

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

Approved by the Regents

May 17, 2007

The University of Michigan School of Dentistry

Nisha Jacinta D'Silva, BDS, MSD, PhD, assistant professor of dentistry, School of Dentistry, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of dentistry, with tenure, School of Dentistry [also assistant professor of pathology, Medical School].

Academic Degrees:

Certificate	1998	University of Washington
PhD	1997	University of Washington
MSD	1990	Indiana University
BDS	1987	University of Bombay, India

Professional Record:

2006 – present	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Department of Pathology, Medical School
2005 – present	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Department of Periodontics and Oral Medicine, School of Dentistry
5/2004 – present	Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service, School of Dentistry
5/2003 – 8/2003	Interim Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service, School of Dentistry
2002 – present	Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Head and Neck Tissue Core Cancer Center, Medical School
5/2002 – 8/2002	Interim Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service, School of Dentistry
5/2001 – 8/2001	Interim Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service, School of Dentistry
5/2000 – 8/2000	Interim Director, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service, School of Dentistry
1999 – 2000	Clinic Attending, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Oral Medicine Clinic, School of Dentistry,
1998 – 2005	Assistant Professor, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, Department of Oral Medicine, Pathology, Oncology, School of Dentistry
1994 – 1998	Acting Instructor, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, Department of Oral Biology
1987 – 1990	Associate Instructor, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, General Pathology Laboratory

Summary of Evaluation

Teaching: In 1998 Dr. D'Silva was appointed as assistant professor in the Department of Oral Medicine, Pathology, Oncology (in 2005 this department merged with Periodontics/Prevention/Geriatrics to become Periodontics and Oral Medicine) in the School of Dentistry and in 2006 she began her current dual appointment as assistant professor in both the Department of Pathology, in the University of Michigan Medical School and in the Department of Periodontics and Oral Medicine. In 2002, she was appointed director of the Head and Neck Cancer Tissue Core, at the University of Michigan Cancer Center.

Dr. D'Silva primarily performs didactic teaching in the area of oral pathology. Dr. D'Silva has had teaching responsibilities in several areas including: director of the Dental Hygiene General and Oral Pathology course DH393, since 2001. Co-director of the dental course Clinical Oral Pathology DENTED614, since 2004; co-director of the dental course Sophomore Oral Pathology Lab OP626, since 2001 (and lecturer since 1999); co-director for dental course Oral Pathology for sophomore dental students DENTED624, since 2004 (and taught since 1999). In addition she currently presents lectures in Integrated Medical Sciences III, Colloquium 824 for senior dental students; and in the past taught in General Pathology for dental and graduate students; and Biology of Salivary Glands.

Dr. D'Silva gets excellent ratings from students and it is indeed fortunate that we have such a talented, skillful individual teaching in our graduate and undergraduate programs here at the University. Students find Dr. D'Silva to be an excellent teacher and find her interactive teaching style to be particularly effective. In addition to excellent ratings by students, peer evaluations of her teaching performance are strong.

Beyond teaching at the didactic level, Dr. D'Silva also excels as a mentor. She devotes additional time to the mentoring of doctoral students where she has been the thesis advisor for one student and a member of the thesis committees for two others and she has also served as an Oral PhD Qualifying Examiner for three students. She mentors and assists undergraduate students, graduate students, dental students, medical school residents, postdoctoral fellows and pathology students whom are participating in laboratory rotations or fellowship programs. Dr. D'Silva takes these commitments very seriously and demands quality performance from the students while making sure that students have a very positive experience.

Research: Dr. D'Silva has an excellent, internationally recognized research program that focuses on enhancing our understanding of the role that cell signaling plays in the development of oral cancer. This area of research is extremely timely where the results of these studies are critical for studying mechanisms of how cells acquire a neoplastic phenotype by mutation of genes critical for the transport of proteins into the nucleus. Moreover, the information gained from these studies provides the potential for use in the understanding of the causes of oral cancer and possible treatments.

Dr. D'Silva has been very successful in obtaining outside funding and has been awarded 11 grants from internal and external sources. Currently, she is funded through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) where she is a PI on an RO3 award from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, a co-investigator on an RO1 award also from the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, and an integral member/investigator in the NIH National Cancer Institute specialized program of research excellence (SPORE) in head and neck cancer at Michigan, in addition to several other collaborative projects. She has also received support from University programs. Her ability to obtain continued funding from external sources is an excellent indication of the respect she has gained from the scientific community.

Dr. D'Silva currently has 16 peer reviewed publications either published or accepted for publication. She is first or senior author on 13 of these publications, indicating her direct contribution to the studies presented in these papers. The quality of her research is reflected in the peer reviewed journals in which she publishes. She has published in high impact scientific journals including; *Neoplasia*, *American Journal of Pathology*, *Cancer Research*, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, *Oncogene*, *American Journal of Physiology*, and the *Journal of Cellular Physiology* in addition to the top journals in her clinical field including *Oral Surgery Oral Medicine Oral Pathology*, *The Journal of the American Dental Association*, *Oral Oncology* and *Archives of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine*. These are all indications of the high quality of her scholarly activity. Her long-term research goal is to translate her biological findings and those of others into therapeutic applications. Beyond her excellent research performance, her presentations are impressive and she has gained international recognition for her research as evidenced by her invitations for presentations at other Universities and special meetings. These invitations include a seminar, "Galanin receptors, rap1GAP and rap1 in Head and neck cancer." New York University, Fall 2006; Session Chair at "Oral Cancer: Factors Affecting Growth and Metastasis." American Association of Dental Research meeting in Orlando, FL, 2006; Seminar presentation, "Rap1: Role in Oral Cancer" Ottawa Regional Cancer Center, Canada, March, 2004; and five presentations at the Henry Ford Hospital and Detroit Receiving Hospital during 2001 and 2002. Dr. D'Silva is an expert in the field of oral pathology and oncology and she is highly regarded by her peers in the research community.

Recent and Significant Publications:

1. Zhang Z., Mitra R., Henson B., Datta N., McCauley L., Kumar P., Lee J., Carey T., **D'Silva, N.J.** Rap1GAP inhibits tumor growth in oropharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma, *American Journal of Pathology* 168:585-96, 2006.
2. Mitra, R., Zhang, Z., Henson, B., Kurnit, D.M., Carey, T.E., **D'Silva, N.J.** Rap1A and rap1B ras-family proteins are prominently expressed in the nucleus of squamous carcinomas: Nuclear translocation of GTP-bound active form, *Oncogene* 22: 6243 – 6256, 2003.
3. **D'Silva, N.J.**; Mitra, R., Kurnit, D.M., Zhang, Z., Babcock, C.R., Polverini, P.J., Carey, T.E. Rap1B, a small GTP-binding protein is upregulated during arrest of proliferation in human keratinocytes, *J Cellular Physiol.* 196: 532- 540, 2003.

4. Henson, B.S., Neubig, R.R., Jang, I., Ogawa, T., Zhang, Z., Carey, T.E., **D'Silva, N.J.** Galanin Receptor 1 has anti-proliferative effects in oral squamous cell carcinoma, *J Biological Chemistry* 280:22564-22571, 2005.
5. Wang, S.J., Wolter, K.G., Henson, B., Wang, S., Griffith, K.A., Chen, J., Carey, T.E., Bradford, C.R., **D'Silva, N.J.** A novel small molecule inhibitor of Bcl-xL inhibits growth of human head and neck squamous cell carcinoma in vivo, *Neoplasia* 8:163-172, 2006.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“Overall, she represents one of the extremely rare “triple threat” oral pathologists who is engaged in basic science/translational research, education and clinical service.”

Reviewer (B)

“She is PI of the RO3 and the Tissue Core component of the P50 grant. Support from these grants amount to 74% of her salary, a very impressive number. The total direct support for grants that she participated in has exceeded \$4 million.”

Reviewer (C)

“Dr. D'Silva's educational pedigree is first class and as such much is to be expected from her. She has not disappointed and her research, with funding from both internal and external agencies, and publications places Dr. D'Silva at the head of her peer group in the field of oral pathology.”

Reviewer (D)

“She has shown an innovative approach especially by creating a new living textbook in oral pathology, a method that can be applied also to other fields of education. With this, she has created together with her colleagues a new and effective teaching method.”

Reviewer (E)

“Dr. D'Silva's work on Rap1 is of particular interest, as this represents solid independent investigation with a definable end product that demonstrates novel conclusions that are of interest to a wide range of investigators.”

Reviewer (F)

“On reading her personal statements on teaching and research, the passion and drive that fuels Dr. Silva's progress are palpable. This is one candidate who appears to have crafted every stage of her academic career by making wise choices and through much discipline and grit.”

Service: Dr. D'Silva has and continues to put a major effort into service for the school, as well as at the national level. She has served on several committees within the school including several faculty search committees. She has received positive feedback on her excellent and insightful contributions to the goals of these committees.


Beyond her responsibilities to the school, she serves on the Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Biopsy Service Committee, 1999-present, within the Department of Periodontics and Oral Medicine. This service has been growing and its success is due to a significant part to the outstanding professional service by Dr. D'Silva.

At the national level she has also gained recognition as indicated by her membership on the American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Nominations Committee. Such activities show her involvement both at the local level and at the national level.

Summary of Recommendation:

Dr. D'Silva is an outstanding faculty member who has made significant contributions to the school and the dental community and has gained recognition as a gifted researcher and a concerned clinician dedicated to the academic community.

Dr. D'Silva has a strong research background in the area of salivary gland cell signaling with specific interest in cell signaling and oral cancer. She also has excellent professional skills in the area of oral pathology. As you can see from the enclosed *curriculum vitae*, teaching portfolio, and outside letters, Dr. D'Silva is serious with regard to her contributions to the School's mission. It is with the support of the Appointments, Promotion and Tenure and Executive Committees of the School of Dentistry that Dr. D'Silva is being recommended for promotion to associate professor of dentistry, with tenure, School of Dentistry.



Peter J. Poverini, DDS, DMSc
Dean, School of Dentistry

May 2007