

Celebrating the first year of Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

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The School of Oral Health Sciences has found it fitting to celebrate the first year of the existence of Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) with the publication of a special edition of our most esteemed journal (SADJ). The School is based in and serves largely marginalized societies and with the dynamic political and environmental situation in the country, could not be better situated to finding solutions towards serving the masses of this diverse South African population whose health needs, already demanding, are rapidly escalating. Technology in the health sciences is improving at a fast pace and comes at high costs. The challenge for researchers (scientists/clinicians) is to find and carefully select the type of technology that will best benefit the nation. Research in the School has to be locally relevant and yet be internationally competitive in order for the Institution to improve its esteem in the academic arena.

Articles presented in this edition cover radiological, pathological, trauma, aesthetic, patient satisfaction and educational needs, a spectrum which reflects the diversity of oral health issues within the ambit of the School. The Department of Oral Pathology delivers diagnostic histopathology and clinical pathology services to clinicians of the School of Oral Health Sciences, of the specialist departments of Ear Nose and Throat, Dermatology, Plastic Surgery as well as to peripheral hospitals in Polokwane. Specialists in the Department are actively involved in local outreach programs, several International organisations and were invited to write chapters for the new 2017 WHO Head and Neck issue and to participate in the International Collaboration of Cancer Reporting (ICCR) Dataset for Oral Cancer to be distributed early 2017. The Department has an active research output with various research foci but also acts as a research support unit in-house and on campus. Radiology plays a vital role in serving all clinical disciplines and with the recent full digitization of this Department, more efficiency in patient management and increased research output is expected. We live in a violent

society and there is an abundance of trauma treated in the Maxillofacial clinic in our hospital. Aesthetic needs are on the increase as reflected in the number of patients requesting aesthetic rehabilitations and orthodontic treatment. In this modern society, patients demand the best treatment and departments are challenged to offer this with the limited resources available, hence, the importance of regular patient satisfaction surveys. The teaching and training platform cannot be overlooked, leading to the need to improve on didactic methods and to constantly reassess and revise the curriculum to make the training relevant to societal requirements whilst staying on par with local and international norms. SMU is rooted in rich academic soil, sufficiently fertile to enable research to grow and to flourish.

The challenge facing the School henceforth lies in strengthening and empowering the post-graduate offerings through recruitment and retention of skilled academics and increasing the skills of the current personnel. The postgraduate sector is the heart of research output in most institutions and when this sector is fully functional, inputs translate into high research output, excellent service delivery and attraction of good academics and students. There are indeed areas of good progress but the School must identify others that need strengthening and must also seek collaboration with local and international institutions to build capacity and to establish a formidable team of dedicated academics. It is also my view that the School needs to expand its training platform as this will serve as the "fertile ground" for research development through community engagement and service delivery.

I want to thank Edith Dube, Editorial Assistant, Annemie Visser, Graphics Designer, EDoc, Professor Evans, Managing Editor and his team of reviewers for the hard work they put into processing this issue within a short space of time. I also want to thank the Director of the School of Oral Health Professor Lekan Ayo-Yusuf for presenting the idea and seeking permission from the South African Dental Association to publish this edition. A final thank you goes to all academic members of staff for their willingness and hard work in striving successfully to meet tight deadlines.

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Message from the Director/Dean

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OA Ayo-Yusuf



As with its predecessor, the Medunsa/University of Limpopo, the School of Oral Health Sciences at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) continues to address both the under-representation of blacks in the oral health profession and the lack of good oral health care in underserved regions of South Africa. The SMU still trains most of the black dentists in South Africa and places great emphasis on attracting students from rural areas of South Africa, stressing community service and preventive oral health care during undergraduate training. The SMU remains the only one of the five oral health profession training institutions in South Africa offering three Baccalaureus programmes, namely, in Dentistry, Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene. All undergraduate programs have strong service learning components and one of the papers in this special issue of the SADJ focuses on how students reflect on the value of social accountability. The paper suggested that the students from SMU recognise the importance of social development within the overall context of health promotion rather than only focusing on immediate needs for pain relief, especially in poverty stricken communities.

