Graduate/Alumni Summary

The Graduate/Alumni survey was conducted by the Dental Hygiene program with the assistance of TCC’s Institutional Research and Assessment department for data entry. The main purpose of the survey was to assess two areas of interest: 1) how important are dental hygiene specific responsibilities as applied to dental hygiene practice and 2) how well did the TCC dental hygiene program prepare graduates to perform these specific skills. Additional information regarding preparation for national and clinical boards and other job-related questions were also obtained.

In June of 2005, Graduate/Alumni surveys were mailed by the dental hygiene department to 25 graduates representing the two most recent graduating classes (2003 and 2004). A postage paid return envelope was included in the mailing so respondents could return their survey directly to the Institutional Research department for data entry and tabulation. Included with the survey, was a consent form granting permission to send an employer survey to their designated employer. For those respondents who gave permission to contact their employer, consent forms were forwarded from the Institutional Research department to the dental hygiene department.

To ensure an adequate response rate, follow-up letters were sent to recipients as a reminder to complete and mail-in the survey, or telephone the dental hygiene department to obtain another copy. The reminder letter was sent approximately two weeks after the first mailing. At the end of the data collection, 12 responses were received yielding a 48% response rate.

This report is reflective of the dental hygiene programs commitment and effort to ascertain graduates opinions regarding the level of education received and the importance of their education when applied in a “real world” practice setting.

The results of the data provide information that can be used for program improvement as well as provide specifics on job-related information as a workforce development program.

Results from the general job-related questions can provide information on salary, benefits and other items of interest as students prepare to begin their careers as registered dental hygienists. Results on membership in ADHA, the dental hygiene national professional association, can be shared with both the local and state components for their benefit.

The overall results obtained from questions that directly impact the program or curricula were positive. All respondents reported being well prepared or adequately prepared for the national board exam. The majority of respondents also reported being well prepared or adequately prepared for the clinical board exam.

Questions relating to how important are dental hygiene specific responsibilities to their current position provided insight into how what we teach is actually being integrated into their daily routines or business practice. Questions related to how well has graduate been prepared to perform dental hygiene skills provided insights into how we may need to make improvements in our curriculum or clinical teaching methods.

It should be noted that respondents overwhelmingly are incorporating data gathering information into their practice. It should also be noted that the majority of graduates reported that they were well prepared to perform these data gathering procedures (i.e., med/dental history, perio charting, dental charting and exposing diagnostic radiographs). Respondents also reported it is important to provide appropriate patient oral health education and they were well prepared to perform this task. Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported that it was important to develop a dental
hygiene treatment plan in their current practice and eighty-three percent reported they were well prepared or adequately prepared to perform this skill.

As expected, the majority (83%) of respondents reported performing oral prophylaxis services (i.e., scaling root planning, debridement and polishing) was important to their current practice. Respondents also reported they were either well-prepared (83.3%) or adequately prepared (8.3%) to perform this skill. One hundred percent of valid respondents reported that it was very important to administer local anesthesia in their current practice, however, only 75% of respondents reported being well prepared. Respondents also reported being well prepared in the administration of nitrous oxide sedation (100% of valid responses), however, only 66% of respondents reported it as important to their current position. The placement of subgingival prescription medication was reported as very important to 33% of respondents and moderately important with 42% of respondents. One hundred percent of valid respondents reported they were well prepared or adequately prepared to perform this skill, 72.7% and 27.3% respectively.

Other adjunctive services were assessed as to their importance to graduates current practice and graduates preparation in said services. Highlighted here are two items that are routinely performed by the hygienist. These skills are the placement of dental sealants and nutritional counseling. Ninety percent of respondents reported that placing dental sealants was important to their current practice. One hundred percent of respondents reported being well prepared (72.7%) or adequately prepared (27.3%) to perform this task. Fifty percent of respondents reported that nutritional counseling was moderately important to their current practice and 40% reported it as not very important. Over ninety percent of respondents reported they were well prepared (63.6%) or adequately prepared (27.3%) to perform this service.

