

NewsBriefs

Buchanan to step down

Richard Buchanan, DMD, is ending his tenure as dean of the School of Dental Medicine. He will remain as dean until a successor is in place.

On Nov. 26, David L. Dunn, MD, PhD, UB vice president for health sciences, informed the dental school and the UB community that he had agreed to Buchanan's request to step down as dean and as a member of the faculty.

"Rick has been a close colleague and friend, and he has been steadfast in his desire to raise an academically very strong school to even greater heights by the recruitment, mentoring and strong support of its faculty and academic leaders," Dunn said in his statement. "He will be sorely missed here at UB."

A national search to identify Buchanan's successor will begin shortly.

"Those who have had the privilege of working with Rick recognize him as an intuitively smart and thoughtful leader—a person who enriches conversations with his wise and erudite perspective," said Provost Satish K. Tripathi. "From the very beginning of my tenure at UB, I have known and have admired Rick for his intellec-

tual leadership, his indefatigable pursuit of excellence and his ability to thrive in an interdisciplinary environment. This approach to his life's work has contributed greatly to the UB School of Dental Medicine's rise to prominence and our university's success in pursuing our UB 2020 ambitions."

Before coming to UB in 2002, Buchanan held academic and administrative positions at three dental schools—the University of Texas Health Science Center Dental School at San Antonio where he rose to the rank of professor and held several administrative positions, including interim dean; the New Jersey Dental School, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, where he was dean; and Baylor College of Dentistry where he also was dean.

A graduate of the University of Texas-Austin, Buchanan earned a doctorate in dental medicine from the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine.

One of his first accomplishments at UB was guiding accreditation of the dental school by the Commission on Dental Accreditation for the maximum period of seven years, which garnered several commendations and no recommendations for improvement.

Buchanan will be leaving academia when he departs UB, but he will not be retiring completely.

"I look forward to continuing to meet many professional obligations," he said. A member of the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation, he will be involved in accreditation activities at other dental schools, as well as the Dean's Institute, a think tank and support organization for dental school deans that focuses on current challenges common to all dental schools, and the American Dental Education Association Task Force on Ethics and Professionalism.

2 Basic sciences curriculum moves ahead

Four subcommittees of the dental school's curriculum committee are studying ways to implement the school's new curriculum principles that were approved two years ago. The subcommittees—on pre-clinics and clinics, basic sciences, ethics, and bridge sciences—are seeking to reduce redundancy, provide new and needed content, and to plan the delivery of the improved content.

Frank Scannapieco, professor and chair of oral biology, chairs the basic sciences

subcommittee and says that it is in the process of formulating a new model for the basic sciences curriculum.

The basic sciences subcommittee is furthest along in its work, according to Joseph Zambon, associate dean for academic affairs, because basic sciences coursework will be the foundation for the other curricular changes.

One change under discussion would institute course blocking, staggering a smaller number of concurrent classes to reduce competition between them. A student taking biochemistry and gross anatomy, for example, would finish biochemistry a few weeks before anatomy, alleviating some end-of-semester pressure.

The subcommittee convened at a retreat in November and produced a list of changes to their area of the curriculum, including instituting a case-study element that would combine basic science principles with clinical problems. The committee plans to meet with basic sciences course directors early this year to finalize the model and implement it for first-year students in August 2009.

The case-based course will run through all four years of the curriculum and build on knowledge students have acquired in previous classes. A treatment-planning seminar is

under consideration for third- and fourth-year students that would also be case-based.

At each step of the way, students would review how basic sciences and basic oral science are applied in dental practice by studying a specific patient-based dental problem (a patient with tooth pain and diabetes, for example).

Through the patient cases, students would discover the dental applications of learning the histology of the pancreas, or the physiology of neuroconduction. "What's important is to put the basic sciences information a dental student must absorb into some sort of practical, real-life context," Scannapieco says.

How the school will teach the new curriculum is still in discussion. "It will be a big issue," Scannapieco says. "Some schools have adopted problem-based and other alternative learning models, but instituting such learning strategies will take planning."

The new curriculum will help the school provide new yet formalized learning experiences, and will offer students the opportunity to interact more directly with other students and faculty in smaller groups.

"We're moving forward deliberately, and I think in the end it's going to pay off for our



BOCA AT FIVE

Buffalo Outreach and Community Service (BOCA) is an organization dedicated to providing care to underserved areas, created and sustained by students in the School of Dental Medicine. BOCA outreach journeys are organized and planned by dental students under the supervision of dental school faculty, who accompany students on the missions.

During the 2007-08 academic year, students and faculty traveled to Ghana in West Africa; Patzun, Guatemala; Tampico, Mexico; Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic; and Colonial Beach in Virginia.

BOCA provided 54 dental students and four dental residents the opportunity to serve those in need and to gain valuable clinical and cultural experiences. In addition, several dental students have accompanied Kevin D'Angelo, '81, to underserved areas of Appalachia to provide free oral health care in weekend medical/dental clinics.

In the organization's first five years, 208 student dentists, 24 dental residents and 32 faculty have participated in BOCA activities. They have treated 8,147 patients, performed 4,368 restorations and 5,326 extractions. The estimated value of these dental services is \$1,624,646.

BOCA has provided dental treatment for special needs patients and now incorporates screening for hypertension, diabetes and pterygium, an eye disorder common in the Caribbean and Central America.

**REACHING
OTHERS**

At the University at Buffalo, our purpose—our promise—is to reach others. It's a promise that knows no boundaries.

www.buffalo.edu/reachingothers

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ►