

Answering the Call to Higher Education

PENN DENTAL MEDICINE
ALUMNI ARE FINDING DIVERSE,
REWARDING CAREERS IN THE
MULTIFACETED WORLD
OF ACADEMIA.

With a national shortage of dental school faculty an ongoing challenge within dental education, schools across the country are looking for fresh ways to interest dental students in academic careers. “Younger people with a strong academic orientation are...needed to keep curricula up-to-date, sustain strong research programs, and develop the policies and practices that will shape our institutions moving forward,” said Dr. Rick Valachovic, Executive Director of the American Dental Education Association in a recently published letter.

With these critical needs in mind, Penn Dental Medicine combines a strong commitment to research with several innovative programs, including a brand new postgraduate curricular option, to encourage students to consider an academic path, and in turn, prepare them to take on the varied and challenging roles of academia. This latest addition — a Doctor of Science in Dentistry (DScD) degree — allows postgraduate students to combine their specialty training with advanced research and academic opportunities in an alternative to the traditional PhD (see related story, page 17). It builds upon the School’s Master of Science in Oral Biology, which also enables students to integrate more extensive research into their postgraduate education.

For predoctoral students, the School’s long-standing Summer Research Program partners students with faculty members on investigations affecting today’s dental practice, giving students hands-on research experience and the opportunity to present their findings. The competitive Degree Honors Program allows students to participate in advanced clinical, research, or community health honors experiences that can be highly relevant to academic career settings. And through dual-degree programs, qualified dental students may pair their dental degrees with a master’s degree in Bioethics, Business Administration, Public Health, Bioengineering, or Higher Education, drawing on the extraordinary resources of other schools within Penn.

The three alumni profiled here — all at very different stages of very distinctive academic careers — have something in common: They all took advantage of the School’s flexible, multidisciplinary offerings to position themselves for success in the academic world.



NO LIMITS

DR. MARIA VELASCO, D'10, GED'10
INSTRUCTOR OF DENTAL MEDICINE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

It's been less than a year since Dr. Maria Velasco (D'10, GED'10) finished her residency and accepted a full-time faculty position at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University's pediatric dentistry program, and her memories of time spent at Penn Dental Medicine are still vivid. Graduate school presented so many attractive and promising options, she remembers, that choosing a single focus for her education and eventual career seemed an impossible task. "There was so much to learn and so much that I wanted to do," she says. "I didn't want to limit my education in any way."

Luckily, she didn't have to: As a dual-degree student who combined a traditional dental degree with a graduate degree from Penn's School of Education, she was able to craft a flexible curriculum that wove together her interests in dentistry, teaching, and research. After graduating in 2010 with a DMD and a Master's in Higher Education, and completing a residency in pediatric dentistry at Columbia, she was offered an academic position that makes full use of all aspects of her unique background.

A TALENT FOR MULTITASKING: As an Instructor of Dental Medicine at Columbia, Dr. Velasco's busy weekly schedule combines all of her passions — teaching, mentoring, research, and practice. In short, she is doing what she loves best: multitasking.

"I have always been comfortable doing multiple things at the same time," she says, a predilection which helped her simultaneously tackle two very different — and very difficult — educational experiences at Penn. She found role models at every turn: "It was fabulous to learn from people who were so well-rounded and doing so many interesting things. I had great mentors every step of the way, and no one ever denied me an opportunity to do something that interested me."

Combining intensive clinical experiences at Penn Dental Medicine with lectures and seminars in the School of Education helped Dr. Velasco build a powerful combination of skills. "I will

never regret the extra work," she says of her decision to pursue a dual degree. "My coursework in education has made me a better speaker and a better writer — skills I need to be an effective teacher — and my solid clinical dentistry background is something I feel confident about every day."

Two other aspects of her background — academic research and community health — have also inspired her, playing important roles in her educational plans and in her ultimate career choice of academia. ►

ALUMNI AT PENN DENTAL MEDICINE

Following are those Penn Dental Medicine alumni who are part of the School's full-time standing faculty and in key administrative roles; the associated and part-time faculty also includes a strong corps of Penn Dental Medicine graduates.

