

Having trouble viewing the email below? Would you prefer a printable version? Please [click here](#).



A Monthly Newsletter from ADEA Executive Director Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.

In this month's letter, Dr. Rick Valachovic, Executive Director of the American Dental Education Association, shares news from the Global Congress on Dental Education III and describes international efforts to support dental education worldwide.



IFDEA is now poised to become a catalyst and facilitator for an increasingly mobilized international academic dental community.

Dental Education: An Expanding Universe

Globalization has come to dental education. I experienced this reality firsthand earlier this month as I joined ADEA's President, Dr. Jim Swift, and more than 335 representatives from 66 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America to embark on a new era of truly international collaboration. During three program-packed days in Dublin, Ireland, professors and other experts from around the globe came together to refine our common vision of a world where scientific knowledge, the best available technology, and human and fiscal resources are widely disseminated to improve oral health in every region of the world.

Our journey began at Dublin Castle in Ireland where we attended the Global Congress on Dental Education III, the third in a series of international meetings on the future of dental education. I am pleased to report that the United States was well represented at the Congress, with more than 20 dental schools sending delegates. The gathering was held under the joint auspices of ADEA, the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), DentEd III (a European Union initiative to define competences for European dentists and assure quality in dental education), and the International Federation of Dental Educators and Associations (IFDEA). As you may know, ADEA serves as the Secretariat for IFDEA, and it has been my privilege, in addition to my capacity as Executive Director of ADEA, to also serve as Executive Director of this international body.

The Congress was honored by the presence of Dr. Mary Robinson, Chancellor of the University of Dublin, Trinity College, and formerly President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Her keynote address, "Health as a Human Right: Implications for the Dental Profession," underlined the gathering's strategic importance in establishing ways to improve standards in dental education throughout the world, especially in those regions with the greatest oral health needs.

Other distinguished speakers—Sir Iain Chalmers, a founder of the Cochrane Collaboration, which tracks the efficacy of health care interventions; Professor David Wong, Associate Dean for Research at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Dentistry (and a keynoter at the joint ADEA and AADR Annual Sessions in Orlando in 2006); and Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University among them—reminded us of our responsibilities and the challenges we face in the health care professions, especially in tackling poverty-related disease.

Meeting with colleagues from around the globe and hearing from pioneering thinkers who have taken on the vexing problem of how we can address disparities in health care was truly inspiring. But in addition to the opportunity to share ideas, the Congress marked a turning point in our efforts to foster global collaboration to promote oral health. On Saturday, September 8, the current President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, launched

the Global Network in Dental Education, giving our community a powerful mechanism to realize this vision.

The Global Network will provide us with a platform for sharing a vast array of knowledge and understanding on a worldwide basis. It will also enable collaboration and facilitate exchange programs designed to help those in regions of the world with fewer resources. The network will be able to share news and upcoming events, host Web logs and discussion groups in addition to managing large amounts of content that will serve as a trusted and highly valued reference for dental educators here and abroad. You can visit the network at <http://www.ifdea.org/>.

The Congress also marked an expansion of IFDEA aimed at engaging the entire dental education community. Renamed the International Federation of Dental Educators and Associations, the organization has begun welcoming individual as well as institutional members and encouraging them to interact directly with their colleagues around the globe. It seems appropriate that this should happen in Dublin Castle 15 years after IFDEA was launched at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, in 1992.

Having overseen a similar shift at ADEA that increased our membership sixfold, I know that IFDEA will benefit greatly. IFDEA is now poised to become a catalyst and facilitator for an increasingly mobilized international academic dental community. Harnessing technology and strengthening human networks is vitally important to speeding the dissemination of information and resources among our colleagues throughout the globe. The Global Network will allow each one of us to take part in this dynamic endeavour. I invite you to log on and join the network.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of visiting Cape Town, South Africa, to meet with African dental school deans. With the sandy beaches, tropical vegetation, and massive mountain backdrop, I knew I was far from home. But as soon as I entered the local dental school, I felt transported. The place looked and felt like dental schools across the United States, with dental equipment from the same global manufacturers. I was struck by how much we have in common with our colleagues abroad, and what a great asset this is as we strive for greater collaboration in the years ahead.

The Global Congress in Dublin reaffirmed that dental education is a valued international commodity. In preparation for the Congress, 14 working groups prepared papers on the technical, scientific, pedagogical, economic, and human dimensions of dental education. These papers were revised and finalized during the Congress, and they will serve as a baseline consensus view of the most current thinking in our field. The papers will be made available in a special issue of the *European Journal of Dental Education* that will be reproduced in the *Journal of Dental Education* and distributed throughout the world.

All of these developments are the fruit of a decade of dedication, financial support, and unprecedented cooperation from individuals, dental organizations, dental education associations, the European Union, and corporations throughout the world. As we embark on this new era of collaboration, there's no doubt in my mind that these global initiatives will stimulate innovation and elevate standards within dental education—and ultimately improve oral health worldwide.



Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director
valachovicr@adea.org

[American Dental Education Association](#)

1400 K Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005

For member service questions, call toll free 888-ADEA OPEN (888-233-2673)

Phone: 202-289-7201 Fax: 202-289-7204

To unsubscribe, enter Unsubscribe in the subject line of an email and press send. Click [here](#).

Would you prefer a printable version of this email? Please [click here](#).