Urban poverty is changing and growing. How do we keep up?
Dental schools are an integral part of urban communities. We provide an essential service to the city’s most vulnerable, while engaging with nearby hospitals and research institutes to drive innovation. Our students live, work and volunteer across the city as they learn.

Throughout this issue, we explore some of the critical health problems found in Toronto and in cities across the country, and how these intersect with our schools and our patients. This is a small piece of a much larger dialogue about how we can respond to changes in our local environments, and the challenges we face in creating sustainable educational healthcare facilities.

Our first feature takes a close look at the obstacles our patients navigate on a daily basis. Between food insecurity, affordability and a precarious labour market, our patients are being increasingly stretched in ways many of us would find unimaginable.

As dentists, we know oral health has a significant socio-economic component. In a 2015 journal article, “Assessing the relationship between dental appearance and the potential for discrimination in Ontario, Canada,” researchers from UofT Dentistry examined the role dental appearances play in societal discrimination. They outlined how poor oral health is perceived to be a marker of poverty, and that poor dental appearance can affect the way an individual is treated as well as their self-esteem.

When we treat patients, we have an opportunity to alleviate some of the barriers that reinforce cyclical poverty. In our second feature, we look at the city of Toronto as a healthcare innovation hub and how UofT Dentistry plays a pivotal role. It is imperative that we continue to leverage our resources to connect the needs of our patients, the skills and knowledge of our clinicians, and the scientific breadth of our basic science researchers. By continuing to break down silos and foster meaningful dialogue between groups across the city, we increase our ability to solve some of the fundamental problems in oral health and disease — and beyond — and make profound differences in the lives of our patients.

This is all part of our ongoing mission to reinvigorate dental research. In fields such as biomaterials, nanoscience, pain, cancer and tissue regeneration and repair, our research output continues to mark UofT Dentistry as a world-class research institution. With the official opening of our new research facilities this past spring, we are also signalling a reinvestment in the future of healthcare, and reinforcing our role as leaders in advancing knowledge that will ultimately benefit all patients.
**BANNER YEAR FOR GRANTS**

Over the last year, UofT Dentistry researchers have earned an unprecedented number of important funding grants.

Currently, 10 Dentistry researchers hold prestigious Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Discovery Grants — a new record for the Faculty.

Grace de Souza, Bernhard Ganss, Massieh Moayedi, Anuradha Prakki and Paul Santerre received Discovery Grants in November, totalling just over $580,000 in funding. Previous awardees include Siew-Ging Gong, Anil Kishen, Celine Levesque, Tara Moriarty and Karina Carneiro. NSERC funds support faculty members with the day-to-day costs of their research programs.

UofT Dentistry students also broke funding records for the Faculty. Eight graduate students won highly competitive grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research’s (CIHR) Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis during the latest round of funding, accounting for over one quarter of the total CIHR funds awarded across the University of Toronto.

Assistant professor Limor Avivi-Arber 9T3 Dip Prostho, 9T4 MSc, OT9 PhD was awarded a two-year, $150,000 CIHR Catalyst Grant for her study of intraoral injuries.

Also, a Connaught New Researcher Award from the University of Toronto valued at $10,000 has been awarded to assistant professor Marco Carneiro. NSERC funds support the student’s long-term research goals.

**LEARNING CIRCLE KICKS OFF INDIGENOUS STUDY**

Digital storytelling and other culturally appropriate Indigenous health interventions were the focus of a learning circle hosted at the Faculty by professor Heneria Lawrence this past May. The circle began the final leg of the Nishtam Niwiipitan Study (My First Teeth), which brings together co-investigators, students and community partners from First Nations communities across Ontario and Manitoba.

The goal of the study is to reduce early childhood caries (ECC), a disease that is vastly overrepresented in Indigenous communities, and which has led to the use of anaesthesia as the norm, rather than the exception, for treating the disease.

Funded by a CIHR Team Grant, this portion of the study is dedicated to developing family-centred preventive techniques such as motivational interviews and digital storytelling.

“Storytelling as a research methodology is not new in Indigenous community-based research,” says Lawrence, “but digital storytelling has recently emerged as a participatory visual method and an effective strategy for promoting health and wellbeing.”

“Mothers will share their stories with prenatal mothers, and at the same time, the long tradition of Aboriginal storytelling will be honoured via new media,” says Lawrence.

Children in the study also receive fluoride varnish interventions. Yet for Lawrence, the prevention of ECC rests on the social side of the issue, not just the medical. “Restorative dental care alone will never be able to make a significant dent in the number of Indigenous children requiring emergency dental treatment.”

**DENTISTRY PROFS’ IMPACT RECOGNIZED**

Two faculty members have been singled out for the highest honours from the American Association of Endodontics: professor Shimon Friedman was awarded the I.B. Bender Lifetime Educator Award, while professor emeritus Calvin Torneck 5T8 was awarded the Part-Time Educator Award. Both were honoured for their impact on student learning throughout their careers. Torneck’s award is also one-of-a-kind: the AAE renamed it the Calvin D. Torneck Part-Time Educator Award, in recognition of Torneck’s immense lifetime contributions.

As well, professor Paul Santerre has been awarded one of seven inaugural University of Toronto President’s Impact Awards (PIA). The award acknowledges the impact of his work beyond academia in research, translation and commercialization. Santerre and his fellow honourees were chosen from across the university and also have been inducted as advisors into the newly formed President’s Impact Academy.

Earlier this spring, Santerre, who is cross-appointed to the Institute of Biomaterials & Biomedical Engineering (iBBME) and the Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research, was named to the $2.5M Baxter Chair of Health Technology and Commercialization, and received a prestigious Ontario Professional Engineers Award for his entrepreneurship.

