

Quinsigamond Community College

Internal Program Review

Academic Year 2002-2003

DENTAL ASSISTING PROGRAM

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Coordinator

Spring 2003

**SECTION I:
COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS
AND
REGIONAL LABOR MARKET DEMAND**

Section I: Competitive Analysis and Regional Labor Market Demand

1. Market Influences

- A. Provide a broad definition of this employment sector. List specific knowledge and skill requirements for employment in this field.**

Response:

Dental Assistants perform a variety of patient care, office and laboratory duties in private dental offices, dental clinics, and hospital dental clinics. They are a dentist's "third hand" chairside where they assist the dentist to increase efficiency and/or provide direct patient care.

Dental Assistant duties vary by state. In Massachusetts, formally trained (FTA) or certified dental assistants (CDA) can perform many of the same independent direct patient care functions as the dental hygienist such as taking x-rays, polishing teeth, giving fluoride treatments, and placing pit and fissure sealants. These functions require specialized training either through two years of full-time on the job training AND the successful completion of the Dental Assisting National Board Certified Dental assistant examination, or through completion of an accredited program. Additionally in Massachusetts, non-certified OJT assistants perform fewer functions than the CDA and are paid less.

According to the USDL Occupational Outlook Handbook high school students interested in a career as a dental assistant should take courses in biology, chemistry, health, and office practices. The Massachusetts Dental Society suggests strong communication skills, manual dexterity, and reliability as desirable employee qualities.

- B. Using relevant labor statistics, indicate whether employment opportunities in this field are expected to increase or decrease over the next 3-5 years. Please cite the sources that you have used to make these predictions. (Note: It is easier for Admissions and Marketing Departments to refer to these predictions if they can quote the source)**

Response:

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the field of dental assisting is expected to grow much faster than average (48% nationally) through 2010.

According to the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training an additional 350 positions per year will be available through 2008. This represents approximately a 50% growth rate in the profession per year.

- C. Review and analyze the most recent five years of institutional data to determine whether graduates of this program have found employment in their field and/or transferred to a related four-year program in their field within one year of graduation**

Response:

The first DA class to graduate was in 2000. Employment/transfer statistics are

<i>Graduating year</i>	<i>Number of graduates</i>	<i>Number Employed</i>	<i>Number Transferred</i>	<i>Percentage Employed/Transfer</i>
<i>2000</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>66%</i>
<i>2001</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>2002</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>86%</i>

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D. Please identify the specific occupations (and job titles, if possible) for which program graduates are prepared for. Identify the types of employers that have hired graduates of this program within the last 5 years.

Response:

Dental Assisting is the job title and occupation. Data is for the last three years. 13 out of 20 graduates (65%) have been employed in solo private practice and group general dental offices, orthodontic offices, and pediatric dental offices, in Worcester and Middlesex Counties.

Identify the institutions to which students have transferred in the last three years.

Response:

55% of graduates from the dental assisting program have transferred to QCC

- *2 graduates have received A.S. degrees in Allied Dental Services at QCC*
- *9 graduates have transferred to the Dental Hygiene Associate Degree program at QCC*

E. Summary and Analysis: Market Influences

Response:

There is a documented shortage of dental assistants statewide and regionally. Dental Assisting graduates have a choice of job offers if they choose to work in the field. Those electing not to work as a dental assistant often go on to enroll in a dental hygiene program to enhance their earning potential.

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2. Programmatic Currency

A. Describe how the program maintains curricular currency.

Response:

American Dental Association Accreditation Standards and Communications. Dental Programs Advisory Board. MDS Dental Educators meeting. Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) Certified Dental Assisting (CDA) exam results. Also, all program faculty are licensed as dental hygienists or certified dental assistants. To maintain licensure/certification, faculty must complete 10-12 hours of continuing education annually. The Massachusetts/Worcester Dental Societies, Worcester District Dental Hygienists, and Worcester District Dental Assistants Association are providers of continuing education courses. In addition, the northeast regional dental convention is held yearly in Boston where nationally known speakers present continuing education courses and up to 1000 dental manufacturers/suppliers exhibit their products. The majority of faculty attends these meetings during an annual basis.

B. Explain the existing mechanisms that allow for regular input from local employers or other relevant sources.

Response:

Dental Programs Advisory Board, Clinical Coordinator visits to dental offices, Dental Office Externship Surveys, Employer Surveys, and student program surveys. Dentist surveys are sent out yearly in June to extern dentists and in October to employers. DANB CDA Examination results for the students electing to take the exam delineate strengths and weaknesses.

C. Describe how this input affects the program. (Note: It is helpful with our accreditation processes if you can include some specific examples of input that have led to recent changes in the program.)

Response:

- *Maintained length of externship assignments based on participating dentists surveys.*
- *Eliminated the cored DHY 126 Oral Pathology course and created the DAS 124 Oral Pathology course to better meet the needs of the dental assisting students based on the student program survey.*
- *Changed the externship evaluation form based on a suggestion by the ADA accreditation visit in October 2001.*
- *Redesigned the extern day sheet to include more specific information concerning dental materials and chairside assisting functions resulting in improved CDA scores in those areas.*
- *Added a chairside dental assisting exercise with the senior dental hygiene students to lessen student performance anxiety before the dental office extern experience.*
- *Added a part-time clinical dental assisting instructor with current clinical skills to the DAS 151 course to assist student learning of basic assisting skills.*

D. Describe ways that the College could support program faculty's incorporating more area industry input.

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Response:

Industry input is adequate.

E. Summary and Analysis: Currency

Response:

*The Dental Assisting program was reaccredited by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation in October 2001 without any reporting requirements. Additionally, QCC and the DA program and clinical coordinators were commended “for their planning, implementation and **improvement of the educational quality of the program**” as a result of the transfer from WTI to QCC. The dental clinic was updated with state of the art equipment in the Fall of 2000. Dentist and graduate surveys indicate that the students are well prepared for entry-level dental assisting positions. Program faculty are also currently licensed or certified.*

Section I-cont.

3. The Pipeline: QCC Feeders

- A. Identify all feeders, both actual and potential, (i.e. sources of applicants) to the program. Please include any potential “customized” feeders the College might be able to develop.**

Response:

The main sources of applicants are through word of mouth, referrals from dental offices, and QCC’s dental hygiene program wait list. Potential “customized” feeders might include General Studies students interested in a one-year health care program. Based on previous DA graduates, other potential feeders are CNA’s, Vocational High School Cosmetology and Health Care graduates and OJT dental assistants who want to expand their earning potential.

- B. What is profile of current student demographics? This information may be helpful in determining new feeders into the program.**

Response:

The demographics of the current 12 students are:

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>At least 1 yr of college</i>	<i>Works part-time or has children</i>
<i>23 and under</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>24 –29</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>40</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>

- C. List all articulation agreements currently in place in this program (i.e., agreements with local secondary schools, community-based organizations, proprietary schools, etc.).**

Response:

No articulations currently exist.

- D. Do program faculty regularly collaborate with their peers in local high schools, four-year colleges and universities, business and industry or community-based organizations on such activities as curriculum development, work-based learning, or professional development? Please cite examples from most recent three-year period. If no active collaboration at this time, please comment on how this type of collaboration might enhance the program. In what ways could the College provide faculty support in this area?**

Response:

The Dental Assisting Clinical Coordinator evaluates students in area dental offices from November through May, which provide numerous opportunities for networking concerning curriculum enhancement, new procedures, equipment, materials etc. In addition, the Clinical Coordinator also attends the three yearly Worcester District Dental Assistant Association continuing education meetings, which provide additional opportunities to network with peers.

Section I-cont.

Lastly, each year the Clinical Coordinator attends the Massachusetts Dental Society's annual educators meeting providing more networking opportunities with peers and employers.

- E. Explain the mechanisms in place within the program to insure that students who have been granted credit through articulation agreement transition smoothly into the QCC program. In what ways could the College increase its support in these areas?**

Response:

Not applicable.

- F. Explain the program's involvement with the area Tech Prep consortia or other educational collaboratives, if relevant.**

Response:

QCC is a partner in the Worcester Pipeline Collaborative program. The purpose of this program is to encourage and prepare middle and secondary school students in the Worcester North Quadrant for careers in the medical and biotechnology fields. The Health Care and Life Sciences Division has met three times with this group for the purpose of sharing information on matters related to curriculum and admissions. This is a work-in-progress with an eventual outcome of devising articulation agreements with some or all of the health programs.

