

**Report from the Chairman of ASE Education Sub-committee
Perth, Western Australia
2009**

1. ASE Endodontic Undergraduate Teachers Meeting

A meeting of endodontic teachers was held in Melbourne as the result of a motion at the AGM of the ASE in Brisbane requesting that the Society address the current acute shortage in teachers in the undergraduate endodontic programs. The purpose of this meeting was to attempt to address some of these problems, and to explore the possibility of sharing academic resources currently available amongst those responsible for teaching this discipline

This report is a brief summary of the meeting. A full report is available on the ASE website. The meeting was an important and productive one and teachers were grateful to the ASE and Gunz Dental for facilitating the meeting.

Gunz dental generously provided funds for meeting costs, airfares and accommodation for delegates

The primary goals of the meeting were:

1. to reactivate the adhoc ASE Undergraduate Teachers' Committee under formal guidelines and a Chairman,
2. to review and update the ASE Guidelines for Teaching Endodontics in concert with the academics responsible for teaching the subject
3. to allow those responsible for teaching endodontics to meet each other and share information
4. for academic staff to meet and share amongst themselves things such as:

Current or proposed curriculum
Lecture content and timetables
Clinical teaching philosophies
Text book recommendations
Practical teaching aids
PowerPoint teaching aids

Teaching philosophies
Practical requirements
Clinical requirements
Web based teaching aids
Video based teaching aids
Personal teaching notes

There were also a number of secondary goals:

1. to examine whether universities could produce and collaborative teaching material.
2. to encourage collaborative endodontic research.
3. to provide a basis for ongoing discussions between teachers under the umbrella of a new ASE Undergraduate Teacher's Committee and
4. to provide a direct line of communication between the ASE and the teachers of endodontics through both individual teachers and the chairman of the Committee.

The meeting was chaired by Alex Moule. Erika Vinczer acted as Secretary and Phillippe Zimet was responsible for local arrangements. All academic coordinators of post graduate and undergraduate dental courses at all universities in Australia attended the meeting.

The following academic staffs were present:

Professor Paul Abbott (*University of Western Australia*)

Professor Roland Bryant (*University of Sydney*)

Associate Professor Peter Cathro (*University of Adelaide*)

Dr Jacky Castro (*University of Western Australia*)

Dr Peter Duckmanton (*University of Sydney*)

Dr Lee Foster (*Griffith University*)

Dr Michelle Heffernan (*University of Sydney*)

Professor Geoffrey Heithersay (*University of Adelaide*)

Dr Bill Kahler (*University of Queensland*)

Associate Professor John McNamara (*University of Queensland*)

Associate Professor Alex Moule (*University of Queensland*)

Dr Peter Parashos (*University of Melbourne*)

Dr Chankhrit Sathorn (*University of Melbourne*)

Dr Erika Vinczer (*University of Adelaide*)

Dr Phillipe Zimet (*University of Melbourne*)

Associate Professor Nick Chandler (*Otago University*) was invited to attend but was unable to do so.

Undergraduate endodontic education – an overview by states

During the first session a spokesperson from each school presented an overview of endodontic education at their school. They were specifically asked to present what they considered were the strengths and weaknesses of their curriculum. This was a very productive session and provided all present with an overview of all the undergraduate endodontic courses in the country. A full report of this material from this session is available on the website.

What is the ideal endodontic undergraduate curriculum?

In the second session, teachers discussed what they considered to be the ideal undergraduate curriculum. In his opening statement, Professor Abbott discussed a recent survey on undergraduate teaching carried out by AAE and compared this with the Australian curricula. He believed that the goal of a school's teaching program was to "instill into the graduates that they are at the beginning of their careers which should become a life long learning experience."

Associate Professor Cathro reported that the University of Adelaide (UA) Dental course was currently undergoing a curriculum review being led by Professor David Newble. The thrust of the review was that curriculum needed to be integrated with a scientific and biological basis. An outcome based approach was being used to identify what the student should know and be able to do upon graduation.

A wide range of topics were then discussed. A problem for most schools was the sourcing of teachers and standardization of endodontic teaching across the curriculum. It was suggested that joint development videos and treatment protocols would be useful for both tutors and students in all schools. All schools were experiencing difficulties in obtaining suitable natural teeth for use in preclinical settings. UQ has been using gamma irradiation to render teeth suitable for use for preclinical exercises. This eliminated many of the infection control problems related to the preclinical use of natural teeth.

The meeting also carried out an extensive review of the **ASE Guidelines for Undergraduate Education**. In his opening statement, Professor Abbott stated that the guidelines were originally written in 1982 and revised again in 1991 and had served the

society well. During wide ranging discussions, there was particular discussion regarding implant treatment and the application of endodontics as part of a long term treatment plan e.g. for preservation of bone, healing of lesions prior to implant therapy and the biological value of the tooth. Amendments were made to the document and it was adopted by the teaching staff of all schools.

