Class of 2012 Full

The Class of 2012 is full, with 74 applicants accepting entry into OHSU School of Dentistry, said Mark Mitchell, M.A., associate dean for student affairs. Although the numbers may change slightly in September when the dental students officially matriculate, right now 50 members of the Class of 2012 are from Oregon. There are 16 students from WICHE states and another eight non-Oregon, non-WICHE students. There are 49 males and 25 females, about the same as in years past, with 61 whites, 11 Asian Pacific Islanders, and two Hispanics. The overall grade point average for the Class of 2012 (GPA) is 3.60.

70 Graduate from School of Dentistry

It was a day of celebration June 3, as the Class of 2008 received their lilac hoods, signifying completion of dental school.

"Seventy highly-motivated, energetic, talented, and sensitive people entered the school four years ago, desiring to become dentists," said Dean Jack Clinton, D.M.D. '64. "They worked many long hours, gaining a newfound understanding about the form and function of the human body, and developing the skills and confidence to apply these skills and knowledge to benefit their patients' oral health needs.

"You, our graduates, have earned the endorsement of our faculty to proudly attach the title of doctor of dental medicine to your name," said Dean Clinton. "Congratulations!"

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DS2's in Class This Summer

The SOD will be a little livelier this summer, with the DS2's in the building for the first time taking courses during July and August.

"One of our strategic goals is to try to decompress the intensity of the dental curriculum," said Phyllis Beemsterboer, M.S., Ed.D., associate dean for academic affairs. "The second year of dental school can be especially heavy."

By adding a new six-week session, Dr. Beemsterboer hopes to give dental students more time to learn their newly acquired technical skills in the operative and fixed prosthodontics disciplines. In addition to technique courses, students will be studying microbiology and spending time in the clinical environment assisting in the periodontology clinic. Many other dental schools already provide education for DS2's during the summer, noted Dr. Beemsterboer.
DS1's Research to AACA Conference for Presentations

Six first-year dental students from the School of Dentistry's Student Research Group have successfully completed research projects that have been accepted as posters at the American Association of Clinical Anatomists (AACA) national meeting this month.

Kelly Andrews, Isaac Edwards, Byung-il Lee, Daniel McCain, Dan Miller, and John Turner will be presenting their research at the AACA meeting July 16 to 18, according to Brion Benninger, M.D., M.S., course director for integrative biosciences, surgery, and oral and maxillofacial surgery. Five of the DS1's are nominated for a national student research prize.

"Clinical anatomy, part of the integrative biosciences department, is focusing on topics and areas of research that translate from basic science to the clinic area," said Dr. Benninger. "These students have done an amazing job. They work through their breaks or after their usual day of educational commitments."

Dr. Benninger and John Mitchell, Ph.D., assistant professor of integrative biosciences, also are taking an additional five Oregon undergraduates to AACA, for a total of 16 research projects.

Award for Infection Control

A photo in the June issue taken by SOD health and safety specialist Sharon Reams, C.D.A., for the Organization for Safety and Asepsis Procedures (OSAP) annual infection control competition has won first prize! Sharon's clever color photo showed the "Queen of England" washing her hands with a "mouncy" in the background next to the motto, "Even her Highness has to wash her hands." Sharon picked up her award in early June at OSAP's meeting and received a statue with a plaque.

Dental Bites is the SOD's monthly internal newsletter. If you have a story or photo submission, please contact Sydney Clevenger (clevenge@ohsu.edu, 503-418-1792) by the 25th of the month prior to each monthly publication.

SOD'ers to live in Mirabella

Ken Berg, D.M.D., assistant professor of operative dentistry, and wife, Susan Wilson Berg, spoke at the recent groundbreaking for Mirabella, a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) now under construction on South Waterfront. The Bergs are charter members of Mirabella and intend to move into the 30-story community when it is ready for occupancy in 2010.

"I heard about the concept some time ago when I was on the committee planning for a new dental school on South Waterfront," said Dr. Berg. "I went to my wife and we thought about it and agreed that it was a good idea. My wife is now probably one of its biggest ambassadors! We have a lot of friends who are planning to live there, too."

The Bergs were two of 10 speakers at the May 3 Mirabella groundbreaking, attended by 400 charter members. "I got to turn a golden shovel," said Dr. Berg.

As charter members, the Bergs paid an initial entrance fee. If a charter member decides to leave or when they die, 95 percent of the entrance fee is returned.

