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Farewell to 711 Elizabeth Street

The School of Dental Science hosted a successful building farewell on the 17th August which was attended by approximately 300 alumni and staff. Displays were set up throughout the building with museum artefacts on the 1st floor; history of the Diploma of Oral Health Therapy and a forensic sculpture display by Ronn Taylor on the 3rd floor. Professors Reynolds and Atkinson addressed the audience with humorous anecdotes and recollections of the years at 711 Elizabeth Street.

The "walk down memory lane" photo boards were a great success and it was very rewarding for the staff who had worked so hard to set this all up, to see the pleasure on the faces of the alumni as they recalled memories of people and events from years ago. A

CD entitled "A farewell to 711 Elizabeth Street – A brief history in pictures" was produced as a memento of the occasion. We still have some copies of the CD available, so please contact us if you would like a copy.

From Rags to Riches

Multi-media equipment at the new Dental School, 720 Swanston St

The move to our new premises at 720 Swanston St has seen the Dental School go from one of the worst teaching environments – leaking lecture theatres with inadequate lighting, non-existent air conditioning and inadequate teaching space with limited student computer access – to the most advanced teaching facilities at The University of Melbourne, and possibly within the Southern Hemisphere.



The two lecture theatres on the ground floor (Jean Falkner Tahija Theatre, 90-seat capacity, raked and the Geoffrey Wylie Theatre, 90-seat capacity, flat) have dual 5500 ANSI lumens (superbright) data projectors, digital overhead projection, VCR, DVD, camera and web access for remote hook-up. It is possible to have a lecture being given in one of these facilities to be viewed anywhere in the school, or even in remote sites, such as the facilities being established in Shepparton. (...continued page 2)



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The first floor computer laboratory boasts 4 similar data projectors ("quad-projection") with identical facilities as well as 90 powerful Dell desktop computers with high resolution 20 inch monitors. Each of these monitors, as well as the data projectors, can be simultaneously projecting an identical image/lecture, controlled by two teaching workstations. This is an ideal facility to utilize our newly acquired virtual microscopy facilities (only the second to be purchased in Australia behind the Royal College of Pathologists) for the teaching of Oral Pathology/Oral Medicine and Oral Histology.

The third floor pre-clinical laboratories are equipped with similar data projectors, digital overhead projectors and each of the 90 student workstations has a small, yet powerful Dell laptop.

These 90 dental simulated workstations boast state of the art Kavo equipment.

There are 5 seminar rooms throughout the building (3 on the ground floor and one each on floors 5 and 6) that also are equipped with state of the art multimedia facilities, including "digital" whiteboards.

Finally, the dental radiology teaching facility on the ground floor has been equipped for both film based and digital radiology teaching for small student groups. As can be imagined, it is taking some time for the teaching staff to come to terms with this abundance of riches. The opportunity to use these facilities for the last four weeks of the current academic year has significantly helped clear up a number of "glitches", most of which were related to us finding our way around the new building getting all this equipment to work. This will hopefully allow for a smooth start to the 2006 academic year and greatly enhance the teaching of both undergraduate and post-graduate dental students in a digital age.



A word from the Head

Well, we finally made it! Or, we soon will have, when the staff and students of the Oral Biology unit and the Dental Museum move to the new building on December 8th and 9th. This will leave only a small group of staff awaiting relocation to Bio21 in January and the Clinical Trials Unit which is still waiting on a relocation site.

It has been quite a momentous year for the School and, while it was sad to leave the old building where so many of us have spent so many years, it has proven to be invigorating and exciting to be in a fresh new location with such wonderful new equipment to work with. Feedback from the students has been very positive and although there have been a few teething problems in the settling in period, none of it, thankfully, has caused any disruption to the smooth progress of the annual examination period.

Thanks must go to the dedication of a few very hard-working staff who put in long hours during the moving period to ensure it was all up and running when the students returned from the non-teaching period at the end of October. Thanks are also due to DHSV staff, who have been very patient and accommodating of all the disruption and extra work the School's move has created for them.

I would like to also extend the School's thanks yet again this year to all those casual staff who help us deliver the School's curricula and most particularly, to those honorary staff who give of their time pro bono. In the new year, we hope to be able to organise an event at which we can showcase some of our wonderful new technology and equipment (once we have completely mastered it ourselves!) and to offer some training sessions for all our casual staff as well.