Joli C. Chou, M'04, GD'07
Assistant Professor of Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology

Chun-Hsi Chung, D'86, GD'92, MS'92
Chair and Associate Professor of
Orthodontics
Director, Postdoctoral Orthodontic
Program

Robert Collins, D'71
Clinical Professor of Community Oral
Health
Director of International Relations

Helen Giannakopoulos, GD'02
Associate Professor of Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology
Director, Postdoctoral Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery Program

Martin S. Greenberg, GD'68, HOM'73
Professor, Dept. of Oral Medicine

Bekir Karabucak, GD'98, D'02
Associate Professor of Endodontics
Interim Director, Postdoctoral
Endodontics Program
Director, Graduate Dental Education
Programs

Jonathan Korostoff, D'85, GR'91, GD'92
Associate Professor of Periodontics
Director, Master of Science in Oral
Biology Program

Heywood Kotch, D'77
Clinical Associate Professor of
Preventive & Restorative Sciences
Assistant Dean of Clinical Operations

Ernesto Lee, GD'87
Director, Postdoctoral
Periodontic/Prosthesis Program

Lawrence M. Levin, D'86, GD'90
Associate Professor of Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology
Chief, Division of Dentistry, CHOP

Rochelle Lindemeyer, GD'79
Associate Professor of Pediatric
Dentistry
Director, Postdoctoral Pediatric
Program

Margrit Maggio, D'87
Assistant Professor of Restorative
Dentistry
Director of Preclinical Dentistry
Director of Advanced Simulation

Francis Mante D'95, HOM'99
Associate Professor, Division of
Restorative Dentistry
Director of Biomaterials

Mel Mupparapu, D'96
Professor of Oral Medicine
Director, Division of Oral &
Maxillofacial Radiology

Andres Pinto, D'99, GD'01, GR'07,
GR'12, M'12
Associate Professor of Oral Medicine
and Community Oral Health
Director of Oral Medicine Services
Chief, Division of Community Oral
Health

Alan M. Polson, D'94
Professor, Dept. of Periodontics

Peter D. Quinn, D'74, GD'78
Schoenleber Professor of Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology
Vice Dean for Professional Services,
Perelman School of Medicine
Senior Vice President for CPUP,
University of Pennsylvania Health
System

Olivia Sheridan, D'90, GD'92
Clinical Associate Professor of
Preventive & Restorative Sciences
Assistant Dean for Admissions

Thomas P. Sollecito, D'89, GD'91
Chair and Professor of Oral Medicine

David Stanton, D'88, M'92, GD'95
Associate Professor of Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology

Eric T. Stoopler, D'99, GD'02
Associate Professor of Oral Medicine
Director, Postdoctoral Oral Medicine
Program

