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# Dent-AL

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## Farewell to Professor Mike Morgan

*"My dear Algy. You talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces false impression."*

Oscar Wilde- The Importance of Being Earnest.



Professor Mike Morgan

Professor Mike Morgan never leaves a bad impression. With 31 years on staff at The University of Melbourne and with an association with the university dating back to 1982 as a post-graduate student, he sadly leaves his current role to become Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Otago.

With 22 years as Deputy Head of School and Head of School, he has re-defined the meaning of leadership. A mark of his intellectual generosity and commitment to his vision is seen in the valuable contributions to the university across research, teaching and engagement. No other dental academic either current or in the past, has such a lengthy record covering all areas in the Melbourne Dental School.

Mike has been a driving force for the transformation of dental public health and epidemiology.

Mike's principal teaching responsibility has been in population oral health. He has a strong research background and interest in the causes and prevention of oral disease, economic evaluation and clinical trials of dental caries preventive agents.

His university role has also included working closely with Community Health Centres, particularly in relation to student placement and clinical service. Mike has served on several NFP Boards over the past 10 years, primarily related to health and education.

Mike will continue his links with both Melbourne and the University of Melbourne into the foreseeable future including the guidance of three RHD students currently under his supervision. He is also an investigator on two externally funded research projects and aims to seek common research areas relevant to both Melbourne and The Faculty of Dentistry at Otago.

On a more personal note, Mike's kind, calm, thoughtful and funny nature is what he'll be most remembered for by the many staff and students who have had the pleasure of working with him. He likes the sound of laughter around the office and welcomes opinions and suggestions. While many leaders state their door is open for discussion, Mike's door is ever open and in his humble way, he encourages staff to take the lead on their projects and ideas. Vision and leadership are shared and passed on.

Professor Mike Morgan will forever be a part of the history of the Melbourne Dental School.

## Welcome Professor Alastair Sloan

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences are delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Alastair J Sloan as the new Head of the Melbourne Dental School, commencing in January 2020.

Alastair is currently a Professor of Tissue Engineering and Bone Biology and Head of the School of Dentistry at Cardiff University in the UK. In the School of Dentistry, he was Vice-Dean for International from 2013–2015 and Vice-Dean, Research and International between 2015–2017.

Prior to this role he was Director of the Cardiff Institute for Tissue Engineering and Repair (CITER), a cross-university research network where he developed collaborative research environments, scholarships, awards and placements.

He obtained his BSc in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Wales in 1993, and completed his PhD in Oral Biology and Pathology at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Birmingham in 1997. Following postdoctoral research in Birmingham (including research visits at the University of Michigan and University of Lyon), he was appointed to a Lectureship in Oral Biology at the School of Dentistry in 2000.

An accomplished scholar, Alastair has led his own research group since 2005 at Cardiff University. He has been awarded over £4.5 million in external research funding, published over 70 peer-reviewed research publications and seven book chapters, and has a current h-index of 32. He holds Visiting Professorships at the Airforce Medical University, Xi'an, China Medical University and University College Cork, Ireland.

"Melbourne Dental School has an established background in high-quality research, education and clinical training. I am delighted to be joining a team with such a strong research focus as well as highly regarded education. I am looking forward to the opportunity to work with the talented staff of the Melbourne Dental School to help them continue to make an impact nationally and internationally and also work closely with my fellow Heads of School and Faculty colleagues in MDS" says Alastair.



Melbourne Dental School Head of School Mike Morgan, CSL Senior Vice President of Research Andrew Nash, University of Melbourne Vice-President (Enterprise) Doron Ben-Meir, COHR CEO & Director of Research Eric Reynolds, Member for Higgins Katie Allen and Brandon Capital Investment Manager Ingmar Wahlqvist at the launch the new Oral Health CRC.

## Launch of the new Centre for Oral Health Research

The Centre for Oral Health Research has now been formally established and launched by the University of Melbourne. The Centre is an evolution of the Oral Health CRC and the CRC for Oral Health Science, which has long been supported by funding from the Australian Government through its Cooperative Research Centres Program. The CRC has also received support from the Victorian Government, CRC participants including CSL, GC Corporation, Mondelez and the University of Melbourne.

The Centre will be led by Laureate Professor Eric C Reynolds AO FICD FTSE FRACDS who is also a previous head of the Melbourne Dental School and the lead on the Pg vaccine research program. The new Centre for Oral Health Research will also continue to build on successful industry partnerships established under the Oral Health CRC.

Building on the technologies resulting from the Oral Health CRC, the Centre will develop novel diagnostics, therapeutic and preventive oral care products to substantially lower the social and economic burden of the major chronic oral diseases. It will also establish the link between those diseases and systemic diseases and conditions to inform government policy on population oral health and to promote better oral health in the broader community

as well as in high risk groups. New areas of collaborative research will be developed through these systemic partnerships across the University of Melbourne Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Science and with hospital based researchers.

Oral diseases are the most prevalent diseases of mankind and have a substantial economic and social burden. The cost of treating oral diseases and disorders globally is US\$298 billion per annum and in Australia is \$8.4 billion per annum with the two major diseases being dental caries (tooth decay) and periodontitis (severe gum disease). The full global economic impact of the oral diseases in 2010 was estimated at US\$442 billion [J Dent Res 94:1355-1361 (2015)]. Over 25% of Australians suffer from caries and/or periodontitis.

The Centre also continues the work of the Oral Health CRC on developing a vaccine to treat chronic periodontitis.

