Lee wins Omaha Publinks golf tourney

Third-year Creighton dental student Stephen Lee of Everett, Wash., won the championship flight of the Omaha World-Herald Publinks golf tournament this summer. Lee was on the golf team at Santa Clara University, but hadn’t played much golf since coming to Omaha and Creighton’s School of Dentistry. “I had only played about seven rounds of golf in Omaha before the tournament,” Lee said. Lee also had some trouble finding a caddy. “Everybody was studying for boards,” Lee said, forcing him to carry his own bag for 36 holes.

At Creighton, Lee is the vice president of his class and editor of the Extractor, the School’s student newspaper.

Get your clubs ready

The second annual Creighton University School of Dentistry Alumni-Student-Faculty Golf Outing will be held Saturday, April 21, 2001, during the 2001 Spring Dental Assembly. This past April, despite chilly temperatures, more than 100 golfers participated in the event. The 2001 golf outing will be held at Tregaron Golf Course in Bellevue, Neb. Watch for your invitation in the mail and join the fun.

School, alumni fund dental X-ray for ILAC

Thanks to a $3,000 joint gift from the School of Dentistry and its alumni, a dental X-ray machine has been purchased for the Institute for Latin American Concern (ILAC) Center in the Dominican Republic. The machine will be placed in the Center’s dental operatory, which has been in existence for two years. The X-ray machine allows Creighton students, faculty and alumni participating in the ILAC program to provide greater comprehensive dental care to needy Dominicans.
While most of our days in the School of Dentistry are occupied with classes, patients and other matters needing immediate attention, we also need to look beyond to see issues affecting our future. Fortunately, we have a strong Strategic Planning Committee. Chaired by Dr. Thomas R. Meng, Associate Professor of Prosthodontics, the Committee recently revised the Vision Statement for the School of Dentistry.

The new Vision Statement reads:

Creighton University School of Dentistry is committed to excellence in education, patient care, service and research. It exists to develop dental professionals who will use the knowledge and technology of the 21st century in the Jesuit educational tradition characterized by compassion, leadership, professionalism, creativity, service and social justice.

To fulfill our vision and position ourselves for the 21st century, we have made important changes in facilities and programs. Major renovations include a new central sterilization area with state-of-the-science equipment. In conjunction with the use of this new facility, students will now lease, not purchase, instruments, equipment and supplies. During the summer months, our cafeteria, Sara’s Place, named after former faculty member Sara Susman, was renovated and expanded, providing a more pleasing and functional environment for students, staff and faculty. In our three main classrooms, new projection equipment for computer presentations has been installed.

We have restructured some teaching and clinical programs. To enhance our programs and help posture the School for the next accreditation review, we undertook a department reorganization.

The former departments of Comprehensive Dental Care, Operative Dentistry and Oral Diagnosis and Radiology were combined into a new Department of General Dentistry. This new department will serve as the nucleus for diagnosis, treatment planning and coordination of comprehensive care for our patients. After a national search, Dr. W. Thomas Cavel was named Chair of the Department of General Dentistry. The Department of Fixed Prosthodontics and the Department of Removable Prosthodontics also were combined into a new Department of Prosthodontics. Dr. Jared H. Smith will chair this department.

This fall, we welcomed a new freshman class, a class that can boast the highest grade-point average and Dental Admission Test scores for a class entering our School. We also have a record number of 24 students who were undergraduates of Creighton University.

In addition to our innovations, we welcomed a new President of Creighton University, the Rev. John P. Schlegel, S.J., during a series of inauguration events in September. Under his leadership and direction, we look forward to continuing the tradition of excellence at the School of Dentistry.

We cannot achieve this without the support and help of our alumni. Alumni and friends demonstrated their support this past year by setting a record in Annual Fund giving, which, for the first time, exceeded $260,000. I thank you, our loyal supporters, for generously giving to our School and supporting our students.

The future is bright; it is a good time for dentistry and our School. We are confident of good years to come.

Wayne W. Barkmeier, D.D.S., M.S.
Dean, School of Dentistry

Dr. Romer A. Ocanto, Assistant Professor of Community and Preventive Dentistry, presented a Table Clinic at a TechnoFair at the Annual Session of the American Association of Dental Schools in Washington, D.C., in April 2000.

Dr. John W. Shanner, Associate Professor of General Dentistry, presented a Table Clinic on Mandibular Advancement Appliances: Dental Side Effects at the Academy of Operative Dentistry Meeting in Chicago in February 2000.

Jan Hillis, Assistant Clinical Professor of Periodontics and Chair of the Iowa Western Community College Dental Hygiene Program, was elected Vice President of the Nebraska Dental Hygiene Association. Hillis also was recently promoted by IWCC to Assistant Professor.

Dr. Randall Ellis, Associate Professor of Pediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics, has been appointed to the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry’s Advisory Council.

Dr. Gary H. Westerman was recognized as a Research Award Competition Finalist by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Foundation at the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry’s Annual Session in May 2000. Dr. Westerman is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Community and Preventive Dentistry and holder of the Dr. Oscar S. Belzer Endowed Chair in Dentistry. The title of his paper was “Argon Laser Curing of Fluoride-Releasing Pit and Fissure Sealant: In-Vitro Caries Development.” The paper’s co-authors were Drs. M. John Hicks and Cathy Flaitz.

Dr. Laura Romito, Assistant Professor of General Dentistry, and Dr. Luke Matranga, Associate Professor of General Dentistry, received a summer grant from Creighton’s Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to support assessment efforts in the School of Dentistry.
First Dental Hygiene class scores high marks

The Dental Hygiene Program, offered through a cooperative agreement between Iowa Western Community College and the Creighton School of Dentistry, graduated its first class in the spring of 2000. Fifteen students completed the two-year degree.

