

the probe

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1
OCTOBER 2008

Inside this issue

| | |
|---|----|
| A Letter From the Student Body President | |
| Frank Henrich | 2 |
| ADPAC Student Membership | |
| Richard Carlile | 3 |
| National Student Research Group Here at VCU! | |
| Poonum Baharal | 3 |
| Indian Summer | |
| Caitlin Stangel | 4 |
| July MOM Project: Wise County, VA | |
| Annie Leffingwell | 6 |
| Back in the Balkans | |
| Nikkolay Mollov | 7 |
| Sausage & Politics | |
| Stephanie Chambers | 8 |
| Fifth Year of Dental School?! | |
| Audrey Gamulo | 10 |
| Academy of General Dentistry | |
| Danielle Hoexeter | 11 |
| A Letter from the Anti-Dentite | |
| Scott Culpepper | 12 |

Challenges Create Opportunities for Positive Change

by Ron Hunt, Dean

Being dean of the VCU School of Dentistry offers me the privilege of engagement at many levels of leadership in the school, state, and national organizations. This engagement involves competing demands for resources, sorting through demands, and enlisting supportive allies. Finding workable solutions is often the biggest challenge I face. But where there are challenges there are opportunities.



Beginning close to home at the school level, I am delighted we are constructing a new building. The extra space provides opportunities to expand our enrollment, improve our patient care, and bolster our research. But we face staggering cost overruns. These overruns have driven the cost of the building from \$12 million to over \$20 million. Our primary strategy is to enroll a higher percentage of out of state students for the next six years to cover the school's share of the cost. This is a temporary measure. As we meet our financial goals, we will reduce the percentage of out of state students.

I am delighted we have implemented a clinical curriculum that increases D2 involvement in patient care and integrates the D2, D3, and D4 classes in practice groups with faculty and staff teams. But we are challenged to find enough faculty and patients to give these students the experience they need. These challenges provided opportunities to expand recruitment of part-time faculty, to identify new ways of increasing patient intake, and to

streamline ways for students to recruit their own patients. Of course the best way to increase our patient population is to provide high quality customer service, from the first phone call to the last visit. So we will look for additional opportunities to provide excellent customer service.

At the state level, I am an advisory member of the Virginia Dental Association (VDA) Board of Directors. As our student delegates to the VDA can attest, a major challenge is how to make dental care available to 30 percent of the population without access. Fortunately, Virginia is one of the more progressive states in addressing this huge challenge and provides opportunities through Missions of Mercy, Donated Dental Services, and Medicaid for students, faculty and dental professionals to serve underserved populations. All of this helps, but we are challenged to do more

Access to care is a dominant problem at the national level, too, where I am an elected member of the American Dental Association (ADA) House of Delegates. The ADA does a wonderful job of advocating for oral health, dentistry, and its member dentists, but has done less well addressing access to care. Challenging its conservative nature provides an opportunity to find middle ground and work to provide better access for all Americans by considering meaningful change in our dental workforce model.

At the national level, I am currently serving as president-elect of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). ADEA's primary mission is to advocate for high quality dental education. My presidential priority will be promoting more active learning and improving assessment methods in dental education programs. The opportunity to change the way teachers teach, students learn, and how students are assessed has been underway at VCU for several years and we are making excellent progress.

As I look at the challenges and opportunities, it is clear to me that if we work together individually and collectively, we can make things better – better for our students, for our patients, for the public.



This past August five school mates and myself attended ASDA's annual session in Scottsdale, AZ. There are 56 chapters nationwide, divided into 11 districts, VCU is in district 4. These meetings are a wonderful opportunity to network with other dental students. It's a chance to debate and discuss policies that affect us as students and those that will affect us as doctors. Annual session is also a chance to see how well-organized our school functions. I know that might be a hard concept for some students to understand. But it's true; I firmly believe VCU is in the top echelon of dental schools. Each year there is an award ceremony to recognize excellence among the ASDA chapters, while VCU did not win chapter of the year, which is the highest honor, we did win three honorable mention awards which were more than any other school. This is a testament not only to our student body, but also to the faculty that demonstrate strong support for us. As I spoke to some students from around the nation my realization that our school was unique was cemented when a 4th year from a prominent west coast school had yet to extract a tooth. How fortunate are we to have oral surgery rotations during our third year. Thank you curriculum committee! Many other students also had never heard of the MOM projects, let alone been able to do something similar.

In September 2008 I attended the VDA's governance meeting. This was a great assembly of recent graduates as well as "seasoned" dentists debating issues affecting dental health care in Virginia, such as access to care and the "mid-level" provider proposal. What stuck me was the magnitude of doctors gathered from the main disciplines of dentistry were represented and engaged in a professional manner. Oral surgeons, Endodontists, General Practitioners etc. sat side by side debating what would be the best course of action to address these growing concerns. The student delegation also made amendments to some of the existing resolutions, and all but one were adopted by the House of Delegates. Guys this was huge! Not many other state dental associations invite students to their meetings. This was real life organized dentistry in action.

