Dr. Ron Strauss has served in many roles at UNC. He began his career at the dental school at UNC and now serves as Executive Associate Provost and Chief International Officer. Strauss’s background gives him a unique perspective on the issues he approaches.

**MASTER OF ALL TRADES**

Strauss balances dental, administrative duties

**BY MELISSA ABBEY**

As he takes off his scrubs, dons his long black coat and weaves toward the exit of the dentistry clinic, he sees a mother bottle-feeding her newborn.

His face scrunches up with a smile and, despite being in a hurry, he takes three steps back, pokes his head into the room and coos.

Dr. Ron Strauss is a man of many names: Executive Associate Provost, Chief International Officer, husband and father.

But in addition to his many administrative duties and titles, Strauss also works every Tuesday and Thursday with the UNC Craniofacial Center, which deals primarily with cleft palettes.

“Sometimes people ask me if I’m a glutton for punishment,” he says, laughing.

“But I love to multitask. I think the provost office is served best when the leaders there have the same kind of roles as other faculty.

“To me, it just fuels my energy for working for the University.”

Earlier this month, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Bruce Carney looked to Strauss to fill another role — chief international officer.

The job fits the first-generation American whose parents immigrated to the United States from Germany during World War II, and whose career in education includes teaching and research in Israel, Brazil, Thailand, Moldova and China.

With his passion for global interactions, Strauss yearns for the world to meet and know UNC as the first-class university he believes it to be. Speaking before Board of Trustees members Wednesday in a presentation on UNC Global, Strauss laid out his vision for expanding the University’s international reputation.

Carol Tresolini, associate provost for academic initiatives, said Strauss’ varied background gives him a full understanding of academics and faculty, a quality that serves him well as provost and various other posts.

“One of the wonderful things about Ron is that he has a Ph.D. in sociology also, as well as a doctorate in dentistry, so he understands both research and dental practice,” Tresolini said. “Yet he has so many other responsibilities, too.”

Though he no longer has the time to work as an outpatient dentist, Strauss collaborates with the interdisciplinary craniofacial team and helps families develop care plans. He also teaches and mentors students in his field.

“Come Monday, my wife and I aren’t sad the weekend is over — even if we had a great weekend — because we each really love what we do,” he said. “It’s more like, ‘Hey, we get to go to work.’”

After traveling all over the world with their children, Strauss’s two daughters adopted his global view. One even spent a year on a remote island in Micronesia.

“We’re not the kind of family that says, ‘Please don’t go,’” Strauss said. “We just hope they find an Internet café every now and then.”

Luiz Pimenta, the dental director of the craniofacial center, said Strauss has become an extraordinary colleague, especially considering the tasks he juggles.

“Strauss is not only a great dentist, researcher and mentor, but also an extraordinary man,” he said.

Contact the University Editor at university@dailytarheel.com.