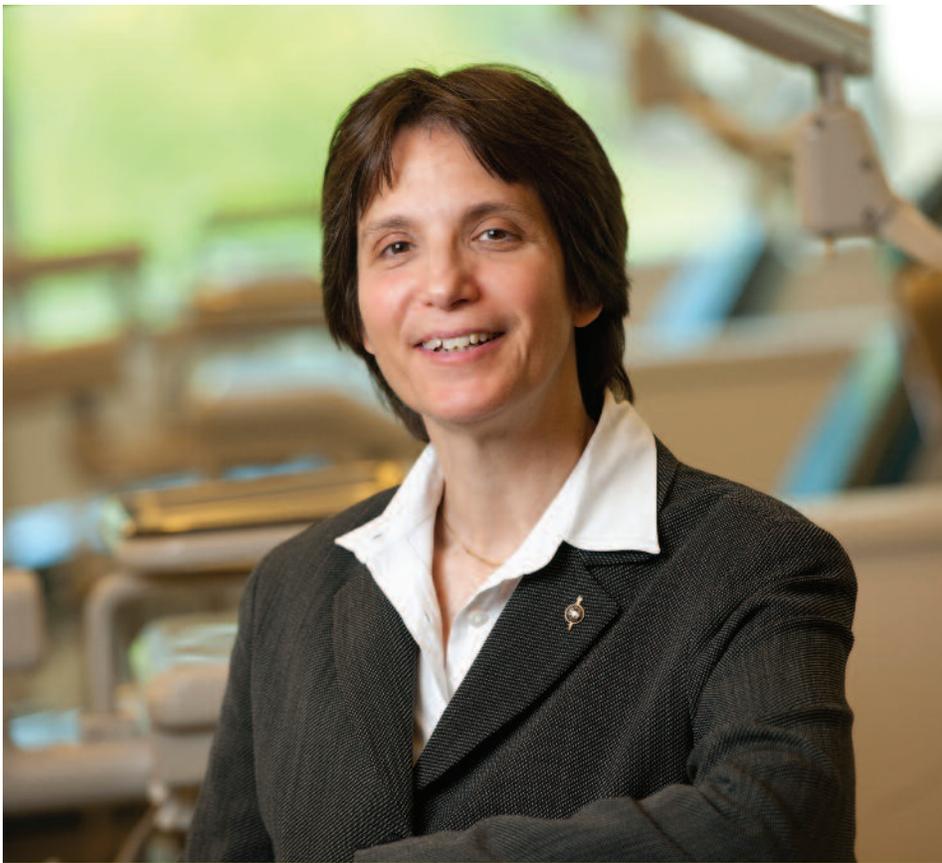
Robert L. Vanarsdall, GD'72, GD'73
Professor, Dept. of Orthodontics
Director, Postdoctoral
Periodontic/Orthodontic Program
Assistant Dean for Advancement of
Dental Specialties

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH: Fascinated by research since high school, Dr. Velasco was thrilled to collaborate with Dr. Sunday Akintoye, Assistant Professor, Department of Oral Medicine, while at Penn Dental Medicine, assisting on a research project involving oral facial bone marrow stem cells. Later, as head resident at Columbia, she worked closely with Dr. Burton Edelstein, Professor of Clinical Dentistry and Clinical Health Policy Management and Chairman of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences, where her research involved measuring patient satisfaction in the faculty practice there. Both projects resulted in an appreciation and deeper understanding of how research, teaching, and practice could work in harmony. "I realized I didn't have to pick teaching over research or research over practice to grow in my career," she says. At Columbia, she hopes to eventually focus her research on oral intervention for premature infants and adolescents, two groups of children who she notes are often overlooked in research.

COMMUNITY CARE: A native of Ecuador and a fluent Spanish speaker, Dr. Velasco also felt a responsibility for helping local Hispanic populations receive good dental care. As a student in Penn Dental Medicine's clinics, she saw a unique opportunity to be of service to Spanish-speaking patients: "I realized that so many important aspects of dental care were getting lost in translation, and that my language skills could help whole families get better care."

At Penn Dental Medicine, she was able to combine the School's community service requirements with her work on the Hispanic Student Dental Association to help build a program of free dental services for Hispanic residents of South Philadelphia. It was there that she learned how much she enjoyed working with children, which led to her choice to pursue a specialty in pediatric dentistry. (She selected Columbia's residency program in part because of the school's location in the largely Hispanic Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights.) Today, she is the first Latino tenure-track faculty member at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, an accomplishment of which she is particularly proud.

Dr. Velasco's new faculty position satisfies the desire she nurtured at Penn Dental Medicine to connect the fields of teaching, research, and practice, and to never put limits on learning. As she explores her new roles, she is eager to pass on her passion to a new generation of students.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR A LIFETIME

DR. CECILE FELDMAN, C'80, D'84, GD'85, W'85
DEAN, NEW JERSEY DENTAL SCHOOL, UMDNJ

The impressive career path of Dr. Cecile Feldman (C'80, D'84, GD '85, W'85), Dean of the New Jersey Dental School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), spans nearly 30 years, and has been marked by extraordinary opportunities that guided her educational choices and propelled her to the top post at a prestigious dental school.

