

September 9, 2024

Greetings to the WSDA House of Delegates from the University of Washington School of Dentistry! This September marks my second anniversary as Dean of the UW School of Dentistry, and what a year it has been!

This summer we started renovations of the D165 Simulation Lab and the B170 area to better train our students and to incorporate additional digital technology into their educational experience. These renovated spaces will better support both our DDS program and the expansion of the Shoreline Community College Dental Hygiene program (more on the DH program below). We are also partway through a long-awaited water pipeline replacement project in both the B and D wings of our complex, strengthening the infrastructure for one of our most vital resources. In the spirit of enhancing educational spaces, facilities and resources on our campus have been renovated to optimize student use of simulation technology, aligned with UWSOD Strategic Priority #4: Harnessing innovative technologies and processes for the future of health care and health research.

Our CODA accreditation work continues. As you know, a huge amount of time and resources are directed towards this endeavor, and we are fortunate these efforts dovetail with our School's own stated strategic priorities – as nearly all we do for the site visit, moves us into closer alignment with our strategic plan. Our self-study document, which provides a record of the school's activities and processes since the last site visit in 2016, is complete, and we're looking forward to the full site visit evaluation coming up this November.

With support from stalwart partners like the WSDA, this year we secured \$2.5 Million in funding from the Washington State Legislature to expand our successful Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) Program. The expansion funding will enable us to make huge strides in scaling our DDS program to meet the oral health care needs of Washingtonians:

- Doubling the size of our RIDE cohort, from 32 to 64 students, rapidly increasing our capacity to provide care in the region.
- Extending the training time for RIDE dental students in Spokane, from one to two years, allowing them to remain closer to the communities they hope to serve.
- Building a regional training center for oral health care excellence in eastern Washington, unifying preclinical simulation and classroom spaces into one new, state-of-the-art facility.

This is an exciting time for oral health care in Washington state, as achieving this expanded funding has been years in the making. Thank you, WSDA, for being a huge part of its success!

The Shoreline Community College's Dental Hygiene program continues to thrive, and the program and our ongoing partnership was highlighted in the June issue of the *ADEA Bulletin*. As you may have read, starting this fall, dental hygiene students will begin a seven-quarter curriculum leading to a Bachelor of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene (B.A.S.D.H.).

The B.A.S.D.H. curriculum includes additional research methodology and community outreach, including a partnership with the Community Health Centers that allows dental hygiene students to expand access to care for a broad section of the community. Students will also complete the Access to Baby and Child

Dentistry (ABCD) training and register for their National Provider Identifier (NPI) numbers. This will allow graduates to further expand access to care, serving more pediatric patients and patients with special needs. The program also plans to increase the class size to 20 students this fall, eventually scaling to a class size of 30 students to help meet industry demand.

I am pleased to report we had a delegation of students and faculty attend Dental Action Day in Olympia in February. While there, we met with legislators and heard a presentation from WSDA representatives. Our students are passionate advocates for our community and for ensuring access to oral health care is available to all.

This summer we welcomed Dr. Alvin Wee to the School as Professor and Chair of the Department of Restorative Dentistry. He also holds the title of Washington Dental Service Endowed Chair in Dentistry. Dr. Wee is a renowned prosthodontist with significant clinical, research, patient care and administrative experience. Dr. Wee comes to us from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, where he was a Professor with tenure and Director of the Division of Prosthodontic, Department of Restorative Sciences. Prior to this, Dr. Wee held many other academic appointments in several institutions. We are indeed very fortunate to have Dr. Wee join the University of Washington School of Dentistry.

We also enthusiastically celebrated Dr. Frank Roberts' appointment to permanent Chair of the Department of Periodontics last month. Dr. Roberts served in the role of interim Chair for the past several years, and we are grateful for his leadership and service. He is Chief of Periodontics at the Seattle Veterans Administration Medical Center. A professor in the School, he also serves as Associate Dean for Regional Affairs and Director of the RIDE program. As a member of the UW School of Medicine curriculum committee, Dr. Roberts represents the UW School of Dentistry in all aspects of overlapping course work. He is also an active researcher and played a key role in the School's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering webinars on clinical protocols for practicing dentists that were circulated nationally.

We continue to see healthy numbers of highly qualified applicants to our programs. This summer we welcomed a talented incoming class of predoctoral students. We are also pleased that students continue to perform well on the National Board Dental Examination.

Providing the best oral health education and oral health care are at the heart of what we do. This past academic year alone, we logged over 85,000 patient visits across our clinics, Service Learning Rotations, and through RIDE.

This new academic year brings many opportunities for our School, and we look forward to continuing a productive partnership with the WSDA. Thank you for your support!

In partnership,



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Professor & Dean
University of Washington School of Dentistry