In the meantime, I would like to wish you and your families all the very best for the festive season from myself and all the staff at the School of Dental Science.

PROFESSOR ERIC REYNOLDS

Research News

DR STUART DASHPER
HEAD OF THE ORAL BIOLOGY SECTION AND
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH

It is with great pleasure that I can announce that at the recent Australian and New Zealand Division Meeting of the International Association for Dental Research held in Queenstown, New Zealand, The University of Melbourne staff and students not only presented some outstanding research but were awarded four prestigious research prizes. I think this highlights the talent we have within the School and the strength of the research that is conducted here.

Congratulations to:

Dr Samantha Byrne who received the Colgate Travel Grant for her PhD studies on the bacterial aetiology of periodontal disease. This award will enable Samantha to present her research in the senior section of the Hatton Award at the next global IADR meeting.

Dr Ivan Darby who received the Oral Biology Award for his studies on Periodontal diseases.

Dr Matthew Hopcraft who received the Preventive and Community Dentistry Award.

Leon Prentice who received The Joan Chong Award in Dental Materials.

The next global IADR meeting will be held in Brisbane, Queensland, in June 2006 and will offer staff and students a great opportunity to present their research to a world-wide audience.

For further information see <http://www.iadr.com/> This conference will also offer those interested in learning more of future directions and developments in dentistry and dental science the rare opportunity to hear a large number of world class researchers and educators present their work in this country. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

The 36th Annual Program of Student Research Presentations was held at the School on October the 27th and 28th. We took full advantage of the technology in our new state of the art lecture theatres to stream a live video feed of the presentations from one theatre to the other. This year's program included presentations from twenty fourth and fifth year BDSc student groups, six second year OHT groups and seven postgraduate students. This program is an excellent opportunity for our students to gain an understanding of the importance of research in Dental Science. I congratulate all of the presenters on the quality of their presentations which covered a wide variety of topics

most comprehensive CPD guide in Victoria – not only will it list all courses being offered by both organisations but will include a blank log sheet, the Dental Registration Board of Victoria's CPD policy, registration forms for both the School and the ADA-VB and the contact details for every possible professional organisation needed by members of the Dental profession.

The program is currently under production but all registered Dentists, Oral Health Therapists and Hygienists should receive a copy on or around the 25th November. At around the same time, the School's program will go up on our web site, which can be found at:

http://www.dent.unimelb.edu.au/dsweb/continuing_dev/index.html

If you have not received your hard copy by the end of November, please contact the CPD Office and we will arrange to have a copy mailed to you. Our courses fill up very quickly so we strongly recommend you register for all the courses you are interested in as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing even more of you in 2006.

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Education News

Continuing Professional Development update

Over the course of the past 10 months, the CPD Unit has run 18 courses and before the year is out, that number will have risen to 21 and over 300 Dentists, Oral Therapists & Hygienists have participated in our program. This equates to over 800 cups of tea/coffee, 1,000+ scones, 1,200 sandwiches, 700 pieces of fresh fruit and countless glasses of orange juice! We are very pleased to announce that several new courses will be introduced into the program in 2006, which are the result of suggestions participants have made via the course evaluation system.

For the first time, the School's CPD Unit will jointly publish the forthcoming year's program with the Australian Dental Associations Victorian Branch. This will make it the



Governor of Victoria, John Landy, (right) presents Professor Reynolds with the Victoria Prize in recognition of his contributions to the field of dental research.

Staff News

Victoria Prize to Top Dental Scientist

Prominent University of Melbourne dental scientist Professor Eric Reynolds has been awarded the Victoria Prize for his ground breaking research into oral diseases and the prevention of tooth decay.

Governor of Victoria, John Landy, presented Professor Reynolds with the prestigious \$50,000 award recently in recognition of his contributions to the field of dental research.

The University of Melbourne was also recognised for supporting Professor Reynolds' work, receiving an award which complements the Victoria Prize – the \$100,000 Anne & Eric Smorgon Memorial Award from the Jack and Robert Smorgon Families Foundation.

Professor Reynolds is one of the leading researchers in the University's Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute. He also heads the School of Dental Science and leads the CRC for Oral Health Science and the Victorian Centre for Oral Health Science.

