

Committee	Dental Technology Program Advisory Committee	Date	10/22/24
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Members Present: Hamid Babaeian, Vahik Avasapyan, Philip Kim, Uri Yarovesky, Chad Crispin, Olga Ramadan, Daniel Rosales, Bahareh Dastjerdi, Natalia Miller, Lily Garcia

I. Welcome

Olga Ramadan welcomed everyone to the meeting. Everyone introduced himself/herself to the group.

II. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting for March 26, 2024.

III. Discussion of Program Changes by Olga Ramadan and the committee discussions.

Mrs. Ramadan informed the group that they would discuss how to start changing the program and the curriculum modifications currently being reviewed by the curriculum committee. These changes will then need to be submitted to the accreditation body. Daniel Rosales and Bahareh Dastjerdi were introduced to the group as adjunct faculty. Mrs. Ramadan announced that Arax Cohen retired as of June 28, 2024.

We passed our accreditation without any findings that need improvement. We are good to go for seven years. However, we must submit updates and surveys to the CODA Accreditation body.

Program Changes:

The document that I will share with you provides an idea of how many hours and units we are reducing, along with an explanation. If we are all in agreement and you see that it brings value to the program and is necessary, then we will progress. This will go through the curriculum process, then the state process, and I will have to notify our CODA accreditation body about all the changes. The committee members agreed that reducing the units and hours will help students complete the program faster, especially since digital technology has been speeding up the process compared to previous hands-on techniques.

We are archiving one course, Dental Technology 101. It is only a 2-hour course consisting solely of lectures. Somehow, it has been disengaged from DT 100. Previously, lectures were in 101, and the laboratory was in 100. However, we noticed that students were not always taking both courses at the same time, even though they were corequisites.

The DT team are planning to introduce only two prerequisite courses starting in Fall 2025: DT 100 and DT 102. During Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, students must complete DT 100, DT 101, and DT 102 as prerequisites. After completing these prerequisites, they can be accepted into the program. If students complete the prerequisites in the Fall semester, they will have to wait a semester before starting the program. For this reason, we now only have one group every Fall semester. For example, if students complete the prerequisite courses in Fall 2024, they will enter the program in Fall 2025. Students who complete the prerequisites in Spring 2025 will be able to start the program in Fall 2025.

We have noticed that students have no desire to wait for a semester. After careful revision, we decided to archive DT 100. We will keep only two prerequisite courses. Most of the lectures from DT 101 will be moved to DT 100. In this course, students will learn to fabricate different dental models and master casts. We have 2D and 3D printers, and we hope that whoever teaches DT 100 in Spring 2025 will begin incorporating 3D printing of some models. Students will not only learn how to mix and pour stone but will also be introduced to 3D virtual digital technology right away in DT 100, that is our first revision. For the second revision, we

decided to trim a couple of hours from each repeatable course. If we have courses covering dentures, such as DT 103 and DT 105, we decided to have 8-hour classes instead of 10 hours. However, when I went through some of the changes and challenges to check with our college rules and regulations, we now have a new option called prior learning. This means that if a technician working in a laboratory or any technician wants to receive an education in our program but cannot attend classes every day due to work, we have a solution for them to attend classes as needed and bring the completed assignments for grading. Out of the 6 hours of laboratory time, we will schedule 3 hours in class. Then, they can continue working at their jobs and labs while gaining experience. They will attend class for 3 hours per week, and we will count their work hours in the laboratory as prior experience. Additionally, this option is designed to support technicians with years of experience who, for various reasons, never received formal education and have been unable to obtain a certificate of completion or an associate degree. This will also provide an opportunity for employers to train their technicians in their labs while ensuring they learn standardized techniques through our school, following the Air Force Manual and Productivity Training Corporation guidelines. If we have a class like DT 109, we have a very similar course DT 111. The difference between DT 109 and DT 111 is that DT 109 is Fixed Prosthodontics 1, while DT 111 is Fixed Prosthodontics 2. In Fixed Prosthodontics, students have traditionally worked on thick gold alloy crowns. Instead of teaching gold crowns for half of the assignments, we will incorporate digital designs, single crowns, and only include one gold casting alloy technique, due to constant technological changes, we will utilize what we have in the classroom.

