The past year has been an active and busy one. I personally have been very involved with a number of grant applications, several ADA and CDC fluoride task forces and committees, and serving in my fourth year on the Examining Board for the American Board of Dental Public Health (DPH). As you will see discussed elsewhere, the Graduate Program and Department have received substantial grant funding and recognition, and a number of awards!

We have such great faculty and now more than 50 alumni! And we are very excited about the quality and diversity of our graduate students at both the MS and PhD levels. (Note that we have more PhD students than ever before. They are pursuing their PhD in “Oral Sciences”, with emphasis in a DPH area.)

We are beginning to work toward the accreditation site visit scheduled for September 2011 for the College of Dentistry, including our MS program in DPH. Thanks to all those who responded this past fall to our confidential survey about the program. (If you haven’t done so, it’s not too late.) Also, the review of all dental specialties by the Commission on Dental Accreditation will occur later this year and Drs. Levy and Kuthy are assisting with some of the planning and writing for this.

Update from the Chair

As you know, in January 2008 I began my tenure as Department Executive Officer (DEO) for the Department of Preventive & Community Dentistry, succeeding Dr. Jed Hand (who had taken over as interim DEO after Dr. Ray Kuthy stepped down in November 2006). Since then I’ve been challenged by a steep learning curve with regard to the University, the College, the Department, and the graduate program in Dental Public Health. Fortunately, the outstanding faculty, staff, students, and alumni with whom I work have made my transition much easier than I had anticipated, and for that I am grateful.

Having said that, now I’d like to briefly describe some of the important activities, events, and highlights of the past year within the graduate program and our department as a whole:

- In Summer 2009, the graduate student office in the South Building was taken over by the College’s Clinical Services, so with the help of Dr. Steve Levy and the graduate students, we managed to secure office space in the North Building (N342 DSB), adjacent to the department faculty offices. So far, this new arrangement is working well, with students having closer access to faculty mentors, printers, and other departmental activities. They even have a (small) window in their office for a change!

- At the beginning of the 2009-10 academic year, we enrolled several new entrants into the graduate program, including Atul Bidarkar, Myungjoo (Julie) Kim, Jayaprakash Kumar, and Deise Oliveira. We look forward to seeing these students in the classroom and working with them on their research in the coming years.

- Throughout this year, I’ve spent many hours in meetings with Administration, University officials, and architects discussing aspects of design for the new addition to the College of Dentistry’s South Building, for which the contractors are expected to break ground in March or April 2010. The new addition primarily is being built to improve clinic space, but additional classrooms and seminar rooms will be added as well. There also will be extensive remodeling and updating of other parts of the College. Stay tuned for further developments on that front! Note: There will be a future College of Dentistry mailing inviting your financial support of the expansion/remodeling projects.

- 2009 has been a good year for department research. In Fall 2009, Dr. Levy and his research team were successful in obtaining 5 years of funding for renewal of their “Bone Grant”, which evaluates the effects of fluoride and other dietary intakes, physical activity, genetics, and other factors on normal childhood bone development among subjects originally recruited for the Iowa Fluoride Study. In addition, Dr. Peter Damiano and his colleagues received one of the few, highly competitive “NIH Challenge Grants”, for which they will evaluate several issues related to a Medicaid-enrolled child’s first preventive dental visit. Also, Dr. Ray Kuthy and others successfully obtained a 3-year grant from the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) to use county and more localized data (zipcode or census track) in understanding where Iowa dentists practice in relation to other
health professionals (physicians, pharmacists). Moreover, we will expand the dental student extramural opportunities in southern Iowa. Finally, Dr. Levy, Dr. Kuthy, and colleagues were thrilled to receive a 3-year renewal of the “Dental Public Health Grant” from HRSA, which will be used to support graduate students, the annual Dental Public Health conference, and other curricular components. A hearty congratulations to everyone for their remarkable efforts!

These are just a few things that have happened in our busy department since January 2008, but that’s all I have time and space for here. In closing, let me just say that I am pleased to be associated with such fine and helpful faculty, staff, students and alumni. Thank you for your continued support, and please stay in touch.

In Memoriam
As many of you know, Dr. Jane Chalmers (‘95) passed away in December 2008. Jane had been one of our integral faculty members and had many interactions with our students – both graduate and pre-doctoral students alike. She was an outstanding contributor to our department and to the dental research community, particularly in the area of geriatric and special needs dental research. She will be sorely missed. In memory of Jane Chalmers, Special Care Dentistry announced The Jane Chalmers Memorial Award, which will be presented to a member of the Special Care Association who has demonstrated achievement in the areas of Minimally Invasive Dentistry, Prevention and/or Restorative Oral Health Care. Contributions can be sent to: Special Care Association, 401 N. Michigan Ave., #2200, Attn: Sue Hanacek, Chicago, IL 60611.

We are saddened to report the death of our friend and colleague, Kay Deegan Mescher (71), a long-time member of the Department of Preventive & Community Dentistry. She lost a valiant battle with cancer on January 8, 2010. Kay had a special ability to translate her rich life experiences into teaching and mentoring students at the UI College of Dentistry. Kay will be greatly missed.