This is an exciting time to be part of the dental profession, our future is bright. There are many opportunities to get involved with organized dentistry. This is the time to build upon all the great things you put down on your application when you applied to dental school. It's all of our future at stake, the future is now. Get involved, be pro-active, let's all stand a little taller and continue making dentistry the best profession.

Let's do it.

LET'S DO IT!

by Frank Henrich,
Student Body President

I would like to start off by thanking Scott Culpepper for his time and efforts as editor of the Probe. I also want to thank all of the other authors that have contributed to this edition of the Probe. To help those who are wondering what ASDA is I will devote a portion of my article to help explain ASDA. Beginning with ASDA's mission statement:

"The American Student Dental Association is a national student-run organization that protects and advances the rights, interests, and welfare of students pursuing careers in dentistry. It introduces students to lifelong involvement in organized dentistry and provides services, information, education, representation and advocacy."

ASDA currently represents nearly 17,000 members, which accounts for 87% of dental students nationwide. This unity is one of the strengths of ASDA, in fact the ADA president Dr. Mark Feldman attended some of the ASDA annual session meetings to consider what we, as students, thought about some of the issues facing dentistry. It would be foolish not to consider the views of an organization with 87% of the future represented. Organized Dentistry is comprised of three levels, called "tripartite membership." National membership is through the ADA, (American Dental Association), the state level is the VDA (Virginia Dental Association). Locally membership in VCU's chapter completes the "tripartite" membership goals of organized dentistry. Every student at VCU is automatically an ASDA member through our fee structure when we are enrolled in school. Much more information about ASDA, national leadership positions, and organized dentistry can be found on www.asdanet.org

5 Letters + 5 Bucks = ADPAC Student Membership

by Richard Carlile (D2011)



Being a presidential election year, there has been a lot of focus on Washington. It is important for us to remember that those we elect will have the power to influence how we practice our profession. Rep. Diane Watson (D-CA) is an example of a politician that would work to adversely affect how we practice. Rep. Watson in 2001 introduced a bill called the "Mercury in Dental Filling Disclosure and Prohibition Act". This bill in essence would have prevented us from using amalgam as a restorative material by the year 2006.

So how do we prevent people like Rep. Watson from becoming the majority? The answer is simple, the American Dental Political Action Committee (ADPAC). At this year's ASDA Annual Session I learned why

ADPAC is so important to each of us.

On the ADA's website they state that ADPAC's "sole purpose is to elect candidates who understand the importance of dentistry and are committed to the nation's oral health. In fact, ADPAC is a critical component in organized dentistry's advocacy strategy in Washington." ADPAC is an apolitical entity and so when the Republicans are in the majority more money goes to Republican candidates, and vice versa when the Democrats are in power.

We've all heard the phrase, "Money Talks". The funds that we donate to ADPAC help to ensure that politicians like Rep. Watson never gain traction in Congress. When a bill that is anti-dentistry comes to the floor, those that have benefited from the

funding of ADPAC will be inclined to help prevent its passage.

As students, we don't have a lot of money floating around. The ADA knows this and that is why they have an ADPAC student membership. For \$5 you can contribute and become an ADPAC member. For those who are thinking of specializing, it is something that you can add to your CV. Even if you aren't thinking of specializing, this is an amazing way to get involved in organized dentistry. When it comes down to it, \$5 is not a lot of money. I spent more at Chick-fil-A the other day! So I ask all of you to consider donating \$5 to ADPAC so that we can continue to practice dentistry the way we want to.



National Student Research Group here at VCU!

by Poonum Baharal (D2010)



VCU School of Dentistry has always been known for its top notch clinical education. Producing dentists who can perform clinically above and beyond what is expected of them. As this is crucial to every dental school, the art of research is also vital to the success of any field. VCU School of Dentistry is taking strides to improve student involvement in research. And now VCU

has a student-run organization that can help predoctoral and doctoral students educate themselves in clinical research. A subgroup of American Association of Dental Research (AADR), National Student Research Group (NSRG) has started a new chapter at VCU. The NSRG was started in 1980 and now has 1200 student members nationwide. Its goal is "to foster an environment

in every dental school whereby students interested in enriching their dental education through research are encouraged to do so". VCU's chapter plans to hold journal club meetings, a series "How to" workshops, and research career presentations that can show students how to use their clinical and research skills to contribute to the field of dentistry. Interested in beginning a student career in research and in NSRG? The group's website can be found at www.aadronline.org. To become a national member as well as a VCU member, a fee of \$51.00 is required. Find out more about NSRG benefits at our next meeting or email us. D1 rep: Sima Amin, D2 rep: Emil Christofakis, D3 rep: Christine Farah.

For more information, contact Poonum Baharal at bharalp@vcu.edu. It's going to be a great year!



