Spring 2017

Lasting Impressions, Spring/Summer 2017

College of Dental Medicine

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lasting Impressions
COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Special Anniversary Issue
Norwegian Cruise Line, together with The Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation and Nova Southeastern University, will be hosting a one-of-a-kind conservation cruise aboard Norwegian Escape, departing Miami, Florida, on October 21, 2017. The week will be filled with live painting; expert-led discussions about marine conservation by Mahmood Shivji, Ph.D., Guy Harvey Research Institute director and NSU professor, and David Gilliam, Ph.D., NSU Coral Reef Restoration, Assessment, and Monitoring research lab principal investigator and NSU professor; meet-and-greets with Guy Harvey, Ph.D.; and much more.

To book your cruise, call your travel professional or (877) 397-1503. Reference “Conservation Cruise” to choose two or more free offers.
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Cover illustration by Randy McCafferty, Senior Graphic Designer, NSU Office of Publications
This year marks the 20th anniversary of when the first dental students began their education at NSU’s College of Dental Medicine (CDM). This issue of *Lasting Impressions* marks this milestone by honoring our faculty members who started with the college and remain with us today. I am sure some of you probably remember the positive impact these faculty members had on your dental career. Learn more about them and their recollections of the college’s early days.

The CDM enters its third decade by launching a new strategic plan, which will provide a road map for the future as the college continues to build on the excellence and innovation established by its founders. I thank all who participated and engaged in this comprehensive and inclusive process. The strategic plan’s development included significant input from many communities of interest, which you will read about in this issue of *Lasting Impressions*.

As clinicians, we all understand and value the importance of a thorough history and physical, a comprehensive oral examination, diagnoses, and a treatment plan. Where would we be without a Department of Diagnostic Sciences to educate us about the critically important process of patient care? This publication features the department’s faculty members, who are teaching these important diagnostic skills, making a difference, and saving lives.

A 20th anniversary is a time for both reflection and celebration. Again, this year, the CDM will host an alumni reception on June 23 at the Florida Dental Convention in Orlando at the Gaylord Palms Resort & Convention Center. I hope to see you at this event.

Additionally, if you are attending the American Dental Association meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in October, the College of Dental Medicine will host a reception at the meeting for the first time. I speak for our entire faculty when I say we all truly enjoy seeing our alumni at these events. Your success is our success, and we love to hear how you are realizing your potential and making a difference in the lives of the patients you are privileged to serve.
The College of Dental Medicine celebrates its 20-year anniversary with a strategic plan.

Two decades is comparatively young for a dental college, but for Nova Southeastern University’s College of Dental Medicine (CDM), its 20th anniversary marks a milestone—and a turning point.

“We have a strong track record,” said Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., the college’s current dean. “We have developed an excellent reputation as an innovative dental school that graduates students with strong clinical skills in a student-friendly environment. We have a team-based, comprehensive care clinical model.”

Niessen also acknowledged the CDM’s commitment to community service. “The faculty members have built core competencies in
special needs dental care and community service in South Florida and globally, including our neighbors in South and Central American countries,” she said. “Moving forward, we’re going to strengthen our curriculum in digital dentistry and continue to integrate our basic sciences with our clinical sciences.”

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

According to Niessen, an updated strategic plan will catapult the CDM in the years ahead. The previous strategic plan, named inNOVAtions (2012–2017), outlined a mission and vision, as well as goals and objectives, for the CDM. The 2017–2022 strategic plan builds on the previous one, with a forward focus and an emphasis on the college’s trajectory for the next 20 years.

“What’s going to affect the CDM is what’s going on in the wider world of health care reform, dental technology innovations, and trends in dental delivery. We will also build on the trends that the university as a whole is addressing,” said Niessen, who became the CDM’s third dean when she assumed the office on October 1, 2013.

The strategic plan begins by reiterating the importance of NSU’s Core Values: academic excellence, student centered, integrity, innovation, opportunity, scholarship/research, diversity, and community. “NSU’s president and CEO, George L. Hanbury, has outlined an exciting Vision 2020 for NSU. The college’s vision aligns well with that vision,” Niessen said.

The aligned vision statement in the CDM strategic plan states, “To lead by having a significant impact on advancing oral health through innovation in dental education, clinical practice, scientific discovery, and community service.” Hanbury agreed that the CDM vision statement is concurrent with NSU’s Vision 2020. “To be recognized as a premier college providing education and knowledge to students, not only dental students, but also postgraduate students who go into specialties of dentistry, and to help improve lives, is absolutely critical not only to the university, but also to the nation,” Hanbury explained. “I believe the concepts in the strategic plan and the methodologies described are very noble.”

According to Niessen, the CDM’s strategic plan’s mission statement supports the university’s core values. The mission statement is geared “to educate future dental professionals and improve oral health through patient-centered care, academic excellence, research, leadership, and commitment to the communities we serve, particularly the special needs and underserved populations.”

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., chancellor of the NSU Health Professions Division, said the CDM’s mission statement speaks to the future of the dental college. “I believe very strongly that dental schools across the nation, including ours, have gone through a metamorphosis over the past decade, looking at not necessarily the academic excellence, but the emphasis of academic involvement in what is traditionally seen as a clinical profession,” he said.

Lippman added that the commitment to community, which has always been a priority since the beginnings of NSU’s CDM, is as important as ever. “The governmental and political community, which represents various licensing and provision of standards to multiprofessionals, has recognized that there is a tremendous need for dental care not available to the general citizenry. That commitment to community is a very important and vital area,” he said.

College of Dental Medicine: Through the Years

The CDM has seen many milestones during its first 20 years. Following are some highlights.

1994
Seymour Oliet, D.D.S., a retired endodontist, is brought out of retirement by former colleagues Morton Terry, D.O., M.Sc., FACOI, and Arnold Melnick, D.O., M.Sc., FACOD, who appoint him to lead a task force established to determine the need for a college of dental medicine in South Florida.
DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Abby J. Brodie, D.M.D., M.S., associate dean for academic affairs, serves as chair of the CDM’s Strategic Planning Oversight and Implementation Committee and previously served on the inNOVAtions Strategic Plan Committee.

“The focus of the plan, in a very broad sense, will always be on the quality of our education, how we manage student needs, how we treat our patients, and how we improve all of our programs across the board,” Brodie said. “The new strategic plan is not drastically changed from the previous plan; it just hones in on some of the more closely identified areas, and sets the path for our future.”

The CDM engaged Stephen Ferrante, M.S.W., managing partner of Group Victory—a Fort Lauderdale-based strategy and organization development consulting firm—to help facilitate the strategic planning process. He said one of the most important factors in developing the plan was the CDM’s determination to have all voices heard. “It was a highly participatory process; not just a few people in a room. Prior to seeking input, we invested time in conducting comparative analyses in the area of dental education at the university level,” Ferrante said. “We laid a foundation in which the school could set some priorities and develop the plan.”

Even before the document was constructed, Ferrante said stakeholder involvement was crucial. “The extent to which this was a participatory process is incredibly important, because if people are invested from the beginning, they own it,” he explained. “They will see it through the execution process to make sure it gets carried out in the way it was intended. That builds in accountability.”

Brodie agreed. “We wanted feedback from stakeholder groups. Different committee members helped to facilitate that. We welcomed each voice.”

Ferrante said the college started its development of the strategic plan in June 2016 and chose a seven-month time frame, which seemed “fairly realistic for their time

On March 26, 1996, Oliet becomes the founding dean of Nova Southeastern University’s College of Dental Medicine (CDM) and serves as dean until 2001.

Robert Uchin, D.D.S., a Broward County endodontist, becomes the second dean of the CDM. There are 520 students in the college’s graduate and postgraduate programs only four years after the inaugural class was admitted.
INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

An objective in the strategic plan’s Innovative Education section identifies implementation of the most advanced technology within the curriculum that mirrors the dental practice environment. “The CDM’s goals around innovative education require strengthening our digital curriculum,” Niessen said. “We must be competitive with the latest technology and innovations in oral health education.”

Sharon Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., M.B.A., professor and chair of the Department of Prosthodontics, continues to build the CAD/CAM (computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing) dentistry curriculum for the predoctoral and postgraduate prosthodontic students.

The U.S. dental prosthetics market, including crowns/bridges, inlays/onlays, and veneers and dentures, is expected to reach $11.8 billion by 2020. “CAD/CAM is the direction restorative dentistry is headed, and we are ahead of the curve in training our students in CAD/CAM dental education,” Siegel said.

Currently, 12 CAD/CAM scanners are available for student use in the training clinic at the CDM. The intraoral, digital impression-taking devices enable dentists to directly scan a patient’s mouth using a handheld digital-scanning device and transmit that data electronically to a laboratory. The use of the devices expedites the restoration processes, increasing the efficiency of both dentists and technicians.

“We are finding that because of our commitment to educating our students to become skilled in CAD/CAM, when they go into practice, they are hired because of their CAD/CAM skills,” Siegel said. She is also examining how to teach CAD/CAM more efficiently as part of an interdisciplinary study with two H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business and Entrepreneurship professors—Steve Kramer, Ph.D., associate professor of decision sciences, and Kimberly Deranek, Ph.D., associate professor of operations and systems management.

“In the study, students are reviewing videos on how to prepare CAD/CAM restorations prior to the sim lab practice. Faculty members then act as facilitators during the clinical laboratory session,” Siegel said. “We have found that the groups who review the video are more prepared, engaged, and more effective in the clinic.”

Siegel presented her findings at the American Dental Education Association conference in Long Beach, California, in March. Her research collaborators, Kramer and Deranek, presented the findings to a Decision Sciences group in Charlotte, North Carolina, in February.

The CAD/CAM teaching research goes a step further. In another research project, Siegel is evaluating the...
PrepCheck software program. “The software evaluates the preparations the students are creating,” she said. While PrepCheck is used in professional settings, Siegel applies it as a teaching tool for students to be able to self-evaluate how well they are creating restorations on CAD/CAM.

“The students can evaluate themselves and understand how to correct their work. They have access to their work 24/7,” Siegel added. “It becomes nonpersonal—the machine shows them the criteria for the preparation and where they need to correct it. It’s going to revolutionize teaching, and it’s going to help us to make the students’ educational experience so much better.”

These kinds of innovations make NSU the “university of the future,” Hanbury said. “That’s the beauty of technology—to learn things today and to be prepared to do things tomorrow that are yet undiscovered.”

NSU’s CDM is also looking toward the future in preparing students to care for patients with dental emergencies. The urgent care clinic, which was established in 2017, was created to recognize the need for patients who have toothaches and only want or can only afford limited care.

“Students are getting hands-on training in providing emergency dental care,” Niessen said. “Patients will always have dental emergencies. We are making sure our students are prepared in every way for a modern dental practice upon graduation.”

