

INTERPROFESSIONAL TIES ACROSS PENN

DR. KELLY JORDAN-SCIUTTO TAKES ON NEW ROLE AS DIRECTOR OF BIOMEDICAL GRADUATE STUDIES AT PENN

AT PENN DENTAL MEDICINE, Dr. Kelly Jordan-Sciutto, Chair and Professor of Pathology, has focused her research on neurodegeneration and neuroinflammation, particularly as it relates to HIV infection. It is a research agenda with an impact broader than dental medicine, Dr. Jordan-Sciutto says, but one that fits well with Penn Dental Medicine's diverse approach to basic science research.

Now, in a move that will further build bridges for dental faculty and students to collaborate on research with colleagues across the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Jordan-Sciutto was appointed Director of Biomedical Graduate Studies (BGS) at Penn, effective Feb. 1, 2017; in this position, she will also hold the

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OPPOSITE: Dr. Kelly Jordan-Sciutto, Chair and Professor, Department of Pathology.

title of Associate Dean for Graduate Education in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine. She is the first person to serve as Director of BGS who does not have a primary faculty appointment in the Perelman School of Medicine.

In sharing news of her appointment with the Penn Dental Medicine community, Dean Denis Kinane, noted that it "reflects her outstanding leadership, extensive service to the University, and status as an extraordinary researcher. This appointment will help us to better integrate our research and PhD mentoring across Penn for the betterment of all."

Established in 1985, BGS enrolls about 700 students in seven PhD programs in basic biomedical sciences. With some 650 faculty members across seven Penn schools, including Penn Dental Medicine, BGS serves as a national model for interdisciplinary education in the biomedical sciences.

Dr. Jonathan A. Epstein, Executive Vice Dean, Chief Scientific Officer and William Wikoff Smith Professor of Cardiovascular Research, Perelman School of Medicine, and Dr. Beth Winkelstein, Vice Provost for Education,



and Professor of Bioengineering, said in announcing Dr. Jordan-Sciutto's appointment that she "will bring bold ideas, enthusiasm, and a strong commitment to teaching and training to this critical leadership role." With her selection, they continued, "We see a truly unique opportunity to further strengthen connections across programs, Schools, and the University."

In addition to her membership in four of seven graduate groups within BGS, Dr. Jordan-Sciutto is a member of the Center for AIDS Research and the Mahoney Institute of Neurological Sciences and a fellow in the Institute of Aging in the Perelman School of Medicine. She also serves as Co-Director of the Penn Post-baccalaureate Research Education Program.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERPROFESSIONAL RESEARCH

As she assumes her new responsibilities, Dr. Jordan-Sciutto retains her position as Chair and Professor as well as teaching and research commitments at Penn Dental

Medicine. Penn, she says, is "a very integrated campus" and provides a unique opportunity for faculty and students throughout the University to work together. "I would like to enhance this further and create more opportunity for dental students and others to engage in interprofessional and cross-disciplinary research," she notes.

"The basic sciences at any professional school have common roots," Dr. Jordan-Sciutto says.

"People need to understand a problem from more than one perspective. The best way to get at a question is to work collaboratively — whether dental, veterinary, or medicine — to move things at the forefront of science. The more we work together, the more we can get done."

She says she hopes the visibility of her new roles will help make "faculty and students in Penn Dental Medicine more interested in research and graduate education. I've already seen more interest by students in research, and the more opportunity they have to do research, the better it is for their educations."

And while she and other researchers from Penn Dental Medicine have long been involved in basic science research at the University, including Perelman School of Medicine and the Schools of Veterinary Medicine, Engineering and Applied Science, Arts and Sciences, and Nursing, she now has a broader platform to promote understanding of the resources at Penn Dental Medicine to the wider University. "What I bring back to the School in my teaching and my interaction with colleagues are my experiences in medical research," she says, "and now, I'm in a position where I can help include dentistry more prominently."

Dr. Jordan-Sciutto says her appointment further highlights the value of the Dental School faculty to Penn's research community. "People are aware of our outstanding clinical expertise and, since the arrival of Dean Kinane, our research profile has risen further due to the strong research programs of the faculty," she says. "It's an exciting time to be at the Dental School."

INTERPROFESSIONALITIES

Dr. Jordan-Sciutto's appointment as Associate Dean and Director of Biomedical Graduate Studies is just one example of the strong interprofessional role of Penn Dental Medicine faculty and students throughout the University. Recently, there have been several other noteworthy awards and initiatives that highlight Penn Dental Medicine's interprofessional work and contributions.

DR. ELLIOT HERSH RECEIVES 2016 PENN ONE HEALTH AWARD

This fall, Dr. Elliot Hersh, Professor in the Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology, was one of three University of Pennsylvania faculty members to receive Penn's 2016 One Health Award, which recognizes exemplary contributions to expanding interdisciplinary collaboration across Penn's health science schools and improving health care for the benefit of humans, animals, and the environment.

Dr. Hersh, in collaboration with fellow award recipients Dr. John T. Farrar, Associate Professor of Epidemiology, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the Perelman School of Medicine, and Dr. Rosemary Polomano, Associate Dean and Professor of Pain Practice at the School of Nursing, leads an interdisciplinary course on pain science and practice for Penn dental, nursing, and medical students. The course stems from the faculty members' work as co-principal investigators on the NIH-funded Penn Center for Excellence in Pain Education.

