Engaging Globally

Penn Dental Medicine advancing academic exchange in China, Taiwan, Korea

by Beth Adams
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT — a core principle of the Penn Compact (the University of Pennsylvania’s vision for moving from excellence to eminence) — is central to the mission of Penn Dental Medicine as well. This March, the University and School were fulfilling both, as Penn Dental Medicine joined a delegation to Beijing, China, led by Penn President Amy Gutmann. From Beijing, Penn Dental Medicine went on to visit dental schools in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea and host symposia in Taiwan and Korea as well, engaging alumni, dental practitioners, and educators throughout the region and taking steps to advance the School’s global presence and exchange.

The Penn delegation, which also included deans and faculty from Wharton and the schools of Law and Engineering and Applied Sciences, traveled to Beijing to initiate and reaffirm Penn’s academic partnerships and agreements with universities there, including Peking University and Tsinghua University. Representing Penn Dental Medicine were Morton Amsterdam Dean Denis F. Kinane; Dr. Syngcuk Kim, Chair and Louis I. Grossman Professor of Endodontics and the new Associate Dean for Global Affairs; and Dr. William Cheung (D’81, GD’82), Chair of the School’s Board of Overseers and a University Trustee, who lives and practices in Hong Kong.

As part of this Penn visit, Dean Kinane and Dean Tao Xu of Peking University’s School of Stomatology signed a new memorandum of understanding, which outlines exchange of students and faculty, exchange of learning resources, and the possibility of joint research projects between the two faculties. President Gutmann and Peking University President Zhou Qifeng also signed a memorandum of understanding to expand the partnership between the two universities and reaffirmed existing partnerships between Wharton and Peking’s Guanghua business schools.

“Great Chinese and American Universities are building a bridge of knowledge spanning the globe. There is every reason to think that those universities that join together to embrace this historically unprecedented kind of integration across liberal arts and professional education will be the most powerful forces for progress in our societies and the world,” said President Gutmann in a keynote address at Peking University, March 10, when the University hosted “Penn Day” on its campus. Among other special events, U.S. Ambassador to China, Jon Huntsman, Jr. (a 1987 Penn alumnus named to the post in 2009) hosted a reception at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, welcoming the Penn delegation, administrators and faculty from Peking and Tsinghua universities, and more than 250 Penn alumni, friends, and parents.

“Penn had an incredible presence in Beijing. With President Gutmann, the deans from Wharton and the Law and Engineering schools, our group from Penn Dental, and Ambassador Huntsman’s involvement as well, it impressed upon our counterparts at the School of Stomatology the level of Penn’s commitment to partnerships within China,” says Dean Kinane. “Our schools recognize the value of scholarship across academic disciplines and national borders. Through collaboration and the sharing of knowledge, we all benefit.”

Such an exchange of scholarship began on this visit with Peking’s School of Stomatology hosting a symposium on oral health March 10 that featured a lecture by Dean Kinane on smoking and oral health, a presentation by Dr. Kim on modern endodontics, and talks on implants and traditional Chinese medicine by members of the Peking faculty.

“We laid the groundwork and built awareness through this first global symposium that we can now build upon as we move forward.”

— DR. SYNGCUK KIM, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

An Opportunity for Growth
The new memorandum of understanding with the School of Stomatology positions Penn Dental Medicine to help advance dentistry in an area of the world where there is great potential for growth in the field.

“Compared to a well-developed country like the U.S., which has 150,000 dentists for a population of 0.3 billion, China has 150,000 for a population of 1.3 billion,” observes Dr. Cheung, who is active in the FDI World Dental Federation, a Geneva-based consortium of nearly 200 dental associations worldwide that works to help less developed countries upgrade their standards in oral health care. Dr.
Cheung serves as the FDI’s Continuing Education Program Manager for the Asia Pacific region. “Educating more dentists is a priority among China’s dental schools, and through such collaborative agreements, Penn Dental can take dental education to higher levels by helping schools refine their curriculum, equip their faculty, and develop young graduates through continuing education programs.”

Dr. Cheung also notes that the exchange agreement with Peking University, as well as those signed with six other dental schools in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea during this trip (see box above) will create new opportunities for scholars within these institutions to study at Penn Dental Medicine through the Penn World Scholars Program, one of the endowed funds created through Penn’s current “Making History” capital campaign. This program enables talented/advanced students from developing countries to study at Penn with the goal of them returning to their home countries to in turn educate their colleagues. Dr. Cheung and his wife, Cathy, were among the first to establish a scholarship — The Cheung Family World Scholar Program — under the Penn World Scholars Program.

“This trip signified a great commitment from Penn Dental to build ever stronger connections with dental colleagues around the world and reinforce the School’s reputation for excellence globally,” adds Dr. Cheung, “which are vital to our mission and ongoing leadership.”

Establishing a Position of Leadership
Dean Kinane, who brought strong international ties with him to the position of Dean, is making global engagement a priority in his strategic plans for the School, and one of his first steps has been the creation of a new position to help lead that process, appointing Dr. Syngceuk Kim as Associate Dean for Global Affairs. This March trip to China, Taiwan, and Korea was the first for Dr. Kim in this new role.