- G. Summary and Analysis: The Pipeline: QCC Feeders**

Response:

The majority of students have at least some college. The students in the past that had no college did not complete the program. It would appear that in order to be successful an individual needs some college (maturity?), has manual dexterity, likes people, possesses strong communication/interpersonal skills, and is willing to assume responsibility. Students that have been employed in the service industry with lower paying jobs have also successfully completed the program. Future articulation agreements through the Worcester Pipeline Collaborative are a possibility.

Section I-cont.

4. Role of the Program Advisory Committee

A. Is there an active (meets at least once a year) advisory committee for this program?

Response:

The Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs share the same advisory board that meets at least once per year.

B. If yes, what is the composition of the advisory committee? How are appointments made to the committee?

Response:

The President elect of the WDDS, Presidents of the WDDAA and WDDHA have one year appointments as well as student members from both assisting and hygiene and alumni representatives from the most recent graduating classes who are currently working in the field. Student and alumni members expressing an interest to participate are appointed as recommended by faculty.

Two year terms are reserved for the Chair of the Allied Dental Professionals Committee of WDDS, a general practitioner from the community as recommended by the Program Coordinator, one dentist faculty member as recommended by the Program Coordinator, and a CDA from the community as recommended by the dental assisting clinical coordinator.

C. Explain the roles and responsibilities of this committee

Response:

- *Provide a mutual exchange of information for improving the program and meeting employment needs of the community.*
- *Assist in the determination and documentation of allied dental manpower needs.*
- *Provide information that may contribute as a resource to such activities as student and faculty recruitment, patient referrals, and employment requirements and opportunities. (Appendix 1 Section I 4C)*

D. If possible, cite examples of how committee input has had an impact on the program over the last 3-5 years.

Response:

After the dental clinic renovation, program expansion of both hygiene and assisting has been the primary concern. The dental programs are currently exploring funding and feasibility of expanding both programs.

Section I-cont.

E. Summary and Analysis: Role of the Program Advisory Committee

Response:

The program advisory committee has been instrumental in the current process of expanding the dental assisting program. Local employment needs necessitate program expansion. Previously, the advisory board was instrumental in the dental clinic renovation and upgrade to a state-of-the-art facility.

5. Competition, Marketing Strategies, and Enrollment Projections

A. Identify the program's primary competitors. Describe the process utilized and/or the rationale to determine the list of competitors.

Response:

There are seven American Dental Association (ADA) accredited programs in Massachusetts. The closest accredited schools are in Lowell and Springfield. Of the eight non –accredited programs, seven are at the high school level. The eighth is in Lexington and offers a 3-month program. Recently, a dental office in Worcester started a 32-hour dental assisting program. We are the only post-secondary ADA accredited program in Worcester County and competition is not an issue at this time. However, there are reports that Massachusetts Bay Community College (Framingham) and Mount Wachusett Community College (Gardner) are collaborating to open up a dental assisting program within the year with the possibility of adding a dental hygiene program in the near future.

B. Identify QCC's program strengths and market niche with respect to these competitors. In other words, what makes QCC's program the first choice?

Response:

QCC is the only ADA one year accredited program in Worcester County. Graduates receive a certificate in dental assisting which may be used as a career ladder to an associate degree. QCC is the only program that cores four courses with the dental hygiene program, an advantage for those students whose ultimate goal is dental hygiene. QCC offers three associate degree options in Allied Dental Services for graduate dental assistants that can be completed in an additional year full-time or part-time evenings. Individuals graduating from QCC one-year certificate course can perform the expanded functions as stated in the State Dental Practice Act. Individuals graduating from non-ADA accredited programs cannot perform all these same functions such as taking x-rays, polishing teeth, applying fluoride, and applying pit and fissure sealants.

C. Explain the specific marketing strategies the College has employed with respect to this program over the last three to five years. Please do NOT list general marketing strategies here. Identify targeted marketing efforts relevant to your program specifically.

Section I-cont.

Response:

The Dental Assisting program was one of the 10 programs brought to QCC from WTI in 1999. At that time marketing efforts announced the transfer of all the programs. Other than participating in the QCC Open Houses, there have been no specific targeted marketing strategies.

D. Describe how program faculty work with the admissions officers to recruit students into the program. If unknown, outline a recruitment plan with specific activities.

Response:

Data on the source of applicants for previous classes can be made available to Admissions for the purposes of specific recruiting efforts. The Marketing Director should work with the Director of Admissions and the Coordinator of the Dental Assisting program to develop recruitment materials.

E. Is the need for this program expected to grow or decline over the next five years? Please base your response on specific data.

Response:

*There is a national and local shortage of dental assistants. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the field of dental assisting is expected to **grow much faster than average** (48% nationally) through 2010.*

According to the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training an additional 350 positions per year will be available through 2008 resulting in a 50% growth rate.

Locally, an initiative between the Worcester District Dental Society (WDDS), QCC, and the MDS is in progress to expand the dental assisting program by 6 students for a total of 18 students. The level of interest in program expansion is supported by the potential dollars the MDS and WDDS have discussed donating in support of this expansion. The projected start date is Fall '03.

F. Based on analysis of information presented in this section, prepare enrollment projections for the next five years. Please describe what you believe is the optimum program size.

Response:

Due to ADA accreditation standards for clinical faculty/student ratios and facility resources the optimum program size would be 18. Based on current admissions data there is a waiting list for Fall '03 due in part to dental hygiene applicant overflow.

It would seem reasonable to project 18 students for the next 5 years, if Mass Bay CC and Mt. Wachusett CC do not open dental assisting and/or dental hygiene programs. Should this occur then the number of students accepted would be adjusted based upon the size of the nearby program.

Section I-cont.

G. Summary and Analysis: Competition, Marketing Strategies, and Enrollment Projections

Response:

The first two years of this program did not meet enrollment of 12 students. This year the DA program has enrolled 12 with a waiting list of five students for the Fall '03 class. Continued enrollment of twelve students and projections for 18 students based on dental hygiene overflow seem reasonable. However, if Mass Bay CC and Mt. Wachusett CC open dental hygiene programs this might limit the pool for QCC's dental assisting program.

Recruiting for dental assisting programs has been difficult for the past ten years due in large part to the on-the-job training provision allowed under state law. Presently, there is an initiative to change the law and require dental assistants be certified or formally trained, thereby eliminating OJT. If this occurs, marketing strategies could reflect this change and applicants to the program should increase. Since we currently have 2-3 students each year from the Wachusett area marketing in this region might be useful.

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6. Opportunities for Program Expansion

A. Are there other directions this program might evolve in order to sustain currency and quality? Consider the following categories, but feel free to include other categories in your responses:

- **New certificate options within the program**
- **New concentrations within the program**
- **Different career ladder options within the program**
- **New associate degree program possibilities**
- **Development of modularized courses**
- **Continuing/professional education in the field (i.e., CEU's, prep for recertification, etc.)**
- **Distance education course development**
- **More proactive job placement/ support post-graduation**
- **Other...**

Response:

One possible area that might be explored would be to offer the DHY 121 Anatomy of the Head and Neck, and DHY 125 Dental Anatomy cored courses online as an option to both assisting and hygiene students which could lessen the workload for the student if offered in the Summer before classes start in the Fall.

Offering continuing education courses at this time is not necessary since dental assistants are not required by state law to maintain continuing education. CDA's are required by the DANB to obtain twelve CEU's per year. The Worcester District Dental Assistants Association presently offers twelve units per year. However, if state law is changed then we would be in a position to offer CDA exam prep courses, or re-entry training as might be required.

B. Summary and Analysis: Opportunities for Program Expansion

Response:

As of this writing, the dental assisting program expansion will probably occur if funding is found.

57% of the dental assisting graduates have taken advantage of the career ladder and associate degree options. The DA program has graduated 21 students since 2000, of which three have received A.S.degrees in Allied Dental Services, and nine have entered the dental hygiene program.