Indian Summer

by Caitlin Stangel

“Julley!” she cried, her tongue pressing through her toothy, grinning greeting. Ninety years of taxing outdoor work molded her small raisin face, ninety years of patience grew her waist-long, yarn-decorated braids.

I gestured to the plastic chair under the shade of the tent and she shuffled across the dusty ground in her tiny elf shoes with upward turned toes, the beads around her neck softly clicking. She pointed to the tooth that hurt, looked away and smiled nervously. Her eyes quickly snapped back to recapture my gaze, and with sudden seriousness she studied my face and read my features, wordlessly challenging my ability and knowledge. Approval in her eyes, she appeared pleased with the answers she silently received. She eased back in the chair and opened her mouth.

I am a dental volunteer in Ladakh, India. My patient is an elderly Tibetan refugee. Without a translator, we have achieved doctor-patient rapport. And without running water, electricity, suction, or a radiograph, with only local anesthesia and boiled-clean instruments, I extracted her painful tooth.

Bluest-blue skies, trash-eating road-ruling cows, pushy street vendors, breath taking natural beauty mired by heartbreaking poverty, nauseating diesel fumes, cheap libations, big jagged rocky mountains.... these are the things I think of when I remember my trip to India. What did I do on my summer vacation? I awoke

every morning to the sounds of Buddhist prayer chants broadcast over loudspeakers throughout the town, the howl of wild dogs outside my hotel, or the chomping of hungry Kashmir goats nibbling outside my tent, to the smell of fresh masala tea or the wafting odor of pit toilets. I counted billions of stars overhead every night, cradled by the world’s highest mountain peaks, the “abode of snow” (true even in July). I felt my fingers and toes tingle (the effects of medication to combat altitude sickness) as I threw snowballs at my thirty traveling companions as we crossed the world’s highest motorable pass (Khardung-La, topping out at over 18,000 feet) on the drive to our next clinic site. I taught tooth-brushing techniques to a group of nomad children... I spent twenty days in the Ladakh region of the state of Jammu and Kashmir on a joint medical-dental expedition serving Tibetan refugees and rural Himalayan villages that are virtually inaccessible due to weather several months out of the year. The excursion was expertly organized by Atlanta-based Himalayan Health Exchange, which for the past thirteen years has sponsored several trips a year to the region, with volunteer physicians, dentists, and health-professional students from the U.S., U.K., and Canada provid-



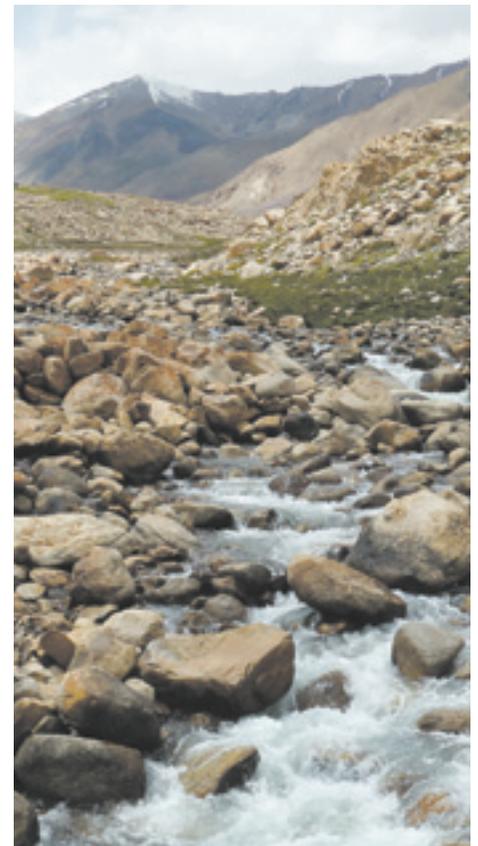


ing free medical and dental care to those in need. Think of it as the ultimate adventure-travel rural-health challenge, MOM Projects taken to the next level: limited supplies, limited resources, and yet all the same challenges as providing safe, quality dental care under the best conditions.

International travel experiences challenge one's values and constitution, and this experience was no different. Expeditions organized by H.H.E. attract worldly, open-minded, passionate professionals from places as different as London and Juno, Alaska who are as committed to health service as they are to indulging their wander-lust. The phrase neatly tattooed across the back of my roommate on the trip, "Temet nosce," became either the unspoken motto or the inevitable outcome for every person participating in this experience. "Know thyself": two simple words commanding tremendous insight, searching, and discovery. By the end of the three weeks, ten clinic days, and over 1,500 treated patients, as the group parted ways for long train rides to remote

south-Asian destinations, motorcycle adventures, or five-star meals and hot showers in posh New Delhi hotels, I think every member of the group could say that we better understand our individual strengths and limitations, our tolerance for the massive cultural differences we encountered, our response to stressful situations, our need both for personal space and freedom and the support of others, our desires for the future of our careers. The experience was definitely not for everyone. It was challenging and difficult and stressful and different from our normal lives in nearly every way, and yet was tremendously rewarding. And that is the point, after all...

