An evaluation of the dental assisting program offered by the Rio Salado College was conducted on April 23-24, 2007 by a committee of the Commission on Dental Accreditation composed of Ms. Patricia Bradshaw, consultant in dental assisting and Ms. Diana Sullivan, Commission staff representative/Commissioner.

The Commission believes that educational institutions offering curricula supportive to the dental profession assume the obligation and responsibility of affording quality educational opportunities which are based on sound educational principles. Commission objectives are also based on the premise that dental assisting education programs should strive continually to improve standards of scholarship and teaching consistent with the purpose and methods of postsecondary education. To assist the institution in appraising its educational effectiveness and identifying ways and means by which its endeavors can be strengthened, dental assisting programs are reviewed periodically by peers in relation to predetermined standards. This peer review of the educational process is based on the program’s self-study and conferences with persons involved in the various components of the program.

This report represents the visiting committee’s findings and conclusions in the form of a suggestion for program enhancement and a commendation. These are found, as appropriate, under headings that parallel the Commission’s Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs. Only those standards that warrant one of the aforementioned types of comments are included; in all other cases, the visiting committee found that the program met or exceeded the minimum standards.

**Accreditation History**

The dental assisting program offered by the Rio Salado College was initiated in 2006. This was the Commission’s first site evaluation of the dental assisting program.
Compliance with Commission Policies

At the time of the site visit, the visiting committee determined that the program was in compliance with the Commission on Dental Accreditation’s policies on “Third Party Comments” and “Complaints.”

Standard 1. Institutional Effectiveness

The program has documented its effectiveness using a formal and ongoing outcomes assessment process to include measures of dental assisting student achievement.

Standard 2. Educational Program

The dental assisting program is presented in two, 20-week semesters. Upon completion of the program, graduates are awarded a certificate. The curriculum has been defined in terms of program goals, general instructional objectives, learning experiences designed to achieve the goals and objectives, and evaluation procedures to assess student attainment of the goals and objectives.

When the visiting committee discussed curriculum, it was learned that the kits for CDA 115 Dental Anatomy and Pathology include a dental laboratory typodont which does not provide detailed tooth morphology or skull anatomy. Although the dental assisting program provides in-depth content in oral anatomy, the visiting committee believed that additional instructional aids such as anatomically correct dental models and skulls would enhance student learning in this area. Therefore, it is suggested that additional instructional aids be incorporated into the CDA 115 Dental Anatomy and Pathology course to enhance student learning of oral anatomy.

Standard 3. Administration, Faculty and Staff

The visiting committee found a very cooperative environment established by the interpersonal relationships of administration, faculty, and the administrative assistant. This relationship facilitates the success of students and the dental assisting program at Rio Salado College. The program director is commended for her open style of communication and her commitment to providing quality dental education for the students.

Accreditation Status

At its July 2007 meeting the Commission on Dental Accreditation adopted a resolution to continue the accreditation status of “approval without reporting requirements” for the dental assisting program offered by the Rio Salado College.
Publication of Accreditation

The Commission has authorized use of the following statement by institutions or programs that wish to announce their programmatic accreditation by the Commission. Programs that wish to advertise the specific programmatic accreditation status granted by the Commission may include that information as indicated in italics below (see text inside square brackets); that portion of the statement is optional but, if used, must be complete and current.

The program in dental assisting is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation [and has been granted the accreditation status “approval without reporting requirements”]. The Commission is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. The Commission on Dental Accreditation can be contacted at (312) 440-4653 or at 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611.