

Program Review

Executive Summary

Dental Hygiene

Majors Reviewed:

- *Dental Hygiene: Health Policy Administration Concentration (BHM/BDD), B.S.*
- *Dental Hygiene (DH), A.A.S.*

April 2014



The Dental Hygiene associate-degree major (DH) was developed in 1977. The first class of students began in January 1978 and graduated in May 1979. The bachelor-degree major was implemented in 1992, and the first students enrolled during the fall of that year.

The applicant pool for the Dental Hygiene program continues to remain consistent, with more applicants than can be accommodated within the major. Other than a few exceptions made for transfers, all students begin in a pre-dental hygiene major and complete general courses towards the major. The program uses a point-based admissions ranking system to select students for admission into the major. Clinic capacity limits acceptances into the associate-degree major to 36 students each year.

Current federal employment trends suggest that the demand for dental hygienists will continue to grow 33% through 2022. However, reports from recent graduates, area dental hygienists, and members of the program advisory committee reveal a geographical mal-distribution of employment opportunities. Dental hygienists commonly work multiple part-time positions, with the majority of positions located in urban/suburban areas. The program will need to continue to monitor this trend.

The program continues to integrate and evaluate emerging technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process and align with industry trends.

Recommendations to maintain program excellence include the following:

- Renovate the clinical facilities to provide a modern teaching/learning environment. Modern facilities will also enhance recruitment of students, which is vital given the significantly lower tuition rates and new clinical facilities at competing community college programs.
- Revise the curriculum to improve the bachelor's degree program goals, sequence, and course offerings.
- Implement a computerized clinical grading system and consider options to increase paperless options with clinical forms.
- Monitor graduate employment trends and threats to the dental hygiene profession. The program may need to consider alternative educational options, such as expanded functions, to ensure graduates remain competitive in the workforce. The program will also need to monitor the possibility of a new mid-level dental provider profession.
- Modify the current selective ranking process to permit students to repeat point courses and to eliminate point reductions categories.