Sharing resource information

The first part of the third session was a free session devoted to individual presentations and demonstrations on various teaching aids and methods at various schools that participants felt may be useful to other teachers.

Topics discussed included how the University of Adelaide's School of Dentistry has been on-selling the Bachelor of Dental Surgery curriculum to the new Dental School at the University of Sharjah (one of the Arab Emirates), interactive assessment protocols, issues of intellectual property and moral rights associated with this project and with general teaching material, teaching manuals, pain diagnosis protocols, legal aspects of teaching, the use of video in teaching endodontics, textbooks and teaching models.

Teaching Staff

Another wide ranging discussion followed regarding the need to attract and retain staff to teach endodontics at the undergraduate level. It was noted that the manner in which tutors were employed varied from school to school, as did the enthusiasm of recent graduates to return to teach at the school. The amount tutors are paid varied enormously from school to school. If alternatives to pay are offered (such as academic titles) they are not always well considered or utilized.

It was agreed that schools needed do more to attract and retain staff and part time teachers in the endodontic program. Academic staff needed to be paid or given alternatives to demonstrate that the school valued their help and assistance. Schools should do more to establish and promote the benefits of being part of a university community. Free or reduced fee for attendance at university post graduate courses, annual functions for teaching staff, the appointment of part time teaching coordinators, and the part time specialist training courses were discussed. It was also stressed that it was necessary to also provide opportunities “to teach the teachers”.

Collaboration and resource sharing

Consideration was given to whether it was viable for teachers to travel to other schools, e.g. if they are an “expert” in a particular field, to assist with teaching. Live video lectures were considered as an option. This was seen as more cost effective and wide reaching than coordinating schools timetables to allow “live” video conferencing. Issues that needed to be considered included that of “time” and funding of audiovisual material that would allow these resources to be shared. It was agreed that there was an urgent need to identify lectures and programs that would be beneficial to individual schools and establish mechanisms to support collaboration.

Teacher’s web site

It was agreed that a web based approach whereby all teaching staff have access to download and share resources was the best and easiest means. The advantage of website was seen that it could be updated easily and accessed readily.

Rotary instrumentation in undergraduate endodontic programs

The fourth session of the meeting was devoted to the questions regarding the availability and method of use of rotary instrumentation in each school; how it is being used in each curriculum, and the teaching philosophy related to its use. The meeting was addressed by a faculty member from each university. Most schools were implementing or considering implementing the use of rotary instrumentation. It was thought to be an ideal time to assess outcome measures of treatment provided.

Undergraduate and postgraduate endodontic research programs

As many schools require undergraduate students to perform research projects either as a faculty requirement or as part of their honours program, it was considered that it would be desirable to discuss undergraduate research programs at this meeting. The final session was therefore devoted to a discussion of undergraduate and graduate research. It was agreed that some combined interschool research was desirable and that there was value in combined research into rotary instrumentation outcomes. Associate Professor Cathro agreed to coordinate this. Professor Heithersay AO was very keen to develop a *multi-centre* endodontic research program (similar to that in the United States and Europe). He welcomed that any ideas for projects be emailed to him (e.g. randomized prospective studies). The importance of publishing the results of both undergraduate and post graduate research was emphasized.

Postgraduate endodontic teaching

As all of the post-graduate coordinators were present, meeting followed which was dedicated to post graduate endodontic teaching programs. A full summary of this meeting (chaired by Professor Abbott) will be made available on the ASE web site.

The meeting also reviewed the **ASE/ANZAE Postgraduate Education Guidelines**. Amendments were made and new guidelines were adopted.

2. Formation of an ASE Endodontic Teachers' Group

It was unanimously agreed that the meeting was extremely productive and helpful to all participants, and that the teachers group should meet again. All felt that communication between teachers needed to continue between meetings and that the opportunity to meet every endodontic course coordinator at the one place and to share ideas and ways to improve undergraduate education had been a rewarding one.

4. Chairman's comments.

The importance of these meetings cannot be underestimated. The face to face meeting for the first time of all academic endodontic coordinators provided a forum that has resulted in many ongoing initiatives. With new schools preparing new endodontic curricula it is important that our society supports teachers and keeps abreast of new teaching developments. We were grateful for the opportunity to meet and sincere thanks must go to Gunz for their generous sponsorship and to the ASE Executive for their assistance. My personal thanks go also to Phillippe Zimet for finalizing local arrangements and to Erika Vinczer for her secretarial assistance. **At the completion of the meeting Gunz offered their support for another meeting. This generous offer was accepted and it is planned to hold another meeting in the middle of 2009.**

Alex Moule
Chairman ASE Education Committee