Creator of learning website used by HKU Faculty of Dentistry students wins award

Dr Karen Gardner from The University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, who established the dental e-learning “Diastemas” website (http://diastemas.net) used by all HKU Faculty of Dentistry second-year undergraduates, has received a Universitas 21 Award for Internationalisation. The nomination for the award was made jointly by UBC and HKU.

Through blogs and online discussions, undergraduate dental students around the globe are using the Diastemas web platform to connect to each other and take part in international dialogue and collaborative learning. By comparing clinical approaches used in different parts of the world, students develop life-long skills in networking, online communication, and peer review. The ultimate aim is to promote global standards in dental care.

Dr Karen Gardner, Associate Clinical Professor in Oral Health Sciences and Dental Education Research at the UBC Faculty of Dentistry, has been instrumental in initiating the Diastemas programme, encouraging other universities to integrate the project into their curricula, and in obtaining funding support from Universitas 21 (U21; website, http://www.universitas21.com), a network of research-led universities from around the world.

Dr Gardner won one of two inaugural awards for internationalisation offered by the U21 network in 2012 to recognise efforts in internationalisation and building relations between U21 members. She received the award at the U21 Annual Presidential Meeting held at Lund University, Sweden, on 10 May 2012. For UBC and U21 coverage of the award, please see, respectively: http://www.dentistry.ubc.ca/News/2012/gardner_award.asp and http://www.universitas21.com/news/details/57/u21-dentists-award-winning-work-fills-gap-in-internationalisation-efforts.

Five U21 universities across three continents are currently participating in the Diastemas project: the University of British Columbia, University of Hong Kong, University of Melbourne, University of Birmingham, and Tecnológico de Monterrey.

All HKU Faculty of Dentistry second-year BDS students have been taking part in this international online student peer review project since 2009. For Faculty and HKU coverage of this project, please see, respectively: http://facdent.hku.hk/engagement/ke/pdf/facultynewsletter/Expressions_2010_issue3.pdf#page=9 and http://www0.hku.hk/cpaoesite/html/pub/Review/teaching_and_learning3.htm.

The e-learning website is named after the clinical term for wide gaps between teeth, symbolising the geographical distances between the world’s dental schools.

###

For more information about the HKU Faculty of Dentistry, visit http://facdent.hku.hk; Facebook page: www.facebook.com/facdent

Media contact: Ms Sau-wan Cheng, Knowledge Transfer Officer, HKU Faculty of Dentistry; Tel: 2859 0410; E-mail: dentktu@hku.hk

Prepared by Dr Trevor Lane, Knowledge Transfer Unit, HKU Faculty of Dentistry. Although every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this news release, they do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Faculty or University and are intended for informational or educational use only; the copyright owner accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 HK License. © 2012 Faculty of Dentistry, The University of Hong Kong.