

SIU School of Dental Medicine has benefits



SIUE photo

Bruce Rotter.

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Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD, hosts Bruce Rotter, DMD, MS, dean of the SIU School of Dental Medicine (SDM).

They discussed many topics, which make the SDM unique in its field, citing the School's rich campus history, specialized faculty and dental facilities, and various community outreach initiatives.

Using examples that included the annual Give Kids a Smile event and the School's dental clinic for special needs patients, Rotter details the many activities in which students are engaged that holistically prepare them as practicing dentists immediately upon graduation. Unlike the medical school environment, the SIU SDM emphasizes primary direct patient evaluation and patient care by students under the supervision of trained faculty, which allows them to immediately begin the practice of dentistry practice without specifically requiring additional residency training.

A graduate of SIUE and the SIU SDM, Rotter was first exposed to the dental school as a student in 1978. Upon graduation in 1982, Rotter joined the U.S. Air Force, where he completed a yearlong General Practice Dental Residency before practicing dentistry on a small Air Force base for three years. Having credited the Air Force as the career phase that solidified his passion for surgery, Rotter went on to complete a four-year oral & maxillofacial surgery residency at the University of Iowa. From there, he maintained a private oral surgery practice in Madison, Wis. for three years. In 1993, Rotter returned to the Metro East area to begin serving on the SIU SDM faculty and has now been with the School for 23 years.

In this week's show, Rotter informed Hansen of many exciting initiatives in the SDM, including the budding success of the international dentist advanced placement program, which is currently in high demand, as well as the possibility of partnering with the SIU School of Medicine to open a dental clinic in Springfield.

Both Hansen and Rotter give high praise to the SIU SDM faculty, mentioning their dedication to student interaction and success. "Dental faculty not only teach in didactic courses, but also laboratory courses, and in the clinic where they supervise all patient care performed by our dental students," Rotter explains. "In a typical week, dental faculty are usually teaching or supervising students about 60 to 70 percent of their time."

Hansen voiced his admiration for the empathetic strengths the SIU SDM focuses upon to make the school successful, giving mention to ideas such as, "We normally don't think about the special skills, people and equipment needed to treat patients with special needs, so I think this clinic is just terrific," and "I thought it was great to see all of the activities you undertook to take the fear off the children at Give Kids a Smile Day. You pointed out that a lot of families don't have the resources to provide dental care for their children, and you see some of them with the needs that they have, and this is the only place they have to get them addressed. I think it's one of the great things you do."

To conclude the discussion, Hansen pries out of Rotter the revelation of a special talent in the kitchen.

Tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM every Sunday at 9 a.m. as weekly guests discuss issues on SIUE's campus.

By Logan Cameron, SIUE Marketing & Communications