A Message from the Dean

At this time of year I find myself thinking of the human situation more than usual; not only in my community but throughout the nation and the world. I am energized by all of the activities you will read about in this issue of the newsletter. Our faculty, students and staff continually work to make the world a better place. It is heartwarming to see how much everyone at NJDS cares.

On another note, please join me in congratulating the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Their site visit was flawless, a testament to the high quality of the program and to the faculty members who are committed to continued excellence. I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season,

Cecil

Bridging the Communications Gap

Rare is the patient who is not at least a little apprehensive about having dental treatment. For a person who is hard of hearing or deaf, however, a trip to the dentist can be overwhelmingly frightful. To help minimize these patients’ fears and make their treatment as comfortable as possible, NJDS is now using a Deaf-Talk machine.

This Internet-based communication system is placed in the operatory where the patient can see it and a certified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is immediately accessed. The patient and the doctor then discuss treatment options and questions are answered. “I recently used the machine with a deaf patient, and he felt very comfortable having the procedure after we ‘talked,’” says Roger Johansen, DMD, associate professor, Restorative Dentistry. “It saves a lot of time, and it’s especially useful in emergencies when people need immediate attention.”

One operatory in all of NJDS’s clinics is wired to accept the machine, however, it does have wireless capability. Patients will soon be able to request a live ASL interpreter to be present during appointments, if they prefer.

NJDS Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Among the Best

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) completed its site visit of the NJDS Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) program a few days ago. (OMFS is on a different accreditation cycle than the rest of the school.) The feedback the dean received could not have been better.

Members of the commission were extremely complimentary about the program, citing it as extremely well-organized and one that offers great clinical experience. The clinical program, they said, is broad and well-rounded, with strong resident-faculty relationships. The residents are very well prepared, according to the report, and the director is quite strong. The CODA team made zero recommendations, which means the program meets all OMFS accreditation standards. In July 2012, OMFS should receive “full accreditation without report requirements status,” which is the best possibly outcome.

Setting a Precedent

Once again, NJDS has set the standard. We received a 100 percent pass rate in endodontics and more than 96 percent pass rate in prosthodontics on the 2011 simulated dental licensing examination. The results continue to demonstrate our students’ skills and the dedication of our faculty members.

Honoring Longevity at NJDS

The 2011 Employee Recognition Program will be held on Thursday, December 15, 1 to 2 pm in the Oral Health Pavilion

A light lunch will be served after the program.
From the Dean’s Desk

Holiday Dinner is Served with a Helping of Ingenuity

At a potluck Thanksgiving dinner—hosted by the Hispanic Dental Association for the International DMD class—the tables in the Multipurpose Room were loaded down with delicious dishes. The bill of fare included mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables and cranberry sauce. It was a feast, complete with all the trimmings. There was, however, one thing missing: the turkey.

The Hispanic students ordered much of the food from a nearby grocery store and picked it up just before the event was scheduled to begin. They never thought to open the boxes in the store, and when they got back to campus, they discovered everything was frozen. Most of the food could be thawed in a microwave, but not the turkey. Without skipping a beat, they headed back to the store and returned the turkey and bought roasted chickens to feed the crowd.

“It was a wonderful event,” says Rosa Chaviano-Moran, director of Multicultural Affairs and advisor to the group. “We all had a great time. The international students were very appreciative of all the effort the Hispanic students put into the evening, and the chickens made it that much more memorable.”

Below: Grocery-store-style roasted chickens filled in for the missing turkey at a Thanksgiving dinner.

Women Helping Women

The month of October was a busy one for members of the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD). To celebrate breast cancer awareness month, the group spent their spare time raising funds for the Susan G. Koman Foundation. The women made bracelets to sell at their bake sales, which they held throughout the month. They also distributed pink ribbons and shoe laces and pink Chap Sticks.

Their efforts paid off; they raised more than $500, thanks to the generosity of NJDS faculty, students and staff.

