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Dr. Karen P. West Named Next ADEA President and CEO

[Karen P. West, D.M.D., M.P.H.](#), Professor and Dean of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Dental Medicine (UNLV SDM), has been selected as the next President and CEO of the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). Her appointment will take effect on July 1, 2019.



A longtime advocate for women's health and diversity and inclusion in dental education, Dr. West began her career as a project director in the Augusta Dental Project/Children and Youth Dental Clinic in 1984. Her positions on dental faculty and in administration span 30 years, and she has held the deanship at UNLV SDM for the past 12 years. Dr. West manages a \$35 million budget and oversees approximately 400 faculty and staff and 350 students.

"Dr. West has experienced every stage of a profession in dental education—from practitioner, to community project manager, to three decades in academia and administration," says R. Lamont MacNeil, D.D.S., M.Dent.Sc., Professor at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine and Chair of the ADEA Board of Directors. "She not only brings the experience to manage this complex organization, she is also committed to ADEA's success as a trusted and valued volunteer leader in the Association."

Dr. West earned her D.M.D. from the University of Louisville School of Dentistry and her M.P.H. in Health Administration from the University of South Carolina School of Public Health. She was recruited as a clinical team leader at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry (UKCD) in 1990. Within the UK system she held a number of administrative positions, including Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs (1998-2002), Acting Dean for Admissions and Student Services (2002-2003), and Interim Division Chief of Public Service Dentistry (2005). She served as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at UKCD from 2002 to 2007, gaining academic tenure as an Associate Professor at that time. She continued to expand her administrative and leadership scope in 2007 when she was appointed as Dean of UNLV SDM.

Dr. West's significant experience extends beyond the dental school environment, having served in many important roles nationally and internationally. She served on the Commission on Dental Accreditation from 2013 to 2016 and was Chair of that important accreditation body in 2016. She has also participated in several international accreditation activities, which provide her, and now ADEA, valuable insights as dental education becomes increasingly global. Dr. West was also elected as President of the [Society for Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine](#) in 2004 after completing the [Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Fellowship](#) in 1999. During her career, she has been involved in research projects in the general area of women's health as well as the key issue of equity for women in dental education. Dr. West has published widely on this and other topics and is considered a leader in the field of women's issues in dentistry.

One of her many noteworthy accomplishments as Dean of UNLV SDM has been increasing the diversity of the student body and faculty, and now the school is considered a model of inclusivity. Her roles at ADEA have included Chair of the Council of Faculties, Chair of the

Council of Deans and Women's Liaison Officer for the University of Kentucky, among others. These successes and contributions led to Dr. West being awarded the [ADEA Distinguished Service Award](#) in 2018.

"ADEA's reach and influence will allow me to meld the best of both worlds—knowing our members' needs from working my way up the ranks in dental education, and my passion for helping the dental professions look outside our institutional and geographic boundaries to find even better ways to improve oral health for all," says Dr. West. "I am honored to have been selected and look forward to contributing in new ways to a profession that I have been privileged to be part of my entire adult life."

Dr. West will succeed Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H., who will retire from ADEA after 22 years as President and CEO.

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