As a chemistry and economics major at Penn in the late '70s, Dr. Feldman, a Clifton, N.J. native and the daughter of an orthodontist, had a keen interest in health care and was considering dentistry. She also had a fascination with business and planning. Although still an undergraduate, she applied for and was hired as a programmer in Penn's Planning Office (now the Office of Strategic Planning), eventually becoming a research fellow at the University's Higher Education Research Institute. There, she learned firsthand the complexities of strategic planning for a university, and her interest in higher education blossomed. That early chance for her, as a student, to prove her worth in a professional setting is what the University of Pennsylvania is all about, she says: "Penn excels at creating opportunity."

COMBINING INTERESTS AND SKILLS:

Building on her interests in dentistry and business, Dr. Feldman pursued a joint DMD/MBA degree in conjunction with the Wharton School, which is now officially one of the dual-degree options for dental students, preparing them for careers in administration and industry. She completed both degrees, along with her postdoctoral dental residency in general dentistry, over the next five years. During this time, her unique blend of educational experiences was further strengthened through another key opportunity: working with Penn Dental Medicine's Dean at the time, Dr. D. Walter Cohen, and the Associate Dean, Dr. James Galbally, in her position at the Higher Education Research Institute, she helped build financial models for the dental school.

For three years after her graduation in 1985, she stayed on at Penn Dental Medicine, teaching in the Department of

Dental Care Systems, and she is still a member of the School's adjunct faculty. In the Dental Auxiliary Utilization Clinic, she taught operative dentistry, as well as practice management, and other business-related courses. She had been at Penn for 11 years when she heard about an opening on the faculty at UMDNJ, the nation's largest free-standing health science university, which will soon become a part of Rutgers, The State University, under the recently enacted New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Higher Education Restructuring Act. That position led to a post as Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment.

To Dr. Feldman, it was a perfect marriage of health care and business — and a major learning experience. She helped develop the University's new comprehensive care program, managing information systems and quality assurance. Then, in 1999, yet another milestone opportunity arose: She was asked to serve as acting dean, and then, when it was clear that the Dean was not going to return to the dental school, she applied for the permanent position. ►

ALUMNI CURRENTLY SERVING AS DENTAL SCHOOL DEANS

Richard Buchanan (D'69),
College of Dental Medicine at Roseman University of Health Sciences

Cecile Feldman (C'80, D'84, GD'85, WG'85),
New Jersey Dental School, UMDNJ

Michael Glick (GD'88, HOM'94),
University of Buffalo School of Dental Medicine

Jeffrey Hutter (D'75),
Boston University Henry M. Goldman School of Dental Medicine

Mark Latta (D'83),
Creighton University School of Dentistry

Col. Thomas R. Schneid (D'79),
US Air Force Dental Service Dean

ALUMNI AT SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

A sampling of Penn Dental Medicine alumni currently working in academic teaching, research, and clinical roles at schools nationwide.

Columbia University College of Dental Medicine

Stephen J. Chu, D'84
Clinical Associate Professor, Periodontology & Implant Dentistry Director, Esthetic Education

Madeline Susan Ginzburg, D'79, GD'80
Assistant Clinical Professor Assistant Attending, Oral Surgery

Joseph McManus, D'72, GD'76
Associate Clinical Professor, Dental Medicine Section of Social & Behavioral Sciences Division of Community Health

Maria Velasco, D'10, GED'10
Instructor of Dental Medicine

East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine

Nancy Jacobson, D'89
Clinical Associate Professor, AEGD Residency Program

Francis G. Serio, D'80
Interim Vice Dean and Professor Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs

Georgia Health Sciences University COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

Katharine Ciarrocca, D'96, GD'98, GED'98
Assistant Professor & Director of Geriatrics

