

**Dental Hygiene Program:
Best Practices for Admission
Leading to Student Success
Spring 2021**

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October 29, 2019

Sabbatical Proposal

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- 1. Purpose:** The purpose of my sabbatical is to evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of the current lottery admissions process that the dental hygiene program here at Oxnard College utilizes. The lottery selection process was initially adopted when the program was being developed (1996), and the selection process has never been reassessed. Initially the lottery procedure was adopted to ensure that our local community and students would be served. While our program remains committed to serving our local community and students, the lottery selection process does not always serve our students well in ensuring that they will be successful once admitted into the program.

The Oxnard College Dental Hygiene Program (OCDHP) is academically rigorous and requires a substantial financial investment in purchasing the required student instrument issue at the beginning of the program. The cost of the fall student issue is approximately \$7000.00, which includes instruments that the students own. Students begin training with these instruments in their first week of the program, and will use them throughout their educational process and well into their hygiene career in private practice. In addition, the students will purchase a winter issue of instruments, which costs an additional \$1800.00. Because there is such a large monetary factor to participating in this program, I would like to ensure that the students admitted have the highest probability of being successful.

Historically, every year, one to three students out of a class of 20 drop out of the program (up to 15% of the class) in the first month of the program because they were not prepared for the rigor of the program. The attrition rate is unfortunate first because of the large financial investment the student has made, and secondly because there were many qualified alternate candidates on the wait list who were not given the opportunity to be admitted.

Meeting the minimum overall and science GPA's of 3.0 is not sufficient in predicting the readiness of the applicants to be able to succeed. A discussion of the current admission process was discussed during the October 24 2019 Advisory Committee Meeting and there was overwhelming support for moving towards a merit based admissions process as long as we maintain the integrity of serving our local student population.

2. Rationale:

a. Professional Development: This proposal would assist me in being able to research other community college dental hygiene programs admissions processes. From the little investigating I have done, we are the only dental hygiene program utilizing a lottery system and this is of concern since both the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) and the Dental Hygiene Board of California (DHBC) recommend a merit based approach. I do fully anticipate our admission process being questioned during our upcoming October 2020 accreditation site visit.

- b. Value to Department:** The department would benefit by increasing the probability that each admitted student would be successful. The OCDHP has enjoyed a 100% pass rate on both the written National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE) and the clinical licensure examinations Western Regional Examination Board (WREB) and the Central Regional Dental Testing Service (CRDTS) for the students completing the program. My goal is to increase the likelihood that every admitted student into the OCDHP be successful in completing the program.
- c. Value to College or District:** Oxnard College and the Ventura County Community College District would benefit by maximizing the financial costs of running such an elite program by increasing student success within the OCDHP.
- d. Value to the Students:** This proposal would help ensure student readiness and success in the dental hygiene program. Additionally, students would not incur the large costs of the student issues if they not successful after the first few weeks of school.
- e. Value to the Community:** The community will benefit by graduating more dental hygienists to serve in the local dental practices. OCDHP graduates are highly sought after in our community and have enjoyed a 100% employment.

3. Implementation

- a. Beginning January 2021, I will begin to gather data on the admission practices from the 17 California community college dental hygiene programs. In addition, I will study the admission processes currently utilized within the VCCCD for programs

already utilizing "point based" admissions such as the nursing programs.

In February 2021, I will analyze the data gathered regarding the admission processes and determine the "best practice" for admission into dental hygiene programs. Potential changes would include an interview, a personal statement, letters of recommendation and acknowledgement of experience in the dental field.

In March 2021, I will determine what best practices I would like to pursue implementing here at OCDHP and present them to Dean Cabral, counselors and upper management for discussion. The proposed changes for the admissions process would be refined and fully developed so that the proposed new admissions policies could be presented to the VCCCD Board of Trustees for approval.

In April 2021, propose the new admissions policies to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Finally, May 2021, should the Board grant their approval the new applications would be implemented for the fall 2022 admissions cycle.

- b. **Projected Results:** I would expect that by implementing merit based requirements in the dental hygiene application and admission processes there would be less attrition during the first semester due to not being fully prepared for the program, and students would not incur large financial debt if

they were unsuccessful. Ultimately, I would love to witness an increase of students completing the program and graduating due to improved student success. The goal I have in mind is to admit 20 students and to graduate all 20 students.

- c. **Dissemination Plan:** The results of this project would be disseminated in numerous ways: 1. to the DH faculty and staff at a department meeting, 2. a meeting with the counselors would be requested so that the results and rationale of the changes to the admissions process could be discussed and 3. the results could also be presented to the Academic Senate.
- d. **Project Timeline:** My estimated timeline would be as follows:

January 2021: Study admission processes at other community college dental hygiene programs. Additionally, I would research the programs within our district already utilizing "merit based" or "point based" admission policies.

February 2021: Establish the "best practices" for admission into dental hygiene programs.

March 2021: Consult with the Dean of CTE, counselors and management about the best practices and what which methods would best serve our college. Prepare final version of admissions proposal to submit for Board of Trustees approval.

April - present the OCDHP new admissions policies for Board approval. Board of Trustees must approve the change for implementation of new proposed policies.

May 2021: Implement the changes for admission on the application and website if Board of Trustees approval is given.

4. Past Contributions to the District

Adjunct dental hygiene faculty 1998-2005

Provisional Full-time Dental Assisting Instructor 2005-2006

Full-time Tenure track Dental Assisting Instructor 2007-2012

Coordinator Dental Hygiene January 2013 - present

Department Chair dental programs 2013 - present

Member of Academic Senate

Member of Professional Development Committee

Member of Program Effectiveness and Program Review

Member of the Curriculum Committee

Member of Planning Budget Committee

Member of Strategic Planning Committee

Member of Accreditation Team

Past Co-chair of Learning Outcomes Team

5. **Length of Service:** Seven years part-time service, 14 years full-time service

Past Sabbaticals Awarded: None