

School of Dentistry Student Global Oral Health Missions

I. Introduction

Each year, a number of Dental and Dental Hygiene students in the School of Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry volunteer to participate in privately sponsored dental missions to third world destinations. In the past, this activity was unstructured and involved a number logistical departmental scheduling issues as well as hardships for the students. Pillar III, Theme 3 of our strategic plan addresses the role of The School of Dentistry in promoting and advocating for global oral health and the need to follow a sustainable model for all interactions with the global community. The School of Dentistry not only supports the development of dental and dental hygiene education and service globally but also recognizes the importance and value of direct student involvement in this undertaking.

In 2011 the School of Dentistry launched a pilot program that allowed a specified number of qualifying students to participate in the Kindness in Action Program. This initial pilot was completed in the spring of 2012 and was a success for the students, School of Dentistry and the global communities that were served (through Kindness in Action). The students came away from the experience with a broadened and compassionate understanding for the oral health issues faced by the global community.

II. Proposal

Following student debriefing and a comprehensive review of the pilot program it was determined that student participation in the missions was of benefit for all stakeholders and that as one facet of our greater global oral health initiative, the process for formalization of this activity should proceed.

III. Terms of Reference and Guiding Principles

Student participation in this program is elective, competency driven and an opportunity offered to the student, not an obligation of the School of Dentistry. As such, it is recognized by both the School of Dentistry and the student body that not all students will be eligible or permitted to participate in this program. It should also be understood that, while participation in global oral health initiatives is encouraged, completion of curriculum requirements and delivery of patient focused care will dictate any activities external to the respective undergraduate programs in dentistry and dental hygiene. To provide structure and continuity for this initiative compliance with the following guiding principles and protocol is requisite.

1. The program is available to third and fourth year dental students and junior and senior diploma Dental Hygiene and 4th year degree students.
2. The maximum number of dental students who are permitted to be absent from clinic on any given scheduled week is 2 for third year and 2 for fourth year. The maximum number of dental hygiene students who will be permitted to be absent from clinic on any given scheduled week is 2 for each of the years
3. It is anticipated that students wishing to participate in a global mission will sign up for their mission early in the spring of the year prior to their mission.

4. Dental students will be expected to make arrangements to complete their hospital rotation during either the summer months or over the Christmas break. The maximum number of openings for the hospital rotations is dependent of a variety of factors and will be approximately 14 for third year and 8 for fourth year. The scheduling of hospital rotations is at the discretion of Dr. Bill Preshing and prior to application to Dr. Preshing for a hospital rotation, all numbers of students interested in participating in a summer hospital rotation to allow them to go on a global oral health mission must make application through the Associate Chair, Academic (Dr. Steve Patterson).

5. **If a student is planning on participating in a humanitarian mission in 2014 during scheduled clinic hours an initial 'Request for Absence Form' must be submitted to the Curriculum Assistant (Ms. Sherri Kessels) no later than July 5, 2013.** The Associate Chair, Student Affairs (Dr. Stevenson) will review each request with the student's CCD Leader. Should it be determined that a leave of absence would not be in the best interest of the student's academic and clinical standing, the absence request will be denied. Final authorization for absence from the program will be at the discretion of the student's CCD Coordinator. Should the absence request be denied, any expenditures or travel plans made by the applicant would be the responsibility of the student. The applying student will be notified about the decision before the end of intersession (July 12, 2013).

If the preliminary request for absence is approved, the student's didactic and clinical progress will be reviewed in February 2014 by the Associate Chair, Student Affairs (Dr. Stevenson) and the student's CCD Leader. Should it be determined that a leave of absence would not be in the best interest of the student's academic and clinical standing, the absence request will be denied. In the case of approved student absences, while the Curriculum Assistant will send out a notification of the student's absence it is expected that the student will notify all of their course coordinators and clinical instructors about their planned absence as well.

6. The choice of mission, application and participation scheduling is the responsibility of the student.

7. Travel, lodging expenses and arrangements, healthcare and liability insurance are the responsibility of the student.

IV. Post Mission Activities and Responsibilities

1. Following the completion of all of the scheduled missions the student participants will be expected to participate in a debriefing process with the School of Dentistry. The purpose of this process will be to identify key strengths and weaknesses of the selected programs and any gaps that could be closed and opportunities that could be developed. This information will be used to modify, expand and enhance this program. It will also serve to identify possible future partnerships and strategies for future activities.
2. The student participants will be expected to provide a group presentation outlining their particular mission and the benefit and experience that they realized from this activity. The presentation

should include information about mission choice, application and participation for future student participants. This session could be organized as a single or multiple noon hour presentation.

V. Future Directions

- 1.** Partnerships with programs already in place within the FoMD as a member of a multidisciplinary team.
- 2.** Activities in those developing countries that currently have a MOU with the University of Alberta and its Global Initiatives enterprises.
- 3.** Participation in programs that will be developed under our current Global Oral Health Initiatives.
- 4.** University of Alberta sponsored programs that would support the participating students through our existing risk management programs.
- 5.** University of Alberta sponsored programs that would financially assist the student participants.