According to Mirabella’s Web site, CHCC’s “enhance lifestyle opportunities for seniors using the philosophy of successful aging” which includes “friends, enriching activities, lifelong learning, and healthy living.”

Multiple studies have shown that seniors who live in CCRC’s are more satisfied with their daily lives and more likely to be happy and healthier than their contemporaries who remain in their own homes.

Mirabella is managed by Pacific Retirement Services, Inc., a nonprofit based in Medford, and OHSU’s partner. OHSU will offer Mirabella residents health care and wellness services and the benefit of its research through the Oregon Center for Aging and Technology.
Hooding (continued from page one)
Fifty-seven of the 70 graduates (81 percent) plan to practice general dentistry, including private practice, associate-ships, group practices, the military, and public health, said Mark Mitchell, M.A., associate dean for student affairs. Class of 2008 graduates are planning to practice general dentistry everywhere from Idaho to Alaska to Montana.

Thirteen graduates from the Class of 2008, a noteworthy 19 percent, will pursue advanced specialty training. Four graduates are heading into orthodontics and general practice residencies (GPR); two are going into advanced education in general dentistry (AEGD), and one each will pursue pediatric dentistry and periodontology.

Three graduates, John Delplanche, Paul Fox, and Elizabeth Palmer, will remain in Oregon for their specialty training. Come fall, John will be a first-year OHSU orthodontics resident and Elizabeth will be a first-year OHSU pediatric dentistry resident. Paul will do his GPR at the Portland Veteran’s Administration Medical Center.

Other 2008 graduates embarking on specialty training programs are headed to such institutions as the University of Colorado, the University of British Columbia, and Ohio State University.

Tom Pollard, D.M.D. ’74, president of the Oregon Dental Association (ODA), was a distinguished guest.

“You’ve worked very hard to get where you are today and we hope you find satisfaction in your career,” said Dr. Pollard. “The most magical part of any profession is learning to give and share. If you are able to give and share and keep learning throughout your career, I think you’ll realize dentistry was the right choice.”

Alumni Association President Jim Alder, D.M.D. ’82, also was on hand for the event.

“I hope you will develop a passion for what you do and enjoy the challenges and rewards that will come,” said Dr. Alder. “You enter a profession where you get to serve others, help others, and be a trusted part of their life.

“The hardest decisions you’ll ever have to make will be the ones you have to feel right about, right down into your soul,” said Dr. Alder. “Remember, no one has ever gotten into trouble treating a patient the way they would want to be treated.”

Class of 2008 President Andrew Dow, D.M.D. ’08, said he wasn’t so sure about his classmates at first, but had definitely changed his mind.

“I can’t imagine anything luckier than being able to call myself a part of this class,” said Dr. Dow. “I am proud to be a part of this group of people who has capitalized on their opportunities. The experiences we’ve shared and friendships we have developed will be with us for the rest of our lives.”

There were 30 awards presented, either at hooding or in an earlier ceremony. Ian Tydeman, won the prestigious Stephen Peglow Award given annually to the dental student who possesses those qualities most desirable in a dentist, including humility, compassion, skill, and sensitivity to patient needs.

Twenty-seven of the 70 dental students graduating — or an amazing 39 percent — graduated with honors and/or clinical honors, noted Mitchell. Nine dental graduates were inducted into the national dental fraternity, Omicron Kappa Upsilon, Delta Chapter.

Dr. Dow presented the annual graduation faculty awards, voted upon by the graduating class. William Bonnksen, D.M.D. ’75, assistant professor of restorative dentistry, won outstanding clinical instructor. Tom Maier, Ph.D., assistant professor of integrative biosciences, was named outstanding didactic instructor.

There were 17 dental students graduating with relatives who had previously graduated from SOD.
SOD’ers Discover Potential New Target For Treating Ear Pain

Researchers at the School of Dentistry have discovered an endomorphin in the nerve of the ear and throat responsible for middle ear troubles and have developed a way to reliably detect the endomorphin secretion from nerve cells. The findings could play a significant role in the development of new therapies to treat various ear and throat pain conditions, such as sore throats, middle ear infections, and the aviation otitis caused by changes in ear pressure during flying. Besides the common cold, ear infections are the most commonly diagnosed childhood illness in the United States.

The new discovery was published online (http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1460-9568.2008.06238.x) on May 29, 2008, in the European Journal of Neuroscience, one of the leading neuroscience journals. The study also ran in one of the two May 2008 print issues (Volume 27, Issue 10) of the European Journal of Neuroscience.

