

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Background: The Standing Committee on Communication and Technology charge is to:

- Evaluate and recommend alternative methods, including the use of enhanced technology, for monitoring programs' continuous compliance with the standards;
- Evaluate and recommend new technological advances in accreditation for reporting and management of information, allowing accreditation to move toward the concepts of continuous assessment, data collection, and readiness;
- Monitor technological trends in alternative site visit methods;
- Develop and implement strategies to increase the effectiveness, quality, content, and processes of communication with all the Commission's communities of interest;
- Ensure that Commission communications strategies allow for transparency and accountability; and
- Oversee the publication of the e-newsletter, the CODA Communicator, with emphasis on communicating the value/outcomes of accreditation.

January 15, 2025 Meeting of the Communication and Technology Committee: The Standing Committee on Communication and Technology met on January 15, 2025. Members of the Committee: Dr. Keith Mays (chair), Dr. Indraneel Bhattacharyya, Dr. Carolyn Brown, Ms. LaShun James, Dr. Kenneth Sadler, and Mr. Noah Williams attended the meeting. Ms. Jill Day and Dr. Fabricio Teixeira, were unable to attend the meeting. Commissioners: Dr. Frank Licari, chair, *ex-officio*, Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) also attended the meeting. Commission Staff: Dr. Sherin Tooks, senior director, Ms. Peggy Soeldner, senior manager, and Ms. Jamie Asher Hernandez, Ms. Jessica Lynk, Mr. Shawn Morrison, Dr. Yesenia Ruiz, Ms. Kelly Stapleton, and Ms. Taylor Weast, managers, CODA were also in attendance.

The Committee began its meeting with a review of the Standing Committee's charge. The Committee discussed the following items: 2024 Web Analytics, progress on the 2024-2028 Communication Plan, and progress on the electronic accreditation system.

CODA Website Analytics: The Standing Committee reviewed the Commission's website analytics for the period of January 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024 (Quarters 1-3). The Committee noted consistent high traffic (161,589 users) to the website throughout the period under review. Most users were in the 18-24 age group. Additionally, over 50,200 engaged sessions (i.e., a session lasting more than 10 seconds with a clicked link, download, or multiple pages viewed) occurred during the reporting period. The Standing Committee also noted that 87% of site users were in the United States, and the top visited webpages were: Search for Dental Programs, CODA (homepage), Find a Program, CODA Accreditation Standards, and About Accreditation. The predominate access source was a direct link to CODA's website, which indicated the website is reaching the correct audience through CODA communications.

CODA Communication Plan: The Standing Committee reviewed the Progress Tracking Sheet (**Appendix 1**) for the 2024-2028 CODA Communication Plan and Strategy, and Executive Summary Report. The Committee reviewed all progress made in 2024, noting updates on the

electronic accreditation portal and learning management system are progressing, with expectations of user testing for staff, CODA volunteers, and CODA-accredited programs in late 2025. The Committee also reviewed the 2024 priority items, which included the following: 1) developing a pamphlet on the Commission's process to revise Standards, for public distribution; 2) developing micro-videos for programs on the preparation of report to CODA; 3) specialized training for CODA site visitors, focusing on a few disciplines each year; and 4) investigating the potential acquisition of a learning management system to disseminate information to CODA's various audiences. The Committee learned that two (2) new staff managers were hired in late Fall 2024, the Manager, Communication and Data Management, and Manager, Training and Assessment, and additional work on these priorities will continue in 2025.

The Standing Committee believed that CODA has made an impact with its communication and training programs, as was noted by the Strategic Plan Tracking Sheet (**Appendix 1**), and the significant amount of training provided by the Commission staff in 2024 (**Appendix 2**). The Standing Committee believed that CODA staff should continue in 2025 to work on all activities related to the 2024 priorities, and additionally expand on communication and training, as appropriate, to support CODA's broad communities of interest.

