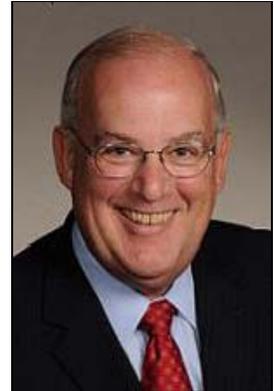


A Monthly Newsletter from Executive Director Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H. The views and opinions expressed in this letter are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the American Dental Education Association.

In this month's letter, ADEA Executive Director Dr. Rick Valachovic offers a daily diary of what you may have missed at this year's ADEA Annual Session & Exhibition in Orlando, Florida..



## Sun Shines on the Many Faces of Engagement

### Friday, March 16 – The Warm-up

*"When you engage, you invest in yourself. That's the biggest investment you can make."*

Dr. Evelyn Lucas-Perry, ADEA Vice President for Students, Residents, and Fellows addressing predoctoral students

As early as Friday, the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek is humming with activity. Early arrivals join a symposium on ADEA's 2011 *Survey on Women's Health in the Dental School Curriculum—An Update*. Hundreds gather for the third ADEA *GoDental* Workshop and Recruitment Fair for Predental Students and Advisors. Orientation starts for the ADEA Leadership Institute Class of 2013, and a commencement reception and dinner is held for the ADEA Leadership Institute Class of 2012.

### Saturday, March 17 – Coming Together

*"We need to send a strong message that this is not a fleeting thing."*

Dr. R. Lamont MacNeil, Dean, University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine during a panel on interprofessional education (IPE)

The morning starts off with the ADEA Signature Series: Breaking Down the Silos—Engaging Across Disciplines and Professions. This daylong event, coordinated by the ADEA Leadership Institute Alumni Association, picks up where we left off last year in discussing interprofessional education (IPE). Monty MacNeil is one of almost two dozen speakers and panelists with practical advice and compelling insights into what it will take to make IPE a reality.

This year, programming is categorized according to six learning focuses, allowing attendees to hone in on their particular areas of interest. On Saturday, a smattering of programming takes place in each of these areas, much of it scheduled to repeat for those arriving at the official start of the conference.

At the opening of the ADEA House of Delegates, incoming ADEA President Dr. Gerald N. Glickman outlines his vision for the year ahead, and I share news about a re-organization we have been engaged in at the central office.

Afterward we head out for a reception to welcome conference attendees. Many stop by their rooms first to shed laptops and suit jackets before joining their colleagues in the blazing Florida sun. I notice green shirts, blouses, and jewelry in celebration of St. Patrick's Day, and "Kiss Me. I'm Irish!" badge ribbons abound. (My sources tell me only the "Rock Star" ribbon was more popular. Who would have guessed?)

### Sunday, March 18 – Opening Day

*"M I C – K E Y (pause for audience response). Are you ready to ENGAGE?"*

ADEA President Dr. Leo E. Rouse opening the first plenary session

*"It never ceases to amaze me what our community can accomplish in three jam-packed days ."*

With this familiar chant, Leo opens the Annual Session and kicks off the first of three outstanding plenary sessions. Each of these speaks to the ENGAGE theme in uncanny ways. Following an emotion-filled awards ceremony honoring Dr. Lonnie Norris, the Dean Emeritus of Tufts University School of Dental Medicine among others, attendees are treated to an exuberant talk by celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson. The Ethiopian born, Swedish raised, New York immigrant embodies diversity in his roots, in his approach to cooking, and in the values he practices as a social entrepreneur. His praise for ADEA's efforts in this area is a high compliment indeed. "I [talk before] a lot of different fields," he tells us, "and they can all learn from you."

Among his many accomplishments, Samuelsson was the youngest chef to receive a three-star review in *The New York Times*. In the intervening years, he has prepared a state dinner for President Obama, appeared on the Food Network, and opened a restaurant in Harlem that offers free community cooking classes, hosts a farmers' market, and engages the neighborhood's young people. "Being in the kitchen is like being in a gang," Samuelsson tells the crowd. "Kids can cook for you, or they can steal your car." The chef has opted to give his young neighbors a sense of belonging in the kitchen, and he gets the audience thinking about ways we might leverage the connection between food and oral health.

