Dear Alumni, Colleagues and Friends,

Is the Golden Age of orthodontics gone? We often complain about the difficulties of recruiting patients as we are now finding competition with the general dentist, an ever increasing supply of other orthodontists, the emergence of large group practice facilities and don’t forget the insurance companies. With the fiasco of the Affordable Care Act being implemented it could be just a matter of time before the government may help us solve our “access to care” needs by creating the Affordable Dental Act. (Oops, I think that acronym is taken).

Would you consider the Golden Age of our profession when you could go into an area that didn’t have any orthodontist in town and soon after opening from scratch, have a four-week wait time for new patients? It sounds great until you consider the painstaking process of banding every tooth and placing wires that would put a tear in a patient’s eye during their monthly visits. No wonder why the general dentist didn’t even contemplate doing orthodontics.

How about the evolution of bonding brackets and high tech wires which enabled us to treat more people and delegate a significant amount of the work? Now we are able to increase the volume of patients and shorten our treatment times while decreasing the number of visits. Consider how many of us deem a four-day work week full time.

Personally, I have considered the Golden Age when the orthodontic program at Illinois had a tuition waver and stipend (from 1994-2006). Someone was actually paying us to attend the program and become an orthodontist! Education loans were miniscule in comparison to today’s typical student education debt.

Some interesting facts:
There are 72 accredited orthodontic programs in the country that graduate 352 orthodontists annually.
UIC Dental School tuition is around $65,000 a year and $27,000 for the UIC Orthodontic Program.
In 2010, the average educational debt of a UIC dental school was around $200,000, while debts of $250,000 to a high of $500,000 were reported from our very own orthodontic graduates.

I guess the question we need to ask ourselves is why would it be so competitive to enter our profession if the greatest years of orthodontics are behind us? I hope we all come to the realization that we are fortunate to have entered the profession no matter when we did.
We would like to again remind you that there are NO administrative costs to the association, and all of the dues are used to fund alumni activities as well as to support the orthodontic program. Revenue that is collected in excess of alumni expenses is spent directly in the Department. Our contributions have helped to support guest lecturer’s visits to the department, orthodontic books and educational material for the residents, and also helped to defray the cost of the graduation banquet. It’s never too late to become a member!

ALL donations collected above the $200 dues during this mailing are given directly to Carla for the Department. Last year we collected $9,850 in donations which were specifically given to the Department. Special thanks to last year donors: Said Alhareedi (NU ’83), Paul Broadwater (UIC ’86), Victoria Chen (UIC ’04), Michael Conlon (UIC ’77), John Damas (UIC ’75), Dale and Lisa Davis (UIC ’94 & ’96), Michael Durbin (UIC ’90), Thomas Dusek (LU ’94), Rebecca Egolf (UIC ’85), Tarek El-Bialy (UIC ’02), John Ford (NU ’84), Ryan Hurley (UIC ’09), (UIC ’09), Ed John (UIC ’69), Pamela Johnson (UIC ’91), Jeff Kemp (UIC ’90), Paul Ladner (UIC ’92), LiHong Lin (UIC ’08), James Lupi (UIC ’93), Steven Moravec (UIC ’85), Michael Naborowski (UIC ’93), Andrea Nakisher (UIC ’97), Donald O’Donoghue (UIC ’63), William Petty (LU ’74), Michael Ryan (UIC ’94), Michael Thompson (UIC ’06), Michael Uhde (UIC ’80), Tonya Volk (UIC ’08), Cecile Yoon-Tartle (UIC ’98), Karla Zinkann (UIC ’55).

Please take the time to support the UIC Orthodontic Program and the Orthodontic Alumni Association of Illinois!

Special thanks to alums Anthony Ettink (UIC ’05) and Dan Bills (UIC ’04) for organizing our alumni reception in Philly. We had an outstanding turnout of almost 30 alums who came out to socialize during the AAO Meeting. Another benefit of membership!
We would like to welcome our nine year residents into the program. Coming from all over the country (and world), they are: Saleh Al-Kharsa – Tufts University, Abdurahman Alwadei – King Saud University, Benjamin Belavsky – UIC, Ginu Dahiya – Case School of Dental Medicine, David Goldberg – University of Michigan, Paul Lazari – New York University, Amitoj Mehta – UIC, Lora Nation – Southern Illinois University, John Polivka – UIC. Are you in the process of transitioning your practice or looking for an associate or partner? It is never too early to start looking for the right person and the best way to start is by networking directly with the residents.

Welcome Class of 2016!

Special thanks to Clinical Associate Professor Rob Manasse and his wife Johanna as they opened their house for a meet and greet gathering for the incoming residents. Appetizers were provided by those who attended while chef Manasse displayed his culinary skills on the grill. Faculty members Carla Evans, Budi Kusnoto, Therese Galang, Ed John, Ellen Begole, Larry Golden, Anthony Eltink, Larry Voss, and Chuck Greene helped to welcome our future alums. The alumni association proudly presented each resident with their own digital caliper at the conclusion of the event.
Are you going to the AAO Meeting in New Orleans in April, 2014? If so, please make plans to attend the off-site alumni reception. Special thanks to alums Mike Durbin (UIC ’90) and local alum Kevin Harris (UIC ’94) as they have extensively researched a location and found the perfect site. Conveniently located across the street from the Convention Center and is billed as “The Original Cajun Restaurant,” the reception will be after the meeting’s opening ceremonies this year rather than before. The Alumni Association will be hosting a gathering at the famous Mulate’s of New Orleans (201 Julia St., New Orleans, LA 70130, phone 504-522-1492). Visit www.mulates.com FREE drinks and appetizers will be provided! (The Alumni Association promises to bring a lot of Rolaids). We hope you plan on attending. Please RSVP to varpinobraces@msn.com.

If you are interested in attending the alumni annual sessions, make sure to look us up. Please be aware that if your school does not appear when you are registering for the meeting (i.e. Northwestern and Loyola), please sign up with the University of Illinois and we will be able to send you information about the reception. The reception location will be listed in the AAO meeting program under the University of Illinois and we will send our reminders based upon the registration. Still another benefit of membership!

At the April ISO Meeting, Budi Kusnoto was presented the Teacher of the Year Award. Budi is the Clinic Director at Illinois and has been involved with research and teaching since graduating from the program in 1998. During his acceptance speech, he spoke of how it was the personal encouragement of the late Dr. Ricketts who had actually encouraged him to apply to the orthodontic program at Illinois to study under the recently appointed Department Chair, Dr. Evans. Inspired by his father who was an orthodontist and teacher in Indonesia, Budi has kept the family tradition going and has become an integral part of the orthodontic department.

Budi recently spoke on the principles of growth prediction at the Foundation for Modern Bioprogressive Orthodontics in Campinas, Brazil. With an attendance of over 300 orthodontists, this is Brazil’s largest Bioprogressive symposium and it was organized by Nelson Oppermann. The program at Illinois is fortunate to have Nelson and fellow Brazilian Flavio Sanchez volunteer their time and travel from Brazil to the clinic once a month as adjunct visiting professors to help teach our residents Biopressive principles and techniques. If you are interested in sitting in on seminar, please visit the UIC Orthodontic Department website for a schedule of their next visit.