Interested in being a dental volunteer abroad? The American Dental Association is a great resource for finding an organization that can provide you with the opportunity you are looking for. Visit their International Volunteer Guide at: <http://www.ada.org/ada/international/volunteer/ivo.asp>. For more information on Himalayan Health Exchange, check out their website: <http://www.himalayanhealth.com/>.



July MOM Project: Wise County, VA

by Annie Leffingwell

Every July, hundreds of volunteers gather at the fairgrounds in Wise County to provide dental care to the local under served population. As my mother and I arrive to the site of the MOM project at 5 am, the surrounding grounds are filled with tents and pop up trailers. Some of these hopeful patients have been waiting patiently for hours or possibly days for their chance to receive much needed dental care.

As my second year at this project, I anticipated a long weekend full of tiresome, yet rewarding work. I accompanied my mom to this project, a dental hygienist who heads up the hygiene portion of a majority of the Virginia Mission of Mercy projects. Overall, \$1.7 million worth of medical

work was provided for the community in Wise. Dental services alone cared for more than 1,300 patients, including 249 cleanings.

As a new student to the division of dental hygiene, I was only able to assist and watch the work of my fellow senior hygiene students and dental hygienists from many areas. Although I couldn't do much for these people, their gratitude showed immensely. A particular patient, Mike, was willing to do anything possible to show how thankful he was for the care he received. Although he had waited at the fairgrounds for 2 long days before being treated, he returned on Sunday, the final day of the event, to become a volunteer himself. He showed his

thanks by helping as a medical placeholder, and later making sure the grounds were clean. Mike will be a patient my mother and I will always remember, and hope to see again at the next Wise MOM project. We were lucky enough to treat many of the patients we had seen the previous year, and meet new faces that we can hopefully help again at upcoming projects. Helping others in need at events such as MOM projects and RAM health fairs is what makes being part of a health profession so great- the ability to give back to the community.





Back in the Balkans

by Nikkolay Mollov

It is not very often that I feel nostalgic. Yet, while standing in front of my grandparents' house with my mom by my side, my childhood was slowly coming back to me.

Someone called my name from behind. I turned around and saw the neighbors. I had not visited the village of Lozitsa for many years, but these people still remembered my face. They were just coming back from working the fields, their faces were dusty, they appeared exhausted but at the same time, filled with joy to see us. We crossed the street, went up the flight of stairs and stood face-to-face with the living memories of years past.

This past summer I went to Bulgaria to see friends and family. It had been five years since my last visit and I fully expected to see my home country from a different perspective. Different is not a just word to describe the strong emotions I felt while being there. A better word would be shocked. Having spent the majority of the last two years looking at teeth from every possible angle, I found myself shocked at the toothless smiles and decaying teeth that looked back at me in Lozitsa, especially of those closest to us. Indeed it was only a small village in the Northern part of the country, but at the same time it did not look any different from the number of towns I drove through while there. The high unemployment rate in the countryside had rendered the majority of part of the population unable to meet the standards of daily living. People had been forced to either escape to

the big cities. Those remained had retreat back to agriculture, but still struggled to make ends meet. In my eye, that manifested most clearly with people's dental problems. I was terrified by the great number of people there who lacked the funds to regularly visit the dentist to treat myriad of their dental problems. While the preferred method of treatment - an extraction, could alleviate their problems temporarily, new dental problems would soon emerge that would eventually only be solved by extracting even more teeth.

A week later I found myself in the country's capitol, Sofia. A city of over a million people, Sofia unashamedly tried to borrow the culture of the West. Streets were congested with expensive cars. Enormous billboards covered the sky. People spent their days living in their business attire and their cell phones glued to their hands. This trend had not left dentistry behind. I visited the dental office of a close friend of our family. He had been working there for over 20 years and had established a small but very successful practice. I spent a few hours there during which time he did Endodontics on a patient. I was surprised to see that the equipment and materials he used I had also seen in high-end private practice offices in Northern Virginia. The stark contrast between the country and the modern megapolis profoundly shook me.

There was no sign of either help or hope coming for the Bulgarians I encountered in the countryside. I returned to the US with mixed emotions - grateful on the one hand that I was fortunate to live in a place where I could provide the type of care these people desperately needed and regret on the other for the future that awaited the

people back in Bulgaria.

I wish I was able to do something for those unfortunate people in Bulgaria; and yet, I could do nothing for I was merely a visitor there and no longer a member of the community.

"I further commit myself to the betterment of my community for the benefit of all of society."

All of us recite Dr. Strauss' Dentist's Pledge in the Fall of our D2 year. These words are a source of inspiration and offer a sound explanation for why we spend so many years in school and why we strive to improve our skills first in lab and later on in clinic. We are here to learn how to serve the community to the best of our ability. Nothing exemplifies that objective better than Mission of Mercy projects.