“With many established relationships throughout the world, Dr. Kim is well positioned to step into this new leadership role,” says Dean Kinane. “He has built the international reputation of Penn endodontics in ways that can be applied more broadly throughout the School to expand and enhance our presence globally, while also strengthening the global perspective and experience for our students.”

Along with Penn Dental Medicine’s activities at Peking University in conjunction with the larger Penn delegation, a key focus of this recent trip revolved around Taiwan and Korea, where Dr. Kim worked with alumni in the region to develop and present the first Penn Dental Medicine Endodontics Global Symposium. The symposium was held in Taipei, Taiwan, March 13–14, and in Seoul, Korea, March 20–21.

“The symposia were organized with the help of graduates of our postdoctoral program in endodontics who are living and practicing there — Dr. Theresa Hsu (GD’95) in Taiwan and Dr. Seung-Ho Baek (GD’95) in Korea,” says Dr. Kim. “We have a fairly significant number of alumni from our endodontics, periodontics, and perio/prosthodontics

Penn Dental Medicine Signs Agreements with 7 Schools
During the March 2010 trip to China, Taiwan, and Korea, Penn Dental Medicine’s Morton Amsterdam Dean Denis F. Kinane signed a memorandum of understanding with the following seven schools. The agreements, four new and three renewing, will facilitate the exchange of students, faculty, and learning resources and foster collaborative research between Penn Dental Medicine and these academic institutions.

• Peking University School of Stomatology, Beijing, China
• The University of Hong Kong Faculty of Dentistry, Hong Kong, China
• Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan
• National Yang-Ming University, Taipei, Taiwan
• National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan
• Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea
• Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea

Left to right: Dean Denis Kinane and Dean Tao Xu of Peking University’s School of Stomatology.
programs in this part of the world. They have taken the Penn Dental Medicine name back to their home countries and are an invaluable resource for enabling our international connections and reputation to grow even stronger.”

The symposium in Taipei was produced in collaboration with three dental schools in Taiwan, and the program in Seoul with four schools there. Dean Kinane and Dr. Kim participated as lecturers at both symposia, and all presenters were Penn Dental Medicine alumni or faculty, spotlighting the School’s expertise. The other speakers at the Taipei conference included Drs. Martin Trope (GD’82, D’83), Michael Marmo (D’95, GD’98), Meetu Kohli (D’02, GD’05), Bekir Karabucak (GD’97, D’02), Theresa Hsu (GD’95), Alan Yang (GD’04), and David Li (D’00, GD’03). Presenting in Seoul were Drs. Gilberto Debellian (GD’91), Su-Jung Shin (GD’04), Andy Kim (D’99, GD’02), Woo-Cheol Lee (GD’01), Frank Setzer (GD’06, GD’07, D’10), Meetu Kohli (D’02, GD’05), Helmut Walsch (GD’00, GD’01), Theresa Hsu (GD’95), and Seung-Ho Baek (GD’95). Alumni receptions were held in Taipei and Seoul as well.

“We had a very positive response, drawing 500 attendees in Taiwan and 900 in Korea,” says Dr. Kim. “We laid the groundwork and built awareness through this first global symposium that we can now build upon as we move forward.”

Already in the planning stages for next year are symposia in Germany and Poland focused on endodontics and one in Japan on endodontics and periodontics. Looking beyond those, Dr. Kim and Dean Kinane both stress that their goal is to expand the nature of the symposia to incorporate presenters from the School’s biological science departments in addition to the clinical sciences. “By incorporating biological sciences, we will be able to spotlight the comprehensive nature of the School’s scholarship across disciplines and gain greater exposure of our activities with a wider international audience,” notes Dr. Kim.

Among other initiatives, Dr. Kim also hopes the use the model for training international practitioners at Penn Dental Medicine that has been established within the Department of Endodontics to help expand and strengthen the visiting scholars/training programs in the School’s other clinical departments. The current international component within the Department of Endodontics is a three-month residency designed specifically for general dentists practicing in other countries who wish to come to Penn Dental Medicine to sharpen their skills in endodontics, but cannot afford the time to complete the formal postdoctoral certificate program.

“I am honored and pleased to be taking on this new role and working with Dean Kinane, our Board of Overseers, and my colleagues on the faculty to help expand our global programs,” says Dr. Kim.

“It is important to share the talents of our faculty and students around the world, and bring scholars here as well,” adds Dean Kinane on the School’s global mission and strategy (see box above). “Through this transfer of knowledge, we will not only raise our global visibility and reputation, but also learn much from our international colleagues. It is a win-win situation for all.”

Engaging Globally

Penn Dental Medicine Global Mission
Enhance the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine’s international reputation to improve the quality of the School and the global experience of our students.
To fulfill this global mission, the following strategies have been defined; they will continue to be reviewed and refined as part of the School’s ongoing strategic planning.

Global Strategies
• Improve the global experience of our students through student exchange (offering four-week international externships)
• Engage in collaborative international research
• Enhance the School’s global reputation to in turn improve the quality of DMD applicants from around the world
• Develop continuing education programs that bring clinicians from around the world to Penn Dental Medicine for hands-on continuing education and present the School’s clinical and biological sciences faculty internationally to share their expertise through continuing education symposia and underline Penn Dental Medicine’s global reputation
• Build and strengthen relationships that may in the long term support development efforts

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