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**GET INVOLVED**

All our alumni are voting members of the Faculty of Dentistry Alumni Association. Become a board member or take part in the annual fall Alumni Association meeting. Become an instructor, a mentor, a volunteer or a donor. For more information: www.dentistry.utoronto.ca/alumni.
n May 25, the Faculty officially opened the newly renovated fourth and fifth floors of the Dentistry building on Edward Street. In attendance at the ribbon cutting were faculty, staff and dignitaries, including UofT president Meric Gertler, and representatives from the University of Toronto and the Government of Canada.

The $20-million project saw labs, offices, and meeting rooms on these two floors revitalized. Many of the labs were original to 1959, while others dated back to 1985. Most were in poor condition.

They’re now bright, well ventilated and fully accessible. Some of the furniture, including benches, is modular and can be unplugged and moved to accommodate new research projects. Throughout the project, green technologies were used.

Five of Dentistry’s most celebrated principal investigators have also moved from satellite locations on campus to Edward Street, where they join existing research teams in open, collaborative spaces for meeting and working.

“This is a great day for the Faculty of Dentistry and for the entire University of Toronto, as we celebrate the revitalization of hundreds of labs here and across our three campuses,” said Gertler at the ceremony. “It is also an occasion to celebrate the power of partnership in advancing Canada’s capacity for world-leading science and innovation.”

The open-bench design of the renovation follows the philosophy that important scientific developments arise from cross-disciplinary collaboration between clinicians and basic research scientists — and a recognition that good science requires good infrastructure.

“Now, the work of our exceptionally talented researchers — experts in areas such as biomaterials, tissue regeneration and repair, and the neuroscience of pain — will no longer be limited in what they can accomplish simply due to outdated infrastructure,” said dean Daniel Haas.

The renovation was supported by the federal and provincial governments, as well as the University’s Lab Innovation for Toronto (LIFT) project.

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UOFT PRESIDENT OPENS DENTISTRY LABS

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2018 SUMMER/FALL • 7
As affordability spins out of control, poverty in Canada's big cities is on the rise. That's having a profound effect on oral healthcare and the organizations that try to fill the gaps.
Since October, 46-year-old Chad Vernon has been working night shifts for the City of Toronto’s solid waste management collection department. Thanks to the job, Vernon has access to family dental benefits for the first time in his life. But that doesn’t mean he can afford all the dental care he needs.

For Vernon and his family, money has been tight for a long time — so tight that he’s lived with the excruciating pain and sensitivity of a broken tooth for the past five years. “The top and one side were just filling,” says Vernon. “Food kept getting stuck under the filling.” He has a couple of other chipped teeth and needs some fillings. He wants a partial made at some point.

Vernon also wants to get braces for his son and comprehensive care for his wife. So the family became patients at UofT’s clinics this year. His student dentist already extracted his tooth — to his profound relief — and will continue to work on his health over the 2018–19 school year.

“Even though I have the benefits, I’m still not happy to just waste that money. I can get more work done going through the dental school on the benefits plan that I have.” It just makes sense, he says, “with the deteriorated state of my mouth.”

Vernon is just one of the thousands of people in the greater Toronto area who can barely afford the basics of self-care. But poverty in today’s city differs from decades past. Despite plenty of social programs, urban shifts mean that there are more people in our city — and other Canadian urban areas — struggling financially and coming up against challenges that programs can’t address. As cost of living soars and wages stagnate, oral healthcare falls lower and lower on the priority list — and has become out of reach for an increasing number of people.

As a result of skyrocketing rents, poverty has been on the move, out of the city’s care to where rents are lower. But not that low. 32 per cent of renters in Richmond Hill spend more than half their income on housing. Food bank visits in the GTA’s inner suburbs have shot up 68 per cent in the past ten years, and 13 per cent in the past two.

Living on the fringes, the city’s vulnerable have to travel extensively for work, childcare, healthcare and social services. While dense, urban areas have affordable transit and walkable neighbourhoods, the ‘burbs require a car, with all its additional costs, or more pricey and time-consuming transit options.

It all translates to more urbanites running out of money before the paycheque, with few dollars left to spend on preventive dentistry — a luxury when the rent and car insurance take most of your income. “If I’m not in pain or not seeing anything strikingly debilitating or detracting, I’ll probably just ignore it for now,” says Hazel Stewart,74, 7TB DDPD DPH, who recently retired as director of dental and oral health services at Toronto Public Health (TPH). She had been with the city agency since 1987, and closely observed the “serious illnesses” people make on a daily basis. When a dental emergency hits a low income family, there’s often little left in the budget to get the kind of comprehensive treatment truly needed.

AFFORDABLE OPTIONS

While it may be changing, poverty in the city is not new, and numerous services work to address the dental needs of those who can’t afford care. One of the benefits of living in a large urban centre like Toronto is the number of low cost or free oral healthcare options available. TPH, which has been a major dental caregiver for the city since 1911, is the most comprehensive. It offers free services at 24 clinics and a two-chair mobile clinic that cater to distinct cohorts: children, seniors, and adults age 18 to 64 on social assistance programs like ODSP and OW.

Meanwhile, UofT Dentistry runs the largest single-site reduced-fee clinic in the GTA — and in Canada. Last year, the school logged a staggering 93,047 patient visits, and that number doesn’t take into account community service learning rotations at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, George Brown College, or the city’s teaching hospitals. Seventy-three per cent of the Faculty’s patients earn less than $30,000 per year, putting them well below the poverty level.

In Toronto, community dental health partners try to fill in each other’s gaps. Jamaican-born Beverley Bowen was referred to UofT Dentistry by TPH in April. She couldn’t get comprehensive care for her root canal through TPH, but couldn’t afford a full-fee dentist either. A 68-year-old retiree on a fixed income, Bowen doesn’t mind the long appointments, and receives top-notch, comprehensive care in return. “I think coming here is fantastic,” she says, even if it’s “all I can afford.”