After a break, Leo and seven ADEA thought leaders take the stage for this year's ADEA President's Symposium. Reprising last year's well-received point/counterpoint format, Leo poses a series of questions that explore the potential of interprofessional education and social entrepreneurship to help our institutions better prepare students to contribute to improving access to care. Strong agreement emerges on the value of IPE, but panelists differ on how best to address the access to care problem, and they point to a number of challenges. Leo tells the audience that folks on Capitol Hill are watching to see our next move. ADEA members leave the hall with ample food for thought and an appetite for more point/counterpoint sessions in the future.

All afternoon, members crisscross the building on their way to educational sessions. Thanks to this year's ADEA 2012 mobile app, most members can keep track of their schedules and locate sessions on the go. Rumor has it that *Best Practices for Incorporating Cultural Competency Into the Dental Curriculum* is filled to capacity. Still time to catch Valencia College President Dr. Sanford C. Shugart explain how he tripled graduation rates at an ADEA Commission on Change and Innovation in Dental Education Special Open Session. As people meet up in the hotel lobby prior to dinner, I overhear talk of these events along with ruminations on critical thinking and evidence-based practice.

After dinner, a sizable crowd heads back to the Floridian Ballroom for this year's Evening Plenary on Gender Issues. Motivational speaker Ms. Patricia Russell-McCloud takes the stage. I think everyone present agrees that her reputation as one of the nation's best speakers is well deserved. She has no trouble engaging the audience with her research, anecdotes, and advice on the skills women should cultivate as they engage in leadership.

## **Monday, March 19 – Day 2**

*"The fact that you even want to talk about politics is pretty impressive to me."*  
Paul Begala, former Clinton administration advisor and current political pundit, addressing plenary attendees

Well that's part of engagement, no? Leo opens Monday's political plenary by reminding the audience of the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from a brain abscess of odontogenic origin. This tragic event resulting from a lack of access to dental care should provide reason enough for dental educators to remain engaged in the political process, and Paul Begala seems to feel that our engagement is paying off.

"Hillary-care did not have the kind of oral health care that the [Affordable Care Act] ACA has," he says. "That's because of ADEA."

As for the ACA's tenuous future, Mr. Begala believes that voters are theoretical conservatives but operational liberals. "They won't know what they've got 'til it's gone," he surmises. Using his own politically conservative father as an example, Mr. Begala explains, "My old man has health issues, a lot of them, viciously expensive, and all of them paid by you. If anyone comes after his Medicare, he's reaching for a shotgun."

As you might imagine, this veteran Democratic political operative makes many jokes at the expense of the dwindling Republican presidential field, but he ends his talk on a serious note. He recalls the day his grandmother, an immigrant who arrived at Ellis Island with an elementary school education and later worked as a maid, visited him in the Clinton White House. He compares her pride in his accomplishment to President Obama's extraordinary rise and praises ADEA's commitment to "broadening the winners' circle."

The doors to the exhibition hall open at noon and hundreds pass through, eager for a chance to see the latest products and grab a quick lunch. This year we have seven new vendors and a record 22 participants in the ADEA TechExpo. By 12:30 p.m., folks begin lining up to hear about the latest innovations and to talk with colleagues about their Poster Presentations. It's inspiring to see the profusion of activity taking place among our members.

Back in the hallways, people head to discussions on emerging technologies, clinical simulation, the ADEA Curriculum Resource Center, and engaging students in the classroom and the community. A session on Chairside CAD/CAM Technology draws a huge crowd. The afternoon ends with a 75th anniversary celebration for the *Journal of Dental Education*.

At 6:00 p.m., elegantly attired women and men stream toward the ballroom for the 2012 William J. Gies Awards for Vision, Innovation, and Achievement Gala. This annual tribute to the most outstanding individuals and institutions in dental education continues to engage the strong support of our corporate sponsors and institutional members. Having attended the Gala each year, I found this one to be particularly meaningful because I had the opportunity to present William J. Gies, II, the namesake's grandson, with his own bust of his grandfather. Bill has been a steadfast supporter of the Gies Awards, and he is a member of the Board of Trustees of the ADEAGies Foundation.

