouver, BC. He was one of 40 UBC researchers invited to speak during the AAAS meeting, which is one of the most widely recognized global science gatherings. Overall’s groundbreaking research has led to a seismic shift in the understanding of immune response—discoveries like an “off signal” for inflammation and the changing functions of “moonlighting” proteins.

Last fall UBC Dentistry hosted the 7th International Conference on Problem-Based Learning in Dentistry: Elements of a Successful Program, in Whistler, BC. The four-day event, held in September 2011, brought together the international dental education community to share problem-based learning (PBL) experiences and questions. The conference was designed to be an advanced forum for disseminating, discussing and debating the elements of small-group, student-centred learning.

SIXTY-SIX people attended the conference, including participants from Australia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Norway, South Korea, Sweden, Thailand and the United States. International participation has grown each succeeding year of the conference as awareness of PBL increases around the world. There was also a strong cohort of participants from British Columbia.

Conference organizers report that the conference received 4.27 out of 5 in the overall rating of its program based on evaluation questionnaire completed by participants.

Other aspects of the conference widely appreciated were the networking opportunities, where participants could connect with colleagues from around the world. And many participants commented on the wealth of ideas and resources they would be bringing back to their institutions.
Global Education:
A QUALITATIVE RATHER THAN QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

BY HEATHER CONN

When Dr. Ravindra Shah, director of international relations at UBC Dentistry, arrived at a university in Jeonju, Korea, in April 2010, he realized that he had forgotten the power cord for his MacBook Pro. How would he be able to work in this foreign country, a PC stronghold?

A Korean student, whom he had never met, lent his own computer to Shah for 10 days. Another student, a stranger, spent four hours travelling by bus, outside his own city into territory where he had never been, to comb through dozens of stores, hoping to find a used power cord for Dr. Shah. The student was successful, and Shah was able to use his Mac PowerBook after all.

Some people might consider such gestures a sign of Asian hospitality or welcoming deference to an elder. To Shah, these selfless efforts reflect a lot more—a qualitative rather than quantitative life within global education. He says:

“In the university systems around the world . . . we stand for making human society easier and better for all humans.”

UBC Dentistry’s international exchange programs and world focus are rooted in this concept. Each human interaction and new personal experience becomes an opportunity to learn and reinforce the benefits of diversity: mutual respect and tolerance, a common vision and shared values.

To praise the initiative and generosity of the two students in Jeonju, Shah wrote a note to the president of the Korean university, and in return, received a note of thanks written by the president himself. This communication across borders and cultures is another core aspect of UBC’s approach to international dentistry: when you initiate quality connections, global relationships can run deep and last a lifetime.

Shah remains in touch with many foreign exchange students from decades ago; one Taiwanese student, whose father died, calls Shah “my Canadian dad.” The director frequently receives cards and heartfelt notes from international dentistry students who say that UBC’s exchange program changed their life or their outlook on life. Some participants have married a dentistry student from another country or culture, whom they met through the University of British Columbia.

Shah views science and education as universal tools to promote humanitarian first, then dentistry. His perspective has helped create a vibrant international dentistry program for undergraduates at UBC that involves about 50 countries, from Australia and New Zealand to nations in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa and beyond. He organizes UBC dental students’ academic visits to other nations and offers two main exchange programs each year; four students at a time usually participate for one to two weeks. He can design and personalize any program to suit the needs and interests of...
a visiting student or faculty member. Once they’re in Canada, at least 10 to 15 percent of international students choose to pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree at UBC or elsewhere in Canada, he says.

With 150 visiting participants a year in both dentistry and dental hygiene, UBC’s international program is likely the largest of its kind in the world, says Shah. He relies on word of mouth, UBC Dentistry’s global reputation and his 40 years of international academic connections to bring new talent to learn and grow at UBC. Since the program’s inception, he has never advertised.

“People grow together if they communicate about their common passion.”

Besides classroom and clinical work, global visitors get a taste of west-coast culture as part of their exchange experience: they live on campus or in the home of local students, may snowboard at Whistler or visit other favourite tourist spots, try foods and drinks they’ve never tasted, and practise English while learning Canadian social customs.

While some of his fellow Korean students played ping-pong with local students in the dentistry building, first-year exchange student Kim Dae Young shared how much he enjoyed the student-faculty rapport at UBC. “In Korea, there is distance between faculty and students. Here, it’s closer. I like this way more.” He also explained how he loved Canada Dry soft drinks and his first meal of lamb steak. Of his first trip to Vancouver and Canada, he says, “It’s so multicultural here. People are from all over the world. In my country, 90 percent are just Korean.”

He added that he might consider returning to UBC to complete his dental studies. Shah has promoted his education credo—Explore, Experience, Experiment—since joining UBC’s dental faculty in 1974. Born and raised in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, he sees his role as a catalyst who connects institutions and people in science and technology within today’s rapidly globalizing world. He meets personally with each international dentistry student or faculty member who visits UBC and hosts an international evening every fall. At that event, in a series of presentations, groups of two to 10 students explain the new insights and understanding they’ve gained from being in the international program. Shah says:

“I still dream of having a perfect world that manages our planetary life through acts of kindness to overcome poverty, disease, war and hunger.”

In a Zen sense, Shah is both the still pond and the pebble that forms expansive concentric ripples on the water surface: a source for reflection and mindful action.

When Shah was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy degree from Chung Shan Medical University in Taiwan in November 2011, he shared a visual presentation of his personal philosophy. He quoted from the Upanishads of ancient India, and remarked that natural laws of wisdom and truth infuse his views of education and life. He likened the Upanishad’s allegory of the cave as a powerful example of what Buddhists call maya or illusion: we do not experience true reality directly, but instead, react to a projection of it, which we create. (In Plato’s cave, a group of people, who spend their whole life chained to the wall of a cave, watch shadows on the wall, believing them to be real; this is the closest they get to viewing reality.)

In 2003, the American Dental Association’s International Association of Student Clinicians honoured Shah with their international faculty advisor award in recognition of his many years of work with students worldwide. Overall, his work reinforces a number of key strategic goals of UBC Dentistry: it expands the international presence at the university as well as UBC’s own global presence. It also encourages greater connection among UBC, external dental professionals and the public. This includes organizations and societies for dentists and dental hygienists, patients and community groups at local, national and global levels.
HOST-GROWN TISSUE AND BONE
USING STEM CELLS IN PERIODONTAL REGENERATION

BY MARI-LOU ROWLEY

UBC Dentistry professor Edward Putnins is collaborating with medical colleague Fabio Rossi to investigate how a patient’s own stem cells can be used to rebuild periodontal tissue and craniofacial bone.