A PATCHWORK OF INITIATIVES

George Jones (not his real name) became a patient at UofT Dentistry’s clinics last year. He was unaware of other low cost or free dental service options when he came in for dentures, and knew of the school’s clinics because his father had been a dentist and a clinical instructor at the school. He’s battled mental health issues throughout his adult life. “I’m more stable now,” says the 64 year old, who’s been on ODSP for nearly three years. Although his benefits will increase next year when he turns 65, Jones faces an uncertain future. He lives with his
Anecdotal evidence also suggests that a growing number of people cannot afford even reduced fees. Well over 50 per cent of nurse practitioner Shana MacKenzie’s patients at the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (which houses a low-fee dental clinic) are “stuck in a cycle of food insecurity and poverty.” She refers her clients — many of whom suffer from addiction, face mental health challenges, or are homeless — to reduced-fee dental services. Many never go. “They’re not ever going to do it,” she says. Some may not be able to afford the transportation to get to an appointment. For others, the appointments are scheduled months in advance, and in the meantime, other, more pressing priorities will take precedence. When a tooth hurts or there’s an abscess, “they’re going to get the antibiotics and it drops down their priority list.” Lacking access to preventive and restorative care, their teeth are left to rot, saving money, and then have all their teeth extracted.

Government dental benefits, she adds, don’t stretch far enough. While clients on ODSP can at least have their teeth cleaned once a year, she says, dental work on OW is limited to emergency care. And, once people like Jones return to work, often with a minimum wage job, they immediately lose their government medical and dental coverage. “Now suddenly you have to pay for your own medication,” MacKenzie says.

Services represent another challenge. People are keeping their teeth longer but their health can deteriorate once they lose their government medical and dental coverage. “Now suddenly we get a call asking us to bring the bus to a senior’s home,” says Stewart. With no government dental insurance, “you have to pay for your own medication,” MacKenzie says.

For every service provider, disseminating information to the public about what services are available to whom, and where, is a major task. Paradoxically, TPÖ does not actively let people know about its dental services. “We cannot advertise our [8-64] program simply because the demand would outstrip the resources,” Stewart says. That’s left to word-of-mouth referrals by community partners like the Daily Bread Food Bank. Janet Evans, a volunteer who’s often stationed at the food bank’s information and referral service desk, says the information provided at the desk is crucial: many clients have little sense of what options are available to them.

**CREATIVE CARE**

As urban poverty becomes more entrenched and complex, services provide care instead of waiting until their teeth rot, saving money, and then have all their teeth extracted.

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Senior residents are another challenge. People are keeping their teeth longer but their health can deteriorate once they lose their government medical and dental coverage. “Now suddenly we get a call asking us to bring the bus to a senior’s home,” says Stewart. With no government dental insurance, “you have to pay for your own medication,” MacKenzie says.

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How Toronto became a world presence in health innovation. And where it needs to go next

BY DIANE PETERS

Toronto is becoming a world-class centre for health innovation — with the university at the nucleus of it all, and UofT Dentistry a key player

n the 14th floor of the MaRS building’s west tower, in the Ted Rogers Centre for Heart Research, Michael Floros is baking little sticks of aluminium at 1,000 degrees Celsius. That’s to see if the adhesive he’s invented will stay stuck at dramatic temperatures.

“The glass is broken, but it still held together,” he says, showing off a glass shard coated with adhesive that he’s been testing in other ways. Some have been lingering in water for months — and are still sticking. Floros, who did his PhD in materials science at Trent University, expects this adhesive, which works alongside thin, flexible pieces of tape, to have regulatory approval around 2020. The new inventions can replace the metal plates and screws that oral and maxillofacial surgeons use to fuse bones together, but are smaller, more flexible and reabsorb into the body after about a year. Such tools should have a starting price of around $2,400 per surgery, so these products, which shall be sold under Floros’ newly formed company Cohesys, could be highly lucrative.

But to get these devices on the market and into real patients, Floros is going to need a lot of help. He’s got it. Floros works as a post doc with the Faculty of Dentistry’s Paul Santerre, and he’s getting plenty of support from the startup veteran. Santerre, including barriers to success related to capital, talent and the healthcare system itself. Toronto deserves its accolades, but has to admit its imperfections. While the city is on the rise, it’s time to push for even better.

Small Beginnings

Canada, and specifically Toronto, has always held its own with basic research. After all, here’s where insulin was discovered in the 1920s, then stem cells in the 1960s. Farah Thong, research and business development manager, technology and research with the Faculty of Dentistry, recalls that while doing her post doc at Sick Kids in the early 2000s, government agencies focused on basic science, not translational medicine. But nobody stopped to think whether or not their work had an application to the disease, that at some point it would relate to patient care,” she says.

Academic silos were alive and well in that era. “There were about 20 institutions all gunning to be seen as Toronto,” says Santerre. “And there was very little collaboration.” While many talented researchers and clinicians stuck around and did important work, major talents got lured south of the border by high profile universities, big salaries, top equipment and the likelihood of gaining international clout.

The worlds of business and science had few linkages then. When Michael May, now CEO of the Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine (CCRM), finished his PhD in chemical engineering in 1998, he was told by his supervisor that if he wanted to be an entrepreneur, he’d have to get a job — doing a startup in science was unheard of. “Taking the commerce or industry route was not looked upon favourably.” After having some success in business a few years later, May recalls speaking to a group of about seven grad students about entrepreneurship. (Now, he does guest lectures for MaRS’s Entrepreneurship 101 to a room of 500 with hundreds more watching online.)

That lack of entrepreneurial spirit became a problem.
We need more players and we need players who know how to get to market faster,” says Battiston. Since few venture capitalists seem willing to wait three years or so it might take to fully test the polymer, Battiston says, “We might have to get creative in how we get this funding.”