We can trim 2 hours from that course. The way it will be scheduled again is that if students are working in laboratories and participating in a crown and bridge series of work, they can attend one class and work one day. We will count this as prior learning.

We are also changing the way we offer our certificates. Currently, our students receive three certificates of completion at the end of two years. For some students, this process is much more difficult and time-consuming.

Philip Kim brought up that in the previous advisory board meeting, there was a discussion about rewarding students after their first year upon completing introductory courses. As the owner of a dental laboratory, we believe it would be better if students received their first certificate after the first year. The certificate can be called Introduction to Dental Technology in Fixed and Removable Prosthodontics. With this certificate, students will not only qualify for entry-level jobs, but they will also gain digital skills, as all our entry-level classes will include digital components such as scanning and basic designs. The committee agreed that it's a good idea.

O. Ramadan provided the information that, after the second year, students will receive a Certificate of Completion in Dental Technology with an emphasis on Implantology or Implant Restorations and CAD/CAM. By trimming some of the required hours, our program will be reduced from 73.5 units to 60 units, completed in two years with only one intersession.

As of today, our students must attend classes during both winter and summer intersessions, meaning they essentially have no break. To address this, we will combine two courses once a year in Removable Prosthodontics (RPD). This course will be offered every other summer, giving students time off during the winter. Instead of 122 hours over two years, we have reduced it to 99 hours in two years.

Mr. Babaeian inquired about the number of hours required over two years. Mrs. Ramadan explained that the 122 hours refer to laboratory hours over two years. For example, we had a few potential students from one laboratory, but our curriculum was too demanding. Students had to be on campus five days a week until 1:30 PM or 2:00 PM, making it difficult for them to work. As a result, many chose to continue working in a laboratory instead of remaining in the classroom because it was their source of income. By making minor

adjustments to our curriculum, we are shortening the program from three years to two years, with a total reduction of 23 hours.

Those 23 hours over two years will benefit our students by allowing them to continue working in laboratories. Additionally, we can start encouraging students who have never worked in a laboratory to gain experience from the first semester. They can begin looking for an entry-level job, perhaps working on model preparation, scanning cases, nesting cases for milling or printing—wherever laboratories need entry-level employees. This hands-on experience will help them grow in the field.

The extra hours they work in the lab will be considered internship or externship hours and counted as clinical hours. Why not give students the opportunity to work while attending school and have their work experience count toward their education? Sometimes, hands-on experience holds more value than theoretical knowledge. While a textbook covers only one chapter a day, in the lab, students are restoring 20 to 40 cases. The value of practical restorations brought to the classroom is far greater than simply reading a chapter and attempting to complete one case.

We initially discussed this idea with Arax and Dana before they retired. In fact, we have been talking about this for an entire year, and Bahareh has also been part of those conversations.

Some students working in laboratories cannot commit to school five days a week. However, committing to two out of five days is manageable for them while still earning an associate degree or a certificate of completion.

Mrs. Dastjerdi asked if it would be possible to eliminate prerequisite classes and allow students to start the program immediately. The current one-year wait time can be discouraging, causing some students to drop out of the program.

Mrs. Ramadan replied that they had an agreement with the admission center that allows students to challenge prerequisite courses such as DT 100 & DT 101 and, if successful, join the program immediately.

Mr. Rosales shared that this semester, he worked with students who have learning disabilities. He emphasized that these students should have the right to challenge the course, try it, and determine whether it is the right fit for them. However, once they are committed and enrolled in the program, if they struggle to succeed in classes, it becomes extremely difficult to retain and support them as students.

Simply keeping students continuously enrolled at the college and helping them find their path is a challenging task. Mr. Rosales mentioned a student who struggled with pouring a model without bubbles.

Mrs. Ramadan pointed out that if they eliminate prerequisite courses, there would be no way to screen students who may find the program too challenging. Without prerequisites, it would be difficult to assess whether a student is suited for the program. Every student who drops, is excluded, or fails creates a financial burden on the department.

Last semester, 16 students started the program, but only 7 graduated. The impact was immediate—with lower student success rates, funding decreased. The department no longer receives the same level of general funding, nor did they receive money from the State to support class lottery funding.

They requested \$80,000 to replace broken computers, scanners, and milling units, but only received \$30,000 for the entire year. The primary reason for this reduction was the low student success rate in the program.