One hundred percent of valid respondents reported that infection control procedures were important to their current practice. One hundred percent of respondents reported they were well prepared to perform infection control procedures.

Dental informatics information was assessed by including questions on intraoral camera, computer-based patient software and digital radiography use. Fifty percent of respondents reported that intraoral camera use was important or moderately important to their current practice. Eighty-two percent reported the need for additional preparation. Seventy percent of respondents reported that using computer-based patient software was important or moderately important to their current practice. Seventy percent reported needing additional preparation in the use of this software. Thirty percent of respondents reported that digital radiography was moderately or very important in their current position. Forty percent reported that digital radiography was not applicable to their practice. However, eighty-one percent of respondents reported they needed additional preparation in the use of digital radiography.

Based on the data provided by the respondents who completed the questionnaire, it is concluded that Tulsa Community College’s dental hygiene program is providing graduates with knowledge and skills that are both important to their current position and graduates are well prepared or adequately prepared to perform these services and/or skills. We are meeting our stated Program Goals and Competencies.

However, there are a few items that should be noted for future program/curriculum improvement. They are as follows:

- **Dental informatics** – it is essential that our program stay current with technologies. The purchase of an intraoral camera is critical in helping to prepare our students for employment. Intraoral camera use is considered a common tool in today’s dental practice. Computer-based patient software should also be looked at for inclusion in our Theory IV course as it relates to practice management. The expense of digital radiography can only be justified when laptop computers are required as part of students instrument kit. A wireless network would be needed so digital radiographs would be available for use at each dental unit.
Salary and Benefits Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are you Paid?</td>
<td>10 – salary per day/week 1- Salary per hour 1 - Commission plus salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average salary for 7-8 hr day</td>
<td>12 - $225 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Insurance</td>
<td>4 – yes 8 – no</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid Vacation</td>
<td>8 – yes 4 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid sick leave</td>
<td>3 – yes 9 – no</td>
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<tr>
<td>401 (k) or other retirement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profit sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual bonus</td>
<td>2 – yes 10 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No benefits</td>
<td>2 – yes 10 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other benefits</td>
<td>3 – yes (CE fees) 9 - no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employer Summary

The employer survey was conducted by the Dental Hygiene Program with the assistance of TCC’s Institutional Research and Assessment department. The main purpose of the survey was to evaluate seven areas of interest regarding our graduates from the employers’ perspective. Additional information regarding major areas of strengths and improvement for TCC’s dental hygiene program were also solicited.

In June/July of 2005, employer surveys were mailed by the dental hygiene department to ten area dentists who employee our graduates. The ten dentists represented those employers whose names were given by a graduate respondent. A postage paid return envelope was included in the mailing so respondents could return their survey directly to the Institutional Research department for data entry and tabulation. Included with the survey, was a letter informing the employer that their dental hygiene employee had given permission for sending the survey.

At the end of the data collection, five responses were received yielding a 50% response rate. This report is reflective of the dental hygiene program’s commitment and effort to ascertain employer’s opinions and assessment of our dental hygiene graduates.

To be prepared to begin the practice of dental hygiene, our competencies documents state that graduates of the Tulsa Community College Dental Hygiene Program must acquire knowledge, skills and values as set forth in the five domains listed below:

- Ethics, Professionalism and Communication
- Dental Hygiene Process of Care
- Community Involvement
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Professional Growth and Development

Based on the data provided by the respondents who completed the questionnaire, it is concluded that Tulsa Community College’s dental hygiene program is providing the dental community with graduates who are competent registered dental hygienist.

Overall results revealed that employer respondents were very satisfied with our graduates knowledge, skills and ability to work as a team as well as adjust to their job responsibilities in the real world. In addition, employers were satisfied with graduates ethical and professional standards and the treatment of their patients.