

Dental Laboratory Technology Program Review

Administrative Response

March 29, 2016 *(with May 9, 2016 addendum at end)*

Thank you for your presentation on February 18, 2016, during which you described the Dental Laboratory Technology program. Your written report addressed both local and national issues and was informative. Throughout the Program Review process, you demonstrated your commitment to our students and to your profession.

This Administrative Response will: a) note particular highlights within your discipline and Program Review; b) include acknowledgements; c) provide the administrative response to the SAC recommendations; and d) include closing comments.

Highlights or Achievements

- You have regularly reviewed the DLT Course Content Outcome Guides along with teaching methods.
- You have created new courses in order to update the curriculum. This included the creation of a course that prepares students for Registered Graduate testing. DLT students who completed the National Association of Dental Laboratory Registered Graduate testing all received passing scores.
- Regularly you meet with members of the profession through Advisory Committee meetings.
- You have thoughtfully mapped the core outcomes to the courses in which these are taught and assessed them to different competency levels.
- As a result of your participation in the learning outcomes assessment process, you have modified teaching practices and curriculum.

Acknowledgement

- We acknowledge your dedication to our students with the goal of providing a quality educational experience, and we understand that you are doing this work within the context of finite resources.

Administrative Response to Dental Laboratory Technology SAC Recommendations

Recommendations for the SAC

We acknowledge the goals and activities included in the Program Review.

Recommendations for Administrative Support

- **Commitment to continuing the DLT Program as a permanently funded and supported program.**
- **Approve the permanently funded faculty positions to proceed into a hiring process for the DLT Program.**
- **Complete the previous bond proposal lab enhancements.**
- **Provide assistance to help market the program.**

Enrollment and Completion: As you shared in the Program Review, “nearly every dental school has eliminated dental laboratory programs in their universities.” Nationwide there are approximately 17 two-year institutions offering DLT programs. At the same time job openings for Dental Laboratory Technicians is forecasted to grow 11% nationally and by 14% in Oregon. The number of projected annual job openings in Oregon between 2012 and 2022 is 40.

(<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/51-9081.00>) However, the number of DLT degrees and certificates awarded at PCC during the past three academic years remains low (12 in 2012-13, 10 in 2013-14, and 10 in 2014-15). We understand that some students leave the program early for various reasons including employment in the field. While there is space for 24 DLT students to enter the Program each year, the Program has not consistently reached capacity.

Wages: Wages for entry-level DLTs in Oregon are low (\$10.55 per hour/\$21,940 per year) and likely influenced by the lack of academic or licensure requirements to enter the field. The estimated cost for completing the DLT Program, including tuition, fees, books and supplies is approximately \$9,000. We recognize that over time DLTs can earn higher wages depending upon the quality and speed of their work (median DLT wages in Oregon are \$19.55 per hour/\$40,670 per year). While hands-on experience through co-operative education opportunities might have assisted PCC DLT graduates with improving the quality and speed of their work (as shared by members of the DLT Advisory Committee), graduates have not recently been provided those opportunities though you have plans to do so in the future. At present, the entry-level wage for Dental Laboratory Technicians falls below a living wage.

<http://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41051>

Equipment and Lab Needs: You have requested that the DLT equipment and lab be upgraded in order to be better aligned with industry. As part of the current Bond project, the projected construction timeline for the remodel of the HT Building is 2019.

Given the confluence of the low number of Program graduates, low entry-level wages, lack of required licensure to enter the field, and the gap between the needs of the Program to upgrade equipment and lab space and the Bond's construction timeline, we regretfully conclude that we need to suspend the Dental Laboratory Technology Program at PCC.* If in the future, these circumstances improve, we will consider reinstating the Program.

Closing

We thank the Dental Laboratory Technology SAC for sharing the results of your Program Review. Both your written report and your presentation allowed us to learn more about opportunities and challenges associated with the Program. We recognize your dedication to our students and regret that we will no longer be offering this Program at PCC.

Administrative Response submitted by Loretta Goldy on behalf of the Deans of Instruction, the Dean of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the Sylvania Campus President.

Lisa Avery, Sylvania Campus President

Kendra Cawley, Dean of Academic Affairs

Christine Chairsell, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs

Loretta Goldy, Sylvania Interim Dean of Instruction

Craig Kolins, Southeast Dean of Instruction

Cheryl Scott, Rock Creek Dean of Instruction

Kurt Simonds, Cascade Dean of Instruction

*See addendum, next page

May 9, 2016



Dear DLT Advisory Committee:

Thank you for attending the meeting on April 14 to discuss the Dental Lab Technology program and contributing your input and inquiries about the decision to suspend the program.

Since the last gathering, the school has engaged in multiple conversations and your guidance gave PCC reason to reverse the suspension on a provisional basis.

As stated at the meeting, the parameters for suspending the program were due to the following:

- Entry-level wages below the living wage
- Inconsistent enrollment capacity
- Low completion/graduation rates

Other cost factors looming for the program and college include:

- An updated lab
- Purchase of CAD/CAM equipment

In order to follow the progress of the DLT, PCC will conduct a mid-term program review in two years to ensure that the following criteria have been met:

- Entry-level wages are at or above a living wage
- Reached enrollment capacity more consistently
- Higher completion/graduation rates
- Continued updates of curriculum to align with industry needs
- Include more hands-on learning opportunities through cooperative education to increase speed and quality of production

We cannot meet all expectations on our own--PCC will need your help. Due to the committee indicating a willingness to help meet the criteria necessary for the program to continue, PCC would like to propose the following:

- Pledge from each advisory committee member that they will start our graduates at a minimum hourly wage of \$11.50 that will be adjusted if living wage data changes
- Commitment from the labs that provide internships to continue to do so for the next two years
- Assistance examining curricular updates and guidance on the plausibility of a one-year certificate

We are pleased to announce this exciting news and want to thank you for your continued support of the program. We look forward to working with you to help our program transition into a thriving opportunity for our students and graduates.

Sincerely,

Lisa Avery
Sylvania Campus President

Loretta Goldy
Sylvania Dean of Instruction

Jennifer Piper
Dean of Dental Sciences

Josette Beach
Director of Dental Sciences