Congratulating Professor Reynolds on winning the Victoria Prize, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Frank Larkins, said that in the quarter of a century Professor Reynolds has been involved in dental science he has made a number of key discoveries.

"He first identified the molecular processes enabling the repair of early tooth decay without the need for invasive treatment. This was followed by the discovery of a milk compound, called

Recaldent™, that repairs the effect of acid on teeth and reduces the risk of disease.

"Recaldent is now used in gels, chewing gum, pastes and rinses around the world," he said.

Gippsland farmers provide the milk used to produce the protective compound, which has been incorporated into chewing gums, gels, pastes and rinses used in dental practices around the world.

Professor Reynolds describes Recaldent as a fundamental but important breakthrough. "Dental decay costs Australians around \$2 billion a year," he says.

Among Professor Reynolds' other honours are the William J Gies Award (USA), Alan Docking Science Award (Australia and New Zealand), Loftus Hill Award (Australia) and the Clunies Ross National Science and Technology Award (Australia). He received the Officer of the Order of Australia for his contribution to dental science and dental education in the 2005 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The Victoria Prize and Fellowships are awarded by the Victorian Government to reward excellence and recognise the contribution of scientists, engineers and innovators to Victoria's future.

THIS PROFILE OF PROFESSOR ERIC REYNOLDS WAS PUBLISHED IN UNINEWS VOL. 14, NO. 15, 22 AUGUST – 5 SEPTEMBER. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION.

John Brumby, Treasurer, Minister for Innovation, Minister for State and Regional Development in Victoria (left) congratulates Professor Eric Reynolds on winning the Victoria Prize.



Professor Martin Tyas has been appointed as an Associate Member of the Joint Interim Expert Advisory Committee on Standards, by the Therapeutic Products Interim Ministerial Council.

This Expert Advisory Committee is being established to consider, and provide advice on harmonised standards for therapeutic products, to be applied by the new joint Australia-New Zealand therapeutic products agency.

Congratulations to David Thomas and Peter Riley on attaining 25 years of service in the School of Dental Science at The University of Melbourne. Both staff members were recently presented with a medal of recognition by Professor Reynolds.

25 years in the School of Dental Science

BY PETER RILEY

I started work in the School of Dental Science in 1980, which not surprisingly, just happens to be 25 years ago and the basis for this little narrative. However, back then the School wasn't a School but a Faculty in its own right, and I worked as a technical assistant in what was then known as the Department of Conservative Dentistry.

It was my first job after graduation from La Trobe University. Just Eric Reynolds and myself in one room, in what is now the Hard Tissue Laboratory. Some of you might recognize it, and possibly even us, from the photo(s) on display for the building farewell in August. Since those early days, I've certainly seen things expand, along with some

waistlines! We've gone from one laboratory to the whole of the second floor, plus a room on the third floor of the old Dental School, and from two people to approximately forty two students and staff. I can recall one Dean at the time (that's when we had Deans of Dental Science) referring to this expansive phase as "the Black Hole", a somewhat contradictory term in the light of things. I think he was referring to Eric's remarkable ability to attract money from industry and government. It is for this reason and the attraction of skilled researchers to the Oral Biology unit that over the past twenty five years I have seen the unit expand in all areas of research and teaching, allowing it to become one of, if not the major dental research institute in the country. I've seen a lot of people come and go over the years, (there's only a handful of us old timers left) and feel very lucky and privileged to have achieved the position of laboratory manager of the unit during this period. Who knows, I might get really lucky, along with the rest of you, and actually move into the new hospital one day!

BY DAVID THOMAS

David Thomas joined the Department of Dental Prosthetics in 1978 as a part-time Senior Technical Officer. The other half of his time was spent as a Research Assistant in the Department of Psychology at Monash.

Growing family and mortgage commitments convinced him that continuing to exist on ARC grant money was not for him. When the then Head of Department, Clive Dennis, offered him a full time position in May 1980 he accepted. This sounds like a long time ago but it's worth remembering that Clive's predecessor, Henry Atkinson, had already been retired for several years but even now in 2005 he remains a part of the School. Other staff of the Department included Harry Gill (sadly soon to succumb to Alzheimer's Disease), John Harcourt (who has been a good friend and support throughout), Bill Ralph and Keith



Faulkner. Other academic staff brought the total to nine or ten with half a dozen support staff, a very different staff/student ratio from that in more recent times.