*If the state of Massachusetts through the Board of Registration in Dentistry changes the present law and mandates formal training and/or credentialing through the DANB CDA examination we would be in a position to expand the day program **without** hygiene overflow and most likely offer evening certification prep courses or re-entry training. The opening of MBCC/MWCC DA and/or DH programs could have an effect on the number of applicants.*

SECTION II: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Program Credentials & Faculty

The complexity, variety, and importance of postsecondary credentials have grown substantially, especially since the 1980s, because the ties between postsecondary institutions and the world of work have grown in the knowledge economy. Access to postsecondary education has become the ante for individual career success and the modal requirement for a globally competitive national workforce. As a result, it is not surprising that the economic functions of postsecondary institutions are becoming more comprehensive. These forces are giving rise to the comprehensive university and the comprehensive community college: As higher education evolves, it

Section II: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Program Credentials and Faculty

1. Foundations of the Program

A. Describe the rationale for offering this certificate with respect to environmental scan information (job outlook) and its unique niche in its particular employment sector.

Response:

Job outlook projections for Dental Assisting in Massachusetts through 2008 indicate a 50% job growth rate compared to the national average growth rate of 48% for the profession. QCC's dental assisting program is well regarded in the Worcester area dental community and dentists seek to employ its graduates as evidenced by the numerous phone calls and faxes received from prospective employers. Most recently, the College has been contacted by the Worcester District Dental Society and the Massachusetts Dental Society concerning the possibility of expanding the program.

B. List degree or certificate objectives in measurable terms. (6-8 overall statements)

Response:

- 1. Obtain entry-level employment as an integral member of the dental health team within six months of graduation, or enroll in an advanced education program.*
- 2. Upon graduation, competently perform chairside assisting and related office and laboratory procedures under the direction and supervision of the dentist within the guidelines of the Massachusetts Dental Practice Act.*
- 3. Demonstrate the appropriate level of knowledge needed to perform dental assisting functions by successfully completing the Dental Assisting National Board Certified Dental Assistant examination within one year of graduation.*
- 4. Conduct ongoing review of program goals and curriculum to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of external organizations, the dental community and students.*
- 5. Engage in intellectual and professional growth, and appreciate the need for life-long learning activities to meet the changing needs and demands of the profession by maintaining CDA status and actively participating in the local chapter of the American Dental Assistants Association.*
- 6. To accept students into the program who have the potential for achieving the stated competencies.*

C. Define expected graduation competencies or student outcomes. Your response should include reference to general education outcomes, employability or “umbrella competencies”, and career-related competencies or technical skills. What will the graduate know and be able to do?

Response:

The following knowledge and skills are those necessary for the competent practice of Dental Assisting. Achievement of these competencies will require a general education background in oral and written communications and applied psychology principles of both patient and office practice management. Also required will be foundation knowledge in the biomedical sciences of the

Section II-cont.

structure and function of the human body, dental and oral anatomy, nutrition, pharmacology, and oral pathology.

1. *Graduates must be competent in the knowledge and skill required to systematically collect diagnostic data including,*
 - a. *Medical and dental histories*
 - b. *Vital signs*
 - c. *Extra/intra oral examinations*
 - d. *Dental charting*
 - e. *Radiographs*
 - f. *Preliminary impressions/study casts/occlusal registrations*

2. *Graduates must be competent in the knowledge and skill required to perform a variety of clinical supportive treatments including,*
 - a. *Manage infection and hazard control protocol consistent with OSHA, CDC, and ADA guidelines*
 - b. *Prepare tray set-ups for general dentistry procedures*
 - c. *Prepare and dismiss patients*
 - d. *Apply current concepts of chairside assisting including oral evacuation, visibility, instrument transfer, and anticipation of dentist's needs*
 - e. *Assist with and/or apply topical anesthetic*
 - f. *Assist with and/or place and remove rubber dam*
 - g. *Assist with and/or apply fluoride agents*
 - h. *Provide oral health instruction*
 - i. *Provide post-operative instructions prescribed by a dentist*
 - j. *Maintain accurate treatment records*
 - k. *Maintain treatment area*
 - l. *Assist in the management of medical and dental emergencies*
 - m. *Administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation when indicated*
 - n. *Fabricate custom trays*
 - o. *Clean and polish removable appliances and prostheses*
 - p. *Fabricate provisional (temporary) restorations*

3. *Graduates must be competent in the knowledge and skill required for business office procedures including,*
 - a. *Manage telephones*
 - b. *Control appointments*
 - c. *Perform financial transactions*
 - d. *Complete third-party reimbursement forms*
 - e. *Maintain supply inventory*
 - f. *Manage recall systems*
 - g. *Operate business equipment to include computers*

4. *Graduates must be competent in the knowledge and skill required to perform expanded functions at the preclinical/laboratory level including,*
 - a. *Coronal polishing*
 - b. *Pit and fissure sealant application*

D. Describe how the program supports the College's mission and purposes

Response:

The Dental Assisting program is an affordable, high quality program leading to a career that provides economic self-sufficiency.

Section II-cont.

E. Prepare a draft program mission statement.

Response:

The mission of the Dental Assisting Program is to provide entry-level employment in a dental office, and career ladder options to further the graduate's level of knowledge and skill if so desired.

F. Summary and Analysis: Foundations of the Program

Response:

- *The Dental Assisting program is an affordable, high quality program leading to a career that provides economic self-sufficiency.*
- *Due to the shortage of dental assistants, graduates of the Dental Assisting program easily find employment.*
- *The Worcester District Dental Society and Massachusetts Dental Society have contacted the College about program expansion.*
- *The program has a mission, measurable objectives, and student outcomes consistent with employability.*

Section II-cont.

2. Curriculum

- A. Based on the analysis of regional labor market needs, evaluate the current curriculum strengths and identify those areas that you believe require enhancement.**

Response:

*Regional labor market needs indicate a continuing strong need for dental assistants. The program was evaluated by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation in October of 2001. At that time, there were no recommendations made regarding the program's curriculum. As a matter of record, the Formal Report on the program evaluation **commended** the administration, program coordinator and clinical coordinator "for their planning, implementation and improvement of the educational quality of the program as a result of the change" in sponsorship from WTI to QCC.*

There is one area that could be enhanced and that is the allotment of lecture time for the DHY 131 Dental Radiology course. The lecture is presently one hour. At WTI the lecture was three hours. We are discussing the feasibility of increasing the lecture to two hours. As this is one of the cored courses, increasing lecture hours would affect the hygiene curriculum. The hygiene program is presently evaluating all courses in the curriculum for revision. The dental assisting students could definitely benefit from increased lecture time.

- B. Include the proposed curriculum for each of the current or proposed options in the program.**

Response:

There are no recommended changes at this time.

- C. For each course in the revised curriculum, provide a description, statement of goals, major topics covered, primary texts or materials, and instructional technology used. (Please refer to the attached format.)**

Response:

There are no recommended changes at this time.

- D. Describe the rationale for the course sequence in the revised program. A rationale of course sequence should be provided for the specific program related courses, the general education courses, electives, etc.**

Response:

There are no recommended changes at this time.

- E. Explain how the general education components are integrated with the department specific courses.**

Response:

English 101 and BIO 140 are the only general education courses in the certificate program. English 101 is expected to assist the students in their ability to read, write, and communicate with patients, colleagues, and other professionals in the field. Students are expected to apply the subject matter learned in BIO 140 to their dental courses in Dental Assisting I and II, Clinical Science I and II, and Oral pathology.

Section II-cont.

F. Does the curriculum incorporate “writing across the curriculum”? Provide an illustration, if applicable.

Response:

Not applicable, the program is a one-year certificate.

G. Describe how the program meets the QCC philosophy of “high tech, high touch, high quality”.

Response:

With the completion of the Dental Hygiene Clinic renovation in the Fall of 2001 the Dental Assisting Program students have access to a state-of-the-art facility. The quality of the program has been evaluated by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation and meets or exceeds the guidelines. Graduate and Employer surveys also indicate a high quality program.

H. Does the program structure provide students with at least one elective choice? If no, is it possible to revise the curriculum so that there is at least one elective? Please explain your response.

Response:

There are no elective choices in the program. The program is structured according to ADA accreditation requirements. Students must complete 37 credits in the one-year program.

