

**Agenda**  
**Allied Dental Education –**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**6:00-7:00pm**  
**Wednesday, October 22, 2025**  
**Via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Mark Frey DDS., Darin Schettler, DDS., Christine Ford, DDS., Gwen Essex, RDH, MS, EdD., Jennifer Borg, RDAEF., Jessica Wong-Colton, RDH., Jessica Chen, RDH.

**Members Absent:** Katrina Morris, RDA

The primary purpose of the advisory committee is to assist and provide recommendations to the district in establishing, operating, and evaluating programs that serve the needs of student's, business, and industry and to provide expertise pertaining to technological and subject matter changes. The advisory committee provides a mutual exchange of information for program improvement.

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|---|-----------------|
| 1. Call to Order (Committee Chair)                  | Dr. Mark Frey   |
| 2. Welcome/Introductions                            | All             |
| 3. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting (10/16/24) | <b>Approved</b> |
| 4. Public Comments                                  |                 |
| 5. Unfinished Business                              | N/A             |
| 6. New Business, Department Updates                 |                 |

DHI Enrollment, Demographics

Cindy F.

**DHI Enrollment, Demographics**

**Cindy F**

**161 Applicants, 92 qualified for lottery. The majority age range is 24-29(9), 7 are 23 and under, 5 are 30-34, and 2 are 35-39., 1 is 40 and over. 21 Females, 3 Males, Level of education-19 out of the 24 have AS or BS degrees. 10 Students reported that they will work while taking the program. 12 of the 24 are Spanish speaking. 13 are planning on staying in Sonoma County and 11 in the surrounding counties.**

**Dental Assisting had 58 Applicants that qualified for lottery.  
24 DA students started; one dropped the first week and we were able to fill their position.  
2 others have also dropped due to personal reasons leaving us with a class of 22 students ,20 Females and 2 males  
15 students are age 23-under, 6 are 24-29, and 1 is 35-39 years old.  
2 students reported working as a sterilization assistant for 1-2 years and 1 student was a dental receptionist range 6-11 years.  
11 students in total work from 7-32 hours a week.  
Their level of education 6 students has a HS diploma,  
12 student have 1-3 years of college, additionally 2 have associate degrees and 2 have earned bachelor's degrees.  
11 students are Spanish-speaking.  
19 of the 22 students plan on staying in Sonoma Couty  
2 will remain in Marin and 1 in Napa after graduation.**

**DHII Updates**

Jennifer A-K

**22 students. The specific demographics were shared by Cindy last year when they were first year students. Last year we were given a grant for portable dental equipment that we use during our school-base rotations to the West County Schools. Andrea and I went to St. Vincent's de Paul in early October with both dental hygiene and dental assisting to participate in the Dia de Los Muertos event where we did oral health assessments. In early November, Andrea and I will be taking the students to the Russian River Health Fair where the DH students will help with oral assessment screenings and the DA students will perform BP checks.**

7. Discussion Items:

Advisory Committee Members

We value your input as we continue to refine and revise our curriculum to meet the needs of the profession and provide the most appropriate and current education for our future Dental Programs graduates. Discussion:

**Jennifer Apocotos-Kirk:**

For those of you who hire our past grads, how well do they handle soft hand-offs with patients, and what could we do to better prepare them to communicate during those transitions?

**Responses:**

**Dr. Frey shared that his hygienist, who's been with him for 15 years and is one of our SRJC grads, knows how he likes to be kept in the loop when he comes into the room to see a patient. She updates him on any changes in a patient's health history or medications,**

**which makes things run super smoothly in his office. He also mentioned how management systems can help with intra-office communication.**

**Dr. Schettler said his hygienist is also an SRJC graduate and has been with him for over 20 years! Dr. Schettler mentioned that every dental office runs a little differently, and what each dentist expects from their RDH can vary quite a bit.**

**Both doctors talked about how they're usually the first ones to see the patient, so they're often the ones doing the hand-off to their hygienists. Both agreed that each office/dentist is different in what a soft hand-off could look like.**

**Jessica Wong-Colton mentioned that new grads are nervous, and she sees this when they have to get the dentist for an exam. She encourages them to have a voice.**

## **Susan Hellums**

What ideas or experiences can you share that would help our graduating students transition more effectively into private practice, particularly regarding the utilization of the 2017 AAP Classification for Periodontitis? If this classification is being used in your practice, how can we ensure that this knowledge supports not only the dentists but also the dental assistants and front office staff?