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

CDM research professionals are contributing to an international footprint in scientific discoveries. Among those CDM scientists is Toshihisa Kawai, D.D.S., Ph.D., whose research includes the fields of immunology, microbiology, and cell biology.

A draw for Kawai to come to NSU directly from 23 years at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine and the Forsyth Institute was the opportunity to partner with bone biologists and immunologists working at NSU’s Center for Collaborative Research (CCR).

“With the exposure of creating the CCR and bringing in world-renowned researchers, not only dental professionals, but also other health care professionals, we provide benefit to the public in the value of preventing disease and securing wellness,” Lippman explained.

Kawai, who joined the CDM in November 2016, is conducting research on bone resorption in periodontal disease. The scientist hopes he can move biomedical research forward in the area of dental studies. “I would like to apply my findings from oral disease to other areas,” Kawai said. “Most dental research borrows ideas and findings from medical research. I want to use discoveries from dental disease and apply those findings to other medical research.”

The CCR is one catalyst Hanbury believes will propel research at the CDM. “The opportunities in research and collaboration in dental research are exciting areas for the university, and not just in biotech, but in high tech as well,” Hanbury said. “Our reputation in dental education and our research in dental medicine continue to become recognized globally. I see us attracting more of the finest students and top research professionals.”

Niessen said the collaborations strengthen all aspects of the CDM. “Building research also works toward creating new solutions to the oral health issues we are facing,” she explained.

Continued on page 8

2003
The CDM launches its first Give Kids A Smile event—a program established by the American Dental Association Foundation. During the inaugural event, 100 children receive free service. In 2016, the event draws more than 750 children and special needs patients.

2007
In November 2007, the NSU chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA) is formed by a group of minority dental students. The SNDA is among several student organizations that address student issues and develop leadership among dental students.
COMMUNITY
The CDM has a long history of treating patients who would otherwise not have access to needed oral health care. “People who are disabled, medically compromised, home-bound, or institutionalized are at increased risk for dental disease,” said Diane Ede-Nichols, D.M.D., M.H.L., M.P.H., associate professor and chair of community dentistry.

The strategic plan serves as a new jumping-off point for Ede-Nichols to engage her students in geriatric dental care—an underserved population she believes has been neglected. The teaching hospital, HCA East Florida, which will be built on the NSU Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus, may create opportunities to serve as an experiential learning site for providing geriatric patient care.

“The hospital could create another resource in terms of following patients from the community into a hospital setting,” Ede-Nichols said.

Ede-Nichols initiated a CDM organization to develop predoctoral and advanced dental education mission trips to provide education and treatment for the underserved in Caribbean and Central American countries. The international mission trips will “continue and grow,” she said.

Yet, the mission in which Ede-Nichols sees the most expansion is the CDM partnership with the Florida Dental Association’s Mission of Mercy—a two-day clinic providing free dental care to the underserved and uninsured in Florida. Every year, the Florida Mission of Mercy project is held in different locations throughout the state. “While our trips abroad are important and necessary, there is a great need right here in Florida,” Ede-Nichols said.

Another focus for the next five years and beyond will be the Special Needs Dentistry Clinic. All CDM graduating seniors have a one-day-a-week rotation through the clinic over a five-week period. In addition, six first-year and six second-year Advanced Education in General Dentistry residents provide daily dental care in the Special Needs Dentistry Clinic.

Ede-Nichols, a champion for dental care for the underserved, hopes to turn the attention of the dental community to the dental needs of older adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). “Pediatric dentists are trained in special needs and will see spectrum disorder patients up to a certain age, but autistic patients are living longer. We haven’t been able to expand provision of care to these ASD patients as they get older,” she said.

Romer Ocanto, D.D.S., M.S., chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, was awarded an almost $4-million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant will fund the development of a curriculum addressing the transition of children and adolescents with ASD to adult dental care.

Ede-Nichols said the grant affords the department the ability to educate general dentists to provide care for adult patients with ASD.

LEADERSHIP
According to Niessen, leadership is a hallmark of CDM graduates and sets them apart in the dental profession. “The mission is to create the next generation of leaders in dentistry while improving oral health care through patient-centered care, research, a commitment to academic excellence, and a commitment to the communities we service,” she said.

Erinne Kennedy, D.M.D., M.P.H., class of 2015, said she always had the desire to be a leader, but it was her
The inNOVAtions strategic plan is introduced to provide a road map for the college’s five-year vision. The plan includes expanding research activities, continuing curriculum innovation, strengthening clinical programs, and engaging alumni to share their expertise with current students.

2012

Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., is selected as the third dean of the CDM.

2013

Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., is selected as the third dean of the CDM. The strategic plan is introduced to provide a road map for the college’s five-year vision. The plan includes expanding research activities, continuing curriculum innovation, strengthening clinical programs, and engaging alumni to share their expertise with current students.

Immediately after graduating from the CDM, Kennedy went to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland, for a general practice residency. Halfway through the year, however, something shifted.

“Dean Niessen encouraged me to complete my dental public health specialty training and pursue the dental health residency at Harvard,” said Kennedy, who added that the dean was “always challenging me to think beyond just a year from now or 2 years from now. What was I going to be doing? What impact would I make 20 years from now, and what steps could I take to get there?”

While at the CDM, Kennedy cofounded Nova Southeastern University’s Practice Management Club and began the Student Research Club. “The CDM gave me the support to help bring in new organizations that we hadn’t had in the past,” she said.

As a current member and project leader in the American Dental Association Institute for Diversity in Leadership, Kennedy is involved in a community-based project that involves creating oral health policy for health care resources for indigenous tribes in Alaska. “I grew into my role as a leader at the CDM. At many schools, it isn’t like that,” she admitted. “The CDM really grows leaders and gives you so many opportunities to do things outside of the classroom. They aren’t just preparing you to be a great dentist; they are helping you to become a better human being.”

Kennedy said part of the responsibility of being a leader is giving back to NSU and the CDM. “Someone invested in you to grow you as a leader, so how are you going to invest to grow more leaders?” she said.

Mark Limosani, D.M.D., M.S., a class of 2011 alumnus who serves as president of the postgraduate Endodontic Alumni Association and the South Broward Dental Association, said the importance of being a leader in the community is fostered at the CDM. “It’s more than just explained by the faculty as to how important community is,” he said.

To that end, Limosani said community is also about making the college stronger. “When you help the school grow, it reflects positively on you. Graduates thrive, and
they have an impact on society. That is the value of staying close with your alma mater,” he said.

Leadership resonates throughout the entire university, no matter what discipline, said Hanbury. “We prepare our students to meet the challenges of their profession, to be innovative, and to solve problems,” he said.

**RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Ferrante said the CDM’s commitment to “both aspects of its identity”—ensuring that financial resources are available and strengthening its academic excellence—is one of the college’s strengths, and it shows in the strategic plan.

“The strategic plan does not lose sight of the college’s role in academics and its students, and it still recognizes the importance of having the right infrastructure and capacity for operations. That was one of the unique aspects of working with this educational institution,” Ferrante said.

One of the goal’s objectives is to raise $21.5 million in funding during the next 5 years. The funding includes reaching out to external sources, with a focus on engaging alumni.

“We’re just starting to ask for money. In our first 20 years, we hadn’t focused on asking our alumni for resources because they were new in the field,” Niessen explained. “They had only been in practice for 15 or 16 years, so they were barely 40. Now, however, in the next 20 years, we will continue to grow the CDM Alumni and Friends Association and have graduates take a more active role.”

The esteemed Kenneth N. Namerow Endowed Professorship in Endodontics, initiated in 2010 by Kenneth Namerow, D.D.S., professor and chair of the Department of Endodontics, is a stunning example of resource development at the CDM—and a template Niessen wants to see continue into the future.

Faculty members, alumni, and donors pooled resources after Namerow’s grassroots approach helped the CDM address a dual challenge identified by the *Journal of Endodontics*. The journal stated that as faculty members and practitioners in endodontics were preparing to retire, fewer new professionals were financially able to pursue a career in higher education.

In 2014, the goal of $500,000 was reached, and Taner Cem Sayin, D.D.S., Ph.D., was named the recipient of the inaugural Kenneth N. Namerow Endowed Professorship in Endodontics. “The Namerow Professorship is our first endowed professorship and has the distinction of being the first endowed professorship at NSU, so it’s quite an honor for the college,” Niessen said.

Other areas for resource development include naming opportunities for donors as part of the university’s Realizing Potential campaign, including the recently renovated Simulation Lab.
NSU College of Dental Medicine
Strategic Plan 2017–2022

MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of the College of Dental Medicine is to educate future dental professionals and improve oral health through patient-centered care, academic excellence, research, leadership, and commitment to the communities we serve, particularly the special needs and underserved populations.

VISION STATEMENT
The vision of the College of Dental Medicine is to lead by having a significant impact on advancing oral and craniofacial health through innovation in dental education, clinical practice, scientific discovery, and community service.

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION
Goal: Provide an innovative predoctoral dental curriculum for comprehensive, patient-centered care in a general dentistry model team-based delivery system.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY
Goal: Expand the College of Dental Medicine’s research activities and translate scientific discoveries into clinical practice.

COMMUNITY
Goal: Strengthen and expand the College of Dental Medicine’s community service and service learning activities, especially in the areas of special needs and underserved populations.

LEADERSHIP
Goal: Provide educational opportunities for faculty, students, and residents to become the next generation of leaders for the dental profession.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
Goal: Develop the financial and human resources necessary to achieve the College of Dental Medicine’s mission and vision.
Before the NSU College of Dental Medicine opened its doors in 1997, the university executives had begun a search for professors. Assembling a solid group of well-respected, knowledgeable professors who could lead and teach the next generations of dental professionals was vital to the new college’s success. Following are some of the professors’ memories about the CDM’s early days and why they chose to come to a fledgling school.

PETER A. KELLER, D.D.S.
Executive Associate Dean
Full-time faculty member since 1996

WHY HE CAME TO THE COLLEGE: In 1995, I was in private practice in Hollywood, Florida. At that time, I was also chair of the Florida Board of Dentistry, and I had been serving as either an examiner or a supervisor for the Florida dental board exam for more than 20 years. Nova Southeastern University was interested in starting a college of dental medicine and wanted to have someone on the committee who knew many Florida dentists and understood the dental laws and rules of the state of Florida.

The committee was to write a report to the NSU Board of Trustees to determine the need for a college of dental medicine in South Florida. Dr. Fred Lippman, chancellor of the Health Professions Division, was aware of my background and asked me to join the committee. Of course, I said yes.

One year later, the committee sent in its report, and the Board of Trustees voted to start the new dental school. Dr. Seymour Oliet was appointed dean, and I was his first hire. He persuaded me to sell my practice and start working full time as soon as possible.