Scott S. De Rossi, D'95, GD'97
Associate Professor & Chair, Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences

J. Kobi Stern, GD'08
Director, Advanced Education of Periodontics Assistant Professor, Periodontics

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA
Jack C. Yu, D'82, GED'84, M'85
Milford B. Hatcher Chair, Professor, & Chief, Section of Plastic Surgery Chief, Pediatric Plastic Surgery, Children's Medical Center

Harvard School of Dental Medicine

Katherine Klein, D'05
Instructor Clinical Associate in Dentistry, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Mass General Hospital

Nathaniel Simon Treister, D'00
Assistant Professor of Oral Medicine Director of Postgraduate Oral Medicine Associate Surgeon, Division of Oral Medicine & Dentistry, Brigham and Women's Hospital

Jefferson Medical College

George Feldman, D'83
Associate Professor, Orthopaedic Research

Mount Sinai Medical Center, Dept. of Dentistry & Oral Surgery

James H. Doundoulakis, D'82, GED'82
Director of Implant Prosthetics

New Jersey Dental School, UMDNJ

Pamela Alberto, D'80
Clinical Associate Professor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Larry Gorzelnik, D'87
Clinical Assistant Professor, Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Howard Pomeranz, D'62
Clinical Professor, Endodontics

Reena Varghese, D'02, GED'02
Assistant Professor, Restorative Dentistry

New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center & Weill Cornell Medical College

Abhinav Sinha, D'05
Director, Pediatric Dental Clinic, New York Presbyterian Hospital Assistant Attending, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery/Dentistry Assistant Professor of Surgery, Weill Cornell Medical College

NOVA Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine

Abby J. Brodie, D'83
Associate Dean, Curriculum & Educational Affairs Associate Professor

Steven Haas, D'83, GD'84
Assistant Professor, Restorative Dentistry Assistant Dean, Predoctoral Clinics

