Dean’s word

I have been impressed by the exciting conversations underway with our clinical teachers and alumni to develop our vision and strategic priorities for the next five years.

Our vision is to achieve the following:

1. The Faculty of Dentistry is recognised by government, media and the general public for its thought leadership and as a source of expert knowledge on matters relating to dental practice, oral health and its relevance to general health.

2. A strong clinical research team in the Faculty of Dentistry that addresses problems associated with priority community health issues, improves dental procedures, and adds to the evidence base for our curricula.

3. The way we work demonstrates that a collaborative patient-centric approach to delivery of health services and teaching is achievable and effective, and delivers better outcomes for the community.

4. The Faculty of Dentistry is the undisputed ‘go to’ place for the dental profession for a) referral of complex clinical cases and b) up-to-date and practical clinically relevant information to assist dental and other health practitioners.

5. Graduates are highly regarded as work-ready, ethical practitioners with a strong commitment to patient care.

“We provide more than a quarter of a million hours of direct patient care for the most disadvantaged people in our communities.”

Professor Chris Peck
Dean, Faculty of Dentistry
Integrating oral and systemic health

This is a key priority and our Chair in Lifespan Oral Health is set to lead the faculty’s research and education in this area. Our researchers are focused on tangible outcomes, and among them are the following bright minds of the faculty:

- Dr Shanika Nanayakkara and Dr Xiaoyan Zhou are working on a clinical cohort database; relating oral and systemic clinical variables.

- Dr Christina Adler is focusing on chronic infection and disease resulting from genetic and environmental actors.

- Dr Ky-Anh Nguyen, Dr Jin Long Gao and Associate Professor Axel Spahr are investigating oral bacterial survival, virulence and links with systemic health.

- Dr Ramin Farahani and Professor Neil Hunter are lead faculty researchers on neuroplasticity and glia-assisted angiogenesis.

- Dr Munira Xaymardan is investigating pluripotent jaw muscle cells for cardiac regeneration.

- Associate Professor Axel Spahr, Dr Luiz Bertassoni and Professor Michael Swain are working on a periodontal model for bone regeneration.

- Professor Ali Darendeliler is lead faculty researcher on two projects: adaptation versus degeneration: orthodontic root resorption and oral management of obstructive sleep apnoea.

- Professor Iven Klineberg and Professor Ali Darendeliler are investigating orthopaedics: instant bone anchorage.

- Professor Greg Murray and Professor Chris Peck are focusing on chronic pain.

- Professor Hans Zoellner and Dr Stephen Cox are working on wounds and scar tissue formation and Professor Zoellner is also investigating cancer cell biology.
Conversations around these activities continue to focus us on ‘putting the mouth back into the body’. Our mouth is the gateway to our body and to good health. Oral health determines the extent to which substances that enter our mouth have access to our body and its systems. How we will do it is important to the ongoing healthcare conversation.

There is also a strong commitment to translating research for community benefit.

Individually, we know we can’t do it alone. So we need to consider how we may work together, and with other health disciplines, the social sciences and humanities.

Our clinical database is up and running and we are piloting patient data collection at Westmead. This will provide us with important information on our clinical activities and ultimately contribute to the development of evidence-based guidelines for patient assessment and management.

Our values underpin this work – we need to consider how values of engaged enquiry and mutual accountability will influence what we do.

The Australian Dental Council has reviewed our Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClinDent) courses and everyone should be proud of the positive results of this review. I would like to thank all staff and students for their commitment to this review and, in particular, Ms Tracey Bowerman, academic staff and course coordinators.

These courses are very important to the provision of healthcare to our communities and in the advancement of dental research and education.

We provide more than a quarter of a million hours of direct patient care for the most disadvantaged people in our communities, which we continue to expand with direct community action. Earlier this year our Oral Health Therapy students joined Sydney’s Homeless Connect to provide care to the less advantaged, such as refugees and homeless people who find it particularly difficult to access dental care. A number of students felt that, for them, these opportunities were life-changing events and set them on a strong path of community care.