“This discovery shows that pain signaling involves many different molecules and complex mechanisms,” said Agnieszka Balkowiec, M.D., Ph.D., senior author of the study, assistant professor of integrative biosciences, and School of Medicine adjunct assistant professor of physiology and pharmacology. “Our next step is to better understand how the endomorphin affects pain signaling to the brain during various pain conditions.”

Sensation from the middle ear, the pharynx and the tonsils is signaled to the brain by the glossopharyngeal nerve. Sore throats, ear infections, and even changes in ear pressure during flight that lead to inflammation of the middle ear, all are characterized by pain that is transmitted to the brain by cells that form the glossopharyngeal nerve.

Dr. Balkowiec’s team discovered an endomorphin, Endomorphin-2, in the glossopharyngeal nerve cells and developed a highly sensitive method of detecting Endomorphin-2 secretion from the cells. Using their method, the scientists showed that Endomorphin-2 is secreted from glossopharyngeal cells onto nerve cells in the brain by electrical impulses. The method can now be used by other researchers and will make possible further study of endomorphins in other parts of the body. Endomorphin-2 has previously been implicated in pain signaling from other parts of the body and is likely to be a key player in the transmission of nerve signals from the ear and throat, said Dr. Balkowiec.

Dr. Balkowiec’s team included Heather Scanlin, B.S., an OHSU doctoral student in neuroscience; Elizabeth Carroll, M.S., a Riverdale High School teacher; and Victoria Jenkins, B.A., an OHSU research assistant.

The research at OHSU was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health, American Heart Association, and M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust’s Partners in Science program.
SOD’ers on the Move
There are a number of new appointments in the SOD, as well as several colleagues departing:

*Jim Epifanio, associate dean for administration, retired June 30 to enjoy hiking and camping. OHSU is providing interim day-to-day services while a replacement search begins.

*Ross Mitchell, D.M.D. ’07, is a one-year postdoctoral fellow in the department of endodontology. After his fellowship, Dr. Mitchell intends to join the SOD faculty as an instructor.

*Mike Plunkett, D.D.S., M.P.H., assistant professor of community dentistry, is the new director of OHSU’s rural and urban outreach program.

*Bob Steelman, M.D., D.M.D., has been appointed director of the pediatric dentistry residency program, replacing Weston Heringer Jr., D.M.D. ’71, who left the SOD June 30 to direct the Dental Foundation of Oregon’s new mobile dental van (see story, page four, June Dental Bites). Dr. Steelman received his doctor of dental medicine from Washington University in St. Louis and his medical degree from the West Virginia School of Medicine.

*Denice Stewart, D.D.S., M.H.S.A., associate dean for clinical affairs, is interim chair of the department of community dentistry. Previous chair Bob Johnson, D.M.D. ’77, is continuing part-time with the department. Plans for a permanent chair search are pending.

*Dianna Taylor retired after more than 30 years in the department of radiology.

*Lisa Thorsrud, Development Coordinator, will leave the SOD Aug. 1 for a trip to Norway and relocation to Bend, Ore.

*Margaret “Peggy” Wallis, is a new dental assistant in the department of pediatric dentistry.

Barbecue Fundraiser
Top: Second-year dental students Jeremy Messer (left), Amanda Stickney (center) and third-year dental student Lindsay Brown enjoy the June 12 SOD barbecue to raise funds for the pediatric dentistry department. Third-year dental student Ryan Vogel reports that $774.39 was raised at the annual event, held in front of the rotunda at the front entrance to the school for all OHSU employees, faculty, and patients. (Photo Byung-il Lee)

Award for Dr. Lax
Peter Lax, D.M.D., School of Dentistry assistant professor of pediatric dentistry, and director of the CDRC (Child Development and Rehabilitation Center) Dental Clinic at OHSU’s Doernbecher Children’s Hospital, recently received the Mary Evelene Calbreath Memorial Award from Providence Child Center’s (PCC) Center for Medically Fragile Children. The Mary Evelene Calbreath Memorial Award is given annually to an exceptional volunteer whose service to PCC’s Center for Medically Fragile Children and its programs has been of long duration and great dedication. Dr. Lax and his dental assistant, Mary Bruno, R.D.H., visit the Center four times a year, as needed, to care for the 70 children with severe disabilities. Dr. Lax and Sherry Lemon, R.D.H., also treat many of the children at the CDRC. Dr. Lax has been a PCC volunteer for 18 years. For his efforts, he received a bronze statue. Dr. Lax graduated from OHSU’s pediatric dentistry residency program in 1975.