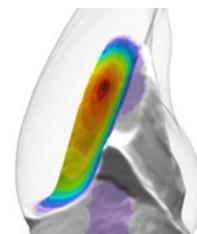


# Association of Science Educators in Dentistry (ASEiD)

(formerly ABSTD)

Newsletter: April 2020



## Reflections on the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the Association has been quiet for a while it seemed appropriate to circulate this short newsletter to emphasise that we are still very much alive. We had hoped to hold a Spring meeting to include an Annual General Meeting in Plymouth but this ran into difficulty with conflicting dates. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed a dampener on almost all 'face-to-face' academic activity, pushing the Spring meeting firmly off the agenda in the face of other overwhelming issues.

Nevertheless, there are things that we need to discuss. Many of us work in situations where students have been sent home, programmes have been modified to continue using a range of 'on-line' or alternative distance learning approaches, and compromises have been made. Issues relating to assessment have proved particularly challenging for some schools. Because of this we become forced to adapt to new ways of working.

## ASEiD Affairs and Future Meetings

It is with sadness that the Association has said goodbye to Alastair Sloan who has recently been appointed Head of the Dental School at the University of Melbourne. This is great news for Alastair, and tremendous for the Biomedical Sciences in Dentistry that one of our number should have been offered this position'. However, he will be missed.

Because of uncertainty generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we are not able to commit to future meetings at the present time. But, as soon as things begin to settle and a degree of normality returns a meeting will be arranged and the life of the Association resumed.

In the meantime – best wishes to all members and friends of ASEiD and stay safe !!

But, this is also an opportunity as we become forced to adapt to new ways of working. In reality we are acquiring new skills in 'on-line' delivery which will extend far beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside this glimmer of a silver lining in what has become a very dark cloud, we need to be wary. Delivery of basic science material 'on-line' may be seen as easy and cost-effective alternative to 'face-to-face' teaching. Whilst electronic approaches have their place, direct contact between staff and students is still a mainstay of the educational process and we must be careful that this is not allowed to become too diluted or even disappear. This, and other related issues have the potential to impact greatly on the experience of our dental students, on dental school staffing numbers and on what is expected of staff in-post. These issues need to be explored and should be tabled for much wider discussion at the first available opportunity.

## Curriculum issues

The long awaited paper describing the proposed '*Core Curriculum in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences for Dentistry*' has now been accepted for publication and a copy is accessible on our website. The focus of this paper is on what should be included in biomedical science curricula for undergraduate dental programmes. Options as to how and when individual elements of this curriculum should be presented will be considered at future meetings. It is also worthwhile noting that there have been parallel publications considering core curricula both in '*Oral Medicine*' and in '*Human Disease*' published in EJDE recently and it would be helpful if similar curricula could be developed in areas under-represented when it comes to published curricular guidance, for example '*Dental Materials*'.

If you have any announcements or comments that you would like included in this newsletter please send them to the Editor at [jon.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:jon.bennett@plymouth.ac.uk)