USC names new dean of Dentistry

Avishai Sadan brings expertise in clinical practice, research

On behalf of USC President Steven B. Sample, Executive Vice President and Provost C. L. Max Nikias has announced the appointment of Avishai Sadan as dean of the USC School of Dentistry, effective Aug. 1, 2009.

Sadan also will hold the G. Donald and Marian James Montgomery Dean’s Chair in Dentistry.

Sadan will join USC from the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, where he serves as associate dean of clinical affairs and professor and chairman of the Department of Comprehensive Care.

“We are delighted to have Professor Avishai Sadan join USC,” said Nikias. “He has distinguished himself at Case Western as a successful administrator and inspiring leader, and we look forward to his service at the USC School of Dentistry as the school continues its mission of educating the finest clinicians, advancing research and enhancing public health.”

Sadan brings strong experience in clinical practice and research to USC. At Case Western, he merged the former departments of restorative dentistry and general dentistry, restructured all preclinical courses to align with contemporary restorative approaches, reorganized all clinical procedures, and streamlined all preclinical and clinical operations. In his role as chair of the department of comprehensive care, he has supervised all departmental research activities, the school’s biomaterials laboratory and the clinical trials in the D.M.D. clinics research.

Sadan is the former editor-in-chief of Quintessence International and of Quintessence of Dental Technology. He has served on the editorial boards of other journals and has published and lectured nationally and internationally on biomaterials, fixed prostodontics, and esthetic and implant dentistry.

“With the great privilege of joining one of the world’s finest schools comes the huge responsibility of maintaining its high level of excellence,” said Sadan. “In a highly competitive environment, the school will continue to reinvent itself using its biggest assets: its outstanding students, world-renowned faculty, and the most committed and proud core of alumni any school has. We will continue to attract the best candidates, graduate the finest clinicians, generate meaningful and exciting scientific discoveries, and be a resource for the betterment of our community through our strong community outreach.”

Sadan received his B.S.c. and D.M.D. degrees from Hebrew University’s Hadassah School of Dental Medicine in Jerusalem, where he also completed an internship in maxillofacial prosthetics and oral medicine.

He received his training in prosthodontics from the Louisiana State University School of Dentistry and also completed a fellowship at LSU in prosthodontics, emphasizing esthetic and implant dentistry.

Sadan is a member of several professional organizations, including the American College of Prosthodontists, the Academy of Osseointegration, the European Academy of Esthetic Dentistry, the American College of Dentists, Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society and Pierre Fauchard Academy.

Clark named president of Occupational Therapy Assn.

By Faryl Reingold

Professor Florence A. Clark, associate dean and chair of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, a division of the USC School of Dentistry, has been elected president-elect of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA).

Clark will serve in that role for the first year of her four-year term and assume the presidency in spring 2010.

Clark, who has served in various capacities on the association’s board for the past six years, will spend her year as president-elect being mentored in her new role by current president Penelope Moyers-Cleveland.

As president of the association, Clark will lead the board in setting strategic directions, including preparing the organization and its members for implementation of its “Centennial Vision,” a forward-looking mission statement devised to recognize that both the association and the profession will celebrate their 100th anniversary in 2017.

“I am very grateful to the membership for electing me to this position,” Clark said. “This is a time of opportunity for occupational therapy as the profession moves forward in response to the national health care reform agenda. My hope is to ensure that what occupational therapy has to offer to meet societal needs is communicated in the most creative and compelling way possible.”

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Medical students finally meet their match on one exciting, ‘crazy’ day

By Sara Reeve

Match Day started early for some fourth-year students from the Keck School of Medicine—very early. “I’ve been up since 4:30 a.m.,” said Tessa Stecker. “I didn’t exactly sleep very well last night; I was very excited.”

Stecker will spend her residency in family medicine at Kaiser Hospital Woodland Hills.

“I’m sure nothing could be more exciting than this day,” she said. “This day is crazy—four years of hard work leading up to this, and it just culminates in this moment.”

At precisely 9 a.m. on March 19—the same time as medical schools across the country—fourth-year Keck students opened their official letters from the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP). The NRMP is designed to provide an orderly and fair mechanism to match the preferences of applicants to U.S. residency positions with the preferences of residency program directors.