My wife convinced me that I needed a new challenge, so I immediately started working five afternoons a week for NSU in North Miami Beach while working every morning in my Hollywood office. Within three months, I sold my practice to my associate and began working full time for the College of Dental Medicine.

MOST MEMORABLE CDM MOMENT: Dr. Sigmund Stahl was the CDM’s first executive associate dean. He was one of the great thinkers, professors, and research scientists in the world of dental education. When I was a dental student in New York, I met Dr. Stahl on my first day in the clinic. I thought he was brilliant but really old and ready to retire. After that first meeting, I did not see him again for 20 years. Then our paths crossed again at the NSU College of Dental Medicine. He was still brilliant, but it turned out that I was now older than he was on that day of our first meeting, 20 years earlier. (Please see the story on Sigmund Stahl on page 22.)

While at NSU, Dr. Stahl was trying to solve a difficult problem. He asked me what I thought. I told him what I would do, and he used my idea to accomplish his task. He thanked me profusely and stated that he never would have thought of that approach. I went home that night and told my wife I had just received the greatest compliment of my professional career. I will never forget that moment.
STEFEN M. KELNER, D.M.D., M.S.
Associate Dean of Institutional Affairs and Professor
Full-time faculty member since 1998

WHY HE CAME TO THE COLLEGE: At the time the CDM opened, I was working in Chicago, Illinois, for the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)—the professional accrediting body for all dental educational programs. The CDM’s founding dean, Dr. Seymour Oliet, was a mentor and friend of mine for many years.

Shortly after the school opened, he persuaded me to move to Florida to lead the effort in becoming an accredited dental school and offered me the position of associate dean and professor. At that time, my parents were still alive and retired in Boynton Beach, so this provided me with an additional incentive to move down here.

MOST MEMORABLE CDM MOMENT: My most memorable moment occurred in 2002, when the college received full approval from CODA for the predoctoral program and all of the postdoctoral programs. With those designations, the NSU College of Dental Medicine became a fully accredited dental school.

DIANE EDE-NICHOLS, D.M.D., M.H.L., M.P.H.
CDM Chair and Associate Professor of the Department of Community and Public Health Sciences and Associate Professor of Public Health at the NSU College of Osteopathic Medicine
Full-time faculty member since 1999

WHY SHE CAME TO THE COLLEGE: After my dental residency, I chose to remain in an academic health science center to pursue my professional career. My first appointment was at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center at Columbia University’s College of Dental Medicine, which I loved. When I relocated to South Florida, the University of Florida was the only dental school in the state. I was ecstatic when I heard NSU was opening a new dental college in my neighborhood. I often say it was so nice of NSU to open the dental school especially for me.

MOST MEMORABLE CDM MOMENT: There have been so many wonderful moments over the past years. Some of my most memorable include working with dental students in our past affiliated nursing homes. Watching the students and the elderly patients interact was often funny and heartwarming. Our international and state mission trips are always memorable, because the students blossom from being nervous students to confident practitioners.

Another hallmark during my tenure was starting the program in special needs dentistry, which is currently housed in the Henry Schein Special Needs Clinical Suite in North Miami Beach. It has become a much-sought-after clinic throughout Florida for dental care of people with disabilities and is operated by amazing faculty and staff members, residents, and students. It is truly one of the brightest gems in the CDM’s crown.
Getting the

Michael A. Siegel examines a patient, assisted by Lina M. Mejia and fourth-year dental student Deisy Norena Otero, right.
Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences teaches dentistry’s medical aspect.

By Michelle F. Solomon

Today’s dentists can assess the multiple linkages between oral and general health. Yet there are situations that can baffle even the most experienced practitioner. “You’re treating people; you’re not only treating teeth,” said Michael A. Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., FDS, RCSED, professor and chair of the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences at the NSU College of Dental Medicine.

It is in this department, which encompasses the divisions of oral medicine, oral pathology, oral radiology, and orofacial pain, where students are exposed to what Siegel calls the “medical aspect of dentistry.” According to Siegel, “All dental students spend a good deal of time with us. The department consists of a group of...
very talented and dedicated faculty who are strongly student and patient centered.”

Before treatment on a patient ever begins in the dental clinic, CDM students gather important medical information, such as medical history, current conditions, and current prescriptions. Students also conduct a complete head and neck examination.

“We may encounter a diabetic patient. These patients often have manifestations of diabetes in their mouth, so they have specific oral hygiene and periodontal needs,” Siegel explained. “Because they are diabetic, their treatment needs are different because they are at risk for infection. As dentists, we also need to recognize and manage the oral side effects of the drugs they may be taking.”

Smoking cessation is also reinforced to patients by Lina M. Mejia, D.D.S., M.P.H., as part of the program funded by NSU’s Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Patients who express a desire to quit smoking are examined by Mejia to ensure that they do not have tobacco-related premalignant or malignant changes, which might necessitate a biopsy.

Following this evaluation, Mejia will then refer patients to the AHEC smoking cessation program located at NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. Mejia is also responsible for in-service training of the College of Dental Medicine’s faculty.

During the head and neck examination, an ulceration discovered in a patient’s mouth would provide students an opportunity to see “the clinical part of oral medicine,” Siegel said. “We may look at that person’s medications to see if that is what’s causing the ulceration. Perhaps it is a drug reaction or a common apthous ulcer (canker sore), or possibly even related to occult gastrointestinal disease.” According to Siegel, a biopsy also may be a recommended course of action to establish a diagnosis.

The biopsy specimen would then be sent to NSU Oral Pathology Services, which provides pathology services not only for the college’s dental clinic, but also for patients throughout the state. “We receive 2,000 biopsies a year from physicians and dentists, and every year it continues to grow,” said Ines Velez, D.D.S., M.S., professor and a Diplomate of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology.

Velez has been dedicated to oral maxillofacial pathology for three decades. The service at the CDM has been provided since 2002. “Dr. Velez started with about 1,000 biopsies a year,” said Siegel. “Now we are a resource to the medical and dental communities.”

ONE OF A KIND

The CDM’s oral and maxillofacial pathology service is the only one of its kind available in South Florida. Patients with rare and difficult-to-diagnose lesions are referred to the clinic for biopsies to be gathered on-site. “Many surgeons and ear, nose, and throat specialists will refer patients here when they are unable to diagnose a problem,” said Velez of the service, which also receives referrals for consultations from nearby hospitals. “This is because hospitals have only general pathology and not oral and maxillofacial pathology.”

The department has two other board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologists—Diane Stern, D.D.S., and Lynn Solomon, D.D.S., M.S. “This makes us unique,” Velez said. “There are only a few more than 300 board-certified oral and maxillofacial pathologists in the United States.”

According to Velez, it was Stern who was the conduit to put the CDM on the map for oral and maxillofacial pathology. “We began the service with one of the most well-known oral maxillofacial pathologists in the world,” she said. In fact, Stern coauthored one of the top medical books on the subject, *Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology: A Rationale for Diagnosis and Treatment*, which received the American Medical Writers Association Book of the Year Award in 2002.

When Stern joined the CDM team, she brought many of her clients to the university. The outgrowth of the clinical consultations and treatments came next. “This specialty does
not exist in many places,” said Velez, who added that the board certifications of the faculty add to the commendations. The department also conducts research and has received an NSU President’s Faculty Research and Development Grant for the following studies:

- “Effectiveness of a Polymer-Based Muco-Adhesive in the Healing of Oral Ulcers in Erosive Lichen Planus”
- “Cryopreserved Amniotic Membrane for Modulation of Periodontal Soft Tissue Healing”

Currently, Velez and her colleagues are investigating the process of metastatic carcinomas in the orofacial region. Additionally, Velez is conducting a study of clinical diagnosis of lesions using a microscope. “Dermatologists have used dermoscopy, but it’s never been used for melanomas in the mouth. This is the way we think,” Siegel said.

According to Siegel, the CDM does not offer graduate programs specifically in oral medicine or oral pathology, but that may change with the impending arrival of HCA East Florida’s new hospital on NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. “We don’t, as of now, have an affiliate hospital that can support us, so the teaching hospital will allow us to expand into graduate programs,” Siegel said.

**RADIOGRAPHY TRAINING**

Radiography training is another important area in the department. “In their second year, the dental students begin with intraoral radiograph techniques. After that, they are using those techniques when working with patients,” said Maritabel Hogge, D.D.S., M.S., M.S.M.Ed., associate professor and director of radiology, who is a board-certified oral and maxillofacial radiologist. “They have to evaluate how they see the patient, learn the techniques, and comply with radiation safety standards, which continues through to their fourth year.”

There is also a commitment by Hogge and Eun Choi, D.M.D., M.S., in keeping up with ever-changing radiographic technology. “We are showing them different technology every year,” Hogge said. “Things change, and we must change with them, so that students are trained in the latest technologies.”

Both Hogge and Choi, maxillofacial imaging specialists, receive scans from practitioners outside of NSU for reading and diagnosing i-CAT cone beam 3-D dental imaging. “We have the units and the latest software to see the radiographic images,” Hogge said.

Most important, students learn the protocols of radiation. “In addition to radiographic techniques, we teach students radiographic interpretation, which is vital for an integrated patient evaluation,” Hogge said. “Third- and fourth-year dental students are required to develop radiographic reports of patients’ intraoral and extraoral imaging prior to starting the treatment plan.”

Collaborative research is also under way at the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, where Paul Bradley, D.D.S., M.D., M.S., professor and director at the CDM’s Orofacial Pain Clinic, has teamed up with Nancy Klimas, M.D., director of the NSU Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine. Bradley’s work using low-intensity laser therapy (LILT) in pain control and healing is proving beneficial for people with complex neuro-inflammatory
illnesses. “We have done several clinics with Dr. Klimas, and we are building on those basics,” Bradley said.

Bradley’s research using lasers at the Orofacial Pain Clinic also focuses on using LILT to treat existing pain. “The lasers have a strong anti-inflammatory effect and are at their best for muscular conditions,” he said. Bradley, a past president of the North American Association for Laser Therapy, found that the lasers are successful in treating patients who arrive at the clinic and are diagnosed with temporomandibular joint disorders, which cause pain when eating or opening wide.

“We receive patients at the clinic who don’t only have pain in the jaw muscles. Many also have pain in the neck,” Bradley said. He added that the combination causes tension headaches where, in some instances, the pain radiates into the chest area.

“We can treat large areas with the laser. In the pain clinic, we often combine the laser with trigger point acupuncture,” Bradley added. The companies that create and manufacture the pricey lasers frequently offer the equipment to the clinic, which is beneficial to the company and allows students to become familiar with the lasers. “The companies would like us to evaluate the laser for them and provide data about its use in particular cases we treat.”

This is part of the research being done at what is commonly known as the Head and Neck Pain Clinic. In existence for 14 years, it is an integral part of the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences. Bradley said his clinic is the only one in Florida that specializes in head and neck pain. “It gives us a special responsibility to the patients who come to us from throughout the state, including some who have been suffering from obscure kinds of pain for years,” he said.