Notable startups making a difference include Atomwise, founded by a UofT computer science grad, which uses AI to help companies find molecules worth pursuing as drug targets. Meanwhile, government funding agencies began demanding research with clinical implications. UofT gradually grew its roster of incubators, which now stands at nine, including H2i, which focuses on health startups. The launch of Medicine by Design in 2015 gave regenerative medicine a further boost. Now, the city has a newly robust health sciences ecosystem with a collaborative infrastructure bent on innovation.

“We need more players and we need players who know how to get to market faster,” says Thong. And, if you look at hires, more and more people are coming back from the U.S. or not leaving in the first place. Santerre recalls negotiating with a talented researcher being offered $3 million from Harvard. He convinced her to stay by saying: “You can go there and jump into a pool and swim. Here, you jump into the pool and there will be a lot of people throwing your life vests and supporting you.” Increasingly, those throwing the life vests are people like Santerre and May who have considerable science entrepreneurship experience. Meanwhile, Toronto has appeal as a home base, and is still affordable compared to New York and San Francisco. “People want to live here,” says Santerre.

Toronto is starting to see successes in healthcare innovations. In 2017, MaRS-supported ventures raised $4.8 billion in capital and earned $3.5 billion in revenue. In 2017, H2i had 80 companies as members — up considerably from the mere seven companies it started with in 2014 — bringing in $80 million in revenue.

Notable startups making a difference include Attenwise, founded by a UofT computer science grad, which uses AI to help companies find molecules worth pursuing as drug targets. It just earned $45 million in venture capital. Stem cell company BlueRock Therapeutics, founded by a team led by Gordon Keller, director of the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine in the University Health Network, landed $245 million from Versant Ventures and Bayer in 2016.

STARTUP WINDS

The human body is very good at rejecting foreign objects, including vital surgical implants. Battiston and Sharifpoor have been working for nearly a year to secure the $3 million they need to fund clinical trials to look ahead to FDA approval. “This is a Class III medical device, considered to be high risk,” says Battiston. Since few venture capitalists seem willing to wait three years or so it might take to fully test the polymer, Battiston says, “We might have to get creative in how we get this funding.” So they’re looking for money from philanthropists, foundations and government. They landed $50,000 from an oncology research competition — a huge boost, but nowhere near what they need.

Battiston and Sharifpoor are falling into a typical trap for Toronto-based startups: they’ve got the cool products, but not the money or the means to get to market. “Canada leads the world in terms of IP patents and all that stuff, but we’ve always had a tough time commercializing,” says Tam.

Access to capital is a huge barrier. According to a report from the Impact Centre, the U.S. has five times more capital for new companies and six times more for companies that are scaling up. Our relatively fledging hub just doesn’t have the same appeal as San Francisco or Boston for venture capitalists. Meanwhile, while our government agencies fund research, it’s not at the same level as other jurisdictions. “We may have the most research but we don’t have the highest research dollars per capita,” says Santerre. That means companies have to seek private capital earlier in the process.

“The reason the capital isn’t there is the companies aren’t there,” says Charles Plant, senior fellow with the Impact Centre. “The capital will go where there are good companies.” He thinks Toronto’s startups aren’t growing fast enough to attract capital. U.S. companies may be getting better support and advice to get to market quicker.

Indeed, the talent gap is still huge here: while many Toronto health sciences entrepreneurs have a few startups under their belt, those in Silicon Valley may have a dozen. “We need more players and we need players who know how to get to market faster,” says Santerre.

We also lack the resources for some healthcare companies
NEW DIRECTIONS

Toronto’s ability to innovate at a world-class level relies on proximity. The city offers walking-distance range to numerous innovative, supportive and cutting-edge organizations, with the University of Toronto and the Faculty of Dentistry right at the core. It’s easier to work together when you can meet for a coffee to chat about your next big healthcare idea.

While many people in today’s healthcare innovation workforce started their careers in the silo age, the next generation will be different.

The Toronto ecosystem should mature, bolstered by important new changes: a recent $15 million government investment in CORe, a new 14-storey innovation hub to be built soon by UofT. At Dentistry, the launch of the Fibrosis Network and the opening of newly renovated labs and workspaces embrace collaboration and state-of-the-art equipment. As the city’s health innovators continue to take the lead on AI, regenerative medicine and fibrosis, and seek new opportunities in emerging areas such as skilled manufacturing in synthetic biology and the use of big data in healthcare, we’ll find our niche at the top — and keep carving out excellence in a place unlike any other. Says Santerre, “This is an electric, fun city to be in.”

1. MaRS Discovery District
   The world’s largest innovation hub, it puts research centres, UofT labs, startups and incubators in collaborative quarters. Startup members include Cohesity and Poluminos.

2. Medicine by Design
   UofT’s wet lab incubator for regenerative medicine and cell therapy.

3. Mitacs
   A government-sponsored accelerator that links university research with industry.

4. Institute of Biomaterials and Biomedical Engineering (iBBME)
   This world-leading organization — cofounded by Dentistry — is one of the conduits through which faculty members develop innovations.

5. University of Toronto Centre for Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine (CRCM)
   Where scientists get support to take their regenerative medicine ideas to market.

6. Mount Sinai
   Centre for Advanced Dental Research and Care
   The Faculty and Mount Sinai work together to develop breakthroughs in hard-to-treat conditions and to impact patient care.

7. Valley for the Study of Pain
   UofT, University health networks and Sick Kids focus on advancing heart research.

8. Hospital For Sick Children
   Canada. His calculations put government and university investment into health innovation research at $7.3 billion annually, which results in company revenues of just $1.5 billion — we’re bleeding startup dollars. “We tell a good story about how well we’re doing, but the real data doesn’t really match the rest of the story,” he says. “We have improved but the rest of the world is improving at a different pace.”