### **Responses:**

**Dr. Frey presented the question to Dr. Ford, who is a periodontist. Dr. Ford does not utilize the current 2017 classification, stating that it is essentially similar to previous classifications but uses different terminology. Instead, she applies her own classification system that has worked for years. Dr. Frye also does not employ the 2017 classification and mentioned that he does not employ recent graduates, so they are not familiar with it.**

**In contrast, Dr. Schettler has diagnosed periodontitis using the AAP 2017 staging and grading classification, primarily for scaling and root planning insurance coverage, as requested by his office management. All doctors acknowledged that the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the demand for implementing the new classification system.**

**Both Dr. Frey and Dr. Ford routinely submit periodontal screening and radiographic images demonstrating evidence of bone loss for scaling and root planning insurance coverage, a practice that has proven successful for years.**

**The audio connection during the Zoom call with Gwen Essex was weak, but she noted that she has proudly adopted the new classification system. While she acknowledges that it may not be widely used in interprofessional or insurance communications, she believes it serves as an excellent educational tool for patients. She finds that the terminology in the new classification is more effective for discussing disease severity and complexities with patients.**

## **Andrea Emerson**

I want to thank you all for your feedback last year. Based on your input regarding the RDA program, and with the Dean, Tammy Sakanashi's, approval, we were able to hire an additional associate faculty member for our clinical lab courses. This has allowed us to reduce the faculty-to-student ratio from 1:12 to 1:6, creating a stronger learning environment. Professor Murray and I are now able to place greater emphasis on developing students' clinical skill sets. From your perspective, are there any gaps between our students' clinical training and the skills needed to be fully work-ready in today's dental practices?

### **Responses:**

**Dr. Frey compared the current program to the previous DA program, noting that students tend to start off a bit “green” in January, though they possess a solid foundation of basic skills.**

**Dr. Schettler mentioned that it's always clear when they have an SRJC intern, as these students arrive well-prepared with the fundamentals. He encourages them to actively participate and learn, often asking questions to assess their clinical skills and determine their level in the program before assigning tasks. He also observed that SRJC students appear more prepared than those who previously completed rotations at UCSF.**

**Overall, the dentists expressed that they are impressed with SRJC interns, finding them consistently well-prepared in their basic skills.**

## **Cindy Fleckner:**

In what ways are you currently seeing Artificial Intelligence (AI) being used in dental practice settings, and how do you anticipate its role expanding in patient care, diagnostics, or practice management?

### **Responses:**

**Dr. Schettler reported that he has experimented with AI-Based Dental Imaging Analysis. At this time, he does not see a clear need to enhance his current imaging capabilities, noting that the AI results did not provide information beyond what he was already able to visualize. He also shared that one of his staff members has been using ChatGPT to upload and analyze photos of specific implants in an effort to identify their type, etc., However, the platform has not been successful in providing detailed or exact implant information, instead returning only general descriptions.**

**Dr. Frey commented that while artificial intelligence is still in its early stages within dentistry, its role is expected to grow—particularly in areas such as practice management, marketing, and digital platform development.**

8. Dean's Report – Tammy Sakanashi

**Tammy provided an update on the new 10-foot storage container with roll-up doors that Health Sciences was able to purchase for the dental programs. This storage cube was placed in the parking lot area and currently being used to house the portable units that students take on their school-based rotations. This great addition is especially helpful as we anticipate losing some space with the construction of the new classroom next to the dental offices.**

**The new large classroom will be located on the first floor of the RACE building, in the area formerly occupied by Health Services. Tammy also noted that the college is in the early stages of discussing a potential bond measure, which could support facility repairs, new roofs, etc.**

**SAVE THE DATE – NEXT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING - October 21, 2026**

**Adjournment: 6:46pm**