In addition to Bradley, the clinic’s specialists include neurologist H. Murray Todd, M.D., who is an authority on neuropathic pain such as trigeminal neuralgia, which is said to be the worst pain known to humans, and physical therapist Volkert de Weijer, D.P.T., M.Sc. Bradley likens the job of the clinic’s specialists to being “detectives” who help those suffering from different types of pain to get relief.

“We’ve designed what we think are relevant questions, and we do a careful examination, an intake, and tests on nerves, blood vessels, or muscles. We try to give the patients immediate treatment. Many of them have traveled a long distance to see us, and we want to help them as soon as we can,” said Bradley, who, before joining the NSU faculty, was professor and chair of oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University of Edinburgh and at the University of London.

Patients are referred to the pain clinic by primary care physicians, dentists, neurologists, and ear, nose, and throat specialists. “They have seen a variety of specialists, but, in many cases, no one can sort out what’s wrong with them, so it’s up to us,” Bradley said.

He often has dental students who will refer a patient, which provides a chance for a learning experience. “We encourage the student to accompany the patient to see how we approach the matter,” Bradley explained.

For information on departmental services, contact the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences, at (954) 262-1929.
In the history of South Florida education, Nova Southeastern University (NSU) President Emeritus Abraham S. Fischler, Ed.D., was honored as a groundbreaker—helping guide NSU to becoming a nationally recognized school. Dr. Fischler passed away on April 3, 2017, at the age of 89.

“He was a visionary and driving force in helping shape the South Florida landscape. Millions of students and individuals have benefitted from Dr. Fischler’s dedication and expertise,” said George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., NSU’s president and CEO.

Dr. Fischler joined NSU in 1966 as the director of the Behavioral Sciences Center and dean of Graduate Studies for the college’s three original centers—Behavioral Sciences, Oceanography, and Physical Science. He also served as NSU’s executive vice president and was named the first James Donn Professor of Education, a distinction created in 1967 by James Donn, senior professor of science education and a former NSU Board of Trustees member.

In late 1969, Dr. Fischler was appointed executive vice president by Nova University’s Board of Trustees, after the first university president resigned. In September 1970, he was appointed president. “When he was named the university’s president, it was facing a number of challenges. He set about meeting them all head on,” said Hanbury.

Under Dr. Fischler’s leadership, NSU became the second-largest private university in Florida, student enrollment increased from 57 students to 10,600, and the university achieved financial stability. He also helped start the NSU University School—a college preparatory school for students from junior-kindergarten through high school. He created course offerings that emphasized technological development and innovation, expanded the Oceanographic Center, created new dormitories, started campus renovations, helped NSU’s law school earn accreditation, and developed the concept of student clusters and distance education, which had a national impact on education. He served in that capacity for 22 years, until his resignation in July 1992.

NSU’s Abraham S. Fischler College of Education was named in his honor in 1992. He was named President Emeritus of NSU in 2005. Dr. Fischler is survived by his wife of 67 years, Shirley; his children Bruce, Martha, Michael, Anita, and Lori; his grandchildren Kenneth, Danielle, Micheal, and Mikaela; and his great-grandson, Jacob.

Contributions in memory of Abraham S. Fischler may be made to the Dr. Abraham and Shirley Fischler Endowed Scholarship Fund (nova.edu/FischlerScholarship or annualfund@nova.edu) at NSU, or the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center of South Florida (hdec.org/hdec/) in Dania Beach. ■
Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean and professor of the CDM, was accorded two recent honors. She received the prestigious Paragon Award from the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) during the group’s annual session held February 22–25 in Orlando, Florida. The Paragon Award recognizes an individual who has significantly contributed to the advancement of the rights, interests, and welfare of dental students throughout his or her career. It is the highest and most notable award given by the ASDA.

“In three short years, Dr. Niessen has transformed the dental student experience at Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine,” said Adam Saltz, who is scheduled to graduate from the CDM in 2017 and is the ASDA editor in chief. “Students are actively engaged in organized dentistry and committed to service and academic excellence. She inspires them to think critically about dentistry and seek opportunities for improvement and growth.

“As a world-renowned lecturer on public health issues, Dr. Niessen gives voice to the inequalities that exist in the oral health care system for women and the elderly. I proudly consider her my dean, mentor, and friend,” Saltz added.

Niessen has been active in dental organizations throughout her career. She has served as president of the American Academy of Esthetic Dentistry, president of the American Association of Women Dentists, president of the American Association of Public Health Dentistry, and president of the Dallas County Dental Society. She is also a member on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Training in Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry.

“It is an honor to receive the Paragon Award from the American Student Dental Association. This award is a tribute to the entire faculty and mentors in my life who helped prepare me for a career in dental education,” Niessen said during her acceptance speech. “I thank the incredibly talented students, outstanding faculty, and dedicated staff at Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine for their support and my family for their encouragement throughout my dental career. I dedicate this award to all ASDA students, with a hope that as you realize your potential as dentists, you pay it forward and consider dental education as part of your career plans.”

Niessen is the fifth recipient of The ASDA Paragon Award—and the first female honoree. In addition to the Paragon Award, Niessen was ranked No. 22 on a list of the 32 Most Influential People in Dentistry in the nation by Incisal Edge—a lifestyle magazine for dental professionals.
Third-year student Jesse Schwartz was honored with a scholarship from Great Expressions Dental Centers (GEDC) during a ceremony at the Grande Oaks Golf Club in Davie, Florida.

Schwartz, who will graduate in May 2018, plans to practice general dentistry in South Florida, with an emphasis on cosmetic procedures. Schwartz decided on a career in dentistry during his junior year of college.

“I participated in a medical mission trip to Honduras, where I worked exclusively with the dental team. Around this time, my younger brother underwent a dental transformation, which enhanced both his aesthetic appearance and his confidence. Both experiences inspired me to pursue a career in dentistry,” said Schwartz, who grew up in Suffern, New York—a small town 30 miles northwest of New York City.

Among those attending the ceremony to present the scholarship were Greg Nodland, B.A., GEDC chief operating officer; Robert Brody, D.M.D., GEDC national clinical director; Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., CDM dean; Peter A. Keller, D.D.S., executive associate dean at the CDM; and Denise Goldson Rau, B.S., director of development for the NSU College of Dental Medicine, College of Nursing, and College of Health Care Sciences. Anhtuan Nguyen, a fourth-year student at the CDM and the 2016 recipient of the award, also attended.

GEDC has been a longtime supporter of the CDM. Based in Michigan, GEDC runs more than 200 practices in nine states, including Florida. The practices offer a wide range of dental services, including preventive care, orthodontics, specialty care, and cosmetic dentistry.

GEDC is known for its contributions to improving oral health through quality and safety initiatives, and for providing access to affordable dental care services. Their dentists are all members of the American Dental Association, and their orthodontists are all members of the American Association of Orthodontists.

CDM PROSTHODONTIST HONORED WITH NATIONAL AWARD

Thomas J. Balshi, D.D.S., founder of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania’s Prosthodontics Intermedia Dental Center and associate professor of implant prosthodontics, received his profession’s highest award from the American College of Prosthodontists in San Diego, California. The Dan Gordon Award is presented annually to an individual who “contrib- utes at the highest level to the welfare and advancement of the college, the specialty of prosthodontics, science, and the health professions.”

In presenting the award to Balshi, Carl Driscoll, D.M.D., president of the American College of Prosthodontists and director of the University of Maryland Prosthodontic Graduate Program, described the award as a recognition for lifetime achievement and stated that Balshi “epitomized the description of the Dan Gordon Award.”

The Pi Dental Center has a 30-year history of providing state-of-the-art dental implant and restorative dental treatment, with an emphasis on excellence and expediency. The center also includes a research and educational component and will soon launch personal mentoring options for dental practitioners in their own offices, with Balshi as the coach.
At 91, Sigmund Stahl, M.S., D.D.S., isn’t ready to retire. He tried 20 years ago, leaving a prominent dental career at the New York University (NYU) College of Dentistry. He left the bright lights of Manhattan for sunny South Florida after spending decades as a periodontics professor, researcher, and associate dean.

He told his NYU colleagues he was going to retire. But the lure of dental medicine was too strong. In 1996, Nova Southeastern University recruited Stahl to help start the College of Dental Medicine. He agreed.

Stahl, who is now an adjunct professor of periodontics at the CDM, worked closely with the college’s founding dean, the late Seymour Oliet, D.D.S., to launch a fledgling dental school in 1997 with 75 students. The school has since blossomed into one of the best and most selective in the nation.

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON AND KEN MA
"The school was built, students came after a while, and we were a real dental school," Stahl said. "Little by little, we had both students and patients. Now we are getting lots of patients and the brightest students in the country."

The draw for Stahl was that he could take part in building something that hadn't existed previously. "All of the schools I had been with were there for 100 years before me, but this was a wonderful opportunity—a true experience," he said. "I was coming to a brand-new place where there was no tradition. I wanted to leave my imprint."

Working with Oliet, Stahl helped build the foundations for the CDM by putting the students and faculty and staff members in place and earning accreditation from the Commission on Dental Accreditation. He worked on the nuts and bolts of starting a new school, such as financing, budget management, and getting facilities, such as the dental clinic, off the ground. Stahl also used his reputation and prestige to help recruit top faculty members, which were hard to come by because of a national shortage.

"He was recognized in the dental profession," said Robert Uchin, D.D.S., who served as the CDM’s dean from 2000 through 2013 and as one of its first administrators. "Whomever he called, he would get answers. He had lots of connections. He set a tone for the dental school and its search for excellence."

Stahl served as the CDM's associate executive dean, as well as professor and chair of the periodontics department. In 2005, he decided to retire again. But, like his first retirement at NYU, it wasn't successful. He moved into an adjunct professor position, driving from his home on Singer Island to NSU’s Fort Lauderdale/Davie Campus. He would have continued traversing Florida’s Turnpike, but a stroke sidelined his driving—but not his will to teach.

Since his stroke a little over a year ago, about a dozen periodontics residents meet every two weeks in a social room at Stahl's condominium building on Singer Island. There, he teaches the Pathology of Periodontal Disease and Histology of Healing. "I'm not sure if they come for me or the doughnuts," said Stahl, who makes sure there are doughnuts and coffee for the students at each class.

TRAILBLAZING YEARS

Stahl’s dream of becoming a dentist began when he was growing up in Berlin, Germany. "I remember when I was 10 years old going into the University of Berlin to pick up a book. Once in that building, I knew that's where I wanted to live," he explained.