A radiant smile is more than just the outward appearance of well-being; it is the body’s barometer of overall wellness, which depends to a great extent on the health of teeth and gums. Periodontal disease—an inflammatory condition causing gingivitis, receding gums and tooth loss—has also been linked to heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, respiratory disease and autoimmune conditions.

As associate dean of Research, Graduate & Postgraduate Studies at UBC Dentistry, Dr. Edward Putnins has spent much of his career investigating the biology of gum tissue, specifically the role epithelial cells play in periodontal disease. The epithelium provides a functional barrier that separates the host cells from the external environment. In the mouth, however, the barrier is challenging to maintain because of the biofilm of bacteria naturally present. These bacteria are able to penetrate the epithelial layers and cause epithelial cell growth and loss of connective tissue attachment, which is the onset and progression of periodontal disease.

In addition, during periodontal disease, three types of tissues are lost: two hard tissues, jawbone and cementum on the root surface, and one soft tissue, the periodontal ligament that joins the two hard tissues together. “This makes periodontal regeneration unique and challenging compared to other types of tissue regeneration,” says Putnins.

Stem Cell Regeneration: A Medical-Dental Collaboration

While on sabbatical, Putnins met UBC colleague and medical geneticist Dr. Fabio Rossi, Canada Research Chair in Regenerative Medicine, who is also intrigued by the complexity of periodontal regeneration. Putnins and Rossi are now collaborating on stem cell studies to repair periodontal tissue and craniofacial bone. As founding members (project leader and co-applicant) of UBC Dentistry’s multi-faculty Centre for High-Throughput Phenogenomics, they share not only the $9.5-million state-of-the-art imaging facility (see Impressions Fall 2011), but also research interests in tissue degradation and regeneration.

“Medicine and dentistry use different models for hard tissue degradation,” explains Putnins, who credits UBC for supporting and facilitating multidisciplinary research. “Medicine uses the arthritis model, because peripheral bone forms differently than head and neck bone. In craniofacial bone, periodontal disease is often used as the model for bone destruction.”

Rossi is enthralled by the complexity of differences. “I am interested in understanding how a stem cell decides to become what it does, and how it is that in one context it does one thing and in another context it does something different,” he says. “From there, my interest is in how these differences are communicated so these cells know what they should be doing. It is a very complex discussion among cells, with many parties influencing the conversation.”

In periodontal tissues the complexity is multiplied. “Within a zone of 1.5 millimetres you need to make three different types of connective tissues in order to reform the proper attachment,” says Putnins. “This tissue formation in approximation to the gingival sulcus [space between the tooth and gum] that communicates with the oral environment adds a further level of complexity.”
Stem Cell Regeneration Primer

Stem cells occur in every tissue of the body. Like stem cells, progenitor cells differentiate but more specifically into the target cell type, and their ability to divide and replicate is much more limited. However, the quantity and quality of progenitor cells is often too limited for tissue regeneration.

Bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells (BM-MSCs), as well as adipose-derived MSCs, are being studied as an alternative for periodontal regeneration because they are abundant and easy to harvest.

All the Better to Eat With: Challenges of Current Treatment

The ultimate aim in periodontal regeneration is to have the jaw and teeth fully functioning. Additionally, cosmetic benefits improve a patient’s overall sense of well-being. Current methods such as conventional periodontal surgery have limitations and costs. Surgery is not only invasive, but the healing process results in the formation of new bone, cementum and periodontal ligament fibres, which often run parallel to the root surface (see illustrations), providing no or inadequate support for the tooth.

“If you let the gum heal naturally, connective tissue will form, but it will not be properly attached to the root surface, so it has no functional benefit,” says Putnins. “For a periodontal ligament to function so that a patient can chew properly, the periodontal ligament has to go from bone and attach into the cementum on the root surface. That is what holds a tooth in place.”

Guided tissue regeneration is a term for newer surgical approaches. One method uses biomembranes to prevent the faster-healing epithelial cells from proliferating on the root surface, thus providing better healing of the periodontal ligament and more time for the cementum and jawbone to make new attachments. Another method involves using a bioactive gel on the diseased or damaged tissue to stimulate the growth and differentiation of host “progenitor” stem cells (see text box) found in the periodontal ligament. However, treatment outcomes are variable and at times unpredictable.

“Something to Hang On To”

Putnins and Rossi have been collaborating on promising treatment alternatives using bone marrow mesenchymal stem cells (BM-MSCs). “The advantage is that you have a robust and relatively large population of cells,” says Putnins. BM-MSCs are able to differentiate into the three types of tissue required for periodontal regeneration.

However, growing and expanding cells in culture is challenging. For example, the longer cells are cultured, the less they are able to differentiate into multiple types of tissue, and a large number of cells die in the process of transplantation.

“The problem with culture and expansion is that cells are grown in super-rich serum, which is somewhat like giving a child pure sugar—they go hyper and bounce all over the place for a while,” Rossi says. “Suddenly you take the cells out of the serum and put them back into tissue where they don’t have these nutrients, so most of the cells die.” In addition, most types of cells grown in culture, including BM-MSCs, need “something to hang on to.” Another type of cell death, apoptosis, occurs when expanded cells are separated or detached from the culture plate.

In two different studies, Putnins and Rossi grew BM-MSCs on gelatin-based microcarrier beads, which were then transplanted directly into wound tissue in animal models. The novel culture method improved cell survival and increased bone formation. Importantly, their data demonstrated that BM-MSCs in conjunction with gelatin beads played a significant role in regulating a more functional periodontal ligament, much closer to perpendicular (80 to 90 degrees) to the root surface. Although donor-derived cells were associated with new tissue in bone, cementum and periodontal ligament, they were as yet unable to determine whether these cells actually generated new growth (weroostoinductive), or simply provided an environment that helped host progenitor cells to produce new tissue (osteoductive).

New Techniques Could Aid Craniofacial Repair

In a recent study on craniofacial bone regeneration, published in the Journal of Biomedical Materials in 2011, Putnins used microCT and histologic analysis to demonstrate that, in fact, BM-MSCs contributed to both osteoinductive and osteoconductive bone regeneration. “This is very important, because the mechanisms are so complex that even using GFP [green fluorescent protein] labelled cells, the outcome is difficult to determine,” notes Putnins. “With our new imaging technology and equipment, we will be able to better identify what is happening at the molecular level.”