At right are (l-r) fourth-year students Michelle Chandnani, (treasurer) Samin Nawaz (president), Pooja Rana co-secretary), and Deanna Michael (vice president).

Best wishes for a happy holiday season
Providing Care where it’s Needed Most

Once again, NJDS went far beyond state borders to provide much-needed oral health care. Here are accounts of two recent missions to the other side of the country and the other side of the world.

Caring for Native Americans in Arizona

Almost all Native American children have experienced tooth decay by the time they reach third grade, and 72 percent of them have unfilled cavities. It’s estimated that teens and adults in this population have double the amount of tooth decay and periodontal disease than the national average. Most of the problems arise from the lack of access to professional dental care.

To help correct this disparity, Gary Vitaletti, DMD, director of the Oral Diagnosis Division in the Department of Diagnostic Sciences, developed the Indian Health Service (IHS) externship program in 2005. Since then he organized 10 groups of 6 to 10 fourth-year students each and supervised them on trips to the Southwest to treat members of this underserved population.

This year, 16 students traveled to the Four Corners Health Center in Teec Nos Pas, Arizona, where they provided free treatment to members of the Navajo Nation. The fourth-year students traveled in two groups, supervised by Dr. Vitaletti and James Delahanty, DMD, and Marc Rosenblum, DMD, and Asha Samant, DMD, all Restorative Dentistry. The NJDS students performed more than 400 procedures, including restorations, root canals and extractions, on 315 patients. They worked closely with the Native American staff and learned the gratitude of the professional dental officers, as well as the patients, some of whom came great distances for care. The mission was funded by the IHS and the AMB Corporation, along with individual donors.

Along with enhancing the students’ clinical skills, these trips heighten their cultural competency and help instill the desire to perform community service. One student wrote of the experience, “The externship was a humbling opportunity to practice the art/science I am so passionate about, while giving to such a deserving community.” Another wrote, “I learned very different cultural practices and came to know the Native Americans in a better way. I will consider IHS as a possible future employer.” Still another wrote, “I never had an experience like this before… I learned, I witnessed, I shared, I was inspired, I connected, but most of all I gained great memories and wonderful relations with the Navajo people.”

Creating New Smiles in Bangladesh

There are an estimated 300,000 children and young adults with unrepaired cleft lips and palates in Bangladesh, who are not accepted in society. They can’t go to school and function normally in their communities. Often the mother is blamed for giving birth to a child with a deformity, and she too is ostracized.

The country has only 30 surgeons able to perform the surgery, and most practice in major cities. Children in poor rural areas have little hope of ever having the surgery. That’s why Shahid Aziz, DMD, MD, associate professor, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, has made a total of eight trips to the region. His most recent trip was in November, when he and his team went to the Hope Foundation Hospital in Cox’s Bazar, a small town on the Bay of Bengal in southeastern Bangladesh. They performed free surgery on 56 poor children.

In addition to Dr. Aziz, team members from NJDS’s Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery included Fran Devonshire, RN, head nurse; Chris Rockford, DMD, chief resident; and Amy Tanchyk, DMD, MD, senior resident.
Helping the Medicine go Down

A spoonful of sugar may be the proverbial sweetener for all things unpleasant, but a plate of treats and a bottle of water do the trick, as well.

To make exams a little more palatable, a group of thoughtful ladies from the Student and Academic Affairs departments packaged cookies, brownies, granola bars, hot chocolate mix and a “good luck” note and distributed them, along with a bottle of water, to first- and second-year students. Third-year students will get their “CARE packages,” as they’ve become known, on the day they take their boards.

Kim Fenesy, DMD, got the idea from a similar project that is carried out at the college her son attends. She proposed it to Dean Feldman, who whole-heartedly agreed and lent a helping hand. Others who pitched in are Pamela Alberto, DMD; Rosa Chaviano-Moran, DMD; Nadege Dady, MEd; Jeanette DeCastro; Eileen Hoskin, DMD; and Patricia Wagner, program administrator.