His family moved to New York City after escaping Nazi Germany in 1939. Stahl spent more than six decades in the United States pioneering teaching methods and research in periodontology—the study of gums, bones, and other supporting structures of teeth. Curious and brilliant, Stahl eventually completed dental school at the University of Minnesota College of Dentistry in 1947. Two years later, he would add a master's degree in histopathology—the study of the manifestations of diseases—from the University of Illinois.

In 1950, he began a long career at NYU as an instructor in charge of research. Five years later, he became an assistant professor in the dental school’s Department of Periodontia and Oral Medicine. In 1978, he was named associate dean for academic affairs.

"This man has truly amazed me," said Stuart Hirsch, D.D.S., an associate dean at the NYU College of Dentistry. "He is an individual who is always curious. And he really believes in quality."

At NYU, Stahl began his trailblazing research in periodontics. He wanted to know how tissues, such as gums, would heal around teeth after dental work, as well as the impact gingivitis had on teeth. He was also curious about how bone in a patient’s mouth would react to dental implants. The goal was to make sure implants stayed in the mouth.

Continued on next page
His research led to a better understanding of all these issues, which have helped dentists improve their techniques. Stahl also became one of the first dentists to apply the cytology techniques that were used for Pap smears to help diagnose oral cancer.

“I asked myself, ‘Why can’t we scrape surface cells out of the mouth to test for cancer?’ ” he said. “In the 1960s, that was a novel technique to discover oral cancer. Now, it’s fairly common. The earlier you diagnose oral cancer, the better your chances are.”

Stahl also studied how the lack of protein, through malnutrition, would affect bone and gum tissues. When patients are not well nourished, he said, their gums and bones may take longer to heal after a dental procedure.

“Because of his research, he has been an icon in the world of periodontology,” said William Parker, D.D.S., associate dean for advanced education at NSU’s College of Dental Medicine.

Fatemeh Gholami, D.D.S., M.S.D., said she had the privilege to work with Stahl on developing her master’s thesis, “Histologic, Radiographic, and Clinical Evaluation of Osteotome Site Development Technique for Maxillary Sinus Augmentation.”

“He is an incredible professor, but an even better mentor,” said Gholami, who was a resident in the Department of Periodontology and former CDM adjunct faculty member. “Whether or not he is their adviser, he is always willing to go above and beyond for his students. He’s such an asset to the dental school.”

Stahl said he’ll keep inviting students for class, coffee, and doughnuts as long as he can. “In a sense, the students are doing me a favor; I’m not doing them a favor. I feel so lucky, because I trained with one of the top dental pathologists and periodontists, Balint Orban, at the University of Illinois 50 years ago. To be able to continue that tradition is a good feeling.”

A portion of this story previously appeared in NSU’s Horizons magazine.
Message from the Chancellor

Being involved with the Health Professions Division’s Board of Governors and the NSU Board of Trustees meetings makes me quite aware that a major focus is being placed on the community’s involvement not only with its time, but also with its treasure. What I’m referring to when I use the word treasure are matters related to endowed scholarships, the naming of academic units, and other financial gifts, which are so necessary to ensuring the university’s continued growth and success.

At Nova Southeastern University—and at most private, not-for-profit educational institutions in the United States—additional emphasis is being placed on the value of what we refer to as charitable giving, or what I describe as investment giving. When you invest in education, you are investing in the stability of our great country, and in our ability to gain knowledge for the betterment of humanity.

As NSU President George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D., often states, “The seeds that you plant are the trees that will grow into the shade trees of the future.” You may not be available to sit under one of these trees, but there are many people who will sit under them for many years to come. I’m a firm believer in this philosophy.

Fortunately, many organizations and individuals affiliated with NSU are planting these seeds and investing in the future of the university—and in the future of our society. From an altruistic standpoint, NSU investment giving is increasing. But it doesn’t just relate to people in the community who have become professionally or entrepreneurially successful who are giving of their treasure. Dedicated alumni and administrators, as well as faculty and staff members, are giving back financially to the university and supporting the projects and programs they are passionate about.

Whether it’s a monetary donation to help fund an endowed student scholarship, or through deferred gifts such as life insurance policies and planned estate giving, the internal and external NSU community has realized that an investment in education is a sensible way to leave a positive and indelible imprint on society.

Frederick Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D.
Chancellor, Health Professions Division
With more than 30 years’ experience in the dental field, board-certified prosthodontist Jack Piermatti, D.M.D., said he derives the greatest satisfaction in bringing patients from tears to smiles.

“I really enjoy helping people who had become dental ‘cripples,’ meaning they would lose some or all of their teeth and were unable to chew their food effectively and had a lot of problems in social interacting,” Piermatti said. “By reconstructing their mouths with prosthodontics, as well as with implantology, we have changed people’s lives significantly. It’s a great feeling when they come back after their cases are completed to see them with a brand-new look on their faces.”

To date, Piermatti has brought that happiness to countless patients. He has placed more than 18,000 dental implants and completed thousands of implant restorations during his 37-year career. His vast experience has had a ripple effect to others through the thousands of dentists he’s trained in the procedures.

In September, Piermatti will bring his knowledge and experience to the NSU College of Dental Medicine’s continuing education program as an adjunct professor teaching a new course—the Dental Implant MaxiCourse. The course, which is approved by the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID), is one of 11 taught in North America; seven others are taught abroad.

A MaxiCourse is structured to serve dentists already in practice by being offered 1 weekend a month over 10 months, enabling them to get didactic and hands-on
training without interrupting their practice. NSU students in prosthodontics postgraduate work also will be taking the course.

“1 bring in lecturers who are the outstanding authorities and specialists in implant dentistry from around the country,” Piermatti said. “They discuss their expertise on all aspects of implantology—medical assessment of the patient, surgical head and neck anatomy, bone histology and physiology, implant surgery, implant restoration, and advanced techniques, such as bone grafting and advanced prosthodontic concepts.”

Among the course objectives is to provide live surgical and prosthetic demonstrations on patients and prepare participants for the AAID Associate Fellow/Fellow membership examinations. The 300-hour, interdisciplinary approach utilizes case-based learning methodology and includes live surgery demonstrations, interactive seminars, and hands-on sessions. Also included are fresh-frozen cadaver surgery, such as implant placement, soft tissue, and bone grafting, as well as relevant reviews of literature emphasizing evidence-based clinical practice.

Thomas J. Balshi, D.D.S., Ph.D., a Diplomate of the American Board of Prosthodontics, the founder of Prosthodontics Intermedica in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, and the director of the Institute for Facial Esthetics, will codirect the course. Balshi developed dental implant treatment protocols, including Teeth in a Day for accelerated rehabilitation, and No BoneZ Solution to eliminate the need for extensive bone grafting.

The MaxiCourse of which Piermatti serves as director aligns with the CDM’s mission to develop “innovative educational programs focused on professional development, quality of care, and patient safety,” said Linnette Dobbs-Fuller, R.D.H., B.S., director of program development for the college’s Office for Continuing Dental Education.

“It is an honor to have the CDM selected as one of the sites to administer this program,” Dobbs-Fuller added. “Internationally acclaimed experts in their field will mentor our attendees, who will be able to network with expert clinicians. It is a win-win for the College of Dental Medicine, our attendees, and their patients.”

Piermatti commutes between Florida and New Jersey, teaching another MaxiCourse at the Rutgers School of Dental Medicine, where he has served on the faculty for many years. He also works 1 week a month seeing patients at Dental Arts of South Jersey—a 30-chair private group practice he started 37 years ago before selling it prior to moving to Florida.

Piermatti built the multispecialty practice from scratch to eventually include three prosthodontists, two general dentists, one oral surgeon, one periodontist, and several dental hygienists. He also sublet six chairs to a pediatric dentist.

Piermatti—a self-proclaimed “New Jersey guy” born, raised, and educated in the state—was urged by his family to live and teach in South Florida. Daughters Laura, 35, and Valerie, 34, and son, John, 31, live in South Florida. Piermatti moved to Parkland last year.

In addition to teaching the NSU MaxiCourse, Piermatti will see private patients at Dental Arts of Boynton Beach—a practice started by Laura’s husband, Domenick Cerullo, D.M.D., who named the practice after Piermatti’s own dental office in Paterson, New Jersey.

Continued on next page
As a teenager, Piermatti chose to pursue a career in dentistry, "because I thought it would be something nice to do," he said. He graduated from the Fairleigh Dickinson University School of Dentistry in Teaneck, New Jersey, in 1979 and then did a hospital-based surgical residency program at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey.

He trained in implantology at New York University College of Dentistry and at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in New York, followed by a postgraduate prosthodontics program at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine. After completing his training, he started his private practice.

Piermatti started working with dental implants in 1985 when very few dentists were doing them. He has since spent significant time passing his knowledge and experience to other dentists. "I've always enjoyed training other doctors," he said.

Piermatti is a Diplomate of the American Board of Prosthodontics, the American Board of Oral Implantology, and the International Congress of Oral Implantologists. He is a Fellow in the American College of Prosthodontists and the Academy of General Dentistry and an Honored Fellow in the American Academy of Implant Dentistry. He also is a Master in the American Academy of Implant Prosthodontics.

Piermatti is the immediate past president of the American Board of Oral Implantology, for which he now serves as an examiner for dentists seeking board certification. He also has served as vice president and as a member of multiple committees of the New Jersey section of the American College of Prosthodontists.

Among his many accomplishments, Piermatti was honored with the Private Practice Award for Northeast Region 1 by the American College of Prosthodontists. His colleague, periodontist John Nikas, D.M.D., said Piermatti has "devoted his entire career to the advancement of prosthodontics and implant dentistry. I have seen him lecture to large audiences, give small seminars, and conduct hands-on, over-the-shoulder courses," Nikas said. "He invites dentists and dental students, individually, to observe in his office—all with a zeal that I have not seen in many practitioners."

Piermatti says the greatest challenge he sees in the industry is training doctors in the correct method for implantology and reconstructive prosthodontics. While not many dentists were doing implants when he started, "now everybody does them, and unfortunately, a lot of people are doing them with very minimal training," he said. "I don't think the results are as good as they could be if these practitioners would get proper training."

Piermatti enjoys spending what little downtime he has with his wife, Carol, who is partially retired from the real estate industry, and their family.

He said there is very little in dentistry he has wanted to do but has not accomplished. "I've been a clinician and an educator and published multiple papers and chapters in textbooks," Piermatti said. "I'm really satisfied and pretty fulfilled in what I've done in dentistry."

CDM’s Student Leadership Shows On National Level

Third-year dental student Deeva Bhatt, who is also pursuing a master’s degree in public health, has been elected as the national student representative for the American Association of Women Dentists. Bhatt also is vice president of the CDM’s Women’s Dental Society and is active in other CDM organizations. After graduation, she plans to specialize in the public health field.