Since 2013, the innovative academic pain course has been an interschool and interinstitutional draw for more than 400 students, clinicians, and international colleagues. Reflecting national concerns, the course helps to train the next generation of interprofessional health care providers in pain care and pain management, who are learning to develop strategies to reduce the opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction associated with the treatment of pain. According to the American Academy on Pain Management, some 75 million Americans live with chronic or acute pain.

Dr. Hersh's research focus is on novel local anesthetic drugs and alternatives to opioids in the management of acute postoperative pain, and his clinical research plays a key role in developing and carrying out FDA-pivotal clinical trials.

The course, previously offered over two weekends in January, this year will be offered as a seminar series, the first of which was held April 11. Penn Dental Medicine students, who can take the course as an elective, benefit

from the course in several ways, Dr. Hersh says. For one, they are presented with pain areas for which they get little formal education at Penn Dental Medicine, such as sickle cell, limb amputation, and chronic back pain. Also importantly, he says the course provides dental students with the opportunity to network and collaborate with students in other health professional disciplines, thus broadening their overall understanding of non-dental-related pain their patients may experience and the treatments they are receiving for these chronic pain conditions.

"I am extremely honored to win this prestigious award, and very fortunate to continue to work with Dr. Farrar and Dr. Polomano in both the research and teaching arenas," Dr. Hersh says.

DR. ERIC STOOPLER NAMED PENN MEDICINE MASTER CLINICIAN

Dr. Eric Stoopler, Associate Professor of Oral Medicine and Director of the Oral Medicine Residency Program, has been named the first Penn Dental Medicine faculty member elected to The Academy of Master Clinicians, the highest clinical honor bestowed by Penn Medicine.

"I am truly honored to be included in this prestigious group," Dr. Stoopler says. "Inclusion in the Academy reflects the vital importance of oral medicine clinical services within the health system and the strong reputation of the department throughout the University."

Dr. Stoopler was one of 13 faculty members selected for the Academy's Class of 2016; the others are physicians from departments and entities across Penn Medicine.

He expects his membership in the Academy will serve to strengthen the interprofessional ties that already exist between Penn Dental Medicine, Penn Medicine, and the University. The Department of Oral Medicine, he notes, has a long history of interprofessional collaboration with several departments in the Perelman School of Medicine and is currently developing interprofessional clinical practice models with the School of Nursing.





“Penn Dental Medicine students regularly participate in academic and clinical activities with students and faculty from both these schools,” Dr. Stoopler says. “My recognition as a Master Clinician will enable me to foster new relationships with clinicians in this unique forum, which will lead to development of new interprofessional educational opportunities for dental students.”

Dr. Stoopler routinely sees patients referred from a variety of Penn Medicine clinical departments for evaluation and management of oral medicine conditions, collaborating regularly with colleagues in internal medicine, dermatology, endocrinology, otorhinolaryngology, radiation oncology, cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery, psychiatry, neurosurgery, and other clinical practices.

The Academy of Master Clinicians, established in 2013, recognizes and promotes clinical excellence across Penn Medicine by fostering the highest standards of patient care, with a dedication to the art of medicine, education, professionalism, humanism, collegiality, and citizenship.

In particular, a Master Clinician is recognized as an outstanding educator and patient advocate and is recognized for exceptional clinical skills, excellent judgment, integrity, and exemplary interpersonal and communication skills with patients and colleagues.

NEW PARTNERSHIP IN HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH PROGRAM

In a new initiative, Penn Dental Medicine students now have the opportunity to participate in a summer program at Penn that explores health services research in the area of health disparities. First-year student Andrew Ng (D’20) will be the first to take part this summer.

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The program is co-sponsored by the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics and the Health Care Management Department of the Wharton School to prepare top candidates to pursue careers in health services research, a multidisciplinary field that considers the political, social, economic, and environmental issues that can impact health care access, treatment, and costs. Initially established for undergraduates from underrepresented minority groups, dental students may now apply to participate in the 10-week program.

“Students with an interest in health services research will have an opportunity to explore it further and perhaps choose a

career path that allows them to practice and continue doing this type of research,” said Dr. Uri Hangorsky, Associate Dean for Student Life and Director of PASS. “This program could introduce them to a new aspect of research and encourage them to pursue an academic career in dentistry.”

The summer research program provides another platform for Penn Dental Medicine students to engage with students and faculty in other academic disciplines, promoting cross-school collaborative research opportunities. Furthering this interprofessional experience, participating Penn Dental Medicine students will each work with a Penn faculty mentor outside the field of dentistry, while addressing important health care issues that may cross disciplinary lines.

The program starts in June with an introduction to research skills boot camp and continues with weekly seminars. A highlight of the experience will be the opportunity for participants to attend Academy Health’s Annual Research Meeting in New Orleans in June. At the end of the program, students give a symposium presentation based on their research. Students also often work with their faculty mentor to submit their work for publication.

“It is a wonderful interprofessional opportunity for our students,” says Susan Schwartz, Assistant Dean for Academic Services and Student Life, “enabling them to take advantage of the many resources and opportunities available at Penn that otherwise may not have been tapped.” ■

— By Debbie Goldberg

LEFT: Dr. Elliot Hersh, Professor, Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery/Pharmacology.
ABOVE: Dr. Eric Stoopler, Associate Professor of Oral Medicine (left), with an oral medicine resident.