I. Summary and Analysis: Description of Curriculum

Response:

- *In the Fall of 2001 the American Dental Association reaccredited the Dental Assisting program with the status “approval without reporting requirements”, the most positive finding a program can receive.*
- *The Dental Assisting program is a one-year, 37-credit certificate program with two general education courses, and no electives.*
- *There are no proposed or revised courses to the current curriculum.*
- *A state-of-the-art dental clinic contributes to the high quality of the dental assisting program.*

3. Relevance of Instructional Methodologies, Assessment Strategies and Program Credentials

A. Summarize the INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES utilized in the program. What are the strengths and challenges of these methodologies?

Response:

Instructional methodologies utilized in the program include lecture, demonstrations, guest lecturers, role-playing, interactive floppy disk programs, collaborative learning, clinical externships, clinical experiences with the hygiene seniors and rotations through area dental offices, and laboratory experiences.

B. Provide recommendations for additional methodologies that would enhance students’ learning. More specifically, are there additional ways in which instructional technology could enhance students’ learning? Options for distance learning? Please explain your answer, and include how the College might support these efforts.

Section II-cont.

Response:

The needed technology to present prepared PowerPoint material. It has been frustrating to obtain the limited and poor quality data projectors that are available at any given time.

At the dental program biweekly faculty meetings we have discussed a distance learning option for Head & Neck Anatomy, Dental Anatomy, and Oral Histology and Embryology. We are exploring this option.

C. Please provide a detailed ASSESSMENT plan outlining the methodologies used for on-going student assessment and final outcome assessment.

Response:

Currently, students are assessed by individual instructors within each didactic course by means of written exams, individual oral presentations, case based scenarios, and written reports. Clinically, students are evaluated by faculty, senior hygiene students, and externship dentists. Students are expected to perform at progressively higher levels and in each clinical semester an emphasis is placed upon different skills. Pre-clinical sessions in the Dental Assisting I and II courses are pass/fail and based on completion of stated competencies within three attempts.

D. Describe the strengths and challenges of each of the assessment methodologies listed above.

Response:

Written reports and examinations are valuable for consistent objective evaluation of specific knowledge as well as application of that knowledge. Oral presentations can also be evaluated consistently as rating sheets have been developed based on the stated objectives of each assignment and are used by classmates and instructor. Case based scenarios determine depth and breadth of applied knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Clinically, assessment forms have been developed to evaluate student performance with the hygiene seniors, the externship dentists, and faculty who visit the dental offices for the purpose of student performance evaluation. The externship evaluation forms have been redesigned on a verbal suggestion from the ADA site visit team in October 2001 to better reflect the computations involved in determining the numerical grade.

The main challenge in assessing student clinical performance lies with the evaluator's subjective appraisal of competency. Standards differ from dental office to dental office as well as expectations of student performance. However, this is ameliorated somewhat by having a QCC faculty member evaluate all students in their office rotations on a one-to-one basis for consistency in assessing competence.

E. Provide recommendations for additional methodologies to evaluate student achievement. Please consider, but do not feel limited to, the following strategies.

- **Student work samples**
- **Student portfolios**
- **Capstone projects**
- **Laboratory activities**
- **Presentations**
- **Panel discussions**
- **Seminars or interdisciplinary projects**
- **Juried review of students projects**
- **Performance on case study / problem**

Section II-cont.

Response:

Based on student, employer, and externship dentist surveys expressing satisfaction with the program there are no recommendations at this time.

F. Has this program been evaluated by an EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION organization within the last five years?

Response:

Yes

G. If yes, please provide name of organization and date of last accreditation review. Did the program meet all of the accreditation requirements? If no, please explain. Attach the summary of the accrediting team's recommendations.

Response:

The American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation reviewed the program in October 2001. The program was reaccredited for the maximum seven years without reporting requirements. The program received two commendations - the first for administrative coordination due to the transfer from WTI and the second for curriculum/faculty. There were no recommendations.

H. If the program has not been evaluated externally, list any appropriate professional accreditation or licensure for this program that the College should pursue. (e.g., industry certifications, professional associations, etc.) Please note that federal and state funding agencies are strongly encourage program accreditation as a measure of performance accountability.

Response:

Not applicable.

I. What changes, if any, might need to be considered to foster enhanced program quality? Consider the following, but you need not limit your response:

- **change in admission requirements**
- **inclusion of an internship or other work-based learning experience**
- **introduction of 1 or 2 electives to allow students to self-select learning opportunities**
- **development of a capstone course to synthesize the learning experience**
- **varied instructional methodologies**
- **enhanced assessment of student competencies**
- **better integration of technology applications**
- **specific instructional aides/software etc.**
- **more coordination of faculty efforts, including the possibility of more full-time faculty**
- **attainment of program accreditation, certification, or licensure**

Section II-cont.

Response:

- *Accept students into the program that will be successful in the programs' major courses by changing admissions requirements to include high school level or the QCC equivalent courses in Biology, Chemistry and Algebra.*
- *Mandate completing the DANB CDA examination.*
- *The addition of another full time faculty member would allow the program to enhance the mentoring process for students in the program...Hire an additional faculty member to be shared with the hygiene program if the DA program stays at 12 students. If expansion occurs then an additional full-time faculty member exclusive for the dental assisting program would be needed.*
- *Investigate the institution of an Allied Health aptitude entrance exam to be considered as part of the admissions criteria.*

J. Summary and Analysis: Relevance

Response:

Curriculum currency relevancy is assured due to the oversight of an external accreditation agency. In addition the clinical coordinator spends time in each of the program externship sites. This provides her with ongoing feedback concerning current workplace practices. This aspect of the program has also proved useful to faculty of the dental hygiene program. Additional resources available to the Program Coordinator are annual participation in professional organization meetings, input from the Advisory Committee, and collaboration with the faculty of the Dental Hygiene program. The instructional methodologies used are diverse with specific assessment instruments for each professional course in the curriculum.

4. Program Growth Opportunities

- A. In your opinion, would it be beneficial to develop a common core curriculum among related career programs? (E.g., computer education, business, administrative support, electronics, etc.) Please explain your answer.**

Response:

The DA and DH programs already core four courses, which have worked out well for the DA students. This arrangement is an excellent example of the "career ladder" concept. The students earn credit towards both degrees and also become familiar with the faculty and requirements of the Dental Hygiene program.

- B. Describe, in detail, all potential areas for program growth. Include, but do not limit your response to the following:**

- **Career Ladder Potential**
- **New Degree or Certificate Options**
- **Professional/Continuing Education Opportunities**
- **Professional Recertification Preparation/Testing**
- **Flexible Delivery Options**
- **Enhanced Instructional Methodologies**
- **Improved Assessment of Student Competencies**
- **Distance Learning Course Development**

Section II-cont.

Response:

In response to a request by the Worcester District Dental Society to increase enrollment, program expansion from 12 to 18 students is being discussed and considered.

C. Summary and Analysis: Program Growth Opportunities

Response:

Program growth is limited by available clinical time, staffing, and externship placement sites. The clinic is shared with the Dental Hygiene program and, for at least one more year, the Great Brook Valley Health Clinic. Currently, plans exist to expand the program for the Fall semester 2003 pending funding.

5. Student and Program Assessment (Review relevant data over last five year period.)

Student Statistical Data

A. What have been the incoming students' average scores on QCC placement tests each year for the last five years?

Response:

This information is not available.

B. Please identify a key course in the program and analyze student performance over the last 3-5 years. Look at average grade in course and grade distribution, as well as course completion rates.

Response:

DHY 131 Dental Radiology, a cored course, is a key course for dental assistants according to Massachusetts State Law. One third of the DANB CDA exam content concerns Dental Radiology. The passing grade for this course is a "C". Student performance for the past four Fall classes follows:

<i>Fall Year</i>	<i>Average Grade</i>	<i>Course Completion</i>
<i>1999</i>	<i>1.875</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>2000</i>	<i>2.45</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>2001</i>	<i>2.69</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>2002</i>	<i>2.37</i>	<i>75%</i>

C. What is the graduating students' average college GPAs over the last five years? GPAs in major courses? Please describe the additional measures of central tendencies; i.e. median, mode, etc.