“We are so proud of her for running for the office. She made quite an impression on all of the women at the meeting and is moving Nova Southeastern University’s name into the limelight on a national level,” said Sharon Crane Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., M.B.A., professor and chair of the Department of Prosthodontics.
There were miles of smiles—not to mention dedication—on display during the NSU College of Dental Medicine’s Give Kids A Smile event held on February 4. This year, 305 children, ages 2 to 18, received free dental care from the more than 200 students and 100 faculty and staff volunteers.

The student-run Give Kids A Smile 2017 event turned the dental clinic into an underwater spectacle with appearances by NSU’s Razor the Shark and characters from *Moana*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and *The Little Mermaid*. Miami Dolphins cheerleaders, Burnie from the Miami Heat, balloon artists, clowns, and a Radio X disc jockey added to the fun,
inviting atmosphere. The CDM worked with medical and pharmacy students to provide nutritional counseling and information on poison control and vaccinations.

“We were able to provide comprehensive care to the families we educated and treated. We’re committed to making a child’s first dental visit a truly enjoyable experience,” said Adam Saltz, M.P.H., who is a class of 2017 D.M.D. candidate. “Our transition to electronic health records also made the program run exceptionally smoothly.” Saltz and fourth-year student Divya Puri were codirectors of the 2017 Give Kids A Smile event.

The Give Kids A Smile program, launched nationally by the American Dental Association Foundation in 2003, is one of the world’s largest oral health charitable programs. The program annually provides dental care to more than 350,000 children from low-income families across the country. •
When Reza Ardalan, D.M.D. ('02), reached his final year as an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina, he had completed all his required courses and was looking for an elective that would be fun. He chose a theater class.

Twenty years later, Ardalan, now fully in touch with his inner performer, is blowing up a pink balloon animal for a delighted young patient at his clinic in Port St. Lucie, Florida. The balloon pops, so Ardalan hikes up his jeans and tries again, this time with a yellow balloon.

“What do you think this is?” he asked.

“A dog?” she answered.

“Yessss!” Ardalan said. “If I made the neck too long, I would just call it a balloon giraffe.” He and his staff are known for regularly wearing zany costumes—Star Wars or Ghostbusters characters or ugly Christmas sweaters or just pajamas—and inviting patients and their parents to do the same. The festive atmosphere at Ardalan Pediatric Dentistry in Port St. Lucie even offers 15 flavors of toothpaste.

Make no mistake. A lot of dental care gets done there, including working with patients who have disabilities and are on the autism spectrum. “Reza is good about getting people involved, and that is part of treating special needs patients,” said Mark Meyer, D.D.S., a North Carolina pediatric dentist who has known Ardalan for more than 20 years.
Ardalan also has a list of professional accomplishments as long as that yellow balloon, from chief resident at a Miami hospital to being honored as one of NSU’s Distinguished Alumni in 2008. To his colleagues, Ardalan is the complete package, and then some.

“He’s very genuine, very enthusiastic,” said Manav Malik, D.M.D., a Sarasota pediatric dentist who has worked with Ardalan for several years in the Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, of which Ardalan has served two terms as president. “He always puts others before himself. He volunteers because he is committed. He’s very hardworking and very funny as well. He can juggle a dental practice with a lot of other things.”

Ardalan, whose energy is boundless, jokes about being the old fogy at alumni events. His class of 2002 was the second full class to graduate from NSU’s College of Dental Medicine. “I will always remember the amazing people who became the class of 2002 and the variety of experiences that NSU gave me both in and out of the classroom,” he said.

While at the CDM, Ardalan was student body president and earned the Outstanding Senior Award from both the American Society of Dentistry for Children and the Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the Pierre Fauchard Academy Award, the NSU-CDM Student of the Year Award, the Excellence in Student Leadership Award, and the NSU Chancellor’s Award, among many others.

Ardalan continued his pediatric training at NSU and at Miami Children’s Hospital, where he served as chief resident. He continues to be active in the CDM Alumni Society, currently serving as the alumni chair for pediatric dentistry.

CDM professors he fondly remembers include Marvin Goldberg, D.D.S., “who taught me the importance of professionalism and a good shave;” Marshall Berger, D.D.S., “who always addressed us as ‘doctor’ and kept telling me that I was ‘dynamite;’” and Robert Uchin, D.D.S., former dean at the CDM, “who taught me the value of organized dentistry and told us early on to ‘stop and smell the roses.’ ”

Ardalan also mentioned Jose C. Larumbe, D.D.S., “who always put the students first and could make a space maintainer out of anything. I can’t forget Mark Webman, D.D.S., and the late Ed Nacht, D.D.S,” he added. “They showed me that no matter how successful you are in private practice, you can always find time to help enrich the lives of the students.”

Born in Tehran, Iran, in 1975, Ardalan was 5 years old when his family moved to the United States. He has lived all over the United States, settling in Port St. Lucie with his wife, Kimberly, who is the chief financial officer of the practice; their son, Aidan, 8; their daughters, Layla, 6,
and Noelle, 4; and Mia Hamm, the family Cairn terrier. He is a devoted fan of the Tar Heels of the University of North Carolina, where he received his bachelor's degree in biology in 1997. When Ardalan was a teenager in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, he and his brother were patients of Mark Meyer.

"He was interested in dental school, so I hired him for a year," said Meyer, now retired. "He worked with the dental assistants and then in the business department and the front office. You have to know how to run the business, be a good dentist, and do a good job at both."

That early training made a strong impression on Ardalan, who takes a great interest in building a strong medical and support team in his office. He has crafted a training program for his employees that includes debriefings at the end of every day and regular team-building days.

"He has a lot of personality; that's what everybody loves about him," said Meyer, who continues to work with Ardalan in the Southeastern Society of Pediatric Dentistry. Ardalan is the current president-elect. "He's a natural leader, involved in many associations, and good about getting other people involved."

Meyer stressed to Ardalan that all aspects of a dental practice must smoothly work together. "He has a great practice and a great family and has done everything right," said Meyer. "I'm proud of him." A visitor mentions an upcoming trip to Cuba, where people often need basic supplies, including toothbrushes. Without another word, Ardalan strides to a storage cabinet and produces a box containing about 200 pink, blue, orange, and green toothbrushes. He fends off thanks, saying, "I'm glad if they can make a little bit of difference."
The toothbrushes are just extending the territory of his pro bono dental work. For more than a decade, he has headed up the Treasure Coast version of Give Kids A Smile, providing dental care to children from low-income families. Some children in the program have never visited a dentist and have cavities or mouth pain. Some even need root canal work.

The ambience at Ardalan’s office is so lighthearted that a visitor might not notice there is serious dentistry occurring. Throughout the day, he sees a steady stream of young kids and teens. Even the freshly minted college freshmen allow their names to be added to the no-cavities board of honor. They’ve been seeing him most of their lives, and tradition must be continued.

Ardalan also sees a number of patients with disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum. If necessary, they go into quieter rooms, away from the bustle of the main office, where the lights can be turned off for a more serene experience. Others are happy to be in the big checkup room with four comfortable couches and personal video screens.

All afternoon, Ardalan is a blur of motion in a red T-shirt, jeans, and silver running shoes, coordinating via throat microphone with his staff. None of that motion is wasted. A longtime fan of mixed martial arts, he practices Brazilian jujitsu. “I find it a great way to relieve stress and keep my body in shape, with all the contorting I have to do in the office,” he said.

The obvious question is, how does he do it all?

In Ardalan’s office is a stack of business and leadership books he somehow finds time to read. Above the books is a sheet of paper that says, “Be a laser!”

“My good friend and motivational speaker Morris Morrison gave me that tip so I remember to be focused,” Ardalan said.

“He is high energy; he motivates everybody around him by his energy,” said Michael Roseff, D.M.D. (’04), who was two years behind Ardalan at the CDM. Roseff was president of his class when Ardalan was student body president. “He loves what he does, and he believes in what he does in his office and with the community. When I opened my office in Boynton Beach, Florida, he was the first one to help me handle every part of it. He’s always been a mentor for me and others.”

According to Malik, Ardalan is a vital asset to a number of organizations. “When leadership is needed in an organization—the Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, for example—he was instrumental in pulling people together and almost single-handedly keeping the organization afloat and growing the organization,” Malik said. “Now it’s one of the largest in the Southeast.”

Malik added, “He volunteers a lot of his time and energy. He’s one of the iconic figures in the organization, making the Florida Academy of Pediatric Dentistry what it is today. Much of his technique was grassroots, meeting members one-on-one and getting a commitment and support from the individual. He led from the trenches. He could rally people. He really brought the vision of the organization alive. He’s a visionary leader.”

Reza Ardalan established himself as a leader at the CDM, and continues to be active in the CDM alumni society, serving as the alumni chair for Pediatric Dentistry.
When a fast-growing cancer destroyed Miami teenager Cassandra Charles’ lower jaw two years ago, the sweet-faced high schooler wondered if she would ever smile again. She didn’t have health insurance, and the cost of reconstructive surgery was high.

Then, NSU’s CDM chapter of the Alpha Omega (AO) International Dental Fraternity, whose mission is to change lives, stepped in to help. The 120-member fraternity raised more than $8,000 to pay for her jaw reconstruction through its Fourth Annual Oral Cancer Awareness 5K Run and Walk-a-Thon held in 2016. More than 200 people participated in the event.

“Cassandra was in need,” said Alan Seidenfeld, a fourth-year CDM student who was president of the fraternity during 2016.

AO’s efforts offered Charles a second chance at normalcy after an ameloblastoma, an aggressive tumor, took root in her jaw. The teen has undergone three surgeries so far to remove the large tumor and insert an expanding plate to promote the growth of new bone. “I was really, really scared,” said Charles, a junior at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. “I think a lot about how scary it was. But I was always positive.”
Today, Charles is on the road to a fully restored appearance and awaiting the insertion of implants. CDM personnel who work with AO aren’t surprised at the organization’s accomplishment.

“Her care was paid for by the fraternity,” said Steven I. Kaltman, D.D.S., who donated his time to perform Charles’ cancer surgery and jaw reconstruction. “Treating Cassandra is something that has been very rewarding for us,” added Kaltman, chair of oral and maxillofacial surgery and associate dean for hospital affairs at the CDM. The fund-raising effort was the first time the CDM’s AO chapter earmarked proceeds from its annual run and walk-a-thon for patient care. In the three previous years, all event proceeds were used to support dental research and to purchase new equipment for the college.

A large portion of the money came from a single donor, whose own son had died years ago from leukemia. Samina Ali of Atlanta, Georgia, learned of AO’s mission to help Charles from her daughter Anum—a third-year CDM student who urged her to help. Ali’s son was uninsured when he died at age 15, and she didn’t want someone else’s child to suffer similarly. She and her husband, Feroz, contributed $3,000 in hopes of making a difference.

“Anum called me and said, ‘Mom, can you do something?’” recalled Samina Ali, whose family now owns several convenience stores. “We did a lot but could not save our child. But maybe a little bit of a contribution can save someone else’s.”