I look forward to the conversations we will continue to have as we integrate further our research and education with clinical care.

Professor Chris Peck
Dean, Faculty of Dentistry

Above: Biobank team Dr Shanika Nanayakkara and Dr Xiaoyan Zhou.
Left: Healthy Gingiva. Epithelial cells of the gums, stained for markers of cell proliferation. Courtesy of Filip Vujovic.
Tele-dentistry trial to enhance Aboriginal oral health

A tele-dentistry trial will be a major step forward in closing the oral health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Dr Michelle Irving explains.

In recent years Aboriginal elders of the remote NSW northern central tablelands have expressed concern at the shortage of dental services in their communities. Significant barriers, such as geographic remoteness, poor or no public transport and a scarcity of dentists and dental specialists, continue to plague the oral health of their people.

In 2013, following widespread consultation with the community, local health service providers and the Centre for Oral Health Strategy, the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health implemented an oral health service maintained by recently graduated dentists and oral health therapists and overseen by visiting senior clinicians.

The service has been particularly beneficial to the Aboriginal community and is now set to continue into 2016 and beyond. University of Sydney dental and oral health therapy students will undertake rural placements in those communities.

As the service grows and more complex dental cases present themselves, it will need additional, and important, specialist dental care support. A new tele-dentistry trial, based on a tele-medicine model, should help to meet that need. It will overcome barriers of access to specialist oral health care for patients and provide increased support and advice for local clinicians.

Due to start at the end of 2015, the trial will use two iPads with mobile wi-fi capabilities to enable communication between remote clinical teams and students and Faculty of Dentistry specialists. To measure its success, the faculty will use process evaluation of specialist services, time and cost savings for patients and clinicians and a satisfaction survey for all clinicians involved.

The Poche Centre/Faculty of Dentistry collaboration has been warmly welcomed by the remote, rural community and is expected to vastly improve the oral health of Aboriginal people in this region. The model will eventually be replicated in other remote oral health services.

Dr Michelle Irving
Research Fellow and Bachelor of Oral Health Lecturer
Poche Centre for Indigenous Health
Faculty of Dentistry

Faculty of Dentistry graduate Dr Stephanie Chow and oral health therapist Hollie Bendotti provide care and comfort to a primary school child.
Dr Carrie Tsai, Clinical Lecturer, Paediatric Dentistry

With a passion for teaching and experiencing different parts of the world, Dr Carrie Tsai recently made the move from her home in the United States to join the Faculty of Dentistry as a clinical lecturer in Paediatric Dentistry.

Her dental training at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine has given her extensive experience in problem-based learning (PBL). It is becoming an integral part of the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) curriculum at the University of Sydney, and curricula at medical and dental schools worldwide.

To further her interest in delving into social determinants of health, Carrie earned a Master of Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health, where she co-coordinated a course for postgraduate and public health students on “access issues for dental services”.

“The specialty of Paediatric Dentistry marries my interests, as it is a vital intersection between public health and dentistry in terms of its focus on prevention during early developmental stages, community-wide collaborative efforts, and on enhancing health systems to ultimately improve the health of whole populations,” Dr Tsai says.

During her specialty training at the University of California, San Francisco, Dr Tsai also took on teaching responsibilities and research projects in the areas of dental health policy and global oral health. After this work she collaborated on novel health promotion projects in both Honduras and Nepal, and then held an honorary Assistant Clinical Professorship to remain involved in teaching and research.

In supporting the DMD curriculum, Dr Tsai hopes to bring insight and passion from her time in private practice and academia to keen, interested students in the Faculty of Dentistry.

Students launch own blood drive

Currently only one in 30 people give blood, but one in three people will need it in their lifetime. A single donation can help at least three different patients.

Answering an urgent national call for blood donations, the Sydney University Dental Association (SUDA) has joined their fellow Australian Dental Students Association (ADSA) students and launched its own ‘blood drive’. All donations made during the month of September will contribute to the Sydney tally.