We are lucky to be in a state where dental professionals have taken it upon themselves to interact with and treat members of the community who have difficulty affording or finding good dental care. When I went to a MOM project I was amazed by the number of patients we managed to see and the different procedures we performed. Recently, students and faculty organized a joint MOM project with the West Virginia School of Dentistry in hopes of helping the local dental community regularly organize their own community projects. Time will tell about the fruits of our labor. In the meantime, as dental students and faculty, we will continue to focus our efforts on the community and make sure we provide service to our fellow Virginians to the best of our ability. I keep hope alive that Bulgarians and others around the world can only be so fortunate.

SAUSAGE & POLITICS

It's Never Too Early, It's Never Too Late to Get Involved

by Stephanie Chambers

I love to eat venison. But to watch the preparation of venison from “field to plate”, now that’s a different story. My opposition towards watching venison preparation is the same as my attitude towards the watching of politics because of this quote: “If you like sausage and politics, don’t ever watch either of them being made.”

I heard this while attending the Annual Virginia Dental Association (VDA) House of Delegates (HOD) Governance meeting in Newport News, Virginia. In other words, politics may be unpleasant at times, but if you want to see change and practice dentistry as an independent professional, don’t sit back and watch policy happen. Instead, get involved, be an active presence, state your opinions, or else watch policies that can and will affect you, be implemented for you.

VCU dental student delegates were out in full force at the VDA HOD meeting this year. Along with Dean Hunt, Dr. Certosimo and Ms. Martha Bushong, we prepared resolutions and amendments on student related issues prior to the meeting. We also caucused during the proceedings and we put forth amendments on resolutions the HOD had on the agenda for review. Our hard work was well received and respected by the attending delegates from across the state of Virginia.

In a Political Action Committee article by Gaye Breyman, it is stated that a “group’s power depends on both its potential for control and its potential for unity.” So while I voiced my opinions on various resolutions/amendments, (particularly those that affect students like the one where we can now vote for VDA officers: Go Audrey!), my main focus was to unify two associations, The Virginia Academy of General Dentistry (VAGD) and the VDA, on the issue of having a Joint Mentorship Program.

Taken directly from the VDA Website’s link on Mentoring, it is clear that “Mentoring is a critical aspect of a healthy industry. New dentists and students can learn from the valuable experiences afforded by years of practice.” The Mentorship Program would allow for students to pop their “Dental School bubble” and actually get a sense of real-life dentistry. Speaking from personal experience, I would have probably become an accountant, orthopedic surgeon or military officer (thanks to Meyers Briggs) if it weren’t for my first mentors, Dr. Jim Rutledge, DDS, MAGD and his wife Dr. Carolyn Rutledge. Dr. Jim Rutledge took me “under his wing” during my sophomore year at The College of William and Mary, giving me the opportunity to mentor not only with him, but also with each and every dental specialist he refers to. Similarly, the Joint Mentorship Program would be an invaluable opportunity to provide dental students with guidance and advice such that they can be as prepared as possible for transition into the “real world”.

Many of you are familiar with the AGD since I have helped advocate for student membership in this association during Virginia AGD Lunch and Learns and Organization Fairs. Now that you’re introduced or re-introduced to the AGD/VAGD, I can now familiarize you with the VDA, the second member of the prospective partnership. Whether you know it or not, you’re an ADA (American Dental Association) member. Well actually, you’re an ASDA (American Student Dental Association) member because money is automatically allocated from your tuition to pay the annual ASDA dues. But back to the political drama that even a Law and Order writer would be impressed by. The Virginia AGD and VDA have both, albeit separately, been working very hard to get a Mentorship Program off the ground and running for the past two years! Why have we not seen this Mentorship Program get implemented yet? Politics, partially.

The Virginia AGD feels they have a Mentorship Program “ready-to-go”. Conversely, the VDA’s Mentorship Program up to this point has been mulled over and talked over again and again via a Mentorship Task Force. Even as the Virginia AGD Student Membership Chair, which can instantly imply a bias, I can clearly understand VDA’s standpoint. Even though the VDA has worked for so long without any concrete Mentorship Program to show for their efforts, they have still worked for so long and they too want something to come out of all their time and energy. Thus, the VDA and AGD need to have a “marriage” and learn the art of good communication and compromise on this Mentorship issue.

A product of this partnership would be a strong Mentorship Program that would materialize through a collaborative process between these two associations’ united efforts. Obviously, it would be much better for all future mentors and mentees if the two associations team up for the common goal of a successful Mentorship Program.

Although this partnership idea had been discussed and agreed upon as a good idea amongst a few key people, Dean Hunt helped me put this good idea of a Joint Mentorship Program into concrete writing via an amendment to the original Mentorship Program resolution or statement to be included in the VDA By-laws. This amendment changed the original resolution to include the words “Joint” and “VAGD” such that it read as: “Be it resolved that the Virginia Dental Association establish a new Joint Standing Committee on Mentoring, which will work in partnership with the Virginia chapter of the Academy of General Dentistry.” This was proposed at the first of the VDA Governance meeting, but it didn’t exactly go through to the second part of the meeting as those who worked on this amendment wanted it to.