The major duties of the position were to support the research of the Department; in particular the studies of jaw-motion that became the PhD project of Keith Faulkner and Bill Ralph's work on the periodontal ligament. Other projects included the measurement of bone mineral density in the mandibles of edentulous people. This research involved using a radioactive source in the patient's mouth and a detector mounted outside. This was in fact quite safe but just what an ethics committee would say about it now is another thing.

Over the years since then David has contributed to research projects in most areas of the School but in particular in Prosthodontics, Orthodontics, Dental Materials, Paediatric Dentistry, Oral Anatomy and Forensic Odontology. He has co-authored over thirty articles in the peer reviewed literature and contributed three chapters to edited text books. In doing this he has had the support and friendship of many people including (but certainly not limited to): John Harcourt, Graham Ellender, Vic West, Pam Craig, Sophie Feik, Eric Reynolds, Michael Burrow and John Clement. David remains greatly in their debt and looks forward to enjoying more years in the School of Dental Science, but probably not another 25!

Pictured above: (left to right) Dr Stuart Dashper, Peter Riley, Professor Eric Reynolds, David Thomas, Professor John Clement at the presentation ceremony in recognition of 25 years of service in the School of Dental Science.



Rachael McDonald

5th year BDS student

Rural and regional Australia is suffering a major shortage of health professionals including dentists. The daily news, as well as our studies, repeatedly emphasises this crisis. Most dental students studying at Melbourne University come from the major cities of Australia and as a result, have a poor understanding of how private and public dental providers practice in the regional areas and how this differs to the larger cities. Our studies, especially in the later years, aim to raise interest amongst the students and encourage them to work outside Melbourne, however, with little or no experience of living or working rurally, new graduates cannot make informed or reliable commitments to work in the country.

My week with the Swan Hill dental Group helped broaden my knowledge and encouraged me to consider working in regions of desperate need rather than in the “comfort” of the city. New graduates should be one of the main targets to help increase the rural and public workforce numbers because dentists who are already comfortable in private clinics are less likely to opt to work in these regions. Included in the undergraduate curriculum is the opportunity for students to travel to rural locations and work within a private clinic with public patients which would not only give them experience outside of Melbourne, but would also enable a few extra patients each year to receive essential dental care. This wonderful opportunity that I had to work in Swan Hill gave me a real taste of the type of work involved and the experience of living in the country. Having hands-on experience and the opportunity to make contacts in the country may help to make it a more appealing choice resulting in an increased country workforce.

The Swan Hill Dental Group is a private practice that, via the voucher scheme, also treats many of the public patients in the area.

Currently, the public practice in Swan Hill is unattended and so the waiting lists for general and emergency care are quite substantial.

I found my week in Swan Hill extremely rewarding because I was given the opportunity to treat patients that would have otherwise had to wait for an extended period for treatment. My patients were extremely grateful for the treatment I provided and also were very supportive of my learning experience.

I completed a range of procedures from examinations and simple restorations to pulp extirpations and extractions. I gained an invaluable wealth of knowledge during the week (more so than I would have gained in my three months left until graduation!) possibly due to the community being non-fluoridated and the severity of the caries and periodontal disease of the population I treated. It was an amazing learning experience. My first day was very daunting as I was a long way from home and working with people who I hadn't yet got to know very well, but I soon settled in and provided the best treatment I could for my patients.

My week in the peace and quiet of the outskirts of a busy country town gave me the opportunity to consider the inevitable lifestyle changes involved with working in rural Australia. I am now more confident to move away from the big city into a country town because I have been introduced to wonderful mentors and a friendly community who will help me up the steep learning curve that will be my first year 'out' after graduation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my supervising dentists, Dr Susan Zhang, Dr John Harrison and Dr Robert Hii for sharing their knowledge and experiences with me and for their time and patience when I had questions to ask and all the staff at the Swan Hill Dental Group for providing me with a wonderful learning experience and lots of fun along the way.



