

College of the Redwoods
Dental Assisting Program Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 10, 2024
AT 101- Dental Health Center Waiting Room
11:30AM – 1:30 PM

Members Present: Kelly Harring (RDA), Stephanie Titus (RDA), Kristen Westfall (RDH), John Willis (DDS), Tammy Hoalton (AOA Program), Teresa Moore (RDA/ Program Instructor) Hillary Reed (RDAEF/ Program Coordinator), Raynell Tindall (RDA/ Program Instructor)

1. Called to order at 11:32 am by Hillary Reed.

2. Approved the meeting minutes from May 12, 2023.

3. Provided Program Update:

- Reported that of the 23 students enrolled in August 2023, 14 students graduated. Informed that the Dental Assisting Program that 5 students that were enrolled and sent acceptance letters did not show for orientation, speculation that several were “bot students” faking enrollment to collect financial aid money. Several had almost identical student identification numbers.
- Reported that 10 graduates are currently employed locally, 2 students have left the area and are seeking employment, and 2 other students are pursuing continuing their education. Starting wages ranged from \$21-\$24 per hour. The hires were in general dentistry in private practice and clinics, as well as in pediatrics, orthodontics, endodontic, and oral surgery settings.
- Reported 32 students have been accepted for the 2024-2025 academic year so far, but that only 28 were enrolled. The application period is February 1- August 1. Informed the Committee that at this time students that apply will be put on a waitlist. Acceptance letters have been sent for the upcoming academic year. Tammy will be following up with the incoming students confirming their acceptance into the program.

4. Provided Dental Health Center Update:

- Reported revenue for the Dental Health Center. This year, Tammy scheduled the Dental Health Center provider dentists to produce a total of \$93,872. The Dental Health Center generated a \$36,000 surplus (over what was spent), ending with a positive in the self-supporting budget. This is the largest surplus that the Dental Health Center has had in twenty years.
- Discussed that the \$36,000 surplus would be used for future accreditation expenses and the replacement of the compressor and vacuum that are 15 years old.
- Reported that Dr. Wolven, Dr. Willis, and Dr. Jaso worked this year and that Dr. Wolven and Dr. Willis have confirmed that they plan to return next academic year. Dr. Jaso may return at a lesser capacity, only working one day per month. Additionally, Dr. Kochendorfer had been in contact with Hillary Reed regarding next academic year.
- Discussed starting clinic in late September after the infection control unit and utilizing faculty to assist with students observing. Discussed that students are not prepared for the level of advancement they need to obtain in 10 months. The faculty discussed with internship staff that students are not to the level of advancement of the pre-pandemic students. Additionally, it was observed by faculty and internship office staff that healthy productive work habits have declined since Covid.

5. Petitioned for Community Updates:

- Inquired what “Covid” protocols were remaining in the offices after the mandates were no longer required. Committee members stated that only the air filters remained in the offices where they are employed.
- Inquired which soft- skills could be improved within the Program. Members stated that students struggled with emotional intelligence and accountability. It was discussed that several students seemed to have “flight syndrome” issues and disappeared during clinical and internship activities for 20+ minutes with no communication prior. Additionally, it was discussed that students seemed to need an excessive number of breaks to check their phone and drink water. Breaks seem to be overly occurring in the field as well and individuals seem to not understand that breaks at inopportune times frustrate the staff. One member shared that she feared cross-contamination when a co-worker was sipping water in a clean operatory. Additionally, the members discussed ways in which to curtail cell phone use. A cell phone bucket was suggested for clinical.
- Inquired which skills students struggle with upon internship assignment. It was noted that students seem to struggle with small talk conversations when seating and greeting, proper placement of HVE, so that the DDS view is not blocked, and knowing what instruments to pass in the procedure. Feedback from internship offices overall was that students were struggling with the steps of the procedures and trying to rely on social media rather than memorization. The faculty discussed that students do not want to read the book and reading assignment but want to view social media sites instead. Brainstormed on how to combat this issue for the future.
- Inquired what endodontic skills had changed for assistants in the endodontic procedure. Kelly suggested that Wave 1 and Element Obturation System were being utilized. She stated that the Element Obturation System was an alternative due to gutta percha being recalled. Kelly also encouraged use of the Nomad in the endodontic unit.
- Inquired about equipment purchases for the future. iTero scanning device was highly recommended, as was a new compressor and vacuum.

7. Solicited Community Updates:

- Feedback was provided from Committee members on scheduling. Committee members discussed that hygiene days were not full locally at multiple locations. It was discussed that private practice schedules have been hit hard by the economy and that hygienists are often not working full days the days they are scheduled to work. Clinics stated that they remained at a small number of hygienists for a large patient base. One member suggested a local “sub list” for the community would be helpful for maternity leave, illness, etc.

8. Adjournment.