



L&C Dental Programs Earn Accreditation

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Godfrey, Ill. – Lewis and Clark Community College’s Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs both recently received re-accreditation from the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), without the need for reporting requirements.

Four ADA-CODA representatives visited campus in November 2010, but due to the commission’s meeting schedule, news on the programs' status was not released until last month.

“It was a long nine months, waiting to hear from the commission, but the program's outcomes provided solid evidence that we are either meeting or exceeding the standards set forth by CODA,” said Michelle Singley, who has been coordinator of the Dental Hygiene program since its inception in 1995.

CODA accreditation means that both programs effectively afford quality educational opportunities to their students, and are continually working to improve their educational standards. The process to attain accreditation is a long and detailed one.

Every seven years, each of the nation’s 300+ dental hygiene programs and of almost 300 accredited dental assisting programs is visited by the ADA-CODA, which reviews the school’s accomplishments based on CODA standards and makes suggestions for improvement.

Ahead of the visit, program faculty and staff wrote and compiled volumes of evidence supporting the programs as they relate to institutional effectiveness, educational program, administration, faculty and staff, educational support services, health and

safety provisions, and patient care services. During the two and a half day visit, the ADA-CODA team interviewed faculty, staff, administration, and students, and toured many sites on campus.

“The results of this site visit could not have been accomplished without the assistance of a great many people: our administration, faculty, staff and students worked hard for this ‘approval without reporting status,’ and our housekeeping, maintenance, and facilities staff took personal pride in preparing our facility,” Singley said. “This accomplishment is noted as a true team effort!”

The programs' success holds special significance to the faculty, who support the unique one+one career ladder program design, which takes students from a Certificate of Proficiency in dental assisting to an Associate in Applied Science degree in dental hygiene.

"The fact that our dental hygiene students graduate with dual credentials makes them valuable, well-rounded employees in the dental office setting,” said Chris Hallstead, coordinator of the Dental Assisting program, and a graduate of both programs. “My experiences as a student in the L&C dental programs led to an amazing career in dentistry that could only be surpassed by my opportunity to return as an educator in these programs."

L&C’s dental assisting and dental hygiene programs, initiated in 1972 and 1995, respectively, are known for their rigorous requirements. The bar is set high to help students perform well on the national board exams and clinical board examinations. For dental hygiene, success on these board examinations is a requirement for licensure.

This was CODA’s sixth evaluation of the dental assisting program and fourth site evaluation of the dental hygiene program. The programs were last evaluated in July 2004, and were also approved without reporting requirements. The next ADA-CODA site visit will take place in 2017.

“The external accreditation from ADA-CODA demonstrates the quality of the dental assisting and dental hygiene programs. The rigor of the accreditation process exemplifies the exceptional work of the dental assisting and dental hygiene faculty and staff. The faculty members need to be commended for their dedication to the program and their students,” said Donna Meyer, dean of Health Sciences at Lewis and Clark.