Delta Dental of Iowa Awards $1.5 Million to College
Delta Dental of Iowa has made a $1.5 million gift commitment to help fund a planned major renovation of the Dental Science Building. The gift was made by the newly formed Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation through the University of Iowa Foundation. The College will name the Geriatric and Special Care Clinic area in the renovated dentistry building in recognition of Delta Dental of Iowa’s gift.

Regional Dental Public Health Conference
The University of Iowa College of Dentistry will host a regional conference for Dental Public Health practitioners on October 17-18, 2010 in Coralville, Iowa concerning the “Dental Home”. The conference will be funded, in part, by a HRSA-supported Dental Public Health training grant and various Delta Dental Foundations. (There was no 2009 conference because of the late announcement of the HRSA DPH grants.) If you’re interested in attending, please contact us and we’ll put you on our list.

Army Dental Health and Health Promotion (ADHHP) Conference
The DPH graduate program has recently had a new relationship with the U.S. Army to train Army dentists in Dental Public Health at the University of Iowa. Two dentists have completed the program (Paul Colthurst (2008) and Scott Rankin (2009)), and Johnette (JJ) Shelley will finish later this year. We anticipate another new trainee beginning in 2011. Building on this relationship, the U.S. Army Dentl Command hosted the Army Dental Health and Health Promotion (ADHHP) Conference in Coralville, IA on May 12-15, 2009. The conference featured guest speakers/lecturers from the Army Dental Corps and from various departments of the University of Iowa School of Dentistry, including keynote speaker, Dr. Steven Levy. Other Iowa faculty addressing the audience of enlisted, officer and civilian attendees were: Dr. Teresa Marshall, Dr. Sandra Guzman, Dr. Karen Baker, Ms. Nancy Slach, Dr. Chris Squier, Dr. Elizabeth Momany, Dr. Clark Stanford, and Dr. Jeff Murray.

Congratulations!
To graduate students Susan McKernan and Scott Rankin for passing the quite challenging written (Part 1) American Board of Dental Public Health exam. (Only Part 1 can be taken while still finishing the MS in DPH.)

Current Graduate Students

**PhD candidates (in Oral Sciences with DPH Emphasis)**
- Oitip Chankanka (DDS, Thailand)
- Elham Kateeb (BDS, Jordan)
- Susan McKernan (DMD, Florida)
- Yousef al-Yousef (BDS, Saudi Arabia)

**Pediatric Dentistry/Dental Public Health Students**
- Aaron Blackwelder (DDS, Baylor)

**MS Program candidates**
- Atul Bidarkar (BDS, India)
- Adrienne Jennings (DDS, Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio)
- Julie Kim (DDS, South Korea)
- JP Kumar (DDS, India)
- Deise Oliveira (DDS, Brazil)
- JJ Shelley (DDS, Texas at Houston)
- Alejandra Valencia (DDS, Antioquia [Colombia])
New Students

Atul Bidarkar received a BDS degree from Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in India. He is also currently completing his MPH from Western Kentucky University.

Myungjoo (Julie) Kim received a DDS degree from Seoul National University College of Dentistry. She also received MPH and MBA degrees from the University of Iowa. Julie is working to obtain her certificate in Operative Dentistry along with the MS in DPH.

Jayaprakash (JP) Kumar received a BDS degree from Bangalore University in India.

Deise Oliveira received her DDS degree from the Federal University of Pelotas, Brazil. She is working to obtain her certificate in Operative Dentistry along with the MS in Dental Public Health.

Graduate Student Dental Public Health Field Experiences - 2009

Elham Kateeb – WIC Web-Based Oral Health Education Project
Site Director: Deb Kazmerzak (IANEPCA), Bob Russell (Iowa Department of Julie Janssen (Illinois Department of Public Health)

The primary objectives of this project were: to create a prototype interactive web-based oral health education module using Stage of Change theory to target parents' level of knowledge and engagement in oral health care and practices; and to create links through this module for activities in which children learn, with the help of their parents, basic facts about oral health.

JJ Shelley – Updating the CDC, Division of Oral Health Website
Site Director: Christopher Callahan (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

The Division of Oral Health, CDC, was in the process of revamping its website to make it more user-friendly. The primary objective of this project was to provide an external review of the information architecture of the current site, including analysis with another comparable website for similar content (i.e., infection control).

Alejandra Valencia – Comparison of Preliminary Oral Health Needs Assessment for Three Chicago Communities
Site Director: Anne Clancy (Chicago Community Oral Health Forum)

The Chicago Community Oral Health Forum was able to secure seed monies from the Illinois Department of Public Health to conduct a preliminary oral health needs assessment in three ethnically-diverse Chicago neighborhoods: Humboldt Park; Rogers Park, and Albany Park. The primary objective was to compare survey results from these neighborhoods and report findings at state and local venues.