This year, of the 170 Keck School of Medicine students who participated in the match, 125 will spend all or part of their residencies in California. Forty-two students will perform their residencies for out-of-state students.

Melissa Huck celebrates her match at the family medicine program at O’Connor Hospital in San Jose.

See CLARK, Page 3

See MATCH, Page 3
Kidney disease expert William Schwartz, professor emeritus of medicine, 86

William B. Schwartz, a USC kidney disease specialist who became one of the nation’s leading thinkers on the intersection of medicine and economics, died on March 15 after a long illness. He was 86.

Schwartz, who authored or co-authored several books and hundreds of articles on subjects ranging from electrolyte disorders to the use of artificial intelligence in medicine to the rationing of health care.

Schwartz joined USC as professor of medicine in 1992 and remained with the university for the rest of his career—eventually being named professor emeritus of medicine in recognition of his service and dedication. At USC, his research examined the impact of molecular medicine on health care and on society.

From 1976 to 1992, he was the Vannevar Bush University Professor and professor of medicine at Tufts University. He founded Tufts Medical Center’s division of nephrology in 1950 and served as its chief until 1971, when he became chair of the Department of Medicine at Tufts Medical Center. On the 50th anniversary of the nephrology division in 2000, it was named in his honor.

Schwartz served as chair of Medicine and physician-in-chief at Tufts Medical Center until 1976.

In his work at Tufts University and Tufts Medical Center, he personally trained more than 60 nephrologists, many of whom became preeminent in their field.

He was known for his rigorous attention to detail in scientific analysis, which he imparted to the physicians he trained.

He led landmark discoveries in the physiology and management of acid-base and electrolyte disorders, in understanding potassium depletion, and in glomerulonephritis, a disease characterized by the inflammation of the small blood vessels in the kidneys.

USC researchers uncover mechanism regulating movement of blood-forming stem cells in the body

By Meghan Lewit

Researchers at the Keck School of Medicine have identified a signaling pathway that helps regulate the movement of blood-forming stem cells in the body.

The finding provides important new insight into how stem cells move around the body and may lead to improvements in the efficiency of bone marrow transplants.

The study will appear in the journal Nature, and is now available online.

Lead author Gregor Adams, assistant professor of cell and neurobiology at the Keck School and a researcher at the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, said, “By identifying the key mechanism by which these stem cells home and engraft to the bone marrow, it may be possible to pharmacologically treat the cells to activate this pathway and thus increase the effectiveness of bone marrow transplants.”

Hematopoietic stem cells are blood-forming cells that circulate through the body, shifting back and forth between the bloodstream and bone marrow, Adams explained.

When patients receive a bone marrow transplant, healthy blood stem cells are injected into their veins.

Unless those stem cells can find their way into a specific site known as the stem cell niche, they cannot develop properly to replenish the white cells, red cells and platelets in the patient’s blood. The mechanisms that guide the cells during this migration have not been well understood.

However, in this study the researchers found that blood-forming stem cells that lacked a specific signaling molecule, called GalphaS, did not home to or engraft in the bone marrow of adult mice, Adams said.

“Here we show that the GalphaS pathway is a critical intracellular pathway involved in this process,” he said.

“Currently, large numbers of blood-forming stem cells are required in bone marrow transplantation due to the limited efficiency of the homing process. This study opens up the possibility of treating bone marrow cells with GalphaS pathway activators as a means to increase the effectiveness of bone marrow transplants.”

USC health experts urge expanded vaccinations

USC faculty members Bill Mason, head of the division of infectious diseases in Keck Pediatrics and at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and Jeff Goad, associate professor of clinical pharmacy at the USC School of Pharmacy, testified in Sacramento on March 3 at an Assembly Health Committee hearing on preventing disease through immunizations. The hearing was held in the state capitol. Mason spoke on “Ensuring Vaccine Safety.”

Goad discussed complementary delivery sites such as pharmacies, which have been growing in recent years as medical clinics have been unable to keep pace with the demand for current and new vaccines.

“The pharmacy will likely become a traditional site... as the public comes to expect and demand this service,” Goad said, noting that patients often get vaccinated there on a walk-in basis nearly seven days a week.

USC School of Pharmacy mixes fun, serious topics during 12th annual Kids’ Day

By Kukla Vera

More than 100 seventh graders from the La Merced Intermediate School in Montebello spent March 6 on the Health Sciences Campus, marking the School of Pharmacy’s 12th annual Kids’ Day.

