AAO Council on Education, COE, hosts Department Leaders` Conference

The Bulletin // American Association of Orthodontists
June / July 2003, Vol 21 No 4. p. 13

The AAO Council on Education (COE) hosted the Department Leaders`Conference for chairs and program directors of graduate orthodontic programs May 2 during the 103 rd AAO Annual Session in Hawaii.

More than 90 educators convened for this conference, which was

- organized by Dr. Katherine Vig, chair of the COE,
- and coordinated by COE member Dr. Robert Keim.

The featured speaker was Dr. Harold Slavkin, dean of the University of Southern California (USC) School of Dentistry.

Dr. Slavkin`s lecture focused on the Human Genome Project and the opportunities it has created for orthodontics.

Dr. Harold Slavkin, dean of the University of Southern California Scholl of Dentistry, was the keynote speaker for the 2003 Department Leaders` Conference, which was hosted by the Council on Orthodontic Education. The conference was held in conjunction with the 103rd Annual Session.

Dr. Keim, who is the program director for the advanced program in orthodontics in the Division of Craniofacial Sciences and Therapeutics at the USC School of Dentistry said:

- "Across the country, orthodontic departments, as integral parts of dental schools, are increasingly being required to demonstrate that they are indeed a part of their parent university, and, as such, they have to interact and collaborate with other parts of that institution outside clinical dentistry."
- **"Interactions and collaborations with medicine, biochemistry, molecular biology, etc. are now expected of all clinical sciences, including orthodontics."**
- " Dr. Slavkin`s presentation highlighted how the developments in the field of human genomics offer opportunities for collaboration to graduate orthodontic programs."

Dr. Slavkin said:

- "'Biological solutions to biological problems' is emerging as a new paradigm in dentistry and medicine.
- Diagnosis, treatment, therapeutics and biomaterials are all becoming 'biological' and gene-based.
- We are on the verge of shifting or evolving from mechanical (e.g. surgical) to biological solution for health promotion, risk assessment, diagnostics, treatments, therapeutics, and health-care outcomes.
- Moreover, we are presented with extraordinary opportunities for nurturing and mentoring our residents and faculty."

Dr. Vig, chair of the Department of Orthodontics at The Ohio State University College of Dentistry, appreciated Dr. Slavkin`s lecture an his ability to synthesize information effectively.

Dr. Vig said:

- "He was very engaging and has the special quality of making complicated issues understandable" she said. "Dr. Slavkin looked toward the future of genetics in the medical field and made this new information relevant to us."
  She also noted that he used a clever approach to involve the audience in the topic. Dr. Slavkin distributed DNA precipitation kits to the attendees so they could experiment with the physical properties of DNA.
- "He got us all to think outside of the clinical orthodontic box and to envision how all of the astounding developments in molecular developmental biology apply to our day-to-day lives as teachers."