Outstanding students recognized were: Nichole Cadieux, valedictorian; Gerri Baxter, Iowa Student of the Year; Andrea Matthews, Nebraska Student of the Year; Marjean Schwitters, Hu-Freidy Golden Scaler Award; Michele Ullery, Procter and Gamble Community Service Award; and Michelle Zoucha, The Director’s Award for outstanding overall achievement.

The class recorded a 100 percent pass rate on the Dental Hygiene National Boards in April. One student achieved a perfect score on the case-based section of the exam, and the class average ranked in the top decile nationally. The graduates also had a 100 percent pass rate on the Central Regional Dental Testing Service, with more than half receiving perfect scores.

In August, the program received full accreditation from the Commission on Dental Accreditation in Chicago, Ill.

“I am very proud of the students’ successes; they are to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication,” said Jan Hillis, RDH, MA, the Dental Hygiene Program Chair. “The faculty has also put in a tremendous amount of time and effort to make this new program competitive with established programs.”

Elbow room with a view

Sara’s Place, the School’s cafeteria, was renovated and expanded this summer, with large windows lining the north wall.

Seniors present awards to faculty, staff

The following honors were presented at the 2000 Senior Awards Banquet in April.

• Dr. Raymond W. Shaddy Memorial Award for Outstanding Member of the Clinical Faculty — Dr. Scott C. Di Lorenzo, Assistant Professor of Prosthodontics.
• Sara K. Susman Memorial Award for Outstanding Dedication by Support Staff — Debbie Anderson.
• Dr. Anne M. Garred Memorial Award for Outstanding Dedication in Providing Dental Education — Dr. Dennis R. Higginbotham, Associate Professor of General Dentistry.
• Dr. Theodore J. Urban Memorial Award for Outstanding Dedication to Preclinical Education — Dr. Neil S. Norton, Assistant Professor of Oral Biology.
• Instructors of the Year — Dr. Norton, freshman class; Dr. Terry M. Wilwerding, Associate Professor of Prosthodontics, sophomore class; Dr. Di Lorenzo (clinical) and Dr. Frank J. Dowd Jr., Professor of Pharmacology (academic), junior class; and Dr. Robert J. Achterberg, Associate Professor of General Dentistry (academic), and Dr. Randy E. Stout, Adjunct Professor of Prosthodontics (clinical), senior class.

Maxillofacial Imaging Center

By Dr. Tarnjit Saini, Associate Professor of General Dentistry Diplomate, ABOMR

A $45,980 grant from the Health Future Foundation funded the purchase of a conventional tomographic unit for the School. The unit provides radiographic sections of desired osseous anatomical areas without superimposition of the adjacent structures. It also generates sectional imaging of the mandible and maxilla in a bucco-lingual direction for the site selection, location of the inferior alveolar canal and sinus floor, and the architecture of the bone for implantological purposes. The conventional skull radiographic examination also can be facilitated for diagnostic purposes.

The unit significantly enhances maxillofacial imaging at the School, catering to the needs of TMJ and implantology. Radiographic services utilizing this equipment also will be made available to local and regional area dentists for referrals and provide much needed services for specialized patient care services.

The new tomographic equipment also will be an excellent tool for research endeavors. Already, two student research projects are being formulated to study the functional effects on the lateral pterygoid plate and postoperative evaluation of inserted implants with and without prior sectional radiography. The procurement of the unit by the School further illustrates the efforts being made to generate excellent standards of care and foster research in the new millennium.
The following research abstracts were presented by Creighton School of Dentistry faculty and students at the 78th General Session of the International Association for Dental Research Meeting in Washington, D.C. Presenters are marked with an asterisk.

- Barkmeier WW*, Latta MA, Christensen TL and Erickson RL. Comparison of In-Vitro and Clinical Wear Rates of Composite Resins. J. Dent. Res. 79:246 (Abstract 820), 2000
- Kelsey WP*, Latta MA, Stanislav CM and Barkmeier WW. Shear Bond Strengths of Composite Resin to Porcelain. J. Dent. Res. 79:249 (Abstract 842), 2000
- Latta MA, Stanislav CM, Christensen TL* and Brazeau L. In-Vitro Wear Assessment of Composite Resin Against Enamel. J. Dent. Res. 79:365 (Abstract 1775), 2000

The following articles, authored and co-authored by School of Dentistry faculty, were recently published:
- Kelsey WP, Latta MA, Stanislav CM and Shaddy RS. Comparison of Composite Resin-to-Porcelain Bond Strength with Three Adhesives. General Dentistry; 48:418-421, 2000
- Brundo GC, Preparing to Be a Dean. Journal of Dental Education; 64:430-432, 2000

Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health: What does it mean for Creighton?

The first Surgeon General’s Report on Oral Health in America, released this summer, found that while dental care has vastly improved over the past 50 years, oral diseases continue to threaten poor and minority Americans at a disproportionately high rate.

“Those who suffer the worst oral health are found among the poor of all ages, with poor children and poor older Americans particularly vulnerable,” U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher wrote in the preface of the 309-page report. “Members of racial and ethnic minority groups also experience a disproportionate level of oral health problems.”

Dr. Frank Ayers, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, said Creighton’s School of Dentistry is in a unique position to address those vulnerable groups.

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Thalidomide research

Biologist Dr. Trent Stephens, a faculty member in the Idaho Dental Education Program, has published research in the journal Teratology explaining how the drug thalidomide causes birth defects. Thousands of deformed babies were born in the late 1950s after their mothers took the drug to fight morning sickness. The School of Dentistry has maintained a long-term cooperative relationship with the state of Idaho. Dr. Stephens is an Adjunct Professor of Oral Biology at Idaho State University.