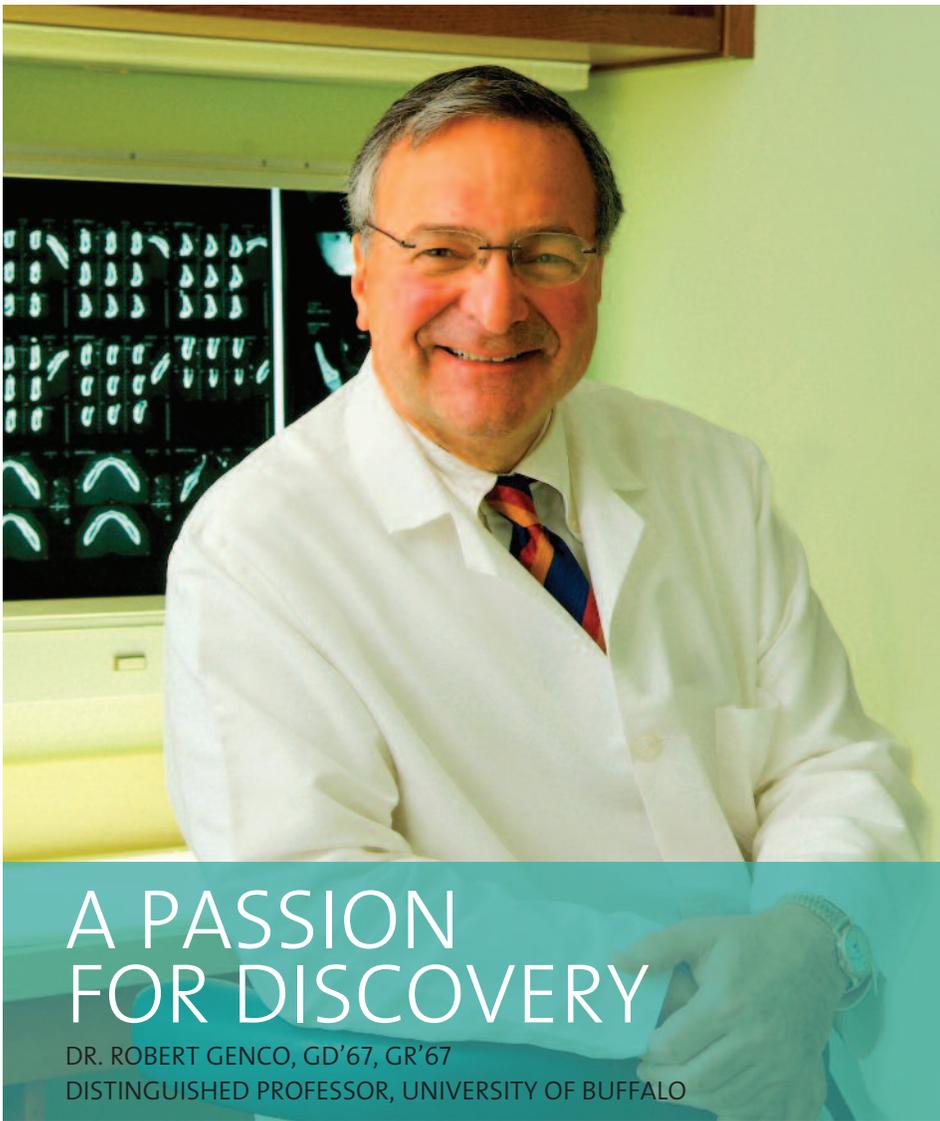
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CHALLENGES AND REWARDS: "I love what I do," she says. "It is fun and exciting, and there is a great deal of collegiality among the faculty, students, and administration here." Dr. Feldman's days are filled with creating budgets, developing programs, and working to advance the school. "Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the job is dealing with the financial challenges," she says. "Over the last decade, there have been significant cuts in support to public schools. These cuts are occurring at the same time that costs are increasing, there is a greater need for access to care by underserved populations, and an economic recession is making it more difficult for people to pay for their care. Trying to balance the school's tri-part mission of education, service, and research is becoming more and more difficult."

One of the accomplishments of which she is most proud is forming the New Jersey Dental School's first Department of Oral Biology. The department achieved top-10 status in less than 10 years since its creation. She also is proud of UMDNJ's community-oriented dental education program, which allows fourth-year students to spend their entire senior year at one of several community sites where residents have limited access to dental care. "I believe we are the only dental school that has created a program where students live for a year in the community where they are working," she says.

Over the last several years, Dr. Feldman has had the opportunity to serve in leadership roles at both the state and national level. This year, Dr. Feldman is Chair of the ADEA Council of Deans. For four years, she served on the NIH NIDCR Advisory Council and on the NIH Council of Councils. And several years ago, she held posts on the Commission on Dental Accreditation and New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. The experiences she gained at Penn, she says, have been critical to these and other professional successes. "The people I had the good fortune to work with were so open to mentoring me," she says. "Because of them, I was able to experience all aspects of the academic world."

"Penn's outstanding people are always looking to push forward the frontier and break boundaries," she adds. "That attitude helped set my outlook for my whole career, and it has become a part of my vision."



A PASSION FOR DISCOVERY

DR. ROBERT GENCO, GD'67, GR'67
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO

Dr. Robert Genco (GD'67, GR'67), SUNY Distinguished Professor of Oral Biology and Microbiology and Vice Provost of Science Technology Transfer and Economic Outreach at the University of Buffalo, splits his time between teaching and research, and his 35 years as a practicing periodontist have helped influence both. "My work is grounded in ideas that will ultimately benefit the patient," says the veteran researcher.

Among his significant research interests are the identification and study of risk factors that predict periodontal disease and the use of tissue engineering in regenerating bone in patients. These projects, and others, have led Dr. Genco to publish nearly 260 research papers. In addition, his current job involves teaching periodontics to dental students and overseeing the University of Buffalo's technology incubator, where academic researchers are supported in startup businesses based on their discoveries.