He’d like to see a fundamental change to a push system that sees healthcare providers solicit solutions to their real, on-the-ground clinical problems from entrepreneurs. Our current pull system sees companies try to sell their new wares into a mostly resistant market, so companies fail and the system never gets more efficient or offers better care. But, that would entail a massive shift in the healthcare system.

Santerre believes some changes will evolve naturally. While many people in today’s healthcare innovation workforce started their careers in the silo age, the next generation will be different. In any given year, 35,000 UofT students are exposed to ideas around entrepreneurship through courses, lectures and events. In turn, those students will be that much more likely to not just launch a startup, but work at one. Today’s startup newbies will be veterans in time, and add to our talent pool in blending science and business.
Meet Caroline Conway DDS and Terry Stavroullakis MSc. These recent grads are notable for more than their academic records — they’ve spent their school years building up their community.

**THE ACTIVIST**

Caroline Conway and her fellow classmates from the DDS class of 2018 are nostalgic about their time at UofT Dentistry. The class entered the Faculty at a period of momentous change that impacted the academic organizational structure, curriculum and the creation of key new positions. But for Conway, it was the school’s shift towards really listening to students that meant the most.

“I’m really encouraged by the changes,” says Conway, who served as the Dental Students’ Society (DSS) president in her final year. “Everyone talks about it. We’ve all noticed the shift in culture. It’s a lot more positive, and a lot of people feel like they can provide feedback and it will be taken into consideration.”

One of the most potent changes, to Conway, were those made to interview day. The Faculty changed the admission interview format this year based on feedback from students and faculty, so DDS students now play an integral part in creating a welcoming and positive climate for potential new students.

“This year we even had balloons,” says Conway, who was an organizer and volunteer for the day, which sees hundreds of nervous applicants come to the school for entrance interviews. “I know it sounds silly, but these small touches make a huge difference. I think incoming students will just be excited to show up because they had such a positive first impression.”

Conway is no stranger to making positive impressions at the Faculty. She was involved from year one. Conway served as the DSS assistant community outreach representative by second year, and then became vice president, community outreach. In that role, she was actively involved in some of the organization’s most successful initiatives that raised money for cancer research, supported research for sick children, and promoted mental health awareness.

By DDS4, Conway had been elected president of the DSS, and was awarded a prestigious Cressy Leadership Award from the university for her exemplary service.

Conway is now doing a one-year general practice residency at the McGill University Health Centre. But she isn’t ruling out returning to UofT for a specialty degree later. “Of course I’d come back!” says Conway. “This was a great community to be a part of. There was great mentorship and I learned a lot more than just dentistry.”

**THE CONNECTOR**

Most days last spring, you’d find Terry (Alexander) Stavroullakis in the newly renovated labs on the fourth and fifth floors, giving new summer research students a tour and helping them get settled in. He knows where all the equipment is, and how to run the machines.

He’s also the guy people lean on when they have a problem. As 2016-17 president of the Graduate and Postgraduate Dental Students’ Society (GPDSS), students would come to Stavroullakis for advice. “I was sympathetic, I wanted to help, but in the end, I didn’t have any training.”

Stavroullakis is now trying to change that. This fall he hopes to train at the St. George campus to become a peer counsellor. These counsellors are the first stop for graduate students with complaints about their supervisors or other students, and they also connect students to resources.

Stavroullakis began at the Faculty as a volunteer researcher in fall 2012. He was taking extra courses before applying to dental schools and was looking to round out his research experience. Right away, he got hooked on research. His first publication was accepted as he entered the MSc program in 2014.

But complications ensued. “I had a change in supervisors early in my program,” he says. Not knowing where to turn to for guidance — graduate students were isolated by small, windowless labs and offices, often having little contact with each other — would, ironically, shape his career. He reached out by getting involved, first as treasurer of the GPDSS, then as a Research Day organizer. And while president of the GPDSS, Stavroullakis made key changes to help grad students in need.

“There are five leaders now in the society. We now have a whole lot of resources for students.”

Stavroullakis may develop his talent for helping people as he considers his future path. He is interested in the Faculty of Dentistry’s PhD program, and while he hasn’t ruled out a DDS degree, he’s also considering applying to the University of Toronto’s psychotherapy counselling program.

For now, though, he’s just excited for the incoming graduate students. The newly revitalized labs and offices on the fourth and fifth floors of the Dentistry building give students unprecedented access to faculty equipment — and to each other. “I’ve already seen a huge difference,” Stavroullakis says. “There are tons of people in the lab space, people are talking and sharing instruments. It’s different. It has a different vibe to it.”

**THE COMMUNITY BUILDERS**
CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2018!

DDS
Ruba Al-Luabi
Margot Andrus
Manvir Bagri
Irina Baranova
Abdelrahman Bendary
Kaitlyn Bento
Cac Bui
Amanda Chan
Anny Charolia
Grace Chen
Yani Chen
Tu Huu Cheng
Cameron Chiang
Kraig Alexander Chin
Yan Yee Chu
Katie Yuen Kei Chung
Fangdi Cong
Caroline Elizabeth Conway
Mevra de Silva
Armita Dehmoonadsharifabadi
Julie Marie Dekorde
Aleksandr Devyatov
Alexander Joseph Dolan
Kyung Min Dong
Prema Susan D’Souza
Amir Ali Ahmed El Maghrabi
Grace Ettinger
Hamza Farooq
Karen Feldman
Rachel Filice
Vinod Krishnan Ganesan
Negin Ghaffari
Ali Ghorbani Gazar
Erin Olga May Goertzen
Kiranjot Gosal