For donations that count towards the tally and to join SUDA’s Red25 club please visit www.donateblood.com.au/who-can-give/red25/join-group

Look under ‘SUDA’ in the ‘Organisation or group’ search box, complete the form and book an appointment online at whichever donor centre is most convenient.

SUDA is keen to lead Australian universities with this initiative, and is calling on all students to come forward and save lives!
Faculty education embraces the technology revolution

Futuristic technology is transforming dentistry education, as Associate Professor Elizabeth Martin explains.

In recent years the faculty has boldly progressed towards more simulation and digital technologies, to provide alternative options to traditional teaching methods and enhance teaching.

The first stage of this strategy involved the acquisition of four dental simulators that use highly sophisticated technology originally designed to train pilots in flight simulation. The technology is based on haptics – the science of creating a realistic sense of touch to the user in a virtual environment.

In the hands of Doctor of Dental Medicine 1 (DMD1) students, the simulators assist the development of crucial manual dexterity. In DMD2, students practise cavity preparation skills, while DMD3 students are able to carry out crown preparations in a virtual environment. Some modules provide immediate feedback to students on work performed, which allows them to develop skills more efficiently in a range of areas before moving on to plastic or extracted teeth, and then patients.

Additional simulation equipment includes the SimMan, an adult life-sized patient simulator that facilitates training in basic and advanced life support skills. We have recently acquired six local anaesthesia simulators used to enhance the teaching and clinical abilities of students by developing their skills in delivering local anaesthesia, before treating patients.

More recently, the faculty has developed a program with Stoneglass Industries using digital technology to facilitate the fabrication of full dentures and the construction of occlusal splints. Introduced into the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics) program, it will be incorporated into the DMD2 teaching program from 2016.

Plans for the near future are to boldly implement broader applications of digital technology to expand teaching, student skills development and patient treatment. This will include the provision of intracoronal and extracoronal indirect restorations, veneers, crowns, implant-supported restorations and partial dentures using digital technology.

Associate Professor Elizabeth Martin
Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, Associate Professor in Tooth Conservation, Faculty of Dentistry.
Partnership supports student innovation

A new partnership with Stoneglass Industries will give students the chance to enhance their learning with emerging technologies.

In April this year the Faculty of Dentistry formally entered into a partnership with Stoneglass Industries to incorporate Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAM) technologies into the curriculum and research activities of our current postgraduate students.

During the initial phase of this project, the collaboration will give the faculty and students an opportunity to expand their learning by integrating emerging technologies and fostering innovation.

Critical to the rollout of the new program has been the establishment of a digital laboratory at Westmead Centre of Oral Health (assisted by Stoneglass Industries) where students can learn to custom design and create prosthesis for their patients. On 26 May we were delighted that the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health and Western NSW, opened the new laboratory at a well-attended event.

Faculty Dean Professor Chris Peck said: “We are pleased to be working with an Australian company to introduce an initial trial of CADCAM technologies into the curriculum of postgraduate dentistry students.

“The use of new technologies is becoming increasingly important in the practice of dentistry; its inclusion in our course contributes to the University of Sydney’s development of highly sought-after graduates.”

Above: Mr Georges Sara, Managing Director, Stoneglass Industries, and Professor Chris Peck sign the agreement.

Dental chair restored to 1919 condition

The faculty received some exciting news recently, as explained in a communication from Associate Professor Peter Barnard, ‘curator’ of the Dental Alumni Museum, to benefactor, Dr Jerry Schwartz:

“Hi Jerry, Great news that the 1919 Ritter [USA] dental chair and tower unit have been delivered. They are now in place in a Dental Alumni Museum surgery display at the Westmead Centre for Oral Health.

I, and other dentists at Westmead, were amazed at the ultimate perfection of these items.

Highest praise goes to Jason Hard for his extreme and intricate work in their restoration.

Thank you Jerry for your donation of these items to our dental museum.”

Clare Bayliss, General Manager of the faculty, added:

“I walked past today and it looks fantastic – the company that refurbished the chair have done a really excellent job – it looks brand new!

“I know that Dr Kenny and the Westmead team are very happy to have the museum display here – I have certainly seen many patients and visitors looking at the artefacts – and the chair is a real ‘jewel in the crown’ for this project, which I know, will attract much interest.”