Chronic periodontitis is an inflammatory disease of the supporting tissues of the teeth. It is associated with detachment of the gum tissues and loss of surrounding bone, and ultimately leads to tooth loss. It has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis and other systemic disorders. Moderate to severe forms of chronic periodontitis affect one in three adults, and the global prevalence of severe forms of the disease has been estimated at around 10%.



*BDSc 2009 graduates celebrating their 10 year reunion at Reunion Weekend*

## Highlights from Reunion Weekend

On 29-30 November 2019 we held our second Reunion Weekend for all alumni of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences with a program of activities designed specifically for Dentistry alumni.

The program was packed full of opportunities to explore the campus and precinct, hear from the University's leading academics and celebrate our diverse alumni community.

There were many events held exclusively for alumni of the Melbourne Dental School. At the *Dentistry: Discovery, Education and Innovation* exhibition on display in the Melbourne Medical Museum, curator Dr Jacky Healy gave a floor talk. Alumnus Professor John Harcourt attended the floor talk and was able to add colour and history to the photographs and exhibition pieces, particularly those that he had lent to the exhibition himself.

Alumni were also offered the chance to tour the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne and hear from Senior University Lecturer Dr Rita Hardiman. Dr Hardiman presented and shared cutting-edge 3D printed anatomy models that are used for teaching and research. Guests could touch and feel these models.

BDSc classes of 2009, 1999, 1989, 1979, 1969 and 1968 all celebrated milestone reunions during Reunion Weekend. For the first time this year, we also held the Apollonia Luncheon for all BDSc alumni who graduated more than 50 years ago. Nearly 200 alumni of the Melbourne Dental School attended events across the Weekend.

Professor Morgan was pleased to be able to attend every dentistry reunion as one of his last acts as Head of School.

Thank you for your support of Reunion Weekend 2019.

### Save the Date for Reunion Weekend 2020!

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences are excited to announce that Reunion Weekend will return next year as 'Alumni Weekend' on 15 - 17 October 2020. More details will follow in the new year.



*Alumni at the Apollonia Luncheon for BDSc graduates of more than 50 years ago.*



*Professor John Harcourt at the Dentistry: Discovery, Education and Innovation exhibition.*



*A family enjoying the Melbourne Oral Health Training and Education Centre (MOHTEC) open house.*

## Dental alumni take students' learning beyond books

*"You've got to get out of your brains and into your hands."*

That's what Dr Glenda Farmer tells the students she supervises at the Melbourne Dental School (MDS) as part of its clinical demonstrator program.

Glenda (BDSc, 1981), a practising dentist and MDS alumna, is one of 300-plus clinicians who give their time to share their industry experience and knowledge with MDS students.

The program is an essential course component that helps students translate their theoretical education into something that will add value when establishing their careers – the practical application of real-life clinical skills.

Glenda has been with the program for more than 25 years and believes this kind of teaching is indispensable.

"The skill set that you can provide students from being in private practice is the ten million things that people who lecture don't come across: how to interact with staff, different communication skills and so on," says Glenda. "It's taking that written knowledge and making it more than that."

Clinicians in the program – the majority of whom are MDS alumni – volunteer their time

for anywhere from once a week to once a semester or yearly, to a class of six to 12 students.

"It's a model that's used around the world," explains Professor Mike Morgan, Head of the MDS.

"The demonstrators are drawn from the profession – they're either dentists, oral health therapists or hygienists, and they come in and supervise the students."

It's that industry insight that really gives students an advantage, says Mike.

"They're not just being taught by academics, but taught by the people for whom they might eventually work."

Dr John Boucher (BDSc, 1978) has been giving his time as a demonstrator in the program for over 30 years, beginning just two years after his own graduation from the Melbourne Dental School.

"It was fabulous – I was taught how to teach by the people who had taught me," he says.

John, who has seen many generations of dentists through their studies and into successful careers, says he enjoys the change of perspective that working with students offers.



I particularly like mixing working and interacting with young people. I used to be that young! It gives you a different view on things and it helps you in your other areas. Teaching helps you learn.

Glenda agrees that giving her time to the program is rewarding in many ways.

"I did it originally because I thought it would help keep me up to date," she says. "But it makes you think in a different way. You do it for the connection with the students and because you'd like to see them grow – to take them on a journey that will take them into a good practising life."

## Garma Festival 2019

Professor Julie Satur is leading partnership work for the Melbourne Dental School in East Arnhem land to improve oral health for Aboriginal people.

Since 2016, Professor Julie Satur has joined Australia's largest Indigenous cultural gathering, the Garma Festival, held over four days each year in Northeast Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory. Hosted by the Yothu Yindi Foundation, Garma is a celebration of the cultural traditions of the Yolngu people of the Arnhem Land region.

"Australian Indigenous people have higher levels of oral disease and poorer health than non-Indigenous people. The work we are doing in this partnership will help to improve capacity to provide oral health services and health promotion, and develop workforce for remote Aboriginal communities.

It's really important that this project, and the Oral Health Plan for Northeast Arnhem Land are led by Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation for Aboriginal people as they are the experts in their own lives.

As part of this work, we are really keen to learn about how Yolngu people understand and experience oral health and disease from within their cultural perspective and how Yolngu knowledges can work in this space", says Professor Satur.

This understanding would be used to develop culturally located resources and interventions to improve oral health for Yolngu people in East Arnhem Land.