Section II-cont.

Response:

Data is only available for 2000. The average GPA was 2.89. No data is available for major courses. However, to successfully complete the Dental Assisting program, students must pass all major courses with a grade of "C" or better.

D. If relevant, how have students performed during their field placements or related work-based learning experience?

Response:

Students must perform in externship rotations to a minimum grade of "C" in the Fall, "B-" during Intersession, and "B" in the Spring. All students since the Fall of 1999 have performed at these minimum levels.

E. Indicate the number of students who have transferred to a four-year program, if applicable.

Response:

Not applicable.

F. Track the average earnings of program graduates each year for the three years immediately following graduation.

Response:

Data from yearly program surveys and anecdotal information obtained from graduates during CEU meetings or in dental offices where students are placed indicate the graduates' average earnings start between \$13.00 - \$16.00 per hour and have increased \$1.00 - \$3.00 per hour in the past three years ranging from \$14.00 - \$19.00 per hour.

Program Statistical Data

G. Provide a summary of the program's enrollment patterns over the last five years.

Response:

The dental assisting program has a capacity of 12 students. The numbers of applications follow:

<u>Graduation Year</u>	<u>Number of Applicants</u>	<u>Number Accepted</u>	<u>Number Enrolled</u>
2000	18	10	10
2001	28	13	8
2002	21	13	11
2003	39	17	12

H. Indicate the program retention rate over the same period.

Note: Consider two cohorts: Fall to Spring (same year); Fall to following Fall (one year).

Sect. II-cont.

Response:

The program has only been offered since September 1999. Retention rates are listed below.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Enrolled</i>	<i>Graduated</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>2000</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>2001</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>87.5</i>
<i>2002</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>64</i>

I. Determine the average number of semesters it takes for students to complete the program. What methods are used to evaluate the quality of the program?

Response:

Two semesters are required to complete the program. Program quality is evaluated through surveys that are completed by the students in May before graduation, the participating externship dentists in May, and employers in September. DANB CDA exam results of those students taking the exam indicate a pass rate of 100% based on 11 out of 20 graduates taking the exam through December of 2002. (Appendix II Section 2I)

J. Define indicators of program quality. Describe specific strategies used to assess the success of the program in achieving its stated objectives.

Response:

*ADA accreditation status and DANB CDA exam results. The ADA accreditation visit report dated 11/08/01 noted the “**improvement of the educational quality of the program**” as a result of the transfer from WTI. All students taking the CDA exam within one year of graduation have passed.*

K. Summary and Analysis: Program Assessment

Response:

The Dental Assisting certificate program is a high quality program leading to immediate employment at self-sufficiency wages. Several external quality assurance mechanisms ensure the program curriculum is current and relevant. Interest in the graduates by dental offices and clinics is high. The most important issue facing the profession and, therefore, the program is credentialing. Currently, credentialing is not required for dental assistants. Mandating credentialing would do a great deal for increasing the quality of care and also be a major factor in stabilizing program enrollment. (Appendix II Exhibit 1-1)

6. Faculty

A. Is the current faculty able to adequately address the instructional needs of all courses, both general and specialty, in the program?

Response:

One of the challenges concerns the cored courses with dental hygiene students, which brings the lecture class size to 32. If program expansion occurs for the Fall 2003 the lecture class size will increase to 38 students. The cored courses are in-depth dental science courses that include Head and Neck Anatomy, Dental Anatomy, Dental Materials, and Dental Radiology. The number of students in these classes does not leave much time for questions and/or student interaction.

Section II-cont.

Additionally, the Dental Materials and Dental Radiology courses require laboratory sessions with a 1:6 ratio in Radiology lab. Based on student input from the Fall of 2001 with 11 students we added an additional adjunct faculty member to the Dental Materials Lab. If the program expands we will need another adjunct faculty member. Also, we have added an additional section for Dental Materials lecture this year that is taught by a full-time hygiene faculty member.

The Radiology lab instructor has indicated that with only 2 x-ray machines it has been extremely difficult for all the students to receive sufficient x-ray practice and has recommended an additional lab be added. If we accept an additional 6 students we will need to add another 2 lab sessions. However, the purchase and installation of a third x-ray machine should eliminate the need for additional lab sessions.

B. Is institutional support for upgrading faculty credentials required? If yes, please explain the kind of upgrade required and approximate cost associated with the upgrade?

Response:

All current faculty have the necessary credentials therefore no upgrade is required at this time.

C. Over the last five years, what has been the ratio between full-time and part-time faculty within this program?

Response:

The ratio is one full-time to five part-time. This ratio does not include the three full-time faculty from the hygiene program that teach, as adjuncts, the lecture component of three of the four cored courses (Dental Anatomy, Dental Materials and Dental Radiology) to both DA and DH students in the same classroom.

D. Describe how adjunct faculty are integrated into the existing program.

Response:

Adjunct faculty are hired to teach the cored Head & Neck Anatomy course, and the 1 hour weekly restorative dentistry portion of the dental assisting Clinical Science I and II courses. Four adjunct faculty also provide lab/clinical instruction in dental materials, radiology, and dental assisting I.

E. Should the College employ additional full- or part-time faculty in this discipline? Provide a detailed rationale.

Response:

- *It would be helpful to the students to have another full-time faculty member available for office hours to provide help sessions with course work as adjunct faculty are not usually available for this purpose.*
- *A full-time faculty position shared with the hygiene program would help both programs in the area of lab/clinical instruction where a 6:1 student/teacher ratio is required, provided there are only 12 DA students.*
- *If the program expands to 18 students a shared full-time faculty member with hygiene would not be sufficient to meet the advising and lab/preclinic sessions needed for a high quality program. At a recent Dental Programs faculty meeting this issue was discussed and the consensus was that DA program expansion would require its own full-time faculty member.*

Section II-cont.

F. Describe how all faculty members contribute to curriculum development and overall program cohesiveness. Do ALL faculty members, both full and part-time have an opportunity to contribute to curriculum development?

Response:

All full-time faculty members of both hygiene and assisting meet bi-weekly to discuss dental programs issues. The dental assisting clinical coordinator, the dental programs coordinator, individual full-time faculty responsible for the cored lab courses, and the adjuncts that instruct the lab courses meet informally as needed to discuss the needs of the dental assisting students.

G. Does the current level of support staff meet the needs of the program faculty? Please explain your answer.

Response:

The dental hygiene and dental assisting programs share a full-time staff person who has secretarial responsibilities as well as the responsibility for managing the Dental Hygiene Clinic. In March 2001, an additional part-time secretary was employed for the academic year based on recommendations made by the ADA Council on Dental Accreditation as a result of the site visit to the Dental Hygiene program in October of 1999. The current level of support staff is adequate at this time. The proposed program expansion for both assisting and hygiene may have some impact on the current status.

H. Summary and Analysis: Faculty

Response:

- *The ADA accreditation report from the October 2001 site visit commended the faculty “for their innovative teaching methods, cooperative team effort, and dedication to the program”.*
- *The curriculum is delivered by highly qualified faculty with extensive teaching and/or clinical experience who meet the academic qualifications of the ADA and the College.*
- *In order to meet the faculty to student ratio required by the ADA for clinical instruction, an additional full-time faculty member who is a CDA and an RDH should be hired to be shared with the Dental Hygiene program if the present DA program maximum of 12 students are enrolled.*
- *If 18 DA students are enrolled due to program expansion, it is recommended that a full-time faculty member be hired solely for the Dental Assisting program.*
- *The present level of support staff is shared with the dental hygiene program and is adequate.*

SECTION III: Institutional Support and Other Program Resources

The combination of academics, vocational instruction, ties to local employers, and flexibility in designing programs is the unique strength of the community colleges.

-Excerpted from *Closing the Gap*, Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth, 1997.

Section III: Institutional Support and Other Program Resources

1. Program Supports

(Please note: Use this section to reflect upon what institutional supports would be useful and why.)

- A. List targeted program marketing and recruitment strategies employed over the last two years? In your opinion, are they appropriate to sustain strong enrollment?**

Response:

There have been no specific targeted program marketing and recruitment strategies employed over the past two years. Recruitment has been limited to the normal College recruitment activities and to participation in the colleges' Open Houses during the Fall and Spring. A large percentage of students enrolled in dental assisting are in queue to enter the dental hygiene program. It is anticipated that full enrollment will be sustained as long as there is a greater than two year wait list for the dental hygiene program.