Above: Dental chair restored to 1919 condition.
Students fill the gap on the run in the City2Surf

Exceptional team bonding and dedication inspired a huge effort by the seven students fundraising for Sydney University Dentistry Association (SUDA) charity of choice ‘Filling the Gap’.

The team’s fundraising culminated in the recent City2Surf, and they managed to reach and surpass their goal, raising a solid $2276.51. One member, Tom Cocks, raised a massive $900 on his own.

This year’s effort aimed to ‘fill the gap’ in Aboriginal communities by contributing to much-needed dental treatment in New South Wales, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

We are so proud of the efforts made by this year’s Faculty of Dentistry team fundraising in the name of ‘Fill the Gap’ – it was not only a resounding success but fantastic fun was had by all!

We look forward to doing this again bigger and better next year with a larger turnout for the race and more importantly for the fundraising!

Kyle Schaltz
DMD3 student

Sandra Rogers, Dean’s Executive Assistant

Sandra Rogers has been recently appointed Executive Assistant to Professor Chris Peck, Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, after many years’ experience working in executive assistant and management roles.

Sandra has clocked up around 15 years in highly stressful frontline positions. After working in a variety of sectors, including Macquarie University, the City of Ryde Council and Century 21 Real Estate, she has learnt that, as the face and voice of the organisation, a cool and calm demeanour is ‘de rigueur’ – at least on the outside!

During Sandra’s employment with Macquarie University she was also practice manager for its medical service for four years and spent a further year as manager of Macquarie’s study abroad and student exchange scheme. Cool under extreme fire, Sandra led the medical service in gaining its first-ever accreditation, and guided the move to a new location on campus.

Outside of work, swimming is her passion. In August 2014 she competed at the World Masters Swimming Championships in Montreal and made the top 10 in the 800m freestyle.

“Training up to five times a week in the pool, along with regular competition at local, state and national meets, my major goal now is to achieve gold in the World Masters Swimming Championships in Budapest in 2017,” Sandra says.
Connecting the homeless with dental care

Our students and staff have again played a key role in Sydney Homeless Connect, which aims to improve quality of life for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

Sydney Homeless Connect takes place at Sydney Town Hall each year and aims to assist those who are most disadvantaged by connecting them with community and government services that can give them the support, guidance and the information they need.

On 21 July this year Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) students and staff again volunteered their time for this worthwhile community day and demonstrated a wonderful team effort. They provided guests with oral health education, answering oral health questions and distributing essential oral hygiene products.

The team assisted with triage and direction to the dental van, where many guests were able to receive emergency dental care that day. Each participant found the experience extremely rewarding.

These events highlight the various factors that contribute to optimum or poor oral health.

“Our students gain enormous insight and perspective as they are called to come to the aid of the vulnerable in our community,” says Cathryn Forsyth, Associate Director of Health Education and Promotion.

“The dental team was fantastic – they tirelessly provided oral health advice and assistance in the treatment of chronic dental pain to many of our susceptible guests.”
Master navigator leaves indelible mark on education

Associate Professor Norton Duckmanton completed his dental training at the University of Sydney in 1951 and entered service in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a navigator – an experience he has often used as a model for his life and ethics.

Following a rewarding period in rural practice, Norton joined the faculty and, after being appointed a Teaching Fellow and Lecturer in 1964 in the Department of Prosthetic Dentistry, he obtained his Master of Dental Science/Surgery by research. In 1977 he became Senior Lecturer under the expert eye of the Head of Department, Professor Campbell (Cam) Harry Graham.

In 1981 Professor Per-Ingvar Branemark, developer of the Branemark implant system and the concept of osseointegration, was invited to Sydney to work with the Faculty of Dentistry’s Prosthodontics and Oral Surgery departments in commencing implant care for edentulous patients.

This exciting and challenging event saw Norton join the implant rehabilitation team at the Sydney Dental Hospital and assist in the development of an Implant Centre – a joint project between the faculty and the hospital.