A LOVE OF SCIENCE: Dr. Genco attributes his early interest in science to teachers, including an excellent high school biology and chemistry instructor in his home town of Silver Creek, N.Y.,

and a college botany professor who offered him the chance to work with algae in the lab. "I guess you could say I was bit by the discovery bug," he says of these experiences, and he has been fascinated by the scientific process ever since. "The nature of research is that there is always a new challenge," he explains. "On any given day, you might discover something no one has ever seen before."

An experience of another kind also shaped Dr. Genco's career. In his youth, he "spent a lot of time in a dental chair," and came to respect deeply the work that his dentist performed. He went on to earn his dental degree from the University of Buffalo School of Dental Medicine. There a professor introduced him to Dr. D. Walter Cohen, Dean Emeritus of Penn Dental Medicine, who at the time was director of the Penn Dental Medicine postgraduate periodontal program. Dr. Genco was intrigued when Dr. Cohen outlined a flexible course of graduate study for him at Penn, utilizing the resources

of both the dental and medical schools, that would combine periodontics, with a PhD in immunology and microbiology and allow him to pursue his passion for research.

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH: "I appreciated the strong support that Penn provided for research in a dental environment. In those days this was unique," he remembers. "The dental school faculty were respected by the medical school faculty and treated as equals, as were the students." From 1963–1967, he completed the postgraduate program in periodontics here, concurrently earning his PhD at Penn as well. "Penn was a true highlight of my education," he says. "I have wonderful memories of friends and colleagues there, but most of all, I remember the excellent faculty."

Later, hired at the University of Buffalo for a faculty position in the newly created, research-focused oral biology department, Dr. Genco began a teaching career that would span decades and help educate generations of students, bridging the educational gap between basic science and dental science. The department will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its PhD program, which Dr. Genco helped develop as a means for periodontal residents to obtain research training. ►

ALUMNI AT SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE

LIST CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

NOVA Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine (cont.)

Maria Hernandez, GD'03
Assistant Professor & Director of
Postgraduate Periodontics

Steven M. Kelner, D'79, GD'86
Associate Dean of Institutional Affairs
Professor, Endodontics

Seymour Oliet, D'53
Professor, Endodontics
Dean Emeritus

Robert Seltzer, D'72, GD'76
Associate Professor, Endodontics

NYU College of Dentistry

Stephen. J. Chu, D'84
Clinical Associate Professor,
Periodontology & Implant Dentistry

Dharti Patel, D'02
Clinical Assistant Professor, Oral &
Maxillofacial Pathology, Radiology,
& Medicine

Cristina Teixeira, GD'97, D'00, GR'01
Associate Professor, Orthodontics &
Basic Science & Craniofacial Biology
Chair, Orthodontics

Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine

Ann Nastj, D'82
Clinical Associate Professor, General
Dentistry
Director, Year 2 Primary Care Clinic

Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry

Meredith Bogert, D'83, GD'84
Director, AEGD Program

Daniel Boston, D'78
Associate Dean for Comprehensive
Clinical Care
Laura Carnell Professor of Restorative
Dentistry

University of Buffalo

Heidi Crow, D'85
Associate Dean, Advanced Education,
School of Dental Medicine
Associate Professor, Oral Diagnostics
Sciences

Robert Genco, GD'67, GR'67
SUNY Distinguished Professor of Oral
Biology and Microbiology
Vice Provost of Science Technology
Transfer and Economic Outreach

University of Connecticut

Douglas E. Peterson, D'72, PhD'76
Professor, Oral Medicine, Dept. of Oral
Health & Diagnostic Sciences,
School of Dental Medicine
Co-chair, Program in Head & Neck
Cancer & Oral Oncology, Neag
Comprehensive Cancer Center

University of Florida

Marc W. Heft, EE'70, D'74
Professor, College of Dentistry,
College of Medicine, and College
of Public Health
Director, Claude Denson Pepper Center
for Research on Oral Health in Aging