Dr Rodrigo Marino

Rodrigo joined the staff of the School of Dental Science in October 2004 to take on the role of Senior Research Fellow at the new CRC for Oral Health Science (Dental Informatics arm). In this role, Rodrigo is responsible for developing new oral health research projects, co-ordinating ongoing studies and ensuring the results of the Dental Informatics arm's work are widely published. The first research project undertaken was the Victorian component of the National Survey in Adult Oral Health. The study, which will provide a comprehensive snapshot of the country's oral health, is the second in history and conducted after almost 20 years of the first national study in oral health.

Rodrigo's current role at the CRC is not his first involvement with The University of Melbourne. In 1997 he received his PhD from Melbourne and he has maintained close links with the School of Dental Science for many years, collaborating on several research studies and as an invited lecturer. Rodrigo has a long professional commitment to the field of public health and is passionate about the importance of public health research and its role in developing initiatives and influencing policies that lead to improved health and oral health, in particular for marginalised populations. He has been involved in various public health and dental public health research projects using a multidisciplinary approach and collaborating with researchers from institutions in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, New Zealand and the USA. He has also done consultancy work for the Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization and has been involved in several cross-cultural health research studies in Australia. In 2003, he was a visiting professor at the Faculty of Dentistry, The University of Valparaiso, Chile.

Rodrigo came to his current position after seven years at the University of New England, New South Wales, where he was a Senior Lecturer in Health Studies at the School of Health. Rodrigo was born in Chile and immigrated to Australia in 1993. He is a Dental Surgeon, graduating from the University of Chile, and holding a Master in Public Health from the University of Minnesota. In 1992, Rodrigo completed a residency program in dental public health at the Epidemiology and Oral Disease Prevention Program of the US National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health. Rodrigo's research has been widely published in national and international journals and in other publications such as reports and manuals for government and the World Health Organization.

On a personal note, Rodrigo is the proud father of two girls (Amalia and Manola) and lives with his wife (Clare Kermond) and daughters in inner Melbourne, easy cycling distance from the campus.

What is Convocation?

Once anyone graduates with a degree from the University of Melbourne, that person automatically becomes a member of Convocation.

The Committee of Convocation Representation of graduates in the governance of the University of Melbourne commenced through a University Senate in 1867. A Standing Committee of Convocation replaced the Senate in 1923. In 1975 the Committee changed its name to the Committee of Graduates, only to re-adopt the name Committee of Convocation in 1986.

The Committee of Convocation represents graduates of the University within the University and its members are elected in proportion to the number of graduates in each Faculty.

The Committee has a minimum of 40 members, and meets at least eight times a year.

The Committee of Convocation is established under the provisions of the Melbourne University Act to contribute to the governance of the University. The membership of the Committee is provided through nomination and, where necessary, election by graduates of the University (Convocation).

The Committee of Convocation and its members contribute to many matters involving policy development and other activities of the University. This is done by Committee members who are appointed to represent the interests of graduates to the Council of the University, to Faculties and to other relevant decision-making bodies of the University.

The Strategic Plan of the Committee of Convocation provides direction for the actions of the Committee and a report is presented each year at the Annual Ordinary Meeting of Convocation.

Some recent activities of the Committee include;

- Contribution to the 150th Anniversary celebrations in preparing biographical details to be displayed with portraits of Chancellors and Vice Chancellors.
- An initiative Representing Graduates Effectively that is exploring ways to enhance contacts with final year students.
- Participation in activities with Alumni Relations Programmes, the Australian University Alumni Council and the Student Ambassador Leadership Program.
- Close relationships are maintained between Council and the Committee by participation in joint briefing sessions, attendance of the President at Council meetings and reports by Deans and members of Council to meetings of the Committee of Convocation.

Division 3 of the Melbourne University Act 1958 outlines the powers and duties of the Committee of Convocation

Dental Science graduates have recently been represented on the Committee by Dr John Harcourt, Dr Stan Sahar and Dr Beverley-Anne Rodan, who is the current representative.

(Adapted from information available on the University of Melbourne website - <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/unisec/convocation/message.html>).

Comments from the editors

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We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of Dent-al, the School of Dental Science's newsletter for alumni. We would be very pleased to have your feedback on this issue and if you would like to contribute in any way, or have any suggestions for future issues, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Editors:

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Jennifer Sifonios

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