Both Putnins and Rossi note that this research is still in the early stages, and several hurdles need to be overcome. The advantage to using a patient’s own stem cells to regenerate tissue is that there are no issues of rejection and the subsequent side effects of immunosuppressant drugs. The disadvantage with BM-MSCs is that extraction involves putting a needle into the bone. There are practical and economic problems as well. In animal models, fetal bovine serum is used to expand cells. “For human transplantation, you would need to expand donor cells in a serum-free medium and then put them back into the patient,” says Rossi. “This would require a designated Good Laboratory Practice facility. Stem cell research is in its infancy and these facilities are not very common and extremely expensive.” He adds that not enough studies have been done on delivering cells without culture and expansion.

Fat Could Provide the Best Chance

While fat gets a bad rap in most medical circles, Rossi’s research on fat-derived stem cells could provide an answer to these logistical and economic hurdles. “One solution would be to avoid expansion altogether and use a more abundant source of stem cells from human fat, which could be easily obtained in an invasive manner through liposuction,” he says.

Rossi envisions a process where the cells could be extracted, purified, attached to microbeads and transplanted back into the patient all within a few hours.

Whether gathered from bone marrow, fat or the “tooth fairy” (see below), stem cells have huge potential for periodontal regeneration. “With today’s treatments we can get back some of the lost tissue, but patients invariably must have the area cleaned every three months,” says Putnins.

“If we can regenerate tissue to what it was like to begin with, it is easier for the patient to manage and cheaper in the long run.” Not to mention that perfect smile. Should the Tooth Fairy Be in the Banking Business?

While many dental researchers support the idea of banking lost baby teeth for use in stem cell regeneration, UBC medicine professor Fabio Rossi does not. With funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, he and UBC Dentistry professor Edward Putnins have been studying the use of bone marrow stem cells for periodontal tissue regeneration—a more predictable and ethical source of donor cells.

“It’s true that we lose our deciduous teeth at a young age and perhaps we should bank them, however, it is also true that the number of stem cells in a tooth is very limited, and adult stem cells are generally not capable of growing in vitro indefinitely,” says Rossi, who does not want to see tooth banking become a business, ultimately prone to illegal clinics and harvesting. “We don’t want to tarnish the image of the Tooth Fairy when there are better options.”
The Far Reach of UBC Dentistry’s Graduate Research Training

BY TERRY WINTONYK

Back in the 1990s they were doctoral students in UBC’s Faculty of Dentistry. Each came from a different part of the world, seeking a solid foundation in research and training that would give them the skills and confidence to investigate some of the most complex issues in oral biology. Now all are professors and established scientists, with careers that are significant, divergent and fascinating.

Dr. Bjorn Steffensen—dentist, periodontist, professor and world-renowned researcher—leads a research program on matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where he also teaches dental and periodontics students.

Proving the Secrets of Desert Flora May Yield Clues to Treating Cancer and Tissue Degeneration

The local flora and his cactus collection help this Texas-based UBC graduate—Dr. Christopher Overall’s first PhD student—to relieve the stress of long days teaching and doing research. Coincidentally, what’s growing in the plains, basins and lowlands of the Lone Star State may also hold the keys to what he is investigating: treatments for cancer and tissue degeneration, a devastating complication of diabetes and periodontal disease.

Dr. Bjorn Steffensen
University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Dr. Laisheng Lee Chou
Boston University

Both diabetes and periodontal disease involve tissue destruction, and Steffensen noted the high risk of diabetes among the Hispanic population in South Texas. “It was prompted to investigate mechanisms of tissue degradation in poorly healing wounds in diabetes,” he says.

Untreated, such wounds have serious health implications and often lead to amputations. Cancer, diabetes and periodontal disease are very complex, however, and Steffensen cautions that much more research will be required before applying any MMP inhibitors to these diseases.

Steffensen’s strengths lie not only in research, but also in his commitment to mentoring and to improving research training. He is the 2012 recipient of the prestigious Irwin D. Mandel Distinguished Mentoring Award conferred by the American Association for Dental Research. As the associate dean for Research at the San Antonio dental school, he directs advanced research training for postdoctoral fellows and for students in PhD programs and a combined Doctor of Dental Surgery-PhD program.

Steffensen recalls his time in Vancouver fondly: “The five years my wife Jane—who concurrently studied at Simon Fraser University—and I spent at UBC were among our personal and professional high points. My UBC graduate training set the stage for a nearly 15-year period of productive academic contributions.” Many friendships and professional alliances made at that time were renewed during a four-month sabbatical spent at UBC in 2009.

Today, Steffensen’s research focuses on developing highly selective MMP inhibitors, following up on critical studies initiated with Overall that characterized how MMPs bind the proteins they degrade. His laboratory at the University of Texas has developed methods for identifying novel potent MMP inhibitors via high-throughput screening of large collections, or “libraries,” of molecules.

In collaboration with chemists in San Antonio, Steffensen is now screening a library of extracts from Texas plants. “Hobbies such as my interest in plants can relieve stress, and at the same time they can inspire an approach to research,” he says, adding: “A similar approach by other researchers led to the discovery of taxol, a plant-source drug that is used in cancer treatment. It pays to be open.”

From Lab to Clinic: Bone Tissue Engineering and HIV-Related Disease

Over 15 years ago he was UBC oral biology professor Donald Brunette’s PhD student. While at UBC he turned the biomaterials community upside down with a notion that he still uses today to successfully treat patients with severe bone defects.

Steffensen’s research on MMPs has led him to investigate the role of MMPs in periodontal disease and oral cancer.

From Lab to Clinic: Bone Tissue Engineering and HIV-Related Disease

Boston University professor Laisheng Lee Chou is a leading researcher in molecular biocompatibility of biomaterials, with multiple qualifications in dentistry, oral medicine, oral pathology and biology. He’s also an expert in HIV-associated oral lesions, and a much sought-after clinician. But let’s begin with his reputation as a teacher—he’s one of the best around.

Dr. Laisheng Lee Chou
Boston University

While at UBC, he turned the biomaterials community upside down with a notion that he still uses today to successfully treat patients with severe bone defects.

Chou was so significant that the World Biomaterials Congress now presents a molecular biocompatibility symposium at each annual meeting.

Chou notes that the theory of molecular biocompatibility has significantly impacted the testing, modification and innovation of new biomaterials for medical applications. One of the most successful examples is biomimicking in maxillofacial reconstruction. “I applied this new concept and developed osteogenic materials for human bone tissue engineering. We have invented inorganic materials that actively stimulate human bone regeneration and have used this process to successfully treat patients with severe bone defects.”

Current approaches to treating bone defects using biological products are not optimal; there is a need for safe, stable and effective materials for better outcomes, Chou says. “It’s challenging work; the application of bone tissue engineering involves multidiscipline collaborations in material sciences, biology and clinical sciences.”