Anum Ali, who doesn’t belong to AO, was touched by Charles’ plight. “Imagine a young kid losing all her teeth and needing full jaw reconstruction,” said Anum Ali, who wants to specialize in cosmetic dentistry. “Kids get bullied. I thought because my mom already contributes to a camp in Georgia for kids with cancer that this might be something she could contribute to.”

At the 2017 run at C.B. Smith Park in Pembroke Pines, Florida, 180 people participated and 20 volunteers assisted. The chapter’s fifth run raised $3,600 that is being donated for Dolores Goddard, a patient at NSU who was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma. In addition, CDM students and faculty members provided oral screenings during the event.

Community involvement is a core value of NSU, and the AO members embrace this. “It’s a great feeling to be able to help someone,” said Libby Finer, AO vice president and a third-year dental student who graduates in May 2018. “Cassandra came to our walk last year with her family and had a really great time.”

“Every cent we raised, from tickets to registration for participants and donations, we gave to her family,” said Sanaz Ghiassi, the new AO president and a third-year dental student who graduates in May 2018.

The CDM’s AO chapter is a tight-knit group of dedicated dental students, instructors, and professionals who promote networking, activism, and academics through an array of community-based activities.

Continued on next page
It’s the oldest international Jewish medical organization, originally founded in 1907 by dental students at the University of Maryland to fight discrimination. Today, the organization is composed of more than 100 alumni and student chapters in 10 countries, with members hailing from an array of cultural backgrounds. It welcomes members of all religions and ethnicities.

In the spring of 2016, the CDM’s chapter had 30 members who graduated, making it one of the organization’s largest graduating classes in the United States.

Broad and Diverse Appeal

Finer and Ghiassi joined Alpha Omega in 2014 because they were impressed with the organization’s academic leanings and direct involvement in community affairs. “AO spoke to me as being academic and community-based, which is something I am very passionate about,” Finer said. “Being Jewish, I was proud of the values and principles the fraternity promoted.”

Ghiassi also was impressed with AO’s history of community involvement and its values. “Although I am not Jewish, AO’s mission and ideologies deeply resonate with me,” Ghiassi said. “AO has given me many opportunities for growth and development. I believe it will continue to do that as I matriculate into a dental professional.”

Third-year dental student Ela Gozlan joined AO for the same reasons. “I feel like a lot of people in dental school—we all want to make a difference,” said Gozlan, who will graduate in 2018. In addition, Gozlan said AO offers fantastic networking opportunities and chances to mingle with staff and faculty members. “There is a conference every year, and we try to go. You see dentists of all ages who have been a part of it and what they have achieved.”

Seidenfeld lauded AO as a great resource for up-and-coming dentists. “It’s a great organization, a wide-reaching organization,” he said. “It’s a resource for learning more. The members love dentistry; they have principles. It’s a resource to make a dentist a better dentist, a better practitioner, and a better community provider.”

Second-year dental student Jiten Solanki joined AO because he wanted to engage in his profession “in a bigger way, working outside the classroom, something hands on,” said Solanki, who worked on the 2016 and 2017 runs. “I helped on the organizational side,” said Solanki, who will graduate in 2019. “I got a lot out of it. This organization has such an ambitious goal. It was so cool to see it materialize.”

Solanki, who is interested in general dentistry, said the networking opportunities AO offers are incredible. “Some of the faculty members were in this organization when they went to dental school,” he explained. “When we have common ground like the same fraternity, we are really able to engage with them on a deeper level, outside of the traditional student-faculty relationship.”

The executive board of the Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity’s CDM chapter donated $3,600 to Dolores Goddard to help pay for reconstruction surgery. Goddard and members of her family attended the 2017 event.
Irene Marron-Tarrazzi, D.M.D., M.S. ('03), right, was one of six women selected by the Lucy Hobbs Project as award recipients for setting new benchmarks in the dental profession. The awards were presented during the Lucy Hobbs Project 5th Annual Celebration held April 27 at the Loews Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Marron-Tarrazzi, recipient of the Woman to Watch Award, defied odds at age 42 by becoming the youngest elected vice president of the American Dental Association (ADA). A periodontist in private practice in Miami, Florida, Marron-Tarrazzi had been serving on the ADA New Dentist Committee while holding positions at the state and local levels.

She initially received her D.M.D. from Universidad Central de Venezuela in Caracas. Later, she received a master’s degree in science and a certificate in periodontology from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. In 2003, Marron-Tarrazzi earned a D.M.D. from NSU’s College of Dental Medicine.

According to the Lucy Hobbs Project, “She draws on her own story—one that encompasses success across two distinct cultures and languages—to inspire young women looking to pursue a career in dentistry and to encourage them to run for leadership roles at the national level.”

With a network of more than 9,000 members, the Lucy Hobbs Project empowers women in dentistry to drive change and deliver success through networking, innovation, and giving back. Named for Lucy Hobbs, who, in 1866, became the first American female to earn a degree in dentistry, the project aims to bring women together from all facets of the dental industry—dentists, dental assistants, hygienists, receptionists, sales representatives, and others.

The American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD) also honors a female dental pioneer with its Lucy Hobbs Taylor Award—the AAWD’s highest honor, which recognizes significant service to dentistry on the basis of achievement in civic, cultural, humanitarian, and academic areas. Two CDM faculty members have received this award: Sharon Crane Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., M.B.A., chair of the CDM’s Department of Prosthodontics, in 2015; and Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean of the CDM, in 1998.◆

BOOK COVERS BUSINESS SIDE OF DENTAL PRACTICE

*How to Grow Your Dental Membership Plan: Marketing Secrets Behind My 1.4 Million Dollars of Growth*, written by Christopher Phelps, D.M.D., CMCT, left, recently reached No. 1 on Amazon’s best sellers for dental books category and ranked No. 2 in the dental office practice category. Phelps, who was in the college’s third graduating class ('03), served as class president three out of his four years at the CDM and is the current president of the CDM Alumni Society and Friends.

Additionally, he is the owner and president of the Carolinas Dental Center of Matthews, North Carolina, and the Phelps Institute. Phelps’ book focuses on the business side of running a dental practice, including marketing and growing a patient base.◆
Latoya Luke remembers being terrified on her first day of clinical work at the NSU College of Dental Medicine.

“I didn’t know what I was doing or how to interact with patients,” said Luke, who will graduate with her D.M.D. degree in 2018. “That whole week, Hope Marshall showed me how to do data collection, mount patient photos, and do other tasks. I felt so much better after that. It’s good to have a partner who will show you everything.”

That support is foundational to the CDM’s Women’s Dental Society, of which Marshall is past president and Luke is now president. “If it wasn’t for the Women’s Dental Society, I would never have met Hope, who is now my fourth-year partner,” Luke said.

Marshall credited the organization for creating a group in which women in dentistry can feel welcome and seek mentoring from other students and faculty members. During her first year in dental school, Marshall missed a class due to illness and didn’t know how to conduct a particular task. Another woman student, a past president of the Women’s Dental Society, offered assistance. “I felt so comfortable talking to her,” said Marshall, who will earn her D.M.D. degree in May 2017. “That’s what we’re trying to provide for other women.”
Nearly 40 years ago, 15.9 percent of first-year dental students were women compared to 47.7 percent in 2014, according to the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute. Although the gender composition of U.S. dentists has significantly changed in the last 20 years, dental equipment is still designed for male bodies, and journal ads are aimed primarily at male dentists, according to the American Association of Women Dentists.

Luke stands out in the profession not only as a woman, but also as one of color. “The number of women in dentistry is growing, but the number of people of color is still stagnant,” she said. American Dental Education Association statistics show that 86 percent of dentists are Caucasian, with the remainder being African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American.

Some patients take note of that, said Luke, who believes one way for the profession to reach underserved areas is to attract more diverse dental students. As a child, Luke disliked going to the dentist. Luke’s turning point came after she saw the restorative work her family’s dentist did with braces on her siblings. Her brother had gone seven years without a front tooth. After dental work, Luke saw his self-esteem soar, and she embraced dentistry as a career choice.

She also observed how people in her native Brooklyn’s Brownsville neighborhood in New York didn’t have access to dental care or money for it. The idea of practicing dentistry in the public health sector made a deep impression on her, said Luke, who attended Barry University in Miami, Florida, for her undergraduate work.

Luke is a “delightful, determined leader whose warm and friendly attributes draw people to follow her,” said Sharon Crane Siegel, D.D.S., M.S., M.B.A., professor and chair of the CDM’s Department of Prosthodontics. Siegel serves as faculty adviser for the Women’s Dental Society. “She is true to her values in everything she does, making time for a deep, spiritual life and a devotion to her family in addition to dedication to her social activism and leadership with the American Association of Women Dentists and the CDM’s Women’s Dental Society.”

Marshall’s interest in dentistry started in high school. She liked the sciences and doing artistic work with her hands, such as beading. She also enjoyed going to her dentist’s office because the environment was pleasing, and she seemed passionate in explaining procedures.

While completing undergraduate studies in her native Wisconsin, Marshall participated in a weeklong Costa Rica mission, helping with extractions, cleanings, and temporary fillings. At the CDM, Marshall has been part of a dental mission trip to Nicaragua.

Siegel noted that Marshall’s preclinical work demonstrated stellar clinical skills. Marshall served as team leader of Siegel’s Clinical Practice of Dentistry Fundamentals course. “I was most impressed with her poise and professionalism in making this treatment plan presentation before all of her peers and faculty members,” said Siegel, adding Marshall encompasses “excellent interpersonal skills in relating to faculty members, patients, and her fellow classmates.”

Siegel also praised Marshall as a “true leader” through her work with the Women’s Dental Society and credited her for organizing philanthropic fund-raising events. Marshall “is a very intelligent, articulate, and ethical person,” Siegel said. “She brings so much to the table as a human being and is very well rounded. She graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin—Madison with a Bachelor of Science degree and a double major in
engineering and Spanish. Both of these contribute to her success in dental school in South Florida. Engineering relates very well to dentistry, and having a working understanding of Spanish helps her in communicating with her patients, as well as fellow classmates.”

Siegel credited Marshall for her athleticism as well, adding her participation in track and field, triathlons, mud runs, and other running and biking events makes her a role model for others.

Luke received the NSU-HPD Chancellor’s Scholarship in the College of Dental Medicine. Marshall receives a monthly U.S. Army Reserve stipend to help cover living expenses and, after graduation, will work with the U.S. Army Reserve one weekend per month for more than two years. Both women also are working on master’s degrees in public health and want to apply those skills through a general dentistry career.