Wesley Crawford Graham
Anish Grewal
Hui Jun Guo
Andrew Hall
Kimberly Hawrylyshyn
Pei Yuan He
Ahmed Mostafa Heider
Michelle Hoang
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Paula Pei Yao Hsien
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Tracy Liu
Yi-Shan (Annie) Liu
Raymond Ho Fai Lo
Derek Mah
Sina Makaremi
Shirina Methali Maedai
Matteson John Marinovich
Venus Marwah
Khalid Marzouk
Colette Mascarenhas
Kaveh Mirsaeidi
Steven Thomas Monardo
Eric Moreysseset
Sina Mushiri
Kelsey Motomura
Halisha Muniraz
Neetu Nath
Emily Ann Nisbett
Courtney Nossak
Jae Hwan Oh
Kelsey O’Hagan-Wong
Dominic Pang
Hannah Park
Ji Ho Park
Stephan Perkins
Rebecca Catherine Phillips
Mandip Puri
Siran Qin
Santa Ralu
Joshua Aram Raisin
Yelda Rawofi
Tyler James David Ricer
Anit Rastenblit
Gofia Samii Saket
Jaclyn Nicole Scark
Li Shi
Anit Soni
Shena Devanthava
Sothiratsam
Keli Stein
Karen Emily Stoskopf
Tyler Tian
Calvin Tang
Gagandeep Toor
Olivia Trzcinski
Alexander Patrick Vasilious
Gowthami Venishetti
Ahmed Qays Baqer Wirwit
Zheng Dong Xie
April Xu
Xiaoxin Yang
Brandon Yee
Sangsoo Yeo
Clarence Yeung
Wenyi Yuan
Nupur Gupta

MSc
Najim Alfissany
Oriyah Barzilay
Melissa Cerone,
Orthodontics
Ralph Dina,
Endodontics
Hendrik Dorerring,
Periodontics
Nghiu Quang Huynh,
Endodontics
Yang Hoon Kang,
Paediatric Dentistry
Nicholas John Ledderhof,
Oral Surgery
Hayder Ali Mahdi,
Radiology
Soheil Mohammad,
Endodontics
Khojaateh,
Dental Anaesthesia

Siavash Hassanpour,
Endodontics

Otlalian Ogueirekko,
Orthodontics
Adam Olahay,
Periodontics
Fay Perrestra,
Orthodontics
Petar Boyd Petrovic,
Orthodontics
A[zadeh Reyhani,
Orthodontics
Annie Shrestha,
Endodontics
Alexander Stavroullakis

Bo Huang
Shiva Hamidian Jahromi
Muna Qasim Mustafa
Marashdeh
Mariam Mashreghi

Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this list as of press time.
MSc and PhD graduates range from fall 2017 to spring 2018.

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2018 SUMMER/FALL • 23

Photo: Lisa Sakulensky
Great times at the Great Alumni Event

Over 300 alumni and friends turned out for the inaugural Great Alumni Event.

Last April, students spanning 70 years — as far back as the 1950s right up to our current DDS4 and grad students — came together to celebrate their profession and their affiliation with the Faculty of Dentistry at Steam Whistle Brewing.

The Great Alumni Event took place on the same weekend as the Ontario Dental Association’s Annual Spring Meeting, which was held at the nearby Metro Toronto Convention Centre, so guests could easily walk over to join the festivities.

Alumni were able to reconnect and reminisce, all while enjoying some great food and posing for pictures in the photo booth.

Class of ’88 student Ahmed Witwit and his classmates, including Abdel Bendary, came out to enjoy their first alumni event ever. Others, such as Roger Ellis, who celebrated his 60th class reunion two years ago, and members of the class of ’80 — including Elizabeth MacSween, Paul Piccininni and Steve Brown — have known each other for more than 40 years. “We are a cohesive group,” said MacSween, who was honoured with the Award of Distinction in 2017. “We still get together and have a lot of laughs.”

This event was made possible by the generous support of dentalcorp, HANSAmed Limited, TMFD Financial, Sunstar Americas, Inc., Henry Schein Canada Inc. and RBC Royal Bank.

Come out to see your former classmates and meet other UofT Dentistry grads. Join us at Steam Whistle Brewing at 255 Bremner Blvd.

Ticket sales open in the New Year.

Visit: www.dentistry.utoronto.ca/the-great-alumni-event for more information.
A FAMILY-INSPIRED LEGACY

VALERIE STAVRO’S FATHER GAVE BACK THROUGH HIS WORK, SO SHE’S DOING THE SAME

Looking back on her career in dentistry, Valerie Stavro 8T4 is philosophical. “Dentistry has been a great influence in my life,” says Stavro. “It’s all about the person as an individual, and all their uniqueness. As dentists, we see the problem, identify what caused it, treat it, and try to prevent it from happening again. Each person’s care is tailored to their specific needs.”

It’s this holistic vision of patients and community, of the whole person and all of their circumstances, that informs Stavro’s generosity. This year, Stavro donated $25,000 as part of the Boundless Promise Program to create the Valerie Stavro Student Bursary, which will help deserving students in financial need.

It was a gift made in honour of her father, Chris Stavro. A businessman and landlord, Chris put people first. “My father was all about giving back and helping out someone in lesser circumstances,” Stavro says. “There was a tenant who had difficulty securing a job, so my father bought him a new pair of shoes for his job interviews. On another occasion, he bought a new denture for a tenant. He had faith that the tenants would succeed. My father led by example. We learned to help whenever we could help.”
When Stavro moved towards retirement, she felt it made sense to give back to her alma mater, UofT Dentistry. Originally graduating from nursing at UofT, Stavro realized that her life-changing conversation with a dental student at Toronto East General Hospital (now the Michael Garron Hospital), where she and her siblings volunteered. Despite how few women were entering dentistry at the time — she was one of just 10 in a class of 120 — especially women with her traditional education, says Stavro, but her father supported her through a second professional degree without hesitation.

