THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON

We have embarked in the Year of the Dragon with the commencement of students in 13 courses including the new Doctor of Dental Medicine and Graduate Diploma in Surgical Dentistry.

I want to especially thank so many in this faculty for their tireless effort without whose goodwill this could not have come about in the seamless way it has. We strive to maximise the potential of our students and staff through our integration of research and education to ultimately benefit Australia and the wider world. We have commenced an internal review of the Bachelor of Oral Health to improve integration and best practice in teaching across all courses. We have important additions to our staff who will hold a pivotal place in developing further our research priorities in the chronic diseases and healthy ageing.

I am extremely encouraged and also wish to recognise the dedication of our current students who are committed to help improve our programs, often not for themselves but for those that follow.

Recent graduands and young alumni are emerging to take a hand in shaping the direction of the Alumni Society with plans for social events and occasions for a renewal of contacts and ties with colleagues and peers.

All in all this is set to be a very exciting year and I take this opportunity to wish all our students, staff and alumni a successful 2012.

Our next edition of encompass will feature our Graduation Ceremony and Prize Award Ceremony for recognition of excellence in Teaching, Research, Postgraduate studies and the Bachelor of Oral Health and Bachelor of Dentistry.

Chris Peck, Dean

GENERATORS OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

SPOTLIGHT Dr Jinlong Gao, Faculty of Dentistry Associate lecturer and researcher

Dr Jinlong Gao earned his BDS degree from the prestigious Sun Yat-sen University in China, and was awarded the NSW Dental Board scholarship and Bela Schwartz Fellowship which enabled him to pursue his PhD degree in Oral Biology the University of Sydney. His research dealing with the haem economy in the bacteria Porphyromonas gingivalis, has been published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry and earned him worldwide recognition.

cont’d page 3
SYDNEY DEVELOPMENT FUND
SPRING APPEAL

The Dean thanks all who generously responded to the recent Spring Appeal.

Your donations to education and research this year will enable an additional scholarship to a student experiencing financial difficulty. Over time with the support of our alumni and friends we aim to increase the available pool of funds for such an important and valuable purpose.

OPERATING MICROSCOPES

The generosity of many individuals, dental study groups the Australian Society of Endodontology, ADA(NSW) and the Australian Dental Council has permitted the Faculty to acquire three new operating microscopes to enhance teaching across the whole Endodontic program at the Sydney Dental Hospital.

Thank you.

When I say, “Doing dentistry is hard” I know that those involved in dentistry, dental & oral health students and graduates (you) really understand what I mean. It is this mutual understanding between students that allows us to get through the hard days, weeks and months. It is this understanding that has built our student community. Our community ensures that a student in need is a student with a colleague and friend to lend support.

Yes, our community is supportive but it also allows us to accomplish more than we could alone. With our community behind them the 2nd years went out together and raised money for Craniofacial Australia. With our community behind them groups of 3rd and 4th years went out into the world and to indigenous communities at home, helping those less fortunate.

It is with a sense of belonging to this community, I hope we can excel in our studies and continue to interact with society. It is with a sense of belonging that leads me to a vital part of our community, you!

Just as you once worried, we now worry.

Just as you succeeded, we strive to succeed.

Just as you are a hygienist, a therapist or a dentist, so we aspire to be!

Our community would be strengthened greatly by an increased engagement with those that have gone before us. This would give the students an even greater well of support and more opportunity to show their significant worth outside the bounds of the faculty curriculum.

In 2012 I implore all alumni to become involved and support the Faculty and students where they can. I hope that together we will find ways for students, our students, to shine in the community. Together, we can win our first Roland Bryant Cup against Charles Sturt University and together, we can finally put the Medicine Rugby Union team back in its place.

Michael Rutledge

BDent4 student and President SUDA

Cambodian children receive new toothbrushes and are given oral hygiene instruction from our BDent3 students and their supervisor, Sydney alumni Dr. Cecilia So. – Photo courtesy of Simon Hampton
Delyse Leadbeatter obtained her Bachelor of Dental Surgery with Honours from the University of Sydney in 1993. After graduation, she was employed in the Westmead Centre for Oral Health’s Dental Officer Program. It was during a rotation in the then Community Dental Health Unit (now renamed the Special Care Unit) that she developed an interest in oral health care for people with intellectual and other disabilities. The dynamic team environment, lead by Dr Peter King, made this role such a stimulating and rewarding one.

In the late 1990s, Delyse accepted a part-time teaching role within the Diploma of Dental Therapy program, at the College of Dental Therapy, Westmead, and in 2003 joined the Faculty of Dentistry’s Bachelor of Dentistry program as a lecturer. Since this time, Delyse continues to explore and further her interest in several aspects of dental education, including the use of Problem Based Learning, assessment and curriculum development.

Following a one-year hiatus, Delyse returns to the Faculty prepared to embark on a journey as a PhD candidate, within the area of educational research.

Delyse says ‘this is an exciting and daring career move and, one that, as a mum-of-three, will present many challenges but there is a wide range of support available to women in the Sydney University environment which I hope will see me achieving my lifelong dream’.

Jinlong joined the Faculty in 2011 as an Associate Lecturer. He says ‘One of the best things I can do is inspire students who have an interest in research to explore their skills of experimental analysis, develop their sense of intellectual curiosity, and encourage them to pursue their academic careers. Being a scientist isn’t a job. It is a way of thinking. Being a teacher isn’t a job. It is a way of sharing.’

*P. gingivalis* is a periodontal pathogen of central importance because of its high prevalence and proportions in “gum diseases” - periodontitis. Almost one in five Australian adults suffers from periodontitis and this number increases up to 61% in senior population aged 75 and above. In addition, *P. gingivalis* infection also implicated to promote the cardiovascular diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, aspiration pneumonia or premature birth. Hence, the financial costs associated with this disease are substantial and make this research crucial for the improvement of oral health in the community.

Jinlong joined the Faculty in 2011 as an Associate Lecturer. He says ‘One of the best things I can do is inspire students who have an interest in research to explore their skills of experimental analysis, develop their sense of intellectual curiosity, and encourage them to pursue their academic careers. Being a scientist isn’t a job. It is a way of thinking. Being a teacher isn’t a job. It is a way of sharing.’
The role of the modern health professional in our society is a well documented barometer of the value of that society.

As the prospect of ‘teeth for life’ and expectations from patients increase, unique responsibilities develop for a special relationship that, quite rightly, will exist between the public and those deemed to have the responsibility for that care.

The concept of a professional within a community is well understood. Privileges and acknowledgement especially within smaller communities has been a feature that is part of modern Australian society. But these features come with reciprocal obligations. If one is to be the beneficiary of such entitlements, then community engagement, consistency of service, care and a desire to serve are not unreasonable in return as a response from the professional.

Says Dr Sinclair ‘A commitment to lifetime learning should not be regarded as a statutory imposition but rather as a response, driven by the professional, to provide the best possible outcomes for their patients. Interaction with a community need not be regarded as an unnecessary intrusion but rather as a genuine desire to assist and establish a ‘social value’ commensurate with the opportunities afforded to the modern oral health professional. In my experience, communities deeply value the role of health professional. Their response to such individuals is even further enhanced when the professional contributes and participates in ways over and above those considered the norm.’