Marshall became cognizant of the CDM’s top-notch reputation during job interviews. For one interview, she had to create a treatment plan from a photo of X-rays. “At the CDM, we never create one treatment plan—we always have to find alternatives,” she said. “I went through this case super detailed. I offered different alternatives and explained everything. They said it was a higher level of treatment plan than they would expect from someone coming right out of school and had no questions for me. That shows the CDM has good treatment-planning courses.”

Luke said public health work through the CDM’s dental clinic speeds up the learning process due to the volume of patients with varied issues. Her initial feelings of trepidation grew into personal satisfaction from helping people with issues ranging from minor problems to severe tooth decay due to past drug abuse.

“It’s always a good day when you help them in a way they really appreciate,” Marshall said, adding that she enjoys “getting to know my patients, as well as being able to solve a problem for them in a way they appreciate.”

Although it’s good to have patients who are gracious, “School is the time you want to have a patient who’s difficult,” Marshall said. “They’re hard to work with, they’re not satisfied, and they don’t understand what you are saying and won’t listen. If you don’t know how to deal with those things, it’s more difficult. We learn from each other and from our experiences.”

Siegel noted that Luke has organized the Women’s Dental Society participation in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, “even bringing me my T-shirt at 11:00 p.m. the night before the race when she had Bible study.

“She was at the race bright and early the next morning, making sure the group was participating. The group raised more than $700 for breast cancer research and awareness,” Siegel added. “She organized other events to bring the women’s group together and for other social causes, such as Feeding South Florida. I see her as being a significant force in organized dentistry in the future.”

As Luke and Marshall begin to plan their future practices, they won’t need to go far to find continued mentoring opportunities from other women dentists, who now compose 29 percent of professionally active dentists, according to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.
SIM LAB WINS DESIGN AWARD
The CDM’s renovated Simulation Lab and the NSU Center for Collaborative Research were named as Outstanding Projects of 2016 by Learning by Design magazine. The projects were judged by a panel of six architects and educational facility specialists and were featured nationally in Learning by Design magazine in print and digitally on www.learningbydesign.biz.
Mixing Dentistry with Osteopathic Medicine

BY DAVID SCHWARTZ

Dental school takes a huge commitment of time, energy, and financial resources. Add to that the rigorous medical courses leading to a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree, and you have a commitment that few students are willing to make.

Only five students have committed to the NSU College of Osteopathic Medicine and the NSU College of Dental Medicine D.O./D.M.D. dual-degree program since its inception in 2007. Two students received the dual degrees in 2013. One student is on track to receive the two degrees in 2022. And at graduation ceremonies in May, sixth-year students Ryan Semensohn, M.B.A., and Dmitriy Kravchenko, M.P.H., received D.O. and D.M.D. degrees.
“It’s not a program for everyone,” said Abby J. Brodie, D.M.D., M.S., associate dean for academic affairs in the CDM. The year-round, continuous program is demanding, with a heavy course load.

The D.O./D.M.D. program launched in the fall of 2007 after 18 months of planning, Brodie recalled, adding that “the curriculum was the most challenging aspect.” The overarching view was for the program to “create a role for those who want to go into interprofessional practice,” she said.

The new physician-dentists might practice in underserved communities or take faculty positions that would “integrate dentistry into the primary core,” Brodie added. The thinking also was that they might train new academic leaders and create leadership opportunities for the next generation, she said. “We felt the world was their oyster. It’s kind of ‘wherever the student wants to take it.’ ”

Deilia Harper-Celestine, Ed.D., M.P.H., CHES, assistant dean of student and alumni affairs and assistant professor of public health in NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM), said the dual-degree program is rigorous. “It’s a select student who gains admission,” she said.

Semensohn and Kravchenko are “high achievers” and disciplined, hard workers, Harper-Celestine added. “They are leaders,” she said. “They have mentored students behind them.” Hilda De Gaetano, D.O., assistant dean and professor at the COM, said, “They have a lot of knowledge they can apply to provide the full spectrum of patient care.”

Before a student is accepted into the dual-degree program, he or she must matriculate in the College of Osteopathic Medicine or the College of Dental Medicine. Semensohn and Kravchenko entered the program as dental students. Semensohn grew up in Coral Springs, Florida, and received a bachelor’s degree from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton before earning an M.B.A. from NSU.

Semensohn was advised to pursue dentistry because dentists “can use their hands.” He said he has long had an interest in being a physician and surgeon and wants to practice oral maxillofacial surgery.

Kravchenko emigrated from Russia to the United States with his family when he was five years old. The family settled in Los Angeles, California. Kravchenko received a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Los Angeles and a master’s degree in public health from the University of Southern California.

Enrolling in the D.O./D.M.D. program may be “an unorthodox route to dental surgery,” Kravchenko said. But he wanted to “separate myself from the herd.” NSU, he added, has “the only combined program.” Among the 33 accredited colleges of osteopathic medicine in the United States, only NSU-COM offers a D.O./D.M.D. program, according to the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.

The dual-degree program at NSU does not favor one field of dentistry or medicine, Brodie said. “There’s a tremendous interconnection between oral health and systemic health, and it goes in both directions,” she added. “Osteopathic medicine is about treating the entire person, and oral health affects overall health, Harper-Celestine said.

Continued on next page
The six-year, dual-degree program curriculum consists of basic science and dental courses in the first year; the study of the respiratory, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, and other systems, as well as clinical practice, in the second year; while clinical rotations continue in year three. The dental curriculum resumes in year four; clinical dental courses, one month of medical electives, and a rotation in rural/underserved medicine make up year five; while year six is devoted to clinical dentistry and medical electives.

Reflecting on his six years in the dual-degree program as he neared graduation, Semensohn said, “It’s like a family environment. The faculty members are my older brothers and sisters.” He added that Jason Portnof, D.M.D., M.D. (’02), a dual-degree oral maxillofacial surgeon, is “the closest thing to a mentor to us.”

Semensohn and Kravchenko talked about the rigors of the program’s medical rotations. They agreed that the most difficult times were the transitions from medical to dental curricula. At one point in their training, “dental days” were accompanied by two weeks of a night hospital emergency room rotation.

Kravchenko said he would get two to three hours of sleep before going to the CMD dental clinic. “I realized that I’m well prepared for a surgical residency,” he said. At another time in their training, daytime shifts in a community medical rotation were followed by evenings at the dental clinic. “We haven’t had a break in three years,” Semensohn said.

The end of January marked the completion of medical school requirements for the two students. “We’re just concentrating on graduating from dental school and board exams,” Semensohn said. On January 30, each student was informed about his match for postdoctoral residencies in oral maxillofacial surgery.

Ryan Semensohn’s residency in oral maxillofacial surgery will be at Broward Health Medical Center.

Semensohn matched with Broward Health Medical Center, where he will train under several oral maxillofacial surgeons, including CDM faculty members Portnof and Steven I. Kaltman, D.M.D., M.D., both of whom know Semensohn well. The local residency will give him the opportunity to stay at home and practice in South Florida. Semensohn said he is considering a private practice or a group practice with hospital privileges and possibly working in academic medicine.

Kravchenko matched with Yale New Haven Hospital in Connecticut. “I was excited to receive the news. It was my first choice,” he said. “My ideal practice is private practice in Southern California, with an affiliation to a university or hospital.”
CLASS REUNIONS PLANNED

Reunions are being planned for the fall of 2017 to honor the classes of 2002, 2007, and 2012. For information on helping to plan the reunions or attending, contact Chris Phelps, president of the CDM Alumni Society and Friends, at drchrisdmd@gmail.com or Rosalie Marin at rm1147@nova.edu.

ALUMNI MEETING AT THE ADA PLANNED

In honor of its 20th anniversary, the CDM will be planning several events, including an alumni reception to be held during the American Dental Association Annual Meeting, which will take place October 19–23 in Atlanta, Georgia. For more information, contact Rosalie Marin at rm1147@nova.edu.

PRESIDENTS OF DENTAL SOCIETIES

Mark Limosani, D.M.D., M.S., a 2011 endodontics graduate, was elected president of the South Broward Dental Society. Limosani is the owner of Weston Endodontic Care in Weston, Florida.

Jared Young, D.M.D. (‘09), has been elected 2016–2017 president of the Broward County Dental Society. Young is the owner of the Bright Young Smiles clinic located in Lighthouse Point, Florida.

CDM STUDENTS WIN ETHICS BOWL

CDM students displayed their mettle in ethics by winning the annual Ethics Bowl, which is sponsored by the NSU Health Professions Division.

In the final round, CDM students Katy Champion, Ryan Whalen, and Derek Whelan defeated the physical therapy students from NSU’s College of Health Care Sciences. Coaches for the CDM students were Harry M. Lehrer, D.M.D., associate professor, and Aryia Amini, D.M.D., assistant professor.

The Ethics Bowl is built on the belief that to be an ethical thinker, a person should be open to a diverse range of views, including appreciating the concerns of others, and making a real attempt to understand their views. The event’s objectives include exposing students to ethical dilemmas and encouraging students to work through them with a solid, ethical foundation. The Ethics Bowl also focuses on building community spirit through healthy competition and dialogue about important professional and civic issues.
SEND US YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY

NSU’s College of Dental Medicine celebrates its 20th anniversary during 2017. We want to hear about your favorite CDM memory. Maybe it’s a professor whose mentorship helped you make a career decision. Or, maybe you were active in an organization. Was it late-night studying at the library? Did you meet lifelong friends, or your spouse, while at the university? And, if you have a photo of your days at the CDM, please include it. Send your favorite memories of your time at the CDM to Rosalie Marin at rm1147@nova.edu.

REALIZING POTENTIAL

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

NIESSEN LONERGAN FAMILY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FUND

DONORS: Dr. Linda C. Niessen and Dr. John Lonergan

COLLEGE/CENTER: NSU College of Dental Medicine

PURPOSE: To assist NSU College of Dental Medicine predoctoral students in good academic standing with demonstrated financial need.

A donor can name a Changing Lives Scholarship with a gift of $1,000 each year for five years. For $5,000 paid each year for five years into NSU’s endowment, a donor can create a named scholarship, research, faculty support, or program fund designed to last for generations. Interested in establishing a scholarship? Please contact annualfund@nova.edu or (954) 262-2127. Students interested in scholarship opportunities can go to nova.edu/financialaid/scholarships.
Become a part of an extraordinary story.

Be active in YOUR alumni society and leave a lasting impression.

The chain of events started as you applied to NSU. It continued as you became a student at the College of Dental Medicine and then graduated to become a member of the dental profession. You are a vital part of the NSU family.

Make your voice heard by becoming active in the new CDM Alumni Society. We also are accepting nominations for the newly formed CDM Alumni Society Advisory Board.

The chain begins and continues with you.

For the latest information, visit our website at dental.nova.edu. You can update your personal information at dental.nova.edu/alumnirelations.

For more information on becoming involved, email Rosalie Marin at rm1147@nova.edu, or call (954) 262-7317.
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