After retiring from the faculty, Norton continued to encourage students to engage in prosthodontics and provide appropriate care that maximises patient benefits in the role of Specialist Prosthodontist at Sydney Dental Hospital. He taught prosthodontics to many students, and for the last 20 years was involved in the specialty Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics) program at Westmead.

Norton was invited to become a visiting Associate Professor at the Department of Prosthodontics in North-Western University, Chicago in 1974–75 and returned again for two years in 1984. These stints were followed by regular visits from 1986 to 2004.

While these US experiences were exciting, Norton’s passion lied in Australia and he remained committed to Sydney, where he maintained links with the RAAF, involvement with oral implant care, an enthusiastic engagement in dental education and a dedication to the University as a stalwart alumnus of his faculty.

Professor Iven Klineberg, Nobel Biocare Professor of Oral Rehabilitation said: “Norton’s dedicated commitment to service – through engagement with patient care, the teaching and mentoring of students and friendship with colleagues – has been a beacon to all who have been privileged to know and work with him.”

Associate Professor Duckmanton is now happily retired and has recently celebrated a significant milestone birthday.
In July this year the Sydney University Dental Association (SUDA), the Dental Alumni Society of the University of Sydney (DASUS) and the Faculty of Dentistry partnered with the Recent Graduates Committee of the Australian Dental Association (NSW Branch) (ADA NSW) to host the 2015 Women in Dentistry cocktail reception.

Together students of the faculty, academics, alumni and their professional colleagues gathered at the Refectory in the Holme Building to listen to Dr Deb Cockrell share insights from her remarkable career. This wide and fascinating journey has led to her being elected as President of ADA NSW. Dr Cockrell spoke enthusiastically about the importance of collegiality and support forming an essential adjunct of the dental profession. She highlighted the importance of bonding with mentors or personal and professional development, which has punctuated her relationship with long-time Head of Oral Rehabilitation, the much-esteemed Professor Iven Klineberg.

Again this year more than 100 guests attended the evening, including a large number of alumni and staff who took the rare opportunity to mingle socially with students in an informal setting. Likewise, the students enjoyed meeting dental professionals and garnering valuable support and advice from these role models.

Warm thanks to our partners – the Recent Graduates Committee of the Australian Dental Association (NSW Branch) – whose continued support assured the success of this function, along with co-sponsors of the event – BOQ Specialist – specialist provider of financial solutions or dental professionals. For more information please visit their website at − boqspecialist.com.au

An open invitation is extended to everyone to join the Women in Dentistry Committee by emailing 2015 Chair Audrey Irish on − airi3760@uni.sydney.edu.au.

We look forward to seeing you next year!
Retirement of Bruce Waters

Bruce Waters joined the Westmead Hospital Radiology Department as Senior Radiographer 35 years ago. He enhanced his training under the tutelage of mentor, Associate Professor Tony Barrett, developed a strong passion for the profession and remained until his retirement last month.

Bruce’s dedication to oral radiology led him to a lifelong love of teaching and, despite limited space in the Oral Radiology department, he set up tutorials for Years 4 and 5 of the Bachelor of Dental Science programs together with Dr Brian Vern Barnett. He was also responsible for bringing Westmead’s Oral Radiology Department into the 21st century by introducing the latest Cone Beam Imaging equipment in 2006.

A founding member of the Australian Academy of Dental and Maxillofacial Radiologists, Bruce regularly presented continuing education programs to faculty staff and is a world-renowned guest speaker.

We are grateful and thank Bruce Waters for his tremendous energy and generous contribution and dedication to teaching of students in the Faculty of Dentistry.

Dean ‘grilled’ at strategy day

During the faculty’s Strategy Day, as an awareness-raising exercise and commitment to wellbeing, health and safety, Dean Chris Peck was placed ‘on the stand’ and cross-examined, in the guise of a senior manager, over a hypothetical incident.

While his responses to the barrister’s questioning were entertaining, they also underlined to the audience the crucial message intended – that, where health and safety are concerned, no-one is absolved of responsibilities in the workplace.