### **Tuesday, March 20 – Day 3**

*"Service cannot just be an ancillary thing. It has to be a core part of your DNA."*  
Author Wes Moore addressing plenary attendees

Forty attendees rise before the sun for a 5K Fun Run. Our first place winners come from the student and faculty ranks. They are Mr. Andrew C. Burke of the University at Buffalo and Dr. Brenda Heaton of Boston University.

Two hours later, we gather again in the Floridian Ballroom for our final plenary, which features best-selling author Wes Moore talking about his extraordinary personal journey. His presentation, "One Name, Two Fates: The Consequences of Personal Responsibility," makes the fourth and perhaps most persuasive case for the power of engagement.

Moore's belief that education and mentorship fundamentally matter, and the inspiring way in which these ideas were borne out in his own life seem to resonate with everyone who hears his story. He emphasizes that people can transcend their environments when there are others around them who set high expectations. He urges all of us, whether as educators or in our private lives, to be available to young people. "It's not enough to be a professional," he says. "What kind of legacy we leave is tantamount." In other words, he tells us, engagement and service have to be a way of life.

A host of new sessions and some repeats keep members on the go for a third (or fifth!) day in a row. The halls are buzzing with talk of health care reform, graduate medical education (GME), and novel ways of integrating the biomedical and clinical sciences. The Exhibit Hall opens again at noon, and across from the entryway, members find the first ever ADEA Showcase. They can engage with staff and others to learn about the ADEA dashboards and benchmarking tools, the ADEA/W.K. Kellogg Foundation Dental Student Outreach Program, our admissions websites, and MedEdPORTAL. Faculty who have already submitted resources to this unique publishing collaboration with the Association of American Medical Colleges are on hand to explain the process. Meanwhile, down the hall, members are invited to help redesign the ADEA website. Everyone seems to enjoy the opportunity to engage face-to-face while getting a better handle on many of ADEA's virtual offerings.

As evening approaches, some head home. Those who stay, come together for conversation at the President's Reception. Beside the pool, under the towering palms, with almost every presentation behind them, ADEA members can relax and unwind. Congratulations, thanks, and sighs of relief pass among friends. The sun

sets. The stars come out. It feels great to be with colleagues, many of whom have traveled great distances to join in this yearly ritual.

### **Wednesday, March 21 – Moving On**

*"The first-timers I spoke to were very impressed. They said they would attend every meeting from this time out."*

ADEA President Dr. Gerald N. Glickman

ADEA Council and Task Force members meet one last time. Those who stick around for the final day also have one last chance to attend workshops. At noon, the ADEA President calls the House of Delegates to order. At the close of the session an hour later, most people say their good-byes and check their boarding passes. Others proceed to Tampa for the annual meeting of the American Association for Dental Research (AADR).

It never ceases to amaze me what our community can accomplish in three jam-packed days plus those that precede and follow. I want to congratulate Leo on selecting a theme that generated such tremendous enthusiasm from presenters and other attendees. Thanks also to the presenters, staff, volunteers, exhibitors, and sponsors who translated that enthusiasm into some phenomenal programming. Above all, kudos to Dr. Marilyn W. Woolfolk, of the University of Michigan, and to the other members of the Annual Session Planning Committee, whose tireless efforts made the 2012 ADEA Annual Session & Exhibition such a success.

I always leave these gatherings with much to think about, but I'm not always so moved. Many attendees praised this year's plenary speakers, who clearly struck a chord. I hope it is still resonating in the hearts as well as the minds of those who attended, and that those of you who were not able to be with us will be motivated to connect with the speakers through their books or their televised appearances.

Next year we will meet in Seattle to explore the "Landscape of Learning: Reflection, Interprofessional Education, Assessment, and Innovation." In the meantime, significant challenges face our institutions, and major problems impede the delivery of oral health care. It will take a fully engaged community to address these issues. I'm honored to be a part of one.



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