- B. Provide recommendations for new or additional marketing or recruitment strategies.**

Response:

As long as Massachusetts does not mandate credentialing for dental assistants, recruiting applicants will be difficult. Interest in choosing dental assisting as a career will need to come from the profession itself by promoting credentialing nationally. The College cannot be expected to take on this role, but it can advertise the program and continue to support credentialing of dental assistants in Massachusetts.

- C. Does the program have sufficient linkages with business, community-based organizations, other colleges and universities, or K-12 public schools? Please explain and cite specific examples. Present in chart form as explained in the guidelines for C & D, opposite page.**

Response:

In conjunction with the dental hygiene program, the dental assisting program has developed or is in the process of developing a number of linkages with business, community-based organizations, as well as some of the public schools.

Name	Nature of Contribution
Central Mass Oral Health Initiative	Liaison with area professionals to provide dental care to underserved populations
Dental Programs Advisory Committee	Liaison to community professionals
Participating Externship Dentists	Students rotate through area dental offices. Sixteen different dental offices participated in the 2001-2002 school year
Great Brook Valley Health Center	QCC Dental Clinic is made available to service providers from Great Brook valley so that they can provide dental treatment to members of the community. QCC students also visit the dental clinic at GBV as part of their externship program
Kidseal	QCC DH sponsored community service program for and with Worcester Public Schools. Provides dental sealants, fluoride treatments, and examinations for underserved children in the community. QCC DA students required to participate. Also provides continuing education and volunteer opportunities for community dentists, assistants, and hygienists

Section III-cont.

D. p r o j e c t s	Worcester Dental Assistants Association	DA students are invited to participate in their events and are encouraged to become student members. Members also serve on our advisory committee
	Worcester District Dental Society	Our students are invited to participate in their events. The association also provides scholarship assistance to our students. Members also serve on our program advisory committee
	Massachusetts Dental Society	Provides a yearly dental auxiliary educators meeting to discuss and assist with recruitment
	Worcester Pipeline	Linkage with North Quadrant Worcester Public Schools
	Fluoride rinse program: Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Worcester School Department	QCC DH sponsored community service program. Beginning in 2003, DA students will assist the DH students in administering fluoride rinses to selected public school children in this community based project

uggestions for improved program linkages. What, if any, assistance do the program faculty need in order to facilitate these linkages effectively?

Response:

The program has sufficient linkages and excellent support from the dental community and the college.

E. Does the program have appropriate equipment to meet the instructional demands of the program? (e.g., medical equipment, laboratory supplies, computer hardware and/or peripherals)

Response:

The program could use an additional x-ray machine so that students have enough time to achieve proficiency. Presently, lab time has had to be extended in order to accommodate student needs. This is the first year the program has the maximum 12 students and the existing two x-ray machines are not sufficient. If 12 additional students, between the DA and DH programs, are added in Fall '03 as proposed, there will be a need for an additional two x-ray machines.

Due to the limited space in the lab/classroom, ceiling and wall mounts or an audio/video station should be considered for presentation of lecture materials. It would be beneficial to consolidate PowerPoint, VCR and overhead projectors in an area that would not interfere with traffic flow. Lastly, in order to become state-of-the-art chairside, laptop computers must be provided so that students can learn to use the latest dental office computer technology.

F. If no, provide a list of required equipment purchases or upgrades. Please present this list in prioritized fashion and identify immediacy of the priority.

Response:

1. Essential Priority
 - a. *Additional one to two x-ray machines in the dental clinic*
 - b. *Laptop computer access at each treatment station*
 - c. *Module for voice activation of chairside software*

Section III-cont.

2. High Priority
 - a. *Wall ceiling mounted data projector/VCR/ screen for PowerPoint and VCR presentations and/or a compact, portable AV station which would include an overhead projector, VCR, data projector, and slide projector*

G. Summary and Analysis: Program Supports

Response:

- *There are no targeted marketing or recruitment strategies in place for the Dental Assisting program. The development of targeted marketing strategies specifically for the Dental Assisting program might help to attract additional applicants.*
- *The program has developed many linkages with business, community-based organizations, and some of the public schools.*
- *An additional one or two x-ray machines are needed in the Dental Clinic as well as computer laptops for each dental unit, chairside voice activation modules, and an AV station for the lab/classroom (126B).*
- *A data projector and screen and/or an audio/video station should be provided for the laboratory/classroom (126B) to enable faculty to make presentations for both regular instructional needs and continuing education.*
- *Laptop computers must be provided so that students can learn to use chairside computer technology. The cabling is in place so that each Clinic station can have computer access.*

2. Academic Supports

A. Are there sufficient instructional/research resources to support student learning in this program?

Response:

The addition of Internet resources has greatly expanded the scope of instructional/research resources available to faculty and students. These resources are adequate to support student learning in the program.

B. Assess the overall currency of the current collection of books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials in the library. Recommend new acquisitions and/or periodical subscriptions. In addition, please work with the library staff to weed outdated materials from the library's current holdings.

Response:

The currency and quality of the current collection of books, periodicals, and audiovisual materials in the Library was evaluated and upgraded for the program site visit. These resources are complete and adequate. Faculty members reviewed their specific subject material during the 2001-2002 academic year for the purpose of weeding outdated material.

Section III-cont.

C. Are there sufficient technology resources, specifically software and hardware resources? Are these resources available and accessible to students? to faculty?

Response:

There are sufficient technology resources available to the students (except those recommended for the Clinic). Faculty resources for classroom presentations are inadequate and, in fact, have diminished since 1998. There had been an insufficient number of slide projectors available for classroom use, which has been resolved. As of May 2001, the classroom (367A) primarily used for cored Dental Hygiene lecture classes has no projection screen, so slides must be projected onto the wall. Picture quality is very poor. Most of the program faculty have attended workshops to learn how to use PowerPoint® and then spent many hours preparing their lecture material in that format. They are very frustrated by the fact that the data projectors required for their presentations are often not available or, when they are available, do not work. The portable arrangements, with the laptop wired to the cart, do not allow for a professional or graceful presentation.

D. Provide a list of recommended technology acquisitions (i.e., software, hardware, PC projection units, etc.) Please prioritize this list and identify the immediacy of the priority.

Response:

1. IP – Immediate Priority

- a. *A screen be provided for the classroom used for the Dental Hygiene classes*

2. HP – High Priority

- a. *Data projectors be installed in the classrooms used by the health programs*

E. Does the Individualized Learning Center provide ample academic support services for students in the program?

Response:

The Individualized Learning Center provides ample support services to students in the program. Disks/Slide/Tape materials (instructional and self-instructional) are housed in the Individualized Learning Center in the Administration Building. The Individualized Learning Center provides seating for 100 students. Learners have access to 13 computers with Internet access; one computer equipped with adaptive technology including a screen reader, speech synthesizer, and video magnification software; and four computers with access to the Library's online catalog, electronic databases, and Internet.

Program students routinely use the Library to prepare reports, abstracts of professional research articles, and scientific presentations. They also view videotapes of preclinical presentations that they missed. The Individualized Learning Center provides ample academic support services in all areas except for tutors.

Section III-cont.

F. Provide recommendations for improved academic support services.

Response:

Provision of tutors for the basic dental science courses would enhance these services. Also, as stated previously in Section II, an additional full time faculty member would be available for extra help.

G. Summary and Analysis: Academic Supports

Response:

Overall, academic supports are sufficient to support student learning with the following exceptions:

- *Tutors and/or an additional faculty member are needed that can assist students with content in the dental science courses.*
- *The need for data projectors and projection screens in the classrooms used by the health programs.*

3. Student Supports

A. How do your students explore career opportunities and prepare to access them?

Response:

Students explore career opportunities through their externships and networking with professionals in the community. Course content, especially in the "Dental Assisting I and II" courses provides students with information regarding various career opportunities. The program also provides assistance with placement by receiving and making available to students information regarding employment opportunities.