Now you may be wondering: “Why even have the partnership in the first place if there seems to be so much political tension surrounding this issue? Why not just keep those two entities separate and make an entirely new student run initiative that creates a Mentorship Program?” Well, why re-create the wheel? If great resources (i.e. potential mentors) from the VDA and AGD are already available to us to get the “wheels turning”, neglect of these existing resources would be illogical.



So now that you are up to speed on all of the great benefits of the Mentorship Program, and like most, want to see it get implemented without delay, let me tell you how the second part of the VDA Governance meeting went. The revised version of the original Mentorship Program resolution stated the VDA’s intent to get the concept of a Mentoring committee approved, but to refer it back to a Task Force to establish the criteria for a Mentorship Program. The concept of a “Task Force” made me

immediately think “Oh no, this means more idea marinating time” since the Task Force wouldn’t be required to present their “established criteria” until NEXT year’s Governance meeting! Also, there was no

mention of a Joint Standing Committee on Mentoring with the VDA working in partnership with the VAGD.

What is the ending to this political saga? Although my goal of seeing wording changes in the VDA Bylaws was not realized, my immediate goal of seeing action did “pass”. Definite action on establishing a Mentorship Program, sooner rather than later, seems to have resonated throughout the whole Governance meeting. In fact, we already have several Mentorship meetings set up! Even though not formally in the VDA Bylaws, both associations, the VDA and AGD, are uniting forces to get a Standing Committee on Mentoring up and running so that the Mentorship Program can be implemented this year. What power the action of spoken words has.

What a wonderful thing it is that the dental profession affords us the opportunity to be multifaceted. Not only can we be practicing dentists, but we can also be business men and women, as well as (gasp) politicians. The fact that even students have clearly shown that we can make a great impact on the dental profession has empowered and invigorated me. To stop short and not enter the “political arena” and ensure that dentistry continues to remain the type of profession so many of us have come to cherish, would be an enormous oversight. Therefore, it is my hope that anyone reading this article will, if they have not already, find the political bone in themselves as well by taking to heart this excerpt from a famous quote by Teddy Roosevelt: “. . .The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena. . .who strives valiantly, and spends himself in a worthy cause. . .”

I would like to take this opportunity to say Thank You to all the outstanding individuals who have helped me discover my innate passion for the dental profession and organized dentistry. I have truly valued each of you as Mentors during my journey so far.

Omicron Omicron Chapter, VCU

by Preeti Kansal, Historian

The Delta Sigma Delta Omicron Omicron Chapter at the Virginia Commonwealth University had to say a sad farewell to its graduating seniors this past July but also embarked on an exciting new year and electing new officers: Nitika Mittal (president), Bernadette Mabanglo (vice president), Jayde Moxey (secretary), Emil Christofakis (treasurer), and Preeti Kansal (historian).

The transition between the 2008 academic year was marked mainly by our involvement with the Special Olympics this past June. In order to spread dental care awareness, the Omicron Omicron Chapter along with fellow Dental Hygiene students and under the guidance of Dr. Matt Cooke, stationed a booth hosted by Special Smiles. Free Intra-Oral Exams were provided by volunteer local Dentists as well as by D3 and D4 DSD members. Special

needs people experiencing financial difficulty and severe dental problems were given referrals to local Dentists willing to do charity work. Hygiene instructions, free goodie bags and custom mouth guards for the athletes were just a few of the services also provided. It was a great event and we thank all members who participated in this event.

With the fall semester just beginning, exciting service projects and social events are already in the works. Future service projects include participating in Habitat for Humanity and continuing our annual Cell Phone Drive for victims of domestic abuse. The Chapter also plans on taking part in a hygiene instruction session with senior citizens being organized by a VCU faculty member.

Turning to the more academic side, fellow delts volunteered

their time to assist in teaching pre-dents how to take impressions and try their hand at tooth carving. It is a program organized to spread awareness to undergraduate students interested in the field of dentistry. Currently, select members are volunteering their experience in preclinical labs by tutoring the new D1’s on tooth carving and the D2’s in fixed prosthodontics as they near their first scheduled practical. Also, special congratulations to Sophie Le Oswald! She received the DSD Omicron Omicron Chapter- Junior Academic Award for having the highest academic standing at the end of her junior year.

Future events include an informal rush week which will be kicked off by an Organization Fair held in early September. All organiza-



tions will be gathering after hours to introduce what each of their organization stands for. It will be a great opportunity for us to recruit new possible members. Later in the week we will also be hosting a DSD meet and greet at a local hot spot here in Richmond so we can socialize in a more informal and relaxed setting.

We look forward to initiation ceremonies set for this September and welcoming new Delta Sigma members into our chapter.

Visit us at our website:
<http://dsdomicronomicron.tripod.com>

Fifth year of Dental School?