Chou also investigates the role of oral mucosal Langerhans cells in HIV-infected patients who have oral cancer and infectious oral lesions. To understand the mechanisms of antigen-presenting, cell-mediated mucosal immunity against oral cancer and infectious diseases, Chou uses gold chloride enhancement, a novel technique that he developed to intensify the molecular signals of immunohistochemical labelling. Lack of tissue samples is a serious obstacle to understanding the mechanisms of disease.

On the clinical side, Chou is director of Boston University’s Oral AIDS Clinic, which he created. Renowned for its service to HIV patients, the clinic also trains dental students to look for suspicious precursors to disease. “Cases with oral cancer and infectious oral lesions are still increasing in number,” Chou explains, and notes that no other dental school in the country offers a rotation like it to undergraduate students.

Dr. Chou, who began teaching in his native China at Shanghai No. 2 Medical University soon after completing his dental degree there in 1978, has held multiple teaching positions—undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral—at Boston University since 1994. By 2002, Chou’s classroom notoriety garnered him the Meritall Cap and Prize—that university’s highest teaching award. He was the first-ever recipient from the Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine. According to a former student: “Dr. Chou’s informative lectures are professional and clear without exception. The ease with which he explains challenging material is a testament to his genuine brilliance as a teacher.”

Chou is no stranger to challenging material. At UBC, Chou studied the biocompatibility of material-tissue interfaces. Chou’s work demonstrated for the first time that material surface chemistry and topography could provide signals to regulate gene activity of functional proteins. “This contradicted a previous ‘inert’ theory of biomaterials known under the term ‘biocompatibility,’ and the phenomenon led to the coinage of a new term: ‘molecular biocompatibility,’” he recalls, while crediting the success of his PhD thesis at UBC to the mentoring and support he received from Dentistry professor Don Brunette and from research associate Tim Forth, who at that time was a lab assistant.

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Finding a Bridge: Developmental Biologist to Oral Pathologist

Sixteen years ago he studied developmental biology—embryonic palate formation, to be specific—at UBC with Dr. Virginia M. Diedert. Today he fights Thailand’s number one killer: cancer.

Oral pathologist professor Dr. Anak Iamaroon is located at Chiang Mai University in his native Thailand, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate students and provides microscopic diagnosis for patients through the dental school’s oral pathology services. He also has a lengthy list of research papers—in the two distinct fields of developmental biology and cancer—attributed to him. His more recent work, however, focuses on oral cancer, particularly its molecular pathogenesis, or development of the disease. Oral squamous cell carcinoma (OSCC) has a high mortality rate worldwide and is on the increase in Thailand. Iamaroon has been studying cell signalling pathways during the formation of oral cancer tumours, especially in OSCC. signalling pathways are part of a complex system of communication for molecular events such as cell growth and development, and damage errors can cause disease. Iamaroon explains the importance of these signalling pathways: “The oral cancer cells utilize these pathways to become more aggressive during tumour progression—that is, tumour invasion and metastasis. One of the interesting aspects of cancer aggressiveness is that the cancer cells can transform their morphology and property from a less plastic cell, or epithelial cell, to a more plastic cell, or mesenchymal cell. This molecular process,” he continues, “is called the epithelio-mesenchymal transition (EMT).”

It would appear, then, that palate formation and cancer are not such distinct fields. Iamaroon first investigated EMT during his PhD research in developmental biology with Dr. Diedert. In addition to being an aspect of the inflammatory process and normal wound healing in adulthood, EMT is a process that has long been recognized by researchers in the area of embryology and development, where it is involved in normal embryogenesis and organ development from single-layered to multilayered organs.

Recently, Iamaroon’s research group found aberrations in two signalling pathways during OSCC tumour formation: in the transforming growth factor beta (TGF-β) and the Akt (protein kinase B) pathways. Already aware that the aberration of TGF-β and Akt signalling pathways leads cancer cells to EMT, his team recently found that oral cancer cells can also undergo EMT. This marked step makes the cancer cells move from place to place or makes them metastasize and finally kill the patient.

Iamaroon’s goal is to literally stop cancer growth “in its tracks”—the signalling pathways. He hopes his work on the molecular pathogenesis of oral cancer will lead to the discovery of drugs specifically for oral cancer treatment, drugs that have fewer side effects than surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

Iamaroon is also interested in collaborating on research into the herbal treatment, drugs that have fewer side effects than surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. Having taught dental students for many years, Dr. Nancy Scott, a 1980 alumna and now clinical assistant professor, was confident in her skills. According to Emanuels, is that she now has a whole new world of linear thinking—evoke a bygone territory for Scott, and she realized that her skills didn’t match the expectations of these “digital natives.” She had no idea that webmail could be used from home to respond to students at any time. She didn’t know how to sign up for a blog account. “Attachments” were about feeling illiteracy in a UBC Dentistry workshop that transformed her working life.

To help older people, tutored course participants in a hands-on computer lab session, helping them in the digital world. This was unfamiliar territory for Scott, and she realized that her skills didn’t match the expectations of these “digital natives.” She had no idea that webmail could be used from home to respond to students at any time. She didn’t know how to sign up for a blog account. “Attachments” were about feeling illiteracy in a UBC Dentistry workshop that transformed her working life.

“Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning” was an educational course designed to help dental practitioners and instructors up to speed with digital technology. Their aim was to re-ignite an enthusiasm for teaching by reducing embarrassment and providing feedback for students online—in blogs, Google Docs and forums. “And the best part of Scott’s transformation after the course, according to Emanuels, is that she now has the courage to ask for help, if needed.

Dr. Anak Iamaroon
Chiang Mai University

Study Backs Effectiveness of UBC Dentistry Workshop for the Tech-Tenuous

BY TERRY WINTONYK

Having taught dental students for many years, Dr. Nancy Scott, a 1980 alumna and now clinical assistant professor, was confident in her skills. According to Emanuels, is that she now has a whole new world of linear thinking—evoke a bygone territory for Scott, and she realized that her skills didn’t match the expectations of these “digital natives.” She had no idea that webmail could be used from home to respond to students at any time. She didn’t know how to sign up for a blog account. “Attachments” were about feeling illiteracy in a UBC Dentistry workshop that transformed her working life.

We noticed some discomfort among older graduation classes and retired dentists in Dentistry’s high-tech teaching clinic,” says associate clinical professor Dr. Karen Gardner. Scott points out that people can easily avoid digital technology if they are not particularly interested. “A dentist who graduated as recently as 10 years ago may have been left behind in the digital age because their support staff handled the technology in their practice.”

Dr. Ingrid Emanuels, clinical assistant professor and operative dentistry liaison, notes that low-level computer skills may discourage many experienced, competent and benevolent dental practitioners from returning to the university to teach new practitioners. “An unfortunate consequence would be the loss of great knowledge not handed down,” she says.

