



Fall 2020 Program Advisory Committee Minutes

Program: Dental

Date: 10/22/20

Members Present: Dottie Vannah, Dr. MaryJane Hanlon, Heather Fullerton, Nicole Dresser, Tamar Iskenderian, Stacey Abbatessa, Paul DiLuigi, Maria DiLuigi, Nicholas Chamberlain-Nunes, Ava Tanner, Kaycie Goudreau, Brianna Swan, Jillian Angeramo, Tracy Angeramo

Program Facilitator: Heather Fullerton

Committee Chair: Dorothy Vannah

Subject: Curriculum Bias Form

Discussion: While the Dental Assisting program has seen gains in increasing diversity throughout the program, there is still a gap in successfully getting non-traditional students to choose this program. During one exploratory a student noted that “there’s just too many girls in here for me.”

Subject: Student Enrollment/Placement

Discussion: Dental Assisting still continues to be a first choice program and in fact, the current sophomore class consists of 24 students. The largest class to date. The classes consist currently of 18 seniors, 19 juniors, and 24 sophomores.



Subject: Remote Learning Best Practices

Discussion: We are finding that students do benefit from receiving their instruction in chunks rather than giving them all of the assignments at once in the beginning of the day. Instructors are spending at minimum two entire blocks of synchronous instruction and then checking in with them at least one other times per day. Instructors feel lucky that there is so much academic content to be delivered remotely and are reserving in-school time almost solely for hands-on instruction.

Subject: New Trends in the Occupational Area/POST COVID

Discussion: Dottie mentions that an incredible amount of trash is being consumed as a result of Post-Covid increases in PPE. All members currently working in the field discuss the difficulty of wearing a mask all day long while working. Most members currently practicing are using level 3 masks with safety goggles and face shields, lab coats. Some people are wearing hair caps, while others are not. People are removing scrubs prior to leaving the office but overall feel safe. Dottie notes that to date there has not been one transmission in the state of Massachusetts of Covid-19 from a dental office. Instructors have concerns about keeping students socially distanced while teaching how to be a dental assistant and have incorporated the use of shields with level 3 masks any time that distance is an issue with the use of timers so that more than 10 minutes is not exceeded. Many offices have upgraded air exchange systems in every treatment room. At least one office reported that they were



ESSEX NORTH SHORE

AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL

behind by about 2,200 patients catching up from being closed during Covid. There is current debate over the use of hygienists using ultrasonics during this time. Both hygienists who are currently practicing are both using ultrasonics for prophylaxis with the added use of the H.V.E. Jillian mentions that a large portion of her job is to take the temperature of every patient prior to coming into the office. This is the consensus of all members in the meeting who are working in offices including Kaycie and Ava who are employed at Dr. LaFauci in Middleton. They do have some patients that are in the waiting room sometimes but most are being called in from their cars to come into the office. Preprocedural rinses are being used by all offices prior to treatment. They vary from ones that are bought from dental suppliers to diluted hydrogen peroxide in an attempt to reduce the viral load in the air. Dottie mentioned that her office is not giving enough time in between patients with the additional cleaning time that is required and often does not have lunch. Paul reminds her that it is illegal to have employees work for over 6 hours without at least ½ hour lunch. Instructors remind all current and former students to be sure their rights are being protected in regard to workload/breaks especially during these unprecedented times.

Subject: Employee Outlook

Discussion: All committee members agree that employment in all aspects of dentistry is abundant. There are more job



ESSEX NORTH SHORE

AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL

opportunities for dental assistants and hygienists than there ever has been especially since Covid. The instructors have received more calls about sending students to offices for COOP than ever in the past. Employees feel burnt out especially with new measures and PPE issues. Many employees did not return to the field after reopening whether it was due to age, pre existing health issues, and childcare issues.

Subject: Portfolios

Discussion: Portfolios are in the process of being digital. All current seniors have created a digital portfolio at the beginning of this year and still have their hard copy binders. That way in the event that portfolio day is remote again this year, they will already be prepared.

Subject: Recommendations

Discussion: Discussed with Paul and Maria (instructors at Middlesex Community College) why former students are having a difficult time getting into their program. The program decreased their seats by almost half so it has become more competitive to get into because of the lower costs than private local colleges. They recommend all prerequisites and any additional courses that can be taken outside of the program be completed prior to applying. Any science course with a grade lower than A could be retaken to increase chances of acceptance. Discussed Northern Essex Community College Dental Assisting program's articulation agreement with Regis College. They will take some courses



ESSEX NORTH SHORE

AGRICULTURAL & TECHNICAL SCHOOL

into their program at Regis from the assisting program and this will help with lowering the costs of education for our former students even though they are already eligible to be licensed dental assistants.

Subject: New Business

Discussion: Instructors discussed concerns about the current grade 11 not being able to gain experience through the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine internship as previous classes have. That, in conjunction with the difficulty of students being in school ½ of the time and social distancing protocol has left little time for such a large class to gain chairside experience.

Dr. Hanlon is going to see if Tufts will be a possibility come January as the dental students are also suffering without our students' help. In addition, there is concern that Tufts will not run their Radiology Certification program that the class of 2020 & 2021 all took and became certified last fall. This could also be an issue for students to be more employable when it comes time for them to be eligible for cooperative education. The class of 2023 is experiencing some of the same issues because of space constraints and social distancing. It is almost impossible for current juniors to be able to learn how to take x-rays. An additional DXXTR mannequin is needed so that more students can expose radiographs in a separate room.

The meeting adjourned at (time): 9:00 P.M.