University of Louisville School of Dentistry

Wendy Hupp, D'84
Assistant Professor, General Dentistry
& Oral Medicine

University of Maryland School of Dentistry

Guadalupe E. Garcia, D'02
Assistant Professor & Director, Implant
Prosthodontics Predoctoral Program

University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry

J. Bruce Bavitz, D'84, GD'85
Dr. Merritt C. Pedersen Professor &
Chair, Surgical Specialties

University of Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry

Robert Boyd, GD'74
Professor & Chair, Orthodontics

Joorok Park, D'06
Assistant Professor, Orthodontics

University of Pittsburgh

Bernard J. Costello, D'94, M'97, GD'00,
RES'00
Chief, Pediatric Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery, Children's Hospital of
Pittsburgh
Professor & Program Director, Oral &
Maxillofacial Surgery Residency &
Fellowship Program, School of
Dental Medicine

University of Southern California Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry

Mahvash Navazesh, GD'78, D'83
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs &
Student Life

University of Tennessee

Eric R. Carlson, D'85
Professor & Chair, Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery, Graduate School of Medicine
Director, OMS Residency Program

John D. Seeberg, D'69
Assistant Professor & Director of
Undergraduate Clinics, Health
Science Center College of Dentistry

University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Barbara A. MacNeill, D'02
Clinical Assistant Professor,
Comprehensive Dentistry

Stephen R. Matteson, D'62
Research Professor, Developmental
Dentistry

Thomas W. Oates, D'83, GD'84
Assistant Dean for Clinical Research
Professor & Vice Chair, Periodontics

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We realize there are other alumni in academic roles; this list includes those we were able to confirm for this issue, but if you are working in academia, we would like to hear from you so we can share that in a future Penn Dental Journal. Please submit your information at www.dental.upenn.edu/classnotes/alumnifedback@dental.upenn.edu

A MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH: Discovering who is likely to develop periodontal disease — and why — has been one of Dr. Genco's ongoing research interests over the years, and his results have shaped current knowledge and treatment.

"We used to think that people got periodontal disease regardless of their medical history," says Dr. Genco, who has received 21 years of federal support to study the topic. "Gradually, our studies allowed us to identify a list of risk factors — diabetes, smoking, stress, osteoporosis, low calcium levels — that predict the prevalence of the disease." By studying Native American populations, particularly the Pima Indians, who have a 50% incidence of Type 2 diabetes, he and his team discovered that a lack of diabetic control was linked to an increase in the severity of periodontal disease. He and his coworkers also found that those with diabetes who suffered from periodontal disease had worse diabetes, and were at greater risk of dying from heart and kidney disease than those diabetics with little or no periodontal disease. This breakthrough in the understanding of the systemic effects of periodontal disease marked the birth of modern periodontic medicine. This year, Dr. Genco was recognized for his many contributions to the understanding, prevention, treatment, and systemic consequences of periodontal disease with the American Academy of Periodontology's Distinguished Scientist Award for 2012.

NEW IDEAS TO MARKET: In addition, Dr. Genco's research has focused on tissue engineering, the regeneration of periodontal tissue and bone after it has been lost to periodontal disease. In collaboration with BioMimetic Therapeutics, he evaluated Gem 21, a platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF) that has been approved by the FDA for treatment of periodontic bone loss. A new dental regeneration product using fibroblast growth factor (FGF) will soon enter clinical trials. Both products allow implants to be placed in jaws weakened by periodontal disease. These are typical of the many new discoveries being brought to market by the University of Buffalo's technology incubator, which Dr. Genco describes as "a welcoming environment for startup businesses," including those that produce drugs, medical devices, and software.

Research results like these, directly benefitting patients, are a large part of what makes Dr. Genco's career such a satisfying one: "I have the opportunity to truly make a contribution, to positively affect people around the globe." **PDJ**

—Juliana Delany