A significant proportion of our students come from rural areas. These students are funded through provincial bursaries or through the National Student Financial Assistance Scheme (NSFAS) and although it provides them with a golden opportunity for an educated future, it also brings some social and academic challenges. Many of the financially supported students often do not have enough money for food or to buy any prescribed textbooks, which frequently hampers their study and overall academic performance. The SMU have some feeding schemes in place where personnel are able to assist with donations. Experience have shown that, when supported to complete their studies, these students from rural areas are three times more likely than others to return and practice in rural areas, giving back to the community they originated from. It is therefore SMU's priority to enhance student academic and non-academic support programmes in order to improve the overall student experience on campus as part of the much broader teaching and learning quality enhancement agenda, which would be supported by the newly established Centre for University

Teaching and Learning (CUTL). Promoting student diversity in the classroom and providing educational opportunities beyond the classroom is a major initiative at SMU. Students requiring any additional academic or non-academic support are identified early through appointed student guardians and incorporated into the SMU student support system through a well organised referral system. Early interventions correlated well with an increase in academic success rates over the past year.

Since the opening of SMU, novel methods of teaching have been developed. These include expansion of modern simulation facilities and more frequent usage of video-based instructions in Maxillofacial and Oral Surgery following a real-time video link to our operating theatre. This expansion of educational methods also called for academic staff who would not only provide high-level patient care while teaching and performing research, but also staff who can reach students via cutting-edge educational portals. New educational initiatives will continue to be developed through continuous education of lecturers but also through research initiatives focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning. The SMU is committed to contribute to evidence-based policy leadership in South Africa and to provide quality oral health services for all its citizens.

While our primary mission is to produce outstanding oral health professionals, we also recognise our profound responsibility as a public institution to the Gauteng

SADA

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the South African Dental Association will be held at **Sunnyside Park Hotel, Parktown, Johannesburg on Thursday 16 March 2017 at 18:00** followed by snacks and refreshments.

The Agenda for the meeting will be posted on the SADA website.

SADA is your Association and your voice counts.

Punkaj Govan - Acting Chief Executive Officer



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Province and its residents. Addressing the historical gap in resource allocation to the Medunsa Oral Health Centre as compared with the other oral health training centres in the province is an on-going process.

On the one hand, the location of our dental school allows us to leverage the immediately surrounding poor communities in ways other schools located within cities have been unable to do, which in turn, increases the lustre of a community-oriented SMU degree. On the other hand, our location poses an additional challenge as regards attracting specialists and fee-paying patients for specialist care, limiting related specialist training opportunities. The access to additional funding through the clinical training grant (CTG) from the Department of Higher Education and Training, the Health Professions Training Grant (HPTG) and the National Tertiary Services Grant (NTSG) through the Provincial Gauteng Health Department have been key in addressing some of these challenges in the past year and would remain vital going forward. In our research and educational programmes, we maintain productive collaborative relationships with leading national and international Universities. The school unlike any other dental school in South Africa now has two NRF-rated scientists on staff, demonstrating our resolve to promote research excellence.

I would like to seize this opportunity to call on all MEDUNSA-SMU alumni to join in supporting the School on this exciting journey as SMU keeps its strategic focus on the following vision and mission statements :

VISION

- To be the benchmark institution providing holistic health sciences education that meets the health needs of the individual, the family, the community, and the population.

MISSION

- Provide high-quality primary health care-oriented health sciences research, education and services.
- Deploy educational approaches that include evidence-based methods for curriculum development and delivery that are rooted in the community.
- Promote interdisciplinary research, education and skills training that recognise the cross-disciplinary nature of holistic health care provision.
- Produce a cadre of health professionals with the transformative leadership capacity to identify, analyse and address the health needs of the individual, the family, the community and the population.
- Create an environment that supports innovation and harnesses the power of new technologies to address the health needs of the community.

We are entering an era in which oral health professionals will have the expertise to manage their patients, communities and the society more professionally and effectively than ever before. It is an honour to lead the Dental School and the Faculty of Health Sciences at SMU at such an exciting time.