Electronic Accreditation Platform: The Standing Committee was provided an update on the progress toward an electronic accreditation system and a learning management system. The Standing Committee learned that CODA staff continues to meet biweekly with the electronic accreditation system vendor. The Commission staff is hopeful that demonstrations of the electronic accreditation system and user testing by CODA and its end users (i.e., programs and volunteers) will occur in Fall 2025. The Standing Committee and Commission will be provided updates as they are available.

Communication and Technology Committee Recommendation: This report is informational in nature and no action is required.

Commission Action:

2024-2028 CODA Communication Plan and Strategy
Progress Tracking Sheet Winter 2025

Progress on the plan will be tracked annually, with cumulative date from year to year to show trends in progress made on the plan.

2024 Priorities (Excerpt of Winter 2024 Communication and Technology Report): Priorities for the 2024 Communication Plan and Strategy include the following: 1) developing a pamphlet on the Commission’s process to revise Standards, for public distribution; 2) developing micro-videos for programs on the preparation of report to CODA; 3) specialized training for CODA site visitors, focusing on a few disciplines each year; and 4) investigating the potential acquisition of a learning management system to disseminate information to CODA’s various audiences.

Area of Strategic Priority: [Accreditation Process and Outcomes](#)

Goals	Strategies	Progress Made
The Commission’s process of accreditation is viewed by programs as a valuable resource in guiding continuous programmatic improvements.	Develop pamphlets or other materials related to the process for developing and revising Accreditation Standards, and how input on Standards may be submitted to the Commission.	2024: The Commission staff is currently working on a draft of this pamphlet.
	Increase program appreciation of the value of accreditation, through Program Director Q&A Sessions and Program Director 101 training sessions.	2024: Program Director Q&A hosted on March 10 for about 120 people. Program Director 101 training hosted on March 9 and April 11, 2024 for about 325 people.
	Provide greater guidance to programs on the use of CODA’s new technology (electronic accreditation)	2024: CODA is in the process of adopting a new electronic accreditation system to replace the current system. In 2025, CODA will include training with the platform roll out.

	<p>Develop a library of tools, expanding resources, and improved templates to assist programs in submission of various types of reports.</p>	<p>2024: During the configuration of the new accreditation database system, CODA staff, IT and our technology partners are being intentional about the development of tools and reporting to make program submission easier.</p>
	<p>Survey programs to determine if CODA's approach is comprehensive.</p>	<p>Future survey to occur (see below).</p>
<p>The Commission continues to be the trustworthy accrediting agency for all dental education programs with communities of interest, including licensing entities.</p>	<p>Monitor licensure requirements in the United States and Canada, and provide CODA-specific information to state agencies, as appropriate.</p>	<p>2024: CODA presented information on the international and U.S. CODA accreditation process to the California Dental Board on November 8. CODA staff addresses questions related to educational requirements for licensure ongoing, via email.</p>
	<p>Educate the professional associations, practicing and licensure communities on the role of CODA and value of Commission accreditation, through community of interest informational sessions.</p>	<p>2024: CODA hosted a session for the Special Care Dentistry Association on December 4. CODA Senior Director has conducted several information exchange sessions with the HRSA staff regarding CODA application process and HRSA funding opportunities. CODA conducted Q&A Session at ADEA meeting in March 2024</p>
	<p>Develop pamphlets or other materials related to the process for developing and</p>	<p>2024: The Commission staff is currently working on a draft of this pamphlet.</p>

	revising Accreditation Standards, and how input on Standards may be submitted to the Commission.	
The Commission supports and guides the process for U.S. and international program accreditation.	Provide information on CODA’s accreditation process and participate to international agencies, as requested.	2024: CODA presented information on the international and U.S. CODA accreditation process to the California Dental Board on November 8.

