



## Sustaining Excellence in Challenging Times

In the midst of an economic crisis that has impacted so many peoples' personal and professional lives, our college has been working hard, moving forward, achieving our vision and executing our mission. As our summer semester quickly comes to an end, I'd like to take a moment to highlight some recent successes and to thank our faculty, staff, students and patients for their continued commitment to the college.

## Excellence in Education

I am proud to announce that Class of 2011 achieved a 100 percent first time pass rate on the National Board Dental Examination Part I. Not only did everyone pass the exam, but the class's collective performance far exceeded the overall national average as well as the section averages. Thanks to the students who prepared well for the exam, and thanks to the faculty who organized the curriculum and instruction for the Class of 2011.

This group participated in the Professional Coating Ceremony on July 11, and have been busy getting oriented to their new TEAMS and Clinical Care Groups. I'm told that senior students are doing a great job welcoming and orienting the juniors, and along with the faculty, are establishing a true team spirit for learning and dental care within the Care Groups.



## Excellence in Patient Care & Service

The results of our annual spring patient satisfaction survey have been compiled and the news is just as uplifting. More than 80 percent of the survey respondents rated the quality of care they received in our clinics as excellent. Almost 20 percent rated their care as very good and less than 10 percent combined rated their care as good, fair or poor.

In addition, 33 percent said that the friendliness and professionalism of our students, faculty and staff are what they like most about our clinics. Quality of care rated a close second at 32 percent.

These results help explain why the DMD clinics have already completed 1,000 more patient visits this summer as compared to the same time frame last summer. Thanks to the faculty, clinical support staff and students for creating an excellent environment for student learning and "patient-friendly" dental care.





## ***Excellence in Research***

Our research enterprise continues to prosper. On July 14, Win Phillips announced that the university received a major, multiyear Clinical and Translational Science Award of almost \$26 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This funding will accelerate the pace of scientific discovery as well as increase the speed at which medical advances make a difference for the patient through the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI). The College of Dentistry is one of 12 UF colleges involved in the CTSI and, being a part of this funding mechanism increases our ability to compete for future funding.



Dr. Roger B. Fillingim, Ph.D., serves as the college's representative on the CTSI Steering and Planning Committee, which is the primary oversight committee for the CTSI. In that role he represents the college's needs and ensures that constituents in the college remain well informed regarding CTSI-related opportunities. He is also the Director of the Pain Clinical Research Unit (CRU), which is one of the eight CTSI-funded venues for supporting patient-oriented research at UF. The Pain CRU provides a facility and resources for UF investigators who would like to incorporate state-of-the-art pain assessment methods into their research projects.



Congratulations are in order for Luciana Shaddox, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., who received notification that her study, Mechanisms and Treatment Responses of Aggressive Periodontitis in Children, received \$ 2.1 million in funding over five years from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), part of the NIH. The co-investigators of this grant are Shannon Wallet, PH.D., Ikramuddin Aukhil, B.D.S., M.S., and Clay Walker, Ph.D. Shaddox is also grateful for the contributions of Enrique Bimstein, C.D., and Ingvar Magnusson, D.D.S., Ph.D., who helped immensely during the initial phases of the study.

The study investigates innate inflammatory response and the role of specific bacteria before and after conventional periodontal treatment in children with aggressive periodontitis. The project began in August 2006 when doctors at the Leon County Health Department, contacted the Department of Periodontology for assistance with some cases of aggressive periodontitis in children and adolescents in their facility.

Shaddox and her team then obtained IRB approval to conduct research to tease out specific bacteria and immunological response that could be contributing for the etiology of this rare yet aggressive periodontal disease. Since then they've traveled to Tallahassee every other week to examine and treat these children.

## ***Speaker of the Florida House – Larry Cretul***

On July 30 we had the honor of participating in an event to recognize and thank Speaker Larry Cretul for his ongoing support of the University of Florida as a whole, other colleges at the HSC and our college. In our case, Cretul helped preserve the \$725,000 in DOH funding for this year – funding that makes it possible to operate our Statewide Network for Community Oral Health.

Cretul spoke about how critical it is for everyone to be involved “at the table” when it comes to budget and policy discussions, “You need to be at the table because if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu. And in today’s budget climate you better bring a knife and fork with you.”

The lesson for us is that it isn’t enough to perform excellent work. We have to advocate, for ourselves, with policymakers in order to ensure awareness of the college’s excellence and how we make a difference for our state and nation.

So thank you all for your hard work, professionalism and commitment to sustaining the excellence of our college.

Go Gator Dentists!  
Dean Terri Dolan

