

The overseas internship-exchange of students in Dentistry.

Cooperation agreement between the University of Concepcion
(Chile) and University of Ghent (Belgium-Europe)

In 2007, under the impulse of Prof. Dr. G. Theuniers – Prof. Em. (U. of Ghent) and Prof. Dr. F. Marchesani (U. Concepcion) a cooperation agreement was initiated and signed for five years, between the Ghent University, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Department of Prosthetic Dentistry, and the University of Concepcion, Faculty of Dentistry, Department of Rehabilitation Orale Mention Prothèse (Chile).

In accordance a mutual desire was stated, to promote international academic, cultural and scientific exchange between both Dental Departments.

Not only the mobility of students was promoted, but also the exchange between Professors and Tutors was stimulated. This was for the first time realized in 2009 for the 90th anniversary of the start of the University of Concepcion. For that purpose, the Faculty of Dentistry (U. Concepcion) organized a Congress (2-days) with all her exchange –partners of different Universities for dental education-internship of the students of University of Concepcion. At that time, Dr. Miche De Meyer was the delegate from the University of Ghent, Department of Dentistry. Soon it became evident, to extent this agreement between all the dental departments within the faculty of Dentistry of both Universities.

Therefore a new agreement was prepared in 2011 (and confirmed in 2013) and another two- days symposium with lectures of Prof. R. De Moor (Endodontics and Restorative Dentistry-U Ghent), Prof. H. De Bruyn (Periodontology, Implantology and Prosthetic Dentistry-U Ghent), Dr. M. De Meyer (Center for Dental Treatment for Sleep disordered Breathing – University Hospital Ghent) was organized by the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Concepcion, Chile. All those efforts resulted (2012) in an upgrading in ranking and recognition of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Concepcion, by the Chilean Government (Ministry of

Education) within all the Dental departments of all the Chilean universities. In 2013-2014 the University of Ghent intends to make an overall agreement with the University of Concepcion, not only with the Faculty of Dentistry but also with the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering.

To enhance this cooperation, the Department of Dentistry of the University of Concepcion appointed Dr. Miche De Meyer in 2011, as a Visiting Professor at the University of Concepcion to represent the Faculty of Dentistry of Concepcion and their students/Professors at the University of Ghent. This nomination facilitates the communication and creative possibilities for exchanging more opportunities along the mutual intentions for both Universities and their Dental Departments. Nowadays, Prof. Dr. F. Marchesani (U. Concepcion) and Prof. Dr. M. De Meyer (U. Ghent-U. Concepcion) and Prof. Dr. R. De Moor (U. Ghent) and Prof. Dr. A. Bustos (Concepcion) and all their faculty members are developing new challenges, not only on the level of internship, but also so for the Master after Master programs of Periodontology (3years), Orthodontics (4 years), Endodontics and Restorative Dentistry (3 years) and Pediatric Dentistry and the Postgraduate course-of Oral Health Science (1 year) at the Dental Department of Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine and Oral Health Sciences at the University of Ghent.

Since this agreement was established, the exchange of students became soon a yearly growing statement and on both sites of the ocean, very enthusiastic students came to explore not only the dental education program but also the different cultural aspects of both societies. To learn another language (English-Dutch for the Chilean students and Spanish for the Belgian students) was an added value, because not only because the English and Spanish languages are now currently used in the world, more over it facilitates the communication between patients and students

and their tutors.

Nowadays, we counted with proudness since the 2007-until 2013-2014 an exchange of 24 students of U. Concepcion and 9 students of U. Ghent. In the period of the earthquake (27/2/2010) the University of Ghent, with the financial help of the Flemish Union for Dentists, was able to invite seven more students of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Concepcion, for their continuation of the internship during that difficult period.

Presently we have one graduate dentist (Dr. F. Marro) at the U of Concepcion, who attended (2012) the Master after Master program in Pediatric Dentistry at the Department of Prof. Dr. L. Martens (U. Ghent) and one graduated dentist (Dr. C. Fernandez) at the U of Concepcion, who attended (2012) the PHD program with Prof. Dr. L. Marks (Special Care Dentistry for

Disabled patients-U.Ghent) as scientific promoter.

As a result of the benefits of the very intensive exchange program a Chilean-Belgian Dental Students Association have been created in 2012 coordinated by Dr. Carla Fernandez (Chile-Concepcion) and Dr. Stephanie Devroey (Belgium-Ghent) and with the full support of Prof. Dr. F. Marchesani (U.Concepcion) and Prof. Dr. M. De Meyer (U. Concepcion-U. Ghent).

By this, many grateful thanks has to be given to all persons who initiated in the past and still are supporting this magnificent exchange project in the future.

DR. MICHE DE MEYER

(Visiting) Professor, University of Concepcion.

Local coordinator University Hospital of Ghent,
exchange internship U Concepcion – U Ghent.