Stavro’s grandparents emigrated to Toronto from Greece in 1926. A family of entrepreneurs, they quickly became juggernauts of the grocery industry before branching off into restaurants and hotels. After Chris Stavro passed away last year, Stavro has already left her mark at UofT Dentistry and has planned.

“i really hope this donation highlights the point that small gifts are good, too. It doesn’t have to be millions of dollars. Every contribution is a move in the right direction”

Stavro served as the Alumni Association president between 2005 and 2010. She received UofT’s prestigious Arbor Award, honouring exceptional volunteer contributions to the University, in 2013.

Thank you to our benefactors who have made important gifts of $25,000 or more to the Boundless Campaign. These gifts have helped lift the Faculty to new heights and support our faculty, staff and students. Thank you for your investment in the Faculty’s mission to provide the highest level of educational experience and patient care, and to perform vital health research.

Joe Stanziani
George and Nancy Vasiga
Valerie F. Stavro
Katherine Zettle
TD Bank Group
6 Anonymous Donors
Vera and Lawrence Tomkins

Lasting Legacies
The Faculty of Dentistry recognizes those donors whose gifts of $25,000 or more have been made through bequests, trusts or insurance through May 30, 2018.

$1,000,000 OR MORE
Miet and Wanda Kamienski

$100,000 TO $999,999
David Locker
Robert Dunlop
Guy and Eunice Poyton
John and Doris J. Richmond

$25,000 TO $99,999
An Anonymous Donor

Leading Gifts
May 1, 2017 – April 30, 2018
Our annual donor listing recognizes the generosity of donors who have made new gifts or pledges to UofT Dentistry of $1,000 or more.

$25,000 OR MORE
George Christodoulou
Nobel Biocare USA Inc.
DENTSPLY-Tulsa Dental Corporation of Canada

$5,000 TO $24,999
A.T. Financial Group Inc.
BMO Financial Group

As an Alumnus, You Are a Member.
We invite all alumni to attend the UofT Dentistry Alumni Association’s Annual General Meeting with special speaker Chris Swaye of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. Come meet your Alumni Association Board, fellow classmates and colleagues to hear about the exciting changes the Board has planned.

This year will also feature a lecture and Q&A on the new standards of practice for infection control. A reception will follow in the Student Commons. The lecture is eligible for one point, category two. Additionally, a $500 credit will be given to attendees for a future UofT CDE course.

Register by October 12 at my.alumni.utoronto.ca/agm2018.

Faculty of Dentistry Alumni Association Annual General Meeting: With Category 2 CE Lecture: “UPDATE ON INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL,” CHRI$ SWAYZE, RCDSO
OBITUARIES (Continued)

CIBC
Jack Garrow
HANSAmid Ltd.
Henry Schein Canada Inc.
Nobel Biocare Canada Inc.
Ontario Dental Association
Avi Ouananou
David J. and Patricia Carey

$1,827* TO $4,999
Izchak Barzialy
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Ka-Biu Ip
Frank Kalamut
John T. S. Kao
Ashley Katchky

$1,000 TO $1,826
3M Canada Company
George and Christine Alexopoulos
Donald and Nancy Allen
Peter Birk
James Blackmore
Timothy J. Blight
Karen L. Burgess
F. Bruce Burns
Cerum Ortho Organizers
Kenneth Chan
Eric Choi
Norma Wendy Chou
Clay Cross
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David Cowan
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International College of Dentists (Canadian Section)
Tom J. Iwanowski
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Jaideep M. Lal
Marjinder S. Lalls
Linda Lee
Wayne A. Mailllet
Caroline Masionneuve
Huckman
Dorothy McConnell
Howard McIsaac
William Medlock
Victor Moncur
Janice A. Munmery
Gail Nefteson
Mark and Janine Niaumout, and Family

Pruzk
RBC Foundation
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Sunstar Americas, Inc.
Tax Matters for Dentists
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David B. Yan

Kerry V. Peacock
Arja-Lisa Pettenomi
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Branco Radioc
Sault Diagnostic Imaging Centre
Maryann Seeffs
Anthony C. C. Tam
Howard C. Teisenbaum
Jacques E. Thibault
Peter T. Tonisson
Chung-Ming Tse
Walter Vogl
John Voudouris
Bitty Williams
William Wing-Bill Wong
Joseph Yu
Edwin Zysko

PRESIDENT’S CIRCLE MEMBERS*
The President’s Circle is the Leadership Annual Giving Society for the University of Toronto. To commemerate the University’s Royal Charter of 1827, all individuals who make annual gifts of $1,827 or greater and organizations who make annual gifts of $10,000 or greater are acknowledged as members of the President’s Circle and enjoy unique opportunities to attend lectures, the President’s Garden Party and the President’s Holiday Party.

GORDON CHONG 6T7
Gordon Chong began working as a dentist after graduation in 1967, then built a lengthy career as a politician and community activist. He first ran for office in 1979, becoming an alderman (now called a city councillor) in Toronto. He then held a position at UofT Dentistry, the amalgamated city council, from 1994 to 2000. He also ran for boards in implant and endodontic dentistry. He served as an instructor at UofT Dentistry, and held patents in implant dentistry and endodontics. Beck was a founding member of the American Academy of Endodontists and a longtime member of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry. He served for thirty years on the editorial board of Oral Health Magazine. His long-time practice was in Toronto and Eglinton.

THOMAS ROUTLEDGE 8T0
Known as Dr. Tom to his patients, Thomas Routledge passed away last March. Vancouver-born Routledge came to Toronto for dental school and worked as a dentist in the Canadian Armed Forces after graduation. In 1984 he returned to Coquitlam to open up a general practice. His work in forensic odontology with the British Columbia Forensic Odontology Team led to him receiving the British Columbia Community Achievement Award in 2015. Routledge was a highly engaged UofT alumnus who led the fundraising efforts for the generous class of 8T0 for their 35th anniversary.