So Gardner and Emanuels designed a course to help get these dental practitioners and instructors up to speed with digital technology. Their aim was to re-ignite an enthusiasm for teaching by reducing embarrassment and providing feedback for students online—in blogs, Google Docs and forums. “And the best part of Scott’s transformation after the course, according to Emanuels, is that she now has the courage to ask for help, if needed.”

Reference


A paper on the study, published in Journal of Education course succeeds in bringing people over the digital divide.
UBC Dentistry ‘Adopts’ Florence Nightingale

BY LORRAINE CHAN, WITH FILES FROM TERRY WINTONYK

“The idea is to provide service to the entire family so there’s an integrated approach and lasting change in both the children’s and their parents’ health behaviour and attitudes,” says Zed.

Open year-round, the one-chair clinic at Florence Nightingale operates every second Thursday, between 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

For the past two years, UBC’s Doctor of Dental Medicine students have been coming to Florence Nightingale as part of their Professionalism and Community Service (PACS) program. Through games and exercises, the PACS students teach the children about oral health care, from proper brushing and flossing to smart food choices—crunchy apples versus sticky cupcakes, for instance.

“So when the dental clinic appeared, it wasn’t a new or scary thing for the kids. They were really familiar with the idea of dentists and what they do,” says Chin Petersen.

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Photography

Dr. Sarah S. Park, UBC general practice resident (L), sees patients for checkups, which may include fillings and extractions. Dr. Christopher Zed (R) notes that children can receive dental care in the school, whereas going to a community dentist would require parents, who may not be able or available, to accompany them.

Watch the UBC Reports video story about the Adopt a School Program. Video includes interviews with Jenny Chin Petersen, principal of Florence Nightingale Elementary School (pictured), Dr. Sarah S. Park, UBC general practice resident, and Dr. Christopher Zed, associate dean of Strategic and External Affairs. Click through to www.dentistry.ubc.ca/ubcr_afn, or scan the QR (quick response) code with your smartphone.

UBC Dentistry ‘Adopts’ Florence Nightingale

Rebecca, age nine, looks happy as she exits the UBC-run dental clinic at Florence Nightingale Elementary School. Equally pleased is her mother, Josefina Romero.

The fact that Rebecca can get free dental care is a great weight off her shoulders, says Romero, who immigrated to Vancouver from Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, with her husband and four children in 2006. “The clinic is very good for families who can’t afford dentists. Vancouver is very expensive for dentists, especially when there are six of us.”

This situation is not unique to the Romeros. Most of the 250 children at Florence Nightingale don’t usually see a dentist. According to school principal Jenny Chin Petersen, dental care has been the missing element in the drive to improve the overall wellness of the students in this Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

The match was a natural. Last fall, the Faculty of Dentistry opened a dental clinic at Florence Nightingale as part of its Adopt a School Program to serve at-risk, inner city schools. Working with the Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and Mount Pleasant Community Centre, the clinic is staffed by UBC general practice residents—licensed dentists who are doing advanced postgraduate training with the Faculty of Dentistry.

Chin Petersen says, “That means children from the most vulnerable families, who don’t have insurance coverage or a regular dentist, can receive the care they need.”

About 30 percent of the children at Florence Nightingale experience pain from tooth decay and oral disease, notes Dr. Christopher Zed, associate dean of Strategic and External Affairs with the Faculty.

“By providing oral health treatment and education, we hope to reduce absenteeism, sleep deprivation and improve classroom attentiveness due to lack of oral pain”, says Zed, whose research looks at oral health disparities in under-served communities in Canada and internationally.

“More than a ‘drill-and-fill relief program,’ says Zed, the Adopt a School Program aims to improve overall oral health standards and knowledge among children and their families.

Family members of children at Florence Nightingale can also get free oral health care from a UBC-led community volunteer dental clinic at the nearby Mount Pleasant Community Centre.

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Standing inside the newly designed student-lounge atrium, Nadean Burkett smiles as she looks out the massive glass windows down onto a courtyard surrounded by trees. “This is exactly the kind of space I wanted for Dentistry students to come and enjoy the natural light and serenity. It’s a place for them to relax, unwind and reconnect with their friends and classmates.”

It is hard to believe that for over two decades this atrium—once an outside balcony on the north side of the John B. Macdonald Building—was locked tight because it didn’t meet safety codes during a building inspection in the 1980s. Now, thanks to the generosity of Nadean Burkett & Associates, the space has been revitalized as part of the massive renovation of the building. The former unsafe balcony has been transformed into a glass-enclosed terrace, a unique space for students to enjoy.

Jonathan Hung, a fourth-year DMD student, agrees. “This area helps us to wind down, refocus and to relax. It’s a place where students want to be.”

A transition coach, mentor and expert in the business of private practice and ownership, Nadean is a long-time supporter of students, alumni and the school. She believes in giving back to the community and to dental professionals who have contributed to her success. Committing to support the new student-lounge atrium aligns with her personal mandate to empower through philanthropy, and in particular, to support the vision and future goals for UBC Dentistry and the profession. Her passion to assist UBC Dentistry students reaches beyond the glass windows of the atrium, past the landscaped view and well into their future.

Remember those old dented lockers—the ones that jam and look like they belong in a downtown boxing gym rather than a dental school?

Renovations to the John B. Macdonald Building have slammed the doors on the last bank of old lockers. Now alumni and friends can “lock up” a gift of new student lockers.

Every contribution of $1,000 helps purchase a locker, and official recognition of the gift will be displayed on the locker.

Visit www.dentistry.ubc.ca/lockers to make a gift, or call the UBC Dentistry Development Office at 604-822-6808.

LOCK IT UP FOR STUDENTS

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The 2011 – 2012 Academic Year in Numbers

Measuring success usually involves some numbers. Take a look at these to learn how Dentistry fulfilled a university-wide mandate to provide community-based experiential learning (CBEL) in the 2011 – 2012 academic year. In educational parlance, CBEL is a term to describe pedagogical practices that focus students’ discipline-specific knowledge onto community-based challenges. Such argot notwithstanding, Dentistry’s Strategic Plan embraces the themes of enhancing student experience and increasing community involvement. So, through these lenses, here are some of the numbers in sharp focus.

To support our aging population, 10 long-term care facilities were on the 2011 – 2012 roster. Seniors were served by 205 dental and dental hygiene students. Pictured: Simon Y.K. Lee Senior Care Homes East Vancouver

All students in all four years of the Doctor of Dental Medicine program—205 students to be precise—participated in curricular projects beyond the UBC campus at locations throughout the Lower Mainland. Pictured: colourful props used by dental students in the Professionalism and Community Service (PACS) program to interact with children and promote oral health at an elementary school.

www.dentistry.ubc.ca/go/pacs

Close to 20,000 toothbrushes were given away by UBC Dentistry residents, students and volunteers at locations in the Lower Mainland and rural British Columbia, and at three international locations. Colgate generously donated the toothbrushes.

www.dentistry.ubc.ca/go/penelakut

Island at www.dentistry.ubc.ca/go/penelakut.

