Introduction

An evaluation of the dental hygiene program offered by Rio Salado College was conducted on April 27-28, 2006 by a committee of the Commission on Dental Accreditation composed of Dr. Richard Foster, allied-dentist consultant; Ms. Judith J. Hall, consultant in dental hygiene; and Ms. Sharon Hagan, Commission staff representative.

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 hygiene 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 hygiene 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 recommendation which directly relates to accreditation standards and a commendation. These are found, as appropriate, under headings that parallel the Commission’s Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs. The recommendations are indented and numbered sequentially throughout the report. 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 hygiene program offered by the Rio Salado College was initiated in 1996. This was the Commission’s third site evaluation of the dental hygiene program. At the time of the site visit, the accreditation status for the dental hygiene education program was “approval without reporting requirements.” Information on the Commission’s previous accreditation of the program follows:

*As approved by the commission on Dental Accreditation for transmittal on July 28, 2006.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Basis of Action</th>
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<td>Site Visit</td>
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**Review of Recommendations Cited in the Program’s Previous Site Visit Report**

At the time of the Commission’s last evaluation of the program in May 1999, two recommendations were cited in the area of Faculty. During this evaluation, the visiting committee reviewed these areas and found that the program has maintained compliance with the previously cited recommendations.

**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 hygiene student achievement.

**Standard 2. Educational Program**

The dental hygiene program is presented in four, 15-week terms and distributed over 15 months. Upon completion of the program, graduates are awarded an associate of applied science. 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.

Graduates must be competent in assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating community-based oral health programs including, health promotion and disease prevention activities. The visiting committee, through review of self-study documents and on-site interviews, determined
that students are introduced to assessing and planning community-based oral health programs through didactic instruction in DHE 229 Community Oral Health. Although students have opportunities to voluntarily participate in community health projects, the program does not have a mechanism in place to ensure competence in assessment, planning, implementing and evaluating community-based health promotion and disease prevention activities for diverse populations.

1. It is recommended that graduates be competent in assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating community-based oral health programs including, health promotion and disease prevention activities. (DH Standard 2-22)

Standard 3. Administration, Faculty and Staff

After review of the self-study document and on-site observation and interviews, the visiting committee noted that the college is committed in their support of the dental hygiene program, as evidenced by the administration’s responsiveness to the community, financial support for faculty development and the availability of student support services. The program administrator provides strong leadership and commitment to maintaining the high standards of the dental hygiene program. It was identified that a very cooperative educational environment has been established through the leadership of the program director and the support of the entire dental hygiene faculty. Additionally, through the enthusiastic and dedicated leadership in the departments of biomedical sciences, unique and innovative distance learning educational experiences are available for students. The administration, program director and faculty are commended for providing an educational environment that promotes student success.

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 hygiene is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation [and has been granted the accreditation status of “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.
Accreditation Status

At its July 2006 meeting the Commission on Dental Accreditation adopted a resolution to continue the accreditation status of “approval without reporting requirements” for the dental hygiene program offered by Rio Salado College.