



L&C Faculty Member Joins Illinois Board of Dentistry

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Godfrey, Ill. – Lewis and Clark Community College’s own Vicki Snell has been appointed to the Illinois State Board of Dentistry, and will join eight dentists, one public member, and only one other dental hygienist for her first meeting in Chicago this September.

“I have been highly interested to serve on the board of dentistry, and felt that I have a skill set that would add value to the board,” Snell said. The Illinois State Board of Dentistry was founded in 1917, and dental hygienists were added to the boards’ composition in 1945, making Snell a part of an exclusive group of influential professionals in her field.

Each member of the board is appointed by the governor of Illinois after an intense application process and serves a four year term on the board. They may be reappointed to serve up to one additional term.

The Illinois State Board of Dentistry’s purpose is to protect the dental safety and welfare of the public by ensuring that licensure qualifications and standards for professional practice are properly evaluated, applied and enforced.

“Vicki is an exemplary faculty member who is an outstanding representative of the dental hygiene profession,” said Donna Meyer, dean of Health Sciences at Lewis and Clark. “She is highly regarded as an expert in her field and her involvement in the profession is to be commended. Being appointed to this board is a prestigious honor and demonstrates the caliber of the faculty at Lewis and Clark Community College.”

Snell also had been previously appointed by regional board organizations as a dental hygiene examiner for the Central Regional Dental Testing Service and the Northeast Regional Board. In addition to her teaching duties at Lewis and Clark Community College, Snell said her experience as a regional board examiner for the past eight years aligns with one of the responsibilities of a board of dentistry member. The regional boards work to ensure the quality of dental hygiene standards and practices in the United States. She will continue her work as a regional board examiner, in addition to her new duties on the State Board of Dentistry and her teaching career.

Snell, of Edwardsville, originally grew up in Staunton. The daughter of a principal and an elementary school teacher, and she always wanted to be in the education profession.

She started her education at Southern Illinois University Carbondale earning her associate degree in dental hygiene, then went on to earn her bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Greenville College. In 2010, she graduated from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana with a Master of Education degree in community college teaching and learning.

After earning her associate degree, Snell started working in private practices and for office of Dr. Thomas Barker, who would become her mentor. He taught at the SIU Dental School and inspired her to teach with his analogies in treating patients.

Snell joined Lewis and Clark's Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting programs as an adjunct faculty member in 1996, and gradually took on more responsibilities until she left private practice for a full time teaching position. Today, she is an assistant professor at Lewis and Clark and one of three faculty members who teach classes in both programs.

"We are thrilled to have a faculty member who is also a member of the State Board of Dentistry," said Michelle Singley, coordinator of L&C's Dental Hygiene program. "Because she teaches courses that include ethics and jurisprudence in the dental profession, her insight into ethical decisions will serve as a solid background for the decision making processes with the board's actions. Her position will also lend current anonymous case study information to her classroom repertoire."

"When I started teaching at Lewis and Clark, I considered it a privilege to follow my passion and contribute my knowledge to educating others," Snell said.

Snell's private practice experience and dental hygiene education proved invaluable. Through teaching the laws of dentistry, she is in a unique position to properly interpret cases that come to the board for review.

“I love teaching more than anything else I’ve ever done, and I never look back. On Monday mornings I actually love coming into work. Moreover, it’s an honor to contribute to the work of the State Board of Dentistry. Its work ensures the public’s health and wellbeing by competent licensed practitioners,” Snell said.