The number of First Nations groups.

Roughly 51 percent of all dental students volunteered in the Voluntary Community Clinic Program the past academic year. In the annual volume-check trip to Panaka Island, volunteers will shift to Chemainus in order to serve a greater number of First Nations groups.

To facilitate student learning, use the online form to answer questions about your practice and location.

UBC Dentistry offers six clinical specialty graduate programs—endodontics, oral medicine and oral pathology, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics and prosthodontics. Graduate students in endodontics regularly rotate to the dental clinics in Malaga on Hall’s Grant.

Download a PDF overview of graduate programs and research clusters at www.dentistry.ubc.ca/go/giving_back

In the Lower Mainland of BC

ARL Dental (private practice)
Adara/Park Lodge
BC Cancer Agency
BC Children’s Hospital
Burnaby-Parkcrest Lodge
Burnaby Family Life
Centre for Child Development of the Lower Mainland
Developmental Disabilities Association
East Van Youth Clinic
First United Church
Flora and Fauna Elementary School
General Brock Elementary School
John A. Vanier Elementary School
Little Mountain Place
Louis Brier Home and Hospital
Monarch Public Dental Centre (private practice)
Mount Pleasant Community Centre
New Westminster Family Place
Pacific Spirit Community Health Centre
Pender House
Portland Hotel Society
Portland Community Dental Clinic
Positive Living BC
Rainsville Community Health Centre
Richmond Health Department
Simon K.Y. Lee Seniors Care Home
Sir William Macdonald Elementary School
St. Paul’s Hospital, Psychiatric Unit
St. Anthony’s Community Dental Clinic
St. Mary’s Health Centre for Children
St. Joe’s Dental (private practice)
UBC Hospital, Babele Psychiatric Unit
UBC Hospital, Purdy Pavilion
Union Gospel Mission
Vancouver General Hospital, Bardfield Pavilion
Vancouver General Hospital, Dental Clinic
Vancouver General Hospital, Medically Complex Patient Clinic
Vancouver South Health Society, Dental Clinic
Villa Callaway Care Home
West Vancouver Community Health Centre
Windsorstone Care Centre
Woodward Elementary School

In BC outside the Lower Mainland

Kakwa Gospel Mission
Penalalt First Nation
Shakow Greek Dental
Victoria Council of Social Services

Outside Canada

Angkor Hospital for Children, Cambodia
National Hospital of Odonto-Stomatology, Vietnam

12 SPRING

TO THE CAMPUS

100

205

20,000

80

63

84

51%

17

13

28
Nick Piemontesi remembers the day, in August 2011, that he arrived at the Maasai Dental Clinic in Kenya. “I was promptly collected at the Nairobi airport and endured four hours in a safari vehicle on a hot, dusty road before arriving at the clinic,” he says.

Located just eight kilometres from Kenya’s Maasai Mara National Reserve, in the middle of nowhere, the small clinic is fenced off from wild animals, with a guard stationed day and night. So Nick was surprised to find—at what was to be his workplace and home for the next three weeks—an ultra-modern facility. “There were four rooms for volunteer dentists to live in; a well-stocked and well-equipped clinic with three operators; two assistants, who between them spoke both Maasai and Swahili; and plenty of food—we ate at the nearby tourist lodge of the national game reserve.”

The clinic serves the Maasai, a semi-nomadic people who live in a large swath of land in East Africa that overlaps Kenya and Tanzania. Close to 30,000 people live within walking distance of the clinic—a walk fraught with perilous geography and wildlife. The clinic is often miles from home villages where huts made from sticks, mud, grass and dung are arranged in an enkang, a circular fence made of acacia. The enkang protects people’s wealth—goats, sheep and cows—from night predators. Clad in red shukas, groups of Maasai would arrive by 10 a.m., on foot, all at once. “It’s not uncommon for people to be hit in the face by animals they work with. One young man was hit by a Cape buffalo on the way to the clinic,” says Nick, who at the time was a beginning fourth-year dental student at UBC. “Our first task in the day at the clinic was to triage patients; trauma cases were handled immediately.”

People come to the clinic because of pain from tooth decay, and if too far gone, extractions are necessary. In children, the culprit is candy—a popular gift given to them from sticks, mud, grass and dung are arranged in an enkang, a circular fence made of acacia. The enkang protects people’s wealth—goats, sheep and cows—from night predators. Nick was inspired to travel to Africa after hearing accounts of previous student trips, particularly that of Amy Bellamy DMD 2011, who was inspired by the community service leadership for her volunteer work at the Maasai Dental Clinic in Kenya.

After graduating in May 2012, Nick plans to do an oral surgery residency in Nashville, Tennessee—and to keep in touch with Kirk Hunt, his now good friend and lifelong mentor.

Other cases involved discouraging unnecessary tooth removal. Requests for the removal of teeth are unique to this population, and an important element of working with the Maasai is to dissuade them of their traditional practice of tooth removal.

Nick explains: “Primary canine tooth buds are commonly removed as they are seen as ‘worms or maggots’ causing vomiting, diarrhea, fever and other diseases—symptoms we associate with tooth decay. In the lower jaw, the mandibular deciduous and permanent teeth are also often taken out. Originally this was done to make a hole for feeding in the event of diseases like tetanus that lock the jaw. Now, even though there are modern vaccines that prevent tetanus, the custom of removing teeth persists—it’s seen as normal. Elders in the village perform these extractions with no anesthesia, using crude instruments like needles and nails that expose the child to extreme pain and potentially life-threatening risks such as shock, loss of blood and transmission of other diseases like HIV and, ironically, tetanus.”

The Maasai are fearless patients. Nick speculates that this could be an ethnic character trait. The Maasai have a reputation of being warriors, and their cultural rites of passage include circumcisions without anaesthetic, both of which must be endured in silence. His patients, Nick says, “never flinched in the dental chair, nor batted an eye at my ‘bush dentistry,’ such as my make-shift dental bridges.”