Does that mean more requirements... err, points?

ASDA and ADA national leaders address the possibility of another year added to the dental curriculum.

by Audrey Gamulo

“So the lady asks me, ‘What kind of cactus is that?’

I said, ‘Cactus.’ Then she points to another one and says, ‘What kind of cactus is that?’ I said, ‘...cactus,” our cab driver muttered. He trailed off on these wild stories while I was in his rickety old van, packed shoulder to shoulder, between France Neilson and Rachel Hubbard. This was the beginning of our trek home from this past ASDA annual session in Scottsdale, Arizona. Scottsdale, in short, is sand, cactus, and peppered with wealthy people.

It has been my experience that these ASDA national meetings always involve the discussion of key issues and the chance to interact with several students from other schools of dentistry. This year’s hot topic was the possibility of requiring an additional year of dental school. A panel discussion on the matter was presented in hopes to educate the national leaders of each school, as well as provide us with different perspectives concerning the 5th year. This panel consisted of ADA President Dr. Mark Feldman, ASDA Past President Dr. Brooke Loftis, (the) Ohio State College of Dentistry Orthodontics Division Chair Dr. Henry Fields, and ADA appointed Chairman of ADA-ASDA-ADEA workgroup Dr. Ed Vigna. Each discussed their views regarding the additional year to provide further clinical experience for dental graduates.

Dr. Mark Feldman addressed the additional year through the public health perspective. He addressed that the additional year would be a residency (not to be confused with a PGY-1) where students have the

ability to do further clinical experience in an area of low access to care. PGY-1 is a one year post graduate program instituted in the state of New York where students would do a year of post graduate residency in replacement of a licensure exam. Dr. Feldman stated that the residency proposed for increased clinical experience will not



replace the licensure exams in lieu with the fact that the licensure issue is not universally accepted, and that licensure is to be achieved after 4th year dental school. He proposed that this would be an opportunity to have a community-based clinical experience following the predoctoral curriculum, in hopes that this would help alleviate the national issue of access to care. In addition, each part of the assessments should be available throughout the year with patients of record, treatment plans/

procedures, and the ability for students to remediate any section of the assessment throughout the residency year. This would allow a third party assessment prior to graduation. Dr. Feldman continued with the discussion of the mid-level provider issue, where auxiliary dental staff (i.e., dental hygienists) would perform non-reversible surgical procedures on patients in areas of need; the need for these mid-level providers would be terminated due to the residency programs situated in those areas of access to care. His suggestions with the program would entail the improvement of access to care, stipends for residents, and to increase the clinical experience of dental graduates.

Dr. Brooke Loftis added that the ADA policy to support the requirement of post graduate year, resolution 38 (revised 38 RC), was defeated. This resolution was the beginning of discussion on the addition of another year of clinical experience. After having participated in a GPR, Dr. Loftis agreed with the benefits of an additional year of clinical experience, but does not agree with program to be mandated on all dental students. Dr. Henry Fields followed up in agreement, and added his concerns with how a post graduate year residency will affect applicants and admissions. Will it affect the number and quality of applicants? Is the dental curriculum as good as it can be? Is it redundant? Dr. Fields suggests that rather than implementing an extra year for more clinical experience, dental schools should thoroughly review their dental curriculum, eliminating redundancies, prior to enhancing/extending the curriculum and program.

Dr. Ed Vigna, being the chairman of the interagency workgroup between ADA, ASDA, and ADEA, created a survey

Are you a student planning to go into General Dentistry after dental school?

by Danielle Hoexeter (D2010)

that was sent out to dental students to evaluate the current state of dental schools throughout the nation. The goal was to reform the dental education model by adding a 5th year of learning/training, not dental school specifically. In addition, the survey asked students what the biggest concerns we are facing today. The response was, "to have the opportunity to meet the needs of the public we serve." Way to go, dental students, good answer! The results of the survey showed that students who have had an AEGD/GPR felt that they needed some type of additional training. People who went to private practice disagreed. In addition to the obvious pros that a further year of training would yield, Dr. Vigna presented the cons of the program: it would extend the financial burden on the students, and the addition of another year where the predoc model may not be as efficient as it can be. Currently, more data is being collected and analyzed to aid in further decisions regarding the year of extra clinical experience.

I, for one, agree that an additional year of clinical experience would be beneficial, but should it be mandated on all dental students? How would that affect students applying for specialty programs? Would they have to do the additional year prior to applying for dental specialties? For a listing of all post-doctoral general dentistry residency programs, consult the ADA site: http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/programs/search_advanced_us.asp.



If so, now is the time to join the General Dentist's trade organization, The Academy of General Dentistry. The AGD is a wonderful association that offers a variety of benefits to us as students and as practicing dentists. Even better, as a student, membership is FREE!

Information about membership benefits for students and beyond can be found at <http://www.agd.org/membership/DentalStudents/> and <http://www.agd.org/membership/benefits/>. Some of the student benefits have been highlighted below (D4's you will want to check out the AGD Career Center, if you are still deciding what to do after graduation!)

