

DEAN'S MESSAGE



Dear Alumni and Friends:

The Dental School community was immensely distressed along with the rest of the nation by the horror of September 11. Activities here ground to a halt and we closed for the afternoon to participate in the reflection necessary for all at that tragic time, and for those at the school to verify the safety of friends or relatives who were potentially in harm's way. Fortunately, none near and dear to those in the School were amongst those lost.

Yet, as a community of caregivers, very quickly our people tried to help. Our efforts included representation on the dental forensics team at the Pennsylvania crash site, as well as a student fundraising campaign for the American Red Cross by making and distributing spirit ribbons for a donation. These activities have been featured in newsletters of the American Student Dental Association, the American Dental Education Association and the American Dental Association. As this issue of FORUM goes to press we have received word from Governor Glendening's office that funds will be available to begin construction on our new building on or after June 1, 2002. The design/development phase of the project is complete, so construction documents will be the next step. A groundbreaking ceremony will be scheduled for late spring or early summer.

The design/development drawings from the architects preview a very exciting building. In addition to necessary function, which is of course the first requisite, the building will have quality-of-life features that will make it a pleasurable place to work, study or visit. From a smaller footprint than the present building, the new building will extend higher to achieve the same amount of useable space. Featuring an atrium above the main entrance from Baltimore Street upwards for nine stories, and a transverse atrium from floors five through nine. The new school will allow outside light in for a dramatically brighter interior.

The ground floor will feature lecture and seminar rooms, a computer theater and attractive public space in a wing extending in front of our present building. Floors one through four will comprise the clinical teaching and service areas, the fifth floor is primarily pre-clinical simulation and technique laboratories, the sixth houses school administration, and floors above are primarily basic science and research.

The commitment by the Governor to the need for a new Dental School building will keep us close to the original timeline and not delay the project unduly. We will make further announcements for groundbreaking once we have more specifics.

Finally, on a personal note, I announced on January 29th that I will be stepping down from the position of Dean at the end of this calendar year (or sooner if a successor is identified). Institutional changes in leadership, while they can be stressful because of uncertainties during the process, also present great opportunities for significant leaps forward. By next fall the School must begin preparing for the 2004 comprehensive site visit for accreditation of our DDS, dental hygiene, and advanced dental education programs, and our new building enters the construction phase. This period of intense introspection of programs and facilities is an ideal time for a successful candidate to begin his or her tenure at the School.

Searches for deans normally take a number of months. Be assured that I will continue to serve the School as I have for the remainder of the time I am in office. After that, my immediate plans are to work for a year with the American Dental Education Association on licensure issues, then return to the faculty in the Department of Periodontics, while spending more time fishing and with my family.

The efforts of the School's faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends during my ten years at the School have been remarkable. And for that, I thank you.

Richard R. Ranney, DDS, MS
Dean