



SIU School of Dental Medicine Commencement Celebrates Class of 2016

June 8 2016 6:05 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) celebrated the achievement of 50 students with the bestowal of doctor of dental medicine degrees.

The students received their doctoral hoods during the SIU SDM commencement ceremony held Saturday, June 4 in SIUE's Morris University Center's Meridian Ballroom. Notably, two students were hooded by a SIU SDM alumnus parent.

“As the only dental school in downstate Illinois and in the St. Louis area, our graduates are a tremendous asset,” said SIUE Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD. “They are proof that an investment in higher education pays the best dividends, not only for individuals, but also for Illinois and the region.”

SIU SDM Dean Bruce Rotter, DMD, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the class of 2016 and encouraged the graduates to always remember five key points throughout their professional careers.

“Always strive to perform the best dentistry that you can and to continue a lifelong pursuit of knowledge and excellence,” Rotter said. “Treat both your patients and your staff with the utmost respect. Maintain a moral compass, striving to do what is right. Maintain a social conscience and share your expertise with those less fortunate who may need your help.

“Finally, return the love and support to your family and friends which they have given to you through the efforts and sacrifices they have made in helping you reach the successful completion of your dental degree.”

The ceremony featured guest speaker George Zehak, DDS, an active advocate for organized dentistry and continuing education, and an avid supporter and good friend of the SIU SDM. Zehak emphasized one of the greatest challenges the graduates will face as dentists – change.

“You are now ready to use one of your life’s greatest achievements for the betterment of humankind,” said Zehak. “Change is occurring rapidly, and it will be exciting, helpful and extremely challenging to keep up with.

“Computers can and will continue to give you all kinds of information. Scientists are even working to give computers artificial intelligence. But no computer can have that human sense or go in a different direction in clinical situations. No computer has the human values that your education has drilled into you. That’s what makes you truly unique and makes dentistry a desirable profession both now and in the future.

The celebration concluded with a reception for students, faculty and family members in the Goshen Lounge. The SIU SDM commencement ceremony can be viewed in its entirety [online](#).

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people

annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.