Some of the student benefits include:

- **Free Annual Meeting & Exhibits Registration**

The AGD welcomes students to its Annual Meeting & Exhibits with a waived registration fee. Students are invited to attend lectures, capsule clinics, and browse the exhibit hall. Visit the Annual Meeting & Exhibits Web site for more information.

- **AGD Career Center**

Simplify your search! Get a jump on graduation by starting your job search here. Post your résumé or Curriculum Vitae online for employers who are seeking general dentists just like you!

- **Student FellowTrack**

Upon graduation, students can receive up to 25 credit hours of continuing education (CE) toward the AGD Fellowship Award through the FellowTrack program. The Fellowship award credentials are a great

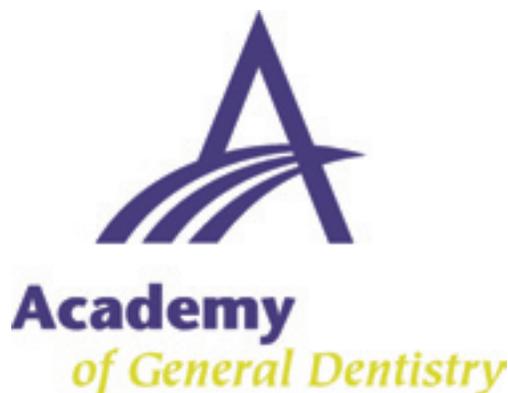
way to distinguish yourself from the competition! E-mail us for local contact information to get started on the road to lifelong learning.

- **Free Student and Recent Graduate Transitional Manual**

Transitioning into your dental career isn't easy. That's why the AGD partnered with Dentist's Advantage to create the resident manual You've Graduated, Now What? This manual provides you with instant access to practice management tips you may not have learned in dental school, such as goal setting, financial planning, and marketing, along with printable worksheets to keep you on track!

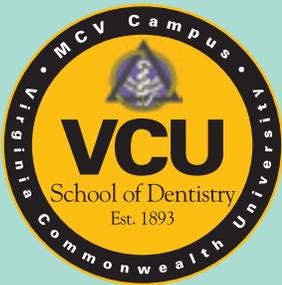
- **Reduced Membership Rates**

Dental students can enjoy all of the benefits of AGD membership for only \$15 per year! It's FREE to us!



Sponsored by

ASDA



Please submit story ideas, questions, comments or concerns to Scott Culpepper at culpeppersb@vcu.edu

A Letter From the Anti-Dentite

I mean, editor

by Scott Culpepper (D2009)

So here we are. After the bail out of Wall Street, the world financial markets still fell into collapse. Will this be the next great depression? We all know about being poor, but does this mean hobo life for us? All of my clothes in a bandana bundle on the end of a stick? Fingerless gloves? Potted meat? Drinking moonshine around a barrel fire? Wait, that sounds fun, but let's not get too melodramatic. Sure, there are ebbs and flows of our business, but dentistry is a durable good. What we do is real. If we can deliver treatments effectively, and be truthful and compassionate, we should be able to find business. Whew. I can live with that. I don't need seven houses or thirteen cars. You know who I'm talking to.



I think people enjoyed the Anti-Dentite well enough, and now they've asked me to be the editor of the entire Probe. How can I tell funny jokes now? Now I'm all political and stuff. Frank Henrich says I'm on what's called the "ASDA executive committee". Frank says that I'm actually kind of a big deal now, so I should get a haircut and tuck in my shirt. (Ahem.) My role now is to advocate organized dentistry. But wait, I've built my cred on poking fun of the establishment, and now I am the establishment. Wah-wah. It seems like the party's over, but I'm still going to keep it real.

We've got a great issue for you. This issue includes a segment about dental missions, both overseas and here at home (brought to you by our great students.) It's all part of my grandiose vision to show the incredible diversity we have here. We have people from all over the world with different cultures and value systems, and yet we all seem to get along. (With a few exceptions, I suppose.) We could probably solve the world's problems—I'd love to get into all of that with you, but organized dentistry tells me that the Osteotomes are having a pizza party. Yes, okay, get involved in organized dentistry, but please, think about the big picture and get political. Use your group to accomplish things. Osteotomes, I expect big things from you this year, though I do like the garlic dipping sauce.

Anyways, I'd like to say thanks to all who have contributed, all who are partaking in the political process, and even those who just had good ideas. Even Sonny Duong, who promised a great food article but I'm sure has been busy in clinic lately. Maybe next time. For that, um if you want to know about great places to eat around town, or how to make good ice cream, just ask him I guess. You're still not fired, Sonny.

Guess WHO!



1) Dr. Button; 2) Dr. Dishman; 3) Dr. Jones; 4) Dr. Barnes; 5) Dr. Kessler; 6) Dr. Masters; 7) Dr. Svirsky; 8) Dr. Waldrop