During his down time—rains kept patients from travelling over the already difficult terrain to the clinic—Nick did a lot of reading. And if treating the people of East Africa in the middle of nowhere was not adventure enough, he was moments away from one of the best wildlife parks in East Africa. Nick took several trips into the reserve, witnessing a lion kill and seeing the other “Big Five” animals—leopards, African elephants, buffalo and the black rhinoceros—as well as cheetahs. A balloon ride over the savannah to view zebra herds ranked at the top of his adventure list.
CLASS NOTES AND EVENTS

Share your news with classmates, faculty and friends. Look for reunion announcements and events for all alumni. Submit alumni stories and keep in touch at www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni

1970s

REUNION DIP DH 1972

To celebrate 40 years as friends and colleagues, the Dip DH 1972 class has decided to take a cruise together this year. To find out more, contact Yolanda Hinks at yhm@telus.com or email alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

David Saret DC

DMD 1978

David presented both the Honourable Member Award from the College of Dental Surgeons of BC, presented in March, and the commemorative Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in April. Read more about David’s award and medal in the news section on page 8 in this issue of Impressions.

DMD 1982 REUNION

The Class of 1982 is planning a weekend trip to the Cove Lakeside Resort in West Kelowna, BC, from June 22 to 24, 2012, to celebrate their 30-year grad anniversary. To reserve a room, call the hotel directly at 1-877-762-2883. For more information about the dinners being planned in the Bonfire Grill on Friday, June 22, or at the Qua’s Date Old Vines Restaurant on Saturday, June 23, email Doug Corn DMD 1982 at docorn5@rogersrewards.com or Jenn Parsons at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

1980s

Dental Conference, showing other dentists how Harms. Rand is wearing his original student scrubs at future UBC Dentistry Family Day events. For ideas, contact Jenn Parsons, manager of Alumni & Community Affairs, at 604-822-6751.

Fourteen of our 30 class members made an appearance at the 40th reunion. There is no doubt in my mind that we all feel we made lifelong friends and colleagues in our four years at dental school. There is genuine affection and respect shared amongst us that has not diminished over the last 40 years. The dinner—more accurately, a dinner party—was a tremendous success. The setting and food were ideal, and the fact that everyone was talking at once was a sign of a truly great time. The prevailing sentiment was that we cannot wait any longer to get together—a reunion is truly a blessing.

DMF 1987 REUNION (THE SEQUEL)

The DMF Class of 1987 is planning a second reunion this year to celebrate 25 years since graduation. The class has booked into the Cove Lakeside Resort in West Kelowna, BC, from September 28 to 30, 2012. To reserve a room, call the hotel directly at 1-877-762-2883. A welcome reception is planned in the hospitality suite on Friday, September 28, and dinner at the Banff Springs Hotel on Saturday, September 29. To find out more, email Large Sea at drsoo@telus.net or Joan Eaton at joan.nick@shaw.ca

1990s

Angie Loo, founder of Spring for Kids Foundation, was the recent recipient of a $100,000 grant from the Pepsi Refresh Challenge (Cycle 3). The grant will help provide ongoing assistance for children with cleft and craniofacial differences. To date, just over half of the funding has been allocated. Angie is seeking craniofacial patients interested for conventional funding sources that help cover the cost of prosthetic treatment. Contact Angie at dflson@breedlibe.com for more information.

Following the Annual Alumni Reception at the Pacific Dental Conference (and a good laugh at our graduation class composite), we enjoyed a wonderful dinner at Cipriano’s Mediterranean Grill in Vancouver’s Yaletown. Surrounded by bottles of aging wine in the private wine room, we visited and reunited as old friends. After 25 years, we remain dedicated to UBC Dentistry. We are not only fundraising together to raise money for the Class of 1987 Travel Fellowship Endowment Fund to support DMF students on international community outreach programs in Southeast Asia, but also, several of us are current volunteers with the dental school. David Lasen is supervising students in the Volunteer Community Clinic Program, and Jason Boutilier, David Ciriani, Joan Eaton and Les Ennis are taking summer students into their practices this year. Part two of our reunion celebrations will be a weekend event at the Cove Lakeside Resort in West Kelowna, BC. See below for more information.

2000s

Winnie Chen

DMD 2008

Winnie is pleased to announce her marriage to Jeff Kellow. Winnie and Jeff met in first-year medicine courses and have been best friends ever since. They are currently working in northern BC. When they are not practising together as a rural dentist/dentist duo, they ski and enjoy the cold weather up north.

ABBREVIATIONS

DMD: Doctor of Dental Medicine

Dip DH: Diploma in Dental Hygiene

BC: British Columbia

UBC: University of British Columbia

TIPS AND TRICKS

For your next reunion or event, consider renting the Bonfire Grill at the Cove Lakeside Resort in West Kelowna, BC, from June 22 to 24, 2012, to celebrate their 30-year grad anniversary.

For more information about the dinners being planned in the Bonfire Grill on Friday, June 22, or at the Qua’s Date Old Vines Restaurant on Saturday, June 23, email Doug Corn DMD 1982 at docorn5@rogersrewards.com or Jenn Parsons at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

For ideas, contact Jenn Parsons, manager of Alumni & Community Affairs, at 604-822-6751.
Almost Alumni

Jonathan Hung DMD 2012

It wasn’t exactly the 2010 Winter Olympics, but students, faculty and alumni all got together to put on a good show for those who came out to watch this year’s students vs. alumni hockey game at UBC’s Doug Mitchel Thunderbird Sports Centre.

A spirited affair with flashy pad saves and a couple of inadvertent, accidentally-on-purpose body collisions, the game lived up to its pre-game “trash talk” and ended with a 5-2 draw, fought right down to the buzzer.

Led by Jeff Coil DMD 1985 and Brian Standerwick DMD 1988, the alumni team scored early and put the students on their heels. The students clawed back into the game with a couple of inadvertent, accidentally-on-purpose body collisions, the game lived up to its pre-game “trash talk” and ended with a 5-2 draw, fought right down to the buzzer.

As we moved into the divisional finals for health faculties, we reminded ourselves to continue this legacy.

Notes” to alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

Send an alumni story or update for “Class Notes” to alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

Recent Events

Storm the Wall, a longstanding tradition at the University of British Columbia, is the biggest intramural event held in North America, with over 3,000 participants. The race includes a specialized relay of a nine-lap swim, 200-metre sprint, 2.8-kilometre bike ride, one-kilometre run and the finish at a 3.65-metre-high “wall of glory,” which each and every member of the team must get over in order to complete the race.

The DMD Class of 2015 has had a rivalry with the current MD Class of 2015 since the Day of the Longboat on October 3, 2011, another UBC REC event, which is held at Jericho Beach. After considerable anguish, a second-place finish behind the MD team at that event inspired us to Storm the Wall qualifying heat of 0:12:56, one of the top times in the entire campus event. This victory further fueled the existing rivalry between our two student teams.