BOUnDless legAcy
Briga Mecis Weaver 6T2
Briga Mecis Weaver died last July in her 79th year. Back in 1962, when there were few female dental students, she graduated at the top of her class at UofT Dentistry. She then became the first female dentist on staff at the Children’s Hosp-ital in Vancouver. She also ran a successful Vancouver practice for many years and was known for her gentle touch.

WE MEmBER…

GIFTS OF EXPERIENCE
UofT Dentistry students gain much from the wisdom and experience of those who have come before them. Thank you to our friends and alumni who have made gifts to the Dentistry Annual Fund, which supports initiatives such as peer mentorship nights and alumni lectures.

We also appreciate the many volunteer instructors in dentistry who have shared their time in service to our community of patients and students. Thank you!

We strive to make our lists as accurate as possible. For more information or if you have questions about the donor listing, contact Miriam Stephan at 416-864-8202 or miriam.stephan@dentistry.utoronto.ca

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
We Mourn the Loss
Norman Baird 572
Barry Cells 7T8
Frank Compoto 4T7, 5T1 Dip
DPM, 7T4 Dip Paris
John Crooks 6T3
Paul Davison 6T0
Barbara Fisher 4T3, 4T2, 4T1 Dip
Peter Gold 7T2
Emerson Jones 6T9
Mary McConney 4T8 Dip
Norman Baird 5T2
John Ponikvar 7T3
Mary McConney 4T8 Dip DN
Emerson Jones 6T9
Mary McConney 4T8 Dip
George Sciuk 5T8
John Ponikvar 7T3
Willem Pellenb 6T1
John Ponikvar 7T3
George Sciuk 5T8
Stewart Sigesmund 5T8
John Ponikvar 7T3
Paul Young 8T2

Listings are as accurate as possible as of press time.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER
NOMINATIONS WELCOME FOR THE 2019 AWARD OF DISTINCTION
Recognize colleagues who are making a difference for the Faculty, research, the dental profession or society as a whole. Nominations are due November 1. The 2019 Faculty of Dentistry Award of Distinction will be presented next spring at a dinner with the dean. Tickets will be available.

For nomination details and forms, visit forms.dentistry.utoronto.ca/award-of-distinction-2019-nomination or contact advancement@dentistry.utoronto.ca.

OCTOBER 16
FACULTY OF DENTISTRY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION — ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WITH CATEGORY 2 CE LECTURE: UPDATE ON INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL BY CHRIS SWAYZE, RCDSO
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Rm 170, 124 Edward St Toronto

All Dentistry alumni are members of the Dentistry Alumni Association. We invite you to attend the Annual General Meeting with special speaker Chris Swayze of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. Come meet your Alumni Association Board, fellow classmates and colleagues to hear about the exciting changes the Board has planned, plus a lecture with Q&A on the new standards of practice for infection control. A reception will follow in the Student Commons. The lecture is eligible for one point, category two. Additionally, a $100 credit will be given to attendees for a future UofT CDE course.

Register by October 12 at my.alumni.utoronto.ca/agm2018.

OCTOBER
YOUNG ALUMNI MENTORSHIP LECTURE SERIES
Location TBA, Toronto

Alumni who graduated between 2013 and 2018 and current students are invited to hear about the speakers' early career experiences that helped to inform decisions regarding career path and community engagement. More details to come.

NOVEMBER 26
DR. GEORGE ZARB CLINICAL RESEARCH LECTURE
5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Room 170, 124 Edward St., Toronto

UofT Dentistry is delighted to announce a lecture by Michael MacEntee, past president of the Royal College of Dentists of Canada and specialist in geriatric oral health. A reception will follow the lecture. Please register at my.alumni.utoronto.ca/zarblecture2018

FEBRUARY 12, 2019
RESEARCH DAY
124 Edward St., Toronto

Join us for this annual symposium to highlight the Faculty’s innovative research. Connect with fellow students, faculty, staff and alumni as we feature student posters, lectures and a keynote address followed by a reception. All are welcome.

MARCH 7
VANCITY ALUMNI RECEPTION PACIFIC DENTAL CONFERENCE
5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Pan Pacific Hotel, Vancouver

Dean Daniel Haas will be hosting an event for UofT Dentistry alumni. Whether you live on the West Coast or you’re in town for the Pacific Dental Conference, we hope to see you. Please register at my.alumni.utoronto.ca/PDC2019

MARCH
DENTANITICS
Enjoy the 98th annual Dentanitics with classmates or your entire practice. Watch for further details in the next issue of UofT Dentistry.

MARCH
WORD OF MOUTH NETWORKING EVENT
6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Student Commons, 124 Edward St., Toronto

Connecting our graduating DDS students with UofT alumni, clinical instructors and experts from the UofT Career Centre, to help prepare them to launch careers as healthcare professionals in a rapidly changing landscape.

MAY 9 – 11
ODA ANNUAL SPRING MEETING
Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building, Toronto

Come see us and the dean in our booth on the convention floor. You may just get an extra drink ticket for the Great Alumni Event!

MAY 10
GREAT ALUMNI EVENT
5:30 p.m. – 9 p.m. Steam Whistle Brewing

255 Bremner Blvd, Toronto

Don’t miss the all-alumni reunion for UofT Dentistry. Located just across the road from the ODA ASM. Get your class together to celebrate your friendships from your time in dental school. For more information visit www.dentistry.utoronto.ca/the-great-alumni-event.

MAY
DDS CLASS REUNIONS
If you graduated in a year ending with a 4 or a 9, don’t miss your class reunion! For information, or if you are interested in organizing your reunion, please contact advancement@dentistry.utoronto.ca.