Mrs. Ramadan emphasized the importance of keeping two prerequisite courses as gatekeepers for the program. For example, in Fall 2024, 28 students enrolled in DT 100, but that number has already dropped to 15 students.

Mr. Babaeian asked about the minimum number of students required for a class.

Mrs. Ramadan responded that since there are three prerequisite courses, she was able to negotiate a minimum of 8 students per class. However, according to CODA accreditation standards, an instructor can only teach 12 students if a tech assistant is present.

She emphasized that they need a tech assistant to help in classes, but the request has been denied due to low enrollment numbers. Having an additional instructor or assistant would significantly improve the learning experience for students. The instructors will be busy teaching and supervising hands-on work, while the tech support will handle equipment maintenance. However, as of today, we do not have that luxury.

Mr. Babaeian asked about the program hours.

Mrs. Ramadan replied that 2nd-year students attend from 7:30 AM to 12:30 PM, while 1st-year students are scheduled from 8:00 AM to 2:05 PM.

Currently, courses run for 8 weeks, but she would like to return to 16-week courses. Instead of requiring students to be on campus five days a week, she proposes reducing it to two or three days, allowing students to work the remaining days.

She also mentioned that all courses are offered in a hybrid format. Classes are taught via Zoom, so students can work while watching the class online. The hybrid modality will continue because the new generation relies heavily on digital platforms.

Mr. Babaeian followed up on when the Introduction to Fixed and Removable Prosthodontics Certificate would be introduced to improve students' employability after their first year of courses.

Committee members discussed the issue and unanimously agreed that this certificate is necessary and beneficial to students.

Mr. Babaeian then inquired about summer classes.

Mrs. Ramadan responded that winter and summer intersessions will be removed, with only one summer intersession every two years. The Removable Partial Denture course will be offered in the summer.

He also asked if prerequisite classes could be offered in the summer.

Mrs. Ramadan explained that high school students usually start college in the fall semester and do not take summer classes. The majority of incoming students are high school graduates, while the number of students in their late twenties and thirties is decreasing. However, international student enrollment is increasing, although some have dropped from classes.

At the college, they have also experienced an increase in homelessness, with individuals entering the building and using campus facilities.

Mr. Babaeian suggested that classes should end by noon, allowing students to work part-time jobs.

Mrs. Ramadan agreed, proposing that classes run from 7:30 AM to noon or 8:00 AM to noon for two to three days a week at most.

IV. Funding for the Dental Program

Mrs. Ramadan informed the group that she serves on the District Budget Committee and closely monitors the college's funding allocation.

The college received \$92 million, but enrollment is declining across the college. As a result, the dental program received only \$30,000 in lottery funds this year, which will be used to upgrade milling units.

She suggested partnering with dental laboratories to get discounted prices and outsource some work.

The program needs to purchase another scanner. Currently, there are only two scanners, and one is extremely slow—it is the first-generation 3Shape open-model scanner. Another scanner has already stopped working.

The X5 circuit lab scanner has been out of service for years, but there is no funding for repairs.

Additionally, the program has a \$15,000 budget for instructional materials, but there are three broken CEREC milling units. These machines have stopped milling completely and cannot even be calibrated.

They contacted Sirona, and the company quoted a \$250 per hour service fee, with an estimated minimum of 10 hours just to diagnose the issue.

Mr. Kim asked about expiring materials and whether expiration dates matter.

Mrs. Ramadan responded that for casting, expiration is not an issue—for example, casting non-precious metals is not affected. However, the problem lies with the ovens.

The primary ovens, which are Ivoclar models, are extremely sensitive to temperature. They tried adjusting the temperature settings and even checked the liquid components to ensure they were not expired.

Despite this, the investment materials are cracking in half, making pressing impossible.

They purchased new investment materials just six months ago and never had issues with expired materials before.

Mr. Kim offered to purchase all necessary materials before they reach expiration. Additionally, he invited students to his laboratory to gain hands-on experience with milling procedures.

V. Marketing the Program

Mrs. Ramadan explained that she is working on gaining access to the program's website so she can update and improve its content.

A flyer has been created and will be translated into Korean, Armenian, and Spanish. A QR code will be included, allowing easy access to the translated versions.

The flyers will be ready next week and will be posted on the website as well as distributed across campus.

Meeting Adjourned: 7: 50pm