Area of Strategic Priority: Organizational Effectiveness

Goals	Strategies	Progress Made
The Commission has continued financial self-sufficiency to carry out its activities related to the Commission’s business purpose and operations.	Develop enhanced electronic resources to disseminate information to programs and communities of interest.	2024: CODA has streamlined several guideline documents. Additional work to occur in 2025.
The Commission is efficient in managing the accreditation processes, both internal and external.	Develop enhanced internal and external accreditation processes (guidelines, systems, tools) that are communicated to various audiences.	2024: Ongoing.
	Develop enhanced electronic processes for material review by site visitors, Review Committees and the Commission.	2024: CODA is in the process of building a new database and electronic accreditation system, which will improve CODA’s electronic processes.
The Commission’s human and operational resource capacity reflects the skill sets needed to support its strategic and operational needs.	Monitor the impact of enhanced communication and technology usage on human (staff and volunteer) and operational resource capacity to meet the current and future demands of the Commission.	2024: CODA hired key positions that will enhance operational resource capacity, Manager, Communication and Data Management, and Manager, Training and Assessment. CODA is exploring new learning management software to help with this capacity.

Area of Strategic Priority: Confidence in Accreditation and the Commission’s Reputation

Goals	Strategies	Progress Made
The Commission regularly assesses its communication, messaging strategies, and platforms to enhance its impact.	Conduct a short communication survey at mid-point of communication plan (2026/2027) to determine impact of strategies.	To occur 2026/2027.
	Monitor electronic platforms to ensure most appropriate tools are used to communicate with various audiences.	2024: This work is ongoing. CODA is continuing to work with IT and the software provider to develop CODA's new electronic tool.
The Commission effectively involves its communities of interest in the work of the Commission.	<p>Enhance Communications to dental and dental related education programs through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Alert Emails on topics of interest, training, and guideline usage • Increased Alert Emails for reminders of deadlines • Training on development of reports to CODA (synchronous and asynchronous) • General updates regarding CODA activities 	<p>2024: The Commission increased CODA Alerts by 8 emails in 2024.</p> <p>Emails under these topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Program Director 101 • Updates to FAFSA and potential impact to educational programs • Emails following CODA Meetings with Important Updates • Distribution of Summary of Major Actions • Reminder of Deadline to Submit Reports to CODA

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Site Visit Orientation for Programs Preparing for a Site Visit • Invitation to Q&A Session • Hearings on Standards Notices • Announcement of Revised Standards • Reminders of Confidentiality and Data Security • Invitation to Open Session of CODA Meeting • Call for Nominations for Volunteer positions with CODA • Distribution of CODA Annual Report
	<p>Enhance Communications to CODA volunteers through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Alert Emails on topics of interest, training, and guideline usage • Increased training on discipline-specific issues (synchronous and asynchronous) • General updates regarding CODA activities 	<p>2024: The Commission increased CODA Alerts in 2024.</p> <p>Emails under these topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Visitor Appointment Mailings • Invitation to Site Visitor Update Sessions and Trainings • Survey to solicit questions/scenarios for development of site visitor training

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Reminders • Invitation to all site visitor to attend Annual Site Visitor Training • Emails following CODA Meetings with Important Updates • Distribution of Summary of Major Actions • Invitation to Q&A Session • Hearings on Standards Notices • Announcement of Revised Standards • Reminders of Confidentiality and Data Security • Invitation to Open Session of CODA Meeting • Call for Nominations for Volunteer positions with CODA • Distribution of CODA Annual Report
	<p>Enhance Communications to communities of interest through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Alert Emails on topics of interest • Community of interest informational session 	<p>2024: The Commission increased CODA Alerts in 2024.</p> <p>Emails under these topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to Open Session of CODA Meetings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General updates regarding CODA activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emails following CODA Meetings with Important Updates• Distribution of Summary of Major Actions• Hearings on Standards Notices• Call for Nominations for Volunteer positions with CODA• Distribution of CODA Annual Report• Ad Hoc communications with various communities of interest (sponsoring dental organizations, state boards, federal agencies, etc.)
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2024-2028 CODA Communication Plan and Strategy

Background

In May 2023, a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology met to consider the Commission on Dental Accreditation's