B. Provide recommendations for enhancing students' career exploration and planning.

Response:

Graduate surveys indicate that all of our graduates who wish to be employed in the field are employed. Externship rotations in the Spring Semester through various dental specialty offices provide first-hand career exploration. It would seem that no enhancement is warranted at this time.

C. Are current student support services adequate to support the teaching and learning process? Describe specific activities in which you may have been engaged relative to student support services.

Consider:

- **Counseling Services**
- **Disability Services**
- **Transfer Information**
- **Other Services (as listed in QCC catalog)**

Section III-cont.

Response:

Counseling Services, Disability Services, and Transfer Information adequately address the needs of the students. Prior to entering the program, most students have utilized the Health Careers Center. Upon recommendation of the clinical coordinator dental assisting students have utilized the services provided in the counseling, disability, and EBE offices.

D. Provide recommendations for additional services that would be beneficial to your students.

Response:

Many of our students have children of various ages. They are able to make child care arrangements for routine situations. Problems arise during times when children are ill and unable to go to their normal placement, or when the children's school vacations or snow days do not coincide with Quinsigamond Community College's vacation and snow days. It would be a wonderful service if the College could provide a school vacation camp or "sick bay day care" for the children of its students.

E. Summary and Analysis: Student Supports

Response:

Student support services, in the area of career exploration and job placement, are adequate. This is demonstrated by the graduate student surveys that show all alumni who wish to work in the field are doing so. Counseling Services, Disability Services, the Health/Wellness Center, Health Careers Center, and Transfer Information all adequately address the needs of the students in the program.

An additional area of support that could be provided would be childcare for snow days, school vacations, and ill children.

4. Physical Facilities

A. Are the current physical facilities sufficient from an instructional perspective? If no, explain and provide recommendations.

Response:

The majority of the cored course classes have been moved to a larger classroom. However, there is still a need for a larger classroom for the "Dental Materials" lecture. The size of the classroom used by the Dental Hygiene program was minimally adequate for Dental Hygiene students. With the addition of the Dental Assisting students in the four cored courses, the room size is inadequate. With projected increases in the DH and DA programs a classroom seating 44 (26 DH and 18 DA) students will be needed. Splitting the class into two sections and the addition of a full time faculty member would help to alleviate the crowding situation.

B. Are the current physical facilities sufficient from a competitive perspective? If no, explain and provide recommendations.

Section III-cont.

Response:

The actual Clinic is an asset from a competitive perspective. The classrooms used by the program are crowded, and poorly equipped. The student locker room provides day locker space only, and is presently shared by 52 students. Student coats, bags, and books are not allowed in the clinic or lab areas, therefore the students need a larger area that allows for secure storage of their personal items.

- C. Given enrollment projections, will additional classrooms or laboratories be required? If yes, please specify the requirements and identify immediacy of the need.**

Response:

*If the dental programs expansion occurs, Dental Hygiene enrollment is projected to increase to 26 and Dental Assisting to 18. This will require that a larger classroom be provided for the core courses taken by both Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting students. This classroom must be able to hold 44 students. An additional classroom would be needed if two sections of each cored course were offered. Either way, the need would be **immediate for Fall '03**.*

- D. Summary and Analysis: Physical Facilities**

Response:

The Clinic facility is modern and an asset to the program, but the locker room is inadequate. Students have only shared day locker space so they cannot regularly store their clinic attire and other personal belongings in the facility. All other programs in the state provide full-time locker storage and a spacious locker room for their Dental Hygiene/Assisting students.

Currently, the classrooms used by the program are crowded and need refurbishing. With the proposed expansion of both Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs, either larger classrooms will be required for cored courses taken by students in both dental programs or an additional classroom will be needed if additional sections are offered.

5. Program Financing

- A. Has the program's funding been sufficient over the last five years? Please explain your response.**

Response:

Program funding has been sufficient since it has been at QCC. The program budget provides funds for classroom supplies and preclinical/laboratory needs. The clinic facility is shared with the dental hygiene program and funds for supplies and maintenance .

- B. Provide an analysis of the cost of this program. Be sure to include ALL costs. (For example, costs associated with instructional salaries, space, lost opportunity costs, equipment rentals and/or maintenance, etc.**

Section III-cont.

Response:

Program costs 2001-2002	
Full time faculty	\$51,661
Adjunct faculty	\$9,252
Secretarial support (PT)	\$3,000 apportioned with DH
Office supplies	400
Subscriptions & memberships	100
Classroom supplies	1,854
Accreditation costs	620
Educational equipment repair	165

C. Based on your enrollment projections, are there projected increases or decreases in the budgetary requirements of this program over the next five years?

Response:

It is planned to increase the program size by one third. Additional space will be needed as well as faculty to accommodate the program.

D. Summary and Analysis: Program Financing

Response:

Thus far financing for the program has been sufficient. With the addition of more students, additional faculty and space will be needed.

SECTION IV: Executive Summary of Findings

“In times of change, it is the learners who will inherit the earth, while the learned will find themselves beautifully equipped for a world that no longer exists.” Eric Hoffer
- Excerpted from the website of the American Association of Community Colleges

Introduction

The Dental Assisting Program was transferred from WTI to QCC in 1999. The program accepts 12 students yearly. Students completing the one year 37 credit certificate may choose to obtain employment immediately upon graduation, or to continue their education immediately, or in the future in one of three career ladder options leading to an A.S. degree in Allied Dental Services. Dental Assistants perform a variety of patient care, office and laboratory duties in private dental offices and dental clinics. Dental Assistant duties vary by state. In Massachusetts, formally trained assistants (FTA) or certified dental assistants (CDA) can perform many of the same independent direct patient care functions as the dental hygienist. These functions require specialized training. Additionally in Massachusetts, dental assistants may also be on the job trained (OJT). OJT assistants perform fewer functions than the FTA or CDA and are usually paid less.

There is presently a shortage of dental assistants both locally and nationally. Job outlook projections through 2008 indicate a 50% job growth rate. Graduate surveys indicate that all of our graduates who wish to be employed in the field are employed. 55% of the program graduates have taken advantage of the career ladder and dental hygiene associate degree options.

Strengths

- The dental assisting program is a high quality program leading to immediate employment at self-sufficiency wages. The American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation reviewed the program in October 2001. The program was reaccredited for the maximum seven years without reporting requirements. The program received two commendations - the first for administrative coordination due to the transfer from WTI and the second to the faculty “for their innovative teaching methods, cooperative team effort, and dedication to the program”. There were no recommendations.
- Several external quality assurance mechanisms ensure the program curriculum is current and relevant (surveys sent to students, graduates, employers and externship dentists, and the ADA self-study/site visit), and faculty attendance and participation in local, regional and national conferences.
- QCC has the only ADA accredited dental assisting program in Massachusetts that cores four courses with the dental hygiene program, an advantage for those students whose ultimate goal is dental hygiene. QCC also offers three associate degree options in Allied Dental Services for graduate dental assistants who are certified that can be completed in an additional year (full-time) or part-time evenings.
- A state-of-the-art dental clinic.
- Shared faculty and resources with the dental hygiene program

Executive Summary-Cont.

External Forces Guiding Program Growth

- At the request of the Worcester District Dental Society (WDDS) and with the support of the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) the college has committed to expansion of the dental assisting program to 18 students for the Fall '03 class. Additionally, the college has also committed to expand the hygiene program by another six students.
- The lack of mandated credentialing in Massachusetts is viewed by educators as a major contributing factor to the shortage of dental assistants. Dental Assisting is not perceived as a "profession" since on the job training is allowed. As a result, many prospective students, parents and guidance counselors do not consider training programs necessary.
- Recruiting for dental assisting has been difficult for the past 10 years. The majority of dental assisting students want dental hygiene and eventually either go on to hygiene or leave the profession. The issues are twofold: hygienists may earn up to twice the hourly rate of a dental assistant, and, the perceived lower status of a dental assistant; hygienists need a license, dental assistants do not.
- Interest in choosing dental assisting as a career will need to come from the profession itself by promoting credentialing on a national level.
- Program growth at QCC is limited by available clinic time, staffing, students, and externship placement sites.
- The projected opening of two new dental hygiene programs offered collaboratively by Mt. Wachusett CC and Massachusetts Bay CC for Fall '03. This could have an adverse effect on DA program enrollment since the majority of our candidates are on the DH wait list. The DH program is now accepting applicants for Fall 2007. The opening of two additional hygiene programs and the possible expansion of our DH program would in all likelihood reduce the number of applicants to the DA program.
- MBCC is also reported to be offering a dental assisting program for Fall '03. We do not believe this to be a problem since we have had only one applicant from that area in four years. However, a dentist in Worcester has opened a 32-hour, non-accredited dental assisting program, which may have an impact on the applicant pool not interested in dental hygiene (about 25% of each class).