Pharm.D. student Sandy Song coordinated the event, which blends fun with information that encourages students to study hard, stay out of trouble and consider careers in health care.

During the event, dancers brought the youngsters to cheering and standing ovations, with routines that ran the gamut from hula dancers to rap singers. In between performances, students participated in raffles of gifts including MP3 players and Trojan garb.

Informational sessions focused on making good life choices, staying out of gangs, substance abuse prevention and other lifestyle topics complemented by an “American Idol”-like competition and a series of dance performances.

Seventh-grade student Jonathan Ortiz said he enjoyed the event, adding that it taught him about health careers and that pharmacists “give advice and help people.”

Before arriving on campus, students were given an opportunity to compete in a poster contest portraying the theme, “what it means to live a life without gangs.”

The winning poster was submitted by Ana Pena, Ana Padilla and Charles Gama. Each of the winners received an iPod Shuffle for their three-panel display that showed the ills of gang life and the importance of making good choices.

Kids’ Day is a community project of the School of Pharmacy Skull and Mortar Honorary Service Fraternity.

Sponsors for the event included Albertsons/Sav-on, CVS/pharmacy, United Pharmacists Network Inc. and Walgreens. Support for the event is also provided by the School of Pharmacy and the USC Graduate and Professional Student Senate.

From left: Ana Pena and Ana Padillo receive their award for best poster from Victor Law, of the United Pharmacists Network, Inc. and Sandy Song, Kids’ Day coordinator.
California Pharmacists Association honors USC School of Pharmacy students, alumni

By Kukia Vera

The California Pharmacists Association (CPhA) awarded USC Pharm.D. student Bonnie Hui the Robert C. Johnson scholarship, named alum George Yasutake Pharmacist of the Year, and honored alum William T. Econome with a life membership at the organization’s annual Outlook meeting in Anaheim on Feb. 20.

The CPhA and Pharmacy Foundation of California awarded Hui with the Robert C. Johnson Scholarship in recognition of her leadership in advancing the pharmacy profession. Hui was one of three California students to receive the award.

Hui currently serves as the co-president of the American Pharmacy Student Alliance and is involved in many other pharmacist organizations. Recently, Hui was awarded the Wal-Mart/Pharmacy Times RESPy award, recognizing her community service.

School of Pharmacy students received the “Best Parody of a TV Commercial” award in the Pharmacy Foundation of California’s Film Festival, “Save-The-Date”, created by Pharm.D. students Bonnie Hui, Mathew Keusghuerian, Parth D. Shah, Diana Tran, Jay Parikh and Sara Vaiyani, won the second film festival award for USC since the competition was created two years ago. For screening and educational outreach having to do with hypertension, the School of Pharmacy won the Project Hypertension Award for the second year in a row.

MATCH: Medical students find transition from school to residency can be a ‘bittersweet’ moment

Continued from Page 1

CLARK: Noted USC scholar tapped to fill national post

Continued from page 1

Hossein Jadvar, associate professor of radiology and biomedical engineering, has been named president of the Pacific Southwest Chapter of the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM).

During his term, from 2009-2011, Jadvar will oversee a chapter representing 930 members from Southern California, Arizona and Southern Nevada.

The SNM is an international scientific and professional organization founded in 1954 to promote the science, technology and practical application of nuclear medicine. Its 16,000 members are physicians, technologists and scientists specializing in the research and practice of nuclear medicine.

In addition to publishing journals, newsletters and books, the society also sponsors international meetings and workshops designed to increase the competence of nuclear medicine practitioners and to promote new advances in the science of nuclear medicine.

ETCETERA
A March 23 Los Angeles Times article quoted urology expert David Penson about prostate cancer screening.


A March 22 Columbus Dispatch article featured Doheny ophthalmologist Mark Humayun and the retinal implant project.

On March 19, KTLA-TV covered “Match Day” at the Keck School of Medicine. Channel 18 also covered the event.

On March 17, the “Today Show” interviewed psychiatrist Drew Pinsky about his new book “The Mirror Effect: How Celebrity Narcissism Is Seducing America.” USA Today also highlighted the book.

A March 16 Optometrist Times article quoted Doheny ophthalmologist David Huang about a new approach to detect early diabetic retinopathy.