2009 Graduates (and titles of research theses)

Yousef al-Yousef (MS) – Iowa Family Physicians’ Frequency of Referral and Other Oral Health-Related Practices Targeting High Caries-Risk Children (0-3)

Yousef is currently pursuing the PhD in Oral Sciences at the University of Iowa.

Susan McKernan (MS) – Modeling a State Dentist Workforce Using County Level Data

Susan is currently pursuing her PhD in Oral Sciences at the University of Iowa.

Scott Rankin (MS) – Dietary Fluoride Intake of Iowa Fluoride Study Children with and Emphasis on Solid Foods

Scott is currently a Major in the U.S. Army. He is stationed at Fort Sam Houston, TX where he is overseeing the Army Preventive Dentistry Program. He provides a dental public health perspective during the development of plans, policies, and programs with Army Dentistry.

Richie Kohli (MS) – Oral Health-Related Quality of Life in Individuals with Ectodermal Dysplasia

Richie is currently working at the University of Minnesota on a project on “Diagnoses for persistent dentoalveolar pain following root canal therapy”. She has also accepted a position in the residency program in TMD and Orofacial Pain at the University of Minnesota, starting in June 2010.

Bhagya Chikan Pendharkar (MS) – Fourth year dental students’ barriers to tobacco intervention services

Bhags is currently working on various UI research projects, including a CDC project and a project with a Global Health study student. Along with Nancy Slach, she is also teaching and lecturing regarding tobacco cessation.

Donald Chi (PhD) – Dental recall frequency among 3 to 6 year old Medicaid enrollees

Donald recently accepted a faculty position in the Department of Dental Public Sciences at the University of Washington.
Yogita Butani (‘02), and husband Arun Thakur had a baby girl, Simran Thakur, on April 12, 2009. She was also welcomed by her big brothers, Nikhil and Anuj.

Zhaomin Huang (‘04) and husband Pan had a baby boy, Evan, in the spring of 2009.

Jessica Meeske (‘99) was one of 150 health professionals meeting in the Rose Garden with President Obama on October 5, 2009 regarding health reform. Jessica was interviewed by ADA News following her visit; you can find details in the October 19, 2009 edition.

Mike McCunniff (‘95) received the President’s Volunteer Service Award from the University of Missouri at Kansas City for his Partnership for Smiles Program.

Alum NEWS

HONORS & AWARDS

Faculty
John Warren was promoted to Full Professor.
Teresa Marshall was promoted to Associate Professor (with tenure).
Deborah Dawson was named as the Morris Bernstein Professor of Dentistry. She was also named to the Task Force on Clinical Design and Analysis in Oral Health Research.
Raymond Kuthy is serving on the External Scientific Advisory Committee, NIDCR Centers for Research to Reduce Disparities in Oral Health. Dr. Kuthy also received a 3-year grant from HRSA to use county and more localized data ( zipcode or census track) in understanding where Iowa dentists practice in relation to other health professionals (physicians, pharmacists).
Pete Damiano, Professor in the Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry and Director of the Public Policy Center (PPC) is the principal investigator for a prestigious NIH Challenge Grant – one of 11 UI programs to receive one of the Challenge grants. The study, called First Preventive Dental Visit: Disparities in Needs, Costs + Behavioral Insights will evaluate several issues related to a Medicaid-enrolled child’s first preventive dental visit. The research team includes Elizabeth Momany (PPC and Preventive and Community Dentistry), Raymond Kuthy (Preventive and Community Dentistry and PPC), Michael Jones (Biostatistics and PPC), George Wehby (Health Management and Policy), Natoshia Askelson (Community and Behavioral Health and PPC) and Donald Chi (Pediatric Dentistry and PPC). The grant provides almost $1 million in research support over the next two years.

Graduate Students
Paul Colthirst – Honorable Mention – 2009 Leverett Graduate Student Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dental Public Health (The Utilization of Dental Services by Children in Foster Care in Iowa; Sponsor – Betsy Momany)
Yousef al-Yousef – Honorable Mention – 2009 Leverett Graduate Student Merit Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dental Public Health (Factors Affecting Iowa Family Physicians’ Frequency of Referral and Other Oral Health-Related Practices Targeting High Caries-Risk Children (0-3 Years of Age); Sponsor – Karin Weber-Gasparoni)
Alejandra Valencia – Herschel S. Horowitz Scholarship recipient (from American Association of Public Health Dentistry)
Susan McKernan – (’09) was recipient of the prestigious L.B. Sims Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award, which “recognizes and rewards distinguished scholarship and research at the master’s level” at the University of Iowa. Susan’s thesis was selected from a university-wide competition.

National Oral Health Conference
The National Oral Health Conference will be held April 26-28, 2010 in St. Louis, Missouri (Hilton at the Ball Park), with the American Board of Dental Public Health (ABDPH) exam administered April 22-24, 2010. We plan to have many of our faculty and most of our current students attend, and also hope to see many alumni there!

Thanks and Best Wishes!
Thank you for your contributions to improving the public’s oral and general health and your support of our program and department. We wish you all the best personally and professionally. Keep in touch so we can share your activities and accomplishments with our faculty and with other alumni.