As students, under the guidance of moustache guru Jim Richardson DMD 1984, MET 2011, grew or wore moustaches during November in support of prostate cancer research. At the end of the month, students gathered for their mug shots and a group photo. Dental hygiene student Christopher Lee BDSc 2013 was one of the “Mo Bros” and “Mo Sistas”

9th Annual Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament

The golf tradition continued this past September at the annual golf tournament. Over 136 golfers participated. The winning foursome—Ray Fong DMD 1989, Mark Wilson, Ed Lower DMD 1996 and Dr. Mike Kozucznik—won tickets to attend a hockey game with Dentistry dean Charles Shuler.

A special thank you to all the golfers who entered the costume contest, alumni partners: Scotiabank, Aurum Ceramic, Denstrate, Patterson Dental, Nadean Burkett & Associates and Pfizer. Thank you also to all the tournament supporters: Jeannie Haslett Financial, Pat Madayak & Company, MNP Accounting, Mahoney’s & Sons UBC, Inn at Laurel Point, Hawksworth Restaurant, Rogue Restaurant, Lautain Wine and Liquor Store, Protec Dental Laboratories, Nobel Biocare, The Dental Mission Project, Tammy Carrillo, Henry Schein, Mike O’Brien DMD 2010 and the Dental Undergraduate Society.

CDE in Maui

UBC Dentistry alumni attended Adventure & Learn Hawaii 2012, a UBC Dentistry Continuing Dental Education travel-and-learn conference held at the Fairmont Kea Lani in Maui, February 2012.

Annual Alumni Reception at the Pacific Dental Conference

Over 680 alumni and friends joined in the UBC-themed Annual Alumni Reception this past March at the PICC. Nadean Burkett & Associates sponsored the getaway contest—a trip to Las Vegas with accommodation at the Mirage Hotel. The lucky winner of the getaway contest was Patrick Manders DMD 1980. Scotiabank sponsored the student contest, which gave winner Nicole Vicenzino DMD 2012 two tickets to the Coldplay concert and dinner out. The alumni partners’ beach-themed basket was won by Anne Kelly DMD 2010. One of the highlights was the group photo of dental hygiene alumni from 1970 to 2011. The group photo is available for downloading from www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni, and hard copies are also available. For a hard copy, email Jen Prasians at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca.
More Events for Students and Alumni

DUS WELCOME BACK BIZZER GARDEN & YEARBOOK PICK-UP
Friday, September 14, 2012 · 5 pm
Student Lounge, John B. Macdonald Building
UBC Point Grey Campus
For more information, email alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

ANNUAL ALUMNI & FRIENDS GOLF TOURNAMENT
Sunday, September 16, 2012 · 1 pm
(Match play)
Morgan Creek Golf & Country Club, Surrey, BC
For more information and to register, email alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca or gerri@vdds.com.

FAMILY DAY & BBQ LUNCH
Saturday, September 22, 2012 · 11 am – 2 pm
Nobel Biocare Oral Health Centre
UBC Point Grey Campus
All DMD and Dental Hygiene alumni, students, staff, faculty and their families are invited to an Open House. Join the dean and our students for a tour of the clinic, a BBQ lunch and a fun relay race. Bring your children and enjoy activities planned by the Tooth Fairy and her pixies.
For more information, contact Alison Kovalcs at akovalcs@dentistry.ubc.ca or Jenn Parsons at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca.

OPEN WIDE COMMUNITY CLINIC DAY
Saturday, September 15, 2012
CDI College, Burnaby, BC
UBC Dentistry alumni and the British Columbia Dental Association have teamed up to deliver free dental and dental hygiene services at CDI College. The clinic will offer basic dental care to the clients of a local social agency. For more information on volunteering for this community clinic, email Anita Gardiner-Mukhras DMD 1993 at anita.gardiner@ubc.ca or Jill Moore Dip DH 1976 at jill4travel@gmail.com or Jenn Parsons at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca.

More Events for Alumni

ALUMNI RECEPTION AT THE NORTHWEST DENTAL EXPO
Friday, September 21, 2012 · 6 pm
Location TBA, Edmonton, Alberta
For more information, contact Jenn Parsons at alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca

ALUMNI RECEPTION AT THE ONTARIO DENTAL CONFERENCE
Friday, May 11, 2012 · 6 pm
Real Sports Bar and Grill, Toronto, Ontario
For more information, email alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca or Diana Younan DMD 2010 at deeyounan@gmail.com

UBC ALUMNI WEEKEND
Saturday, May 26, 2012
Point Grey Campus, Vancouver, BC
For more information, go to www.alumni.ubc.ca

ALUMNI WINE RECEPTION AT TODS MEETING, KELOWNA
Friday, October 26, 2012 · 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre
Join Dr. Charles Shuler, dean of UBC Dentistry, and fellow Okanagan alumni for a glass of wine, hors d’oeuvres, cheese and conversation following the 2012 Thompson Okanagan Dental Society (TODS) Annual Dental Meeting. Conference registration is not required to attend the reception. For conference registration, go to www.todsmeeting.com. For information about the reception, email alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca.

TASTE OF VANCOUVER ISLAND ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION
Saturday, October 13, 2012 · 4 – 6 pm
Inn at Laurel Point, 680 Montreal Street Victoria, BC
Join Dr. Charles Shuler, dean of UBC Dentistry, and fellow Victoria & District Dental Society alumni and friends at the Taste of Vancouver Island reception. Local food prepared by Inn at Laurel Point chef Takashi Ito and wine from Cherry Point Vineyards will be served.
For more information, email organizers Sunny Tatra DMD 2003 at gusta@shaw.ca or Anna Rankin DMD 2010 at shortrankin@hotmail.com

ANNUAL ALUMNI RECEPTION PACIFIC DENTAL CONFERENCE 2013
Friday, March 8, 2013 · 6 – 8 pm
Second Floor Lobby, Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre

Stay in Touch

The alumni relations department at UBC Dentistry can help you stay connected with your fellow graduates, plan and promote reunions, and keep you informed of upcoming educational opportunities. To learn more, contact Jenn Parsons, manager of Alumni & Community Affairs, at 604-822-6751 or alumni@dentistry.ubc.ca
Stay connected to more than 2,300 alumni. Share your news, thoughts or comments. Visit www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
The UBC Faculty of Dentistry & BC Dental Association Dental Mentorship Program, sponsored by CDSF, is recruiting dentists to be mentors. If you are interested in being paired up with a student, contact Alex Hemming at alex@dentistry.ubc.ca

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER
Follow Alumni & Community Affairs @dentum_at_ubc www.twitter.com/dentalum_at_ubc

Additional information and more events can be found at Visit www.dentistry.ubc.ca/alumni