
ORGANIZING FRAMEWORK OF THE DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM AT WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE

PROGRAM MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, PURPOSE, VISION, & GOALS

Introduction

The Dental Hygiene program at Harper College is a full-time, five-semester career program leading to an Associate in Applied Science degree and is accredited by the Council on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

Prior to application for licensure in the practice of dental hygiene, dental hygiene graduates must successfully complete all courses in the program and pass the Dental Hygiene National Board Examination and a regional clinical examination.

The Dental Hygiene program is committed to academic excellence. The program has adopted three statements that define its purpose, philosophy and future.

These statements include:

- Mission- Statement of purpose
- Philosophy – Statement of belief related to teaching, patient care, service and scholarship
- Vision – Statement of future position

Mission of the Dental Hygiene Program

The Dental Hygiene program, a career program in the Health Careers Division, derives its purpose and functions from the philosophy and mission of William Rainey Harper College. The program is committed to academic excellence and will provide educational opportunities that enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills and values to become competent and ethical dental health care professionals who can deliver comprehensive, quality dental hygiene care and who will strive for continued professional growth, personal excellence and life-long learning.

Philosophy of the Dental Hygiene Program

Dental hygiene is a dynamic discipline that has evolved from a professional body of knowledge, skills and values. Dental hygienists use the core competencies of critical thinking, evidence-based practice and professionalism as the foundation for decision-making regarding patient care. The philosophy and goals of the Dental Hygiene Program reflect those of Harper College. The philosophy encompasses the areas of teaching, patient care, service and scholarship.

Teaching

Dental hygiene education is research based, reflective of health care trends, incorporating innovation, technology and creative instructional methods.

The Dental Hygiene program at Harper College will provide an environment for students to become critically reflective practitioners who will aspire to excellence, competence and ethical conduct in the provision of comprehensive oral health care to the public to which they are entrusted.

The faculty will provide the linkage of theory to clinical practice and will create a learning environment that is supportive, flexible and fosters mutual respect among students, faculty, staff, and patients.

The faculty will strive to develop competent health care professionals with the necessary breadth and depth of knowledge, acquired through a balanced curriculum designed by intentional sequencing of general education, biophysical science, introductory and advanced dental and dental hygiene science courses. Instructional strategies will be used that enhance student learning and provide an environment that fosters a commitment to inquiry, life-long learning, community service and professional development.

Patient Care

Dental hygiene care will include active patient involvement with an emphasis on recognizing individual patient needs and encouraging development of strong clinician self-assessment skills. Clinical experiences with culturally diverse patients of all ages and health status will prepare graduates to function successfully in a dynamic interdisciplinary health care system.

Service

Students and faculty, through involvement in professional activities and community service, will demonstrate a commitment to the provision of comprehensive dental hygiene care as well as education of the public and the profession.

Scholarship

Faculty will continually pursue life-long learning in order to apply evidence-based research and decision-making in their position as clinician, educator and role model.

Purpose Statement of the Dental Hygiene Program at Harper College

The Dental Hygiene program will strive to meet the demand for dental hygienists in the area served by Harper College.

Vision of the Dental Hygiene Program at Harper College

The Dental Hygiene program will provide a future-focused, competency-based, learner-centered curriculum, which incorporates evidence-based dental hygiene practices that address the changing oral health needs of a culturally diverse community, and prepares graduates who can confidently function in multiple interrelated professional roles.

PROGRAM GOALS/ OUTCOMES

The Dental Hygiene Program at William Rainey Harper College will

1. maintain admission policies that ensure admission of a qualified student body who have the potential to achieve the program outcomes.
2. provide career education that prepares qualified, entry-level dental hygiene professionals who are competent to provide safe, ethical and comprehensive oral health services to a diverse population as defined by the Harper College Dental Hygiene Graduate Competencies for the Entry-Level Dental Hygienist.
3. maintain a contemporary program that provides a dynamic, integrated and interdisciplinary curriculum which reflects relevant, evidence-based dental hygiene practice.
4. provide quality individualized patient-centered dental hygiene care.
5. provide service to the Harper College and surrounding communities, and serve as a resource of oral health knowledge and education for the health care community.
6. promote professional growth and develop leadership in dental hygiene education by engaging in professional development activities.