"Exams are always stressful, even if you’re well prepared,” says Dr. Fenesy. “We thought this was a good way to help the test takers keep their energy levels up and let them know we’re thinking of them.” Students could also relax with a free chair massage on Dec. 1, thanks to the Student Assistance Facilitators.

NJDS Minority Students Receive Scholarships

Massiel Parra, ‘14, had a reason to be especially grateful this Thanksgiving. She learned that morning, via email, she was the recipient of a scholarship from the Society of Ibero Latin American Medical Professionals (SILAMP). Rosa Chaviano-Moran, DMD, acting director of Admissions and director of Multicultural Affairs, recommended Ms. Parra for the award. In a letter to Dr. Chaviano-Moran from the SILAMP representative, Ms. Parra was described as extremely worthy. "It is people like her who we need to help develop into the health field."

Maria Origel,’13, was one of only 10 students from medical, dental, nursing, and public health schools in New York and New Jersey to receive a National Hispanic Health Foundation scholarship. She was chosen from more than 100 applicants. The recipients were honored at a Gala held on Dec. 1 in New York City.

Nitchel Skal Batien,’14, received one of the American Dental Association Foundation’s coveted Predoctoral Underrepresented Minority Dental Student Scholarship. This highly competitive scholarship is only awarded to 25 dental students in the country. Applicants must have at least a 3.5 GPA and must submit an essay explaining why the scholarship is important to them. They must also explain how they specifically demonstrated leadership qualities in research, service, and volunteerism.

Dean Feldman with Nitchel Skal Batien
**Awards and Honors**

**Shahid Aziz, DMD, MD, associate professor, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery**, presented a lecture, “Cleft Lip in Rural Bangladesh,” at the New York Academy of Medicine-Section on Dentistry and Oral Health Planning in New York City in October.

**Sofia Petrov, DDS, assistant clinical professor, Periodontics**, presented “Rethinking Osteotomes: Modifications in the Design and Applications of Osteotomes as part of Implant Armamentarium” at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Periodontology, during the Innovations in Periodontics session. The event was held in Miami, Florida, in November.

Dr. Petrov first presented the paper at the NorthEast Implant Symposium as a resident at NJDS. Since then the article that is coauthored by Howard Drew, DMD, clinical professor, Periodontics, has been published in *Quintessence International* (Jan. 2011) and a clinical research project is underway comparing osteotome and drilling techniques during implant surgery.

**Vincent Ziccardi, DDS, MD, professor and chair, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery**, presented a lecture, “Trigeminal Nerve Injury: Etiology and Repair,” at the GardenState Periodontal and Implant Study Club held in West Orange in October.

**Publications**

**Diana Galvis, DDS, clinical assistant professor, Restorative Dentistry**, wrote a guest editorial, “Scheduling: To be or not to be...On Time,” for the Passaic County Dental Society. Nov. 2011, Vol. 32, No. 2.

**Professional Activities**

**Peter DeSciscio, DMD, associate professor, Restorative Dentistry**, was honored for his service as president of the American Association of Dental Boards (AADB). He received the recognition at the AADB Annual Meeting in Las Vegas in October.

**NJDS in the News**

A vampire-like bacterium that leeches onto certain other bacteria, including some human pathogens, may one day serve as a living antibiotic for a range of infectious diseases. That’s according to a new article co-authored by Daniel Kadouri, PhD, assistant professor, Oral Biology, titled “Genomic insights into an obligate epibiotic bacterial predator: *Micavibrio aeruginosavorus*, ARL-13” The article is published in the online journal *BMC Genomics* (http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2164/12/453) and was the most viewed in the past 30 days among genomic papers. It details the DNA sequence of the bacterium, giving a new understanding of its predatory lifestyle. Dr. Kadouri is exploring the bacterium as an agent for controlling human- and biofilm-related infections. He discussed his research in a recent interview on YouTube, which can be viewed at: http://www.youtube.com/umdnj#p/u/33/l-0TvnTcQEk.