Areas Targeted for Improvement

- Accept students into the program that will be successful in the programs' major courses. Presently, 25% of students fail Dental Radiology (one of the four cored courses). Discussion is continuing in the dental programs bi-weekly department meetings to address this concern. We have changed admissions requirements for Fall '03 to include high school level or the QCC equivalent in Biology, Chemistry and Algebra. We are also investigating the institution of an Allied Health aptitude test to be considered as part of the admissions criteria. It would be beneficial to increase the Radiology lecture to 2 credit hours and/or offer two sections to allow for more student interaction during class time.

Executive Summary- Cont.

- Encourage the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Dentistry to mandate completing the Dental Assisting National Board Certified Dental Assistant Examination (CDA). This nationally recognized credential is not mandated in Massachusetts. It has been difficult to persuade students to voluntarily pay \$225.00 to take the exam when it is not required for employment. Although many dentists seek to employ CDA's, the current shortage of credentialed dental assistants opens the door for OJT assistants. Many dentists in the state are opposed to requiring this credential because they fear that it would exacerbate the shortage of dental assistants. Our position, and that of the Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association, is that mandated credentialing in dental assisting will enhance its desirability as a career. It should also be noted that in Massachusetts our graduates are considered Formally Trained Assistants (FTA) and may perform all the same expanded functions as a CDA.
- Ideally, an additional full-time faculty member to be shared with hygiene to meet the needs of both programs in the clinical areas and/or added lecture sections. This would also provide the students of both programs enhanced mentoring. Program expansion would necessitate a second full-time faculty member.

Institutional Supports

Priority

- IP** • Continue to support legislation mandating credentialing of dental assistants. This not only would increase the quality of care to dental patients but would also be a major factor in stabilizing program enrollment eliminating reliance on hygiene overflow. Also, if the law is changed we would be in a position to offer CDA exam preparation courses, or re-entry training as might be required.
- EP** • Hire additional faculty to be shared with the DH program for help in
Fall '03 the area of lab/clinical instruction where a 6:1 student/teacher ratio is required and enhance student advising and mentoring.
- IP** • Provide additional sections for the cored courses equipped with data projectors and projection screens.
- EP** • Provide tutors that can assist students with content in the dental science courses.
Fall '03
- HP** • Provide a larger locker space for all dental program students to store coats, bags, and books which due to OSHA Infection Control standards are not allowed in the dental clinic.

Executive Summary- Cont.

Priority	Equipment Needs	Timeline
IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional one, preferably two, x-ray machines	Fall '03
IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projection screens for rooms 126B and 367A	Fall '03
HP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wall mounted data projector for room 126B or a compact, portable AV station to include an overhead projector, VCR, data projector and slide projector	ASAP
EP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laptop computer access at each treatment station• Module for voice activation of chairside software	Spring '04 Spring '04

EXHIBIT 1-1
Assessment Plan for Dental Assisting Program

	Assessment criteria & methods (expected results)	When done/ Person responsible: A. Nichols	Actual results	Analysis and acti B. Melanson and Nichols
<p>graduates will obtain entry-level employment as an integral member of the dental team within six months of graduation, or pursue an advanced education program.</p>	<p>Initial job placement poll</p> <p>Alumnae Outcomes Survey: 100% employed or pursuing further education.</p>	<p>Annually at graduation</p> <p>Annually in the fall for 3 years after graduation</p>	<p>June 2000: 50% employed 67% higher ed.</p> <p>June 2001: 86% employed 100% either employed or in higher ed.</p> <p>Fall 2000: Fall 2001: Response rate: 33% 100% are in higher education. 50% work part-time in a dental office.</p>	<p>This goal is consistently met. No action required.</p>
<p>graduates will, upon graduation, competently perform chairside and related office and laboratory procedures under the direction and supervision of a dentist within the guidelines of the Massachusetts Dental Practice Act.</p>	<p>Program assessment Surveys: Extern/ dentist</p> <p>Employer</p> <p>Graduates</p> <p>Expected results: All responses will indicate average or better skills</p> <p>Alumnae Outcomes Survey: Expected results: Respondents are practicing within the guidelines of the Massachusetts Dental Practice Act.</p>	<p>Annually in June</p> <p>Annually in the fall</p> <p>Annually in the fall</p>	<p>Extern/employer dentist survey</p> <p>June 2000: 50% response rate 6 of the 7 respondents indicated all skills were average or stronger. One respondent indicated a weakness in taking occlusal registrations.</p> <p>June 2001: 62% response rate 5 indicated average or strong for all skills 1 indicated instrument transfer weak 1 indicated pouring and trimming models weak. 1 indicated weakness in preliminary impressions and occlusal registration. 1 indicated lack of experience in chairside computer skills.</p> <p>Graduates 2000: Response rate: 33% Weakness indicated was in rubber dam placement.</p>	<p>In general this goal is consistently met. One graduate survey did indicate a weakness in rubber dam placement. To correct this weakness a guest presenter was invited to provide a hands-on workshop on rubber dam placement. This workshop will be repeated annually.</p>

<p>strate the appropriate level of knowledge perform dental assisting functions by y challenging the Dental Assisting board Certified Dental Assistant on within one year of graduation.</p>	<p>DANB CDA exam Alumnae Outcomes Survey: Expected results: 100% pass rate on exam</p>	<p>As received by DANB/</p>	<p>2000 results 100% passed chairside 75% passed infection control 75% passed radiology. 50% passed the CDA</p>	<p>Insufficient data. O the six graduates sa exam. This will be reevaluated annuall</p>
<p>ongoing review of program goals and to ensure that the program continues to needs of, external organizations, the community, and students.</p>	<p>Student program evaluation Responses of “good” or “better” In each of the queried areas</p>	<p>Annually in December & May</p>	<p>In both 2000 and 2001 all survey responses exceeded expectations. Student comments indicated that the cored Oral Pathology course was too intensive for their level.</p>	<p>For the 2000-2001 a year the original 2 c DHY Oral Patholog was withdrawn from curriculum and repl a 1 credit DAS Intro to Oral Pathology. No action required. to monitor student f</p>
<p>in intellectual and professional growth, iate the need for life-long learning to meet the changing needs and demands ession by maintaining CDA status and rticipating in the local chapter of the Dental Assistants Association.</p>	<p>Program assessment Surveys Student evaluation of faculty Externship evaluation by student</p>	<p>Ongoing Annually/Fall semester Each rotation</p>	<p><u>2000</u>: 86% <u>2001</u>: 88% 2000 2 respondents 100% passed the CDA exam and both are in higher ed. Neither is a member of the WDDAA.</p>	<p>In sufficient data. T reevaluated annuall</p>
<p>in intellectual and professional growth, iate the need for life-long learning to meet the changing needs and demands ession by maintaining CDA status and rticipating in the local chapter of the Dental Assistants Association.</p>	<p>Program completion rates 70% completion Alumnae Survey 100% of alumni will maintain certification and participate in ADAA activities</p>	<p>Annually for three years</p>	<p><u>2000</u>: 86% <u>2001</u>: 88% 2000 2 respondents 100% passed the CDA exam and both are in higher ed. Neither is a member of the WDDAA.</p>	<p>In sufficient data. T reevaluated annuall</p>

**Advisory Committee Members
2001 - 2002**

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Dr. Bruce Field 325 Southbridge Street Auburn, MA 01501 (508) 832-5776	Chairman, Allied Professionals Committee Worcester District <i>2 Year Term - expires 5-31-2002</i>
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Dr. Lisa Antonelli 330 Plantation Street Worcester, MA 01604 (508) 753-1911	QCC Dentist - Faculty <i>2 Year Term - expires 5-31-2001</i>
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