The Academy of Osseointegration is recognized as the premier association for professionals interested in implant dentistry. It has always been at the forefront of scientific advances in dental implant and tissue replacement therapy. In an interview, Annual Meeting chairmen Lyndon Cooper, DDS, PhD, and Donald Clem III, DDS, discuss this year’s meeting, which was held recently, and plans for the 2015 event.

Sierra Rendon: How many people attended AO Annual Meeting 2014?

Dr Lyndon Cooper: More than 2,000 clinicians joined us for the 29th annual meeting of the Academy of Osseointegration (6–8 March 2014, Seattle, USA), which recorded the fourth largest attendance in its history. We had 624 international attendees representing 45 countries and more than 1,100 exhibitors who showcased products and services to support implant dentistry.

Why did AO choose the theme “Real Problems, Real Solutions”?

We have seen that implants are widely applicable and generally successful, and we recognize that clinician education is critical to success among our patients. This year, we sought to inform clinicians that a segment of our population will experience implant complications and failure, but emerging strategies can help them recover success. We encouraged the clinical team to examine implants carefully, address issues promptly and recognize when—and learn how to—intervene to preserve dental implant and patient health.

What were some highlights of the clinical sessions?

Leading experts led the program with insights on who experiences complications, why they occur and what evidence says about how well we address these complications. Consistent with the plan, a broad range of data was presented. The early focus on periimplantitis opened the minds of the audience, while the closing futuristic presentations certainly left everyone feeling inspired. Our clinical presentations anchored the meeting by demonstrating what good science offers great clinicians who adopt an evidence-based approach to caring for people.

Was research a big focus of the meeting?

Yes, presentations ranged from digital planning, new aesthetic techniques and prevention strategies to molecular strategies and stem cell biology. Abstract presentations explored original scientific and clinical research, clinical innovations and case presentations that could help shape the future of implant dentistry. We had a record number of more than 250 Scientific Posters as well.

The new board of directors was also announced in Seattle. How does the AO enjoy such a seamless transition in leadership?
Approaching its 30th year, the AO is fortunate to have organization leadership and leadership development that are very carefully managed. We are all very excited to announce that Dr. Joseph Gian-Grasso, a periodontist from Philadelphia, was elected to serve as the 2014–2015 president of AO. He will follow in the footsteps of a very successful president, Stephen Wheeler, DDS. Dr. Gian-Grasso—and along with the rest of us—will remain committed to establishing a nexus where specialists and generalists from around the world can come together to learn and stay up-to-date on the rapidly advancing clinical research and innovations in the dental implant and tissue engineering industries.

Have you already started planning for AO 2015? Yes, because it’s AO’s 30th anniversary, we’re all very excited about it. Mark the calendar now to join us in San Francisco from 12 to 14 March 2015, where we plan to harness the power of collaboration to advance the art and science of dental implant therapy.

Can you give us a few glimpses at what’s in store for next year? The opening symposium will feature teams of doctors presenting on how they manage patients together for optimal results. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Daniel Alam, who was a member of the multi-disciplinary team of doctors and surgeons at Cleveland Clinic who performed the first near-total face transplant in the United States. He will speak to the critical importance of different disciplines coming together to support a patient’s medical, surgical and emotional needs to make them whole again.

AO also will take a look at what the academy has learned throughout its 30-year history and summarize current recommendations to address the most challenging conditions in implant dentistry. AO has enlisted some of the foremost authorities in both surgical and restorative dentistry to share their knowledge and views to support this initiative.

Keeping with AO tradition, we also want to ensure the closing symposium doesn’t disappoint. It will be an interactive session where attendees can vote on keypads to give their opinion on various treatment options for presented cases. A panel of experts will also discuss and debate the options.

What are you most excited about for the meeting? At the annual meeting, we are excited to build on AO’s past and chart the way for its future. This will be done via top-notch surgical and restorative tracks, as well as a “Morning with the Masters,” for which AO has put together an outstanding group of experts to give attendees pearls that can be used in the office on Monday morning. Ultimately, patient safety and benefit must be based on sound evidence—that’s what the academy is all about and our annual meetings are as well. To learn more about AO membership, please visit our website (www.osseo.org/NEWmembership.html).

Thank you very much for the interview.