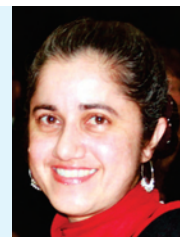


In commemoration of more than forty years of the existence of the UWC Faculty of Dentistry.

SADJ May 2018, Vol 73 no 4 p184

N Mohamed, Guest Editor, Festschrift Edition



In commemoration of more than forty years of the existence of the UWC Dental Faculty, it is with great pride that this Festschrift of the SADJ is being published. Perusal of the articles representing the various disciplines bears testimony to how far the faculty has progressed over the years. From humble and tentative beginnings, the UWC Dental Faculty has burgeoned into a world class institution incorporating all the relevant disciplines and can stand shoulder to shoulder with sister institutions across the globe.

Conveniently situated in central, populous areas, the two service platforms at Tygerberg and Mitchell's Plain draw patients and students from all strata of society- a potpourri of cultures and a true representation of our "rainbow nation". There is however a need to address the imbalances of the past as many of our students come from disadvantaged vernacular backgrounds, funded by bursaries and nothing else. They are often unable to cope with the exigencies and demands of university education. The needs in terms of food, textbooks and accommodation are great. This can be a tremendous setback for students and detracts from their ability to do well and succeed in their studies. Even though volunteer schemes have been established to alleviate the problem to some extent, consideration should be given to establishing a more organized scheme to augment this avenue of support. These vulnerable students should be identified so that systems can be put in place to remedy the situation and in some measure, contribute to the social development of our communities.

As the Dental Faculty is a referral centre, students are exposed to a huge variety of patients which include rare and interesting cases. The Faculty strives to provide holistic care to patients while at the same time offering students a myriad opportunities to learn and to improve their skills. In order to address the ever-changing needs of the new generation of students, emphasis is placed on blended learning with the development of new and innovative educational methods, including the incorporation of technology into various aspects of the curriculum.

The University is taking active measures to spread its influence nationally and internationally by pursuing and encouraging collaborative ventures in the fields of education, research and service delivery. Looking ahead to the challenges facing us, it is of concern that the resource fund allocation granted to the institution is not commensurate with the financial needs of a university that is expanding rapidly. There is an urgent need to establish fundraising initiatives to supplement the shortfall and assist in stabilizing our ailing infrastructure, replace old outdated equipment and refurbish facilities.

Over the years, the UWC Dental Faculty has produced many learned and distinguished scholars. Some have found their niche locally and others have sought alternative opportunities. Still others, the ones that we acknowledge, pay tribute to and salute, have stayed with the institution, invested their knowledge and expertise, and nurtured what was once a nascent dental faculty into what is has now become—an institution of repute and renown.

It is now left to the new generation of staff and academics to carry the beacon further and to embrace the possibilities that the new decade offers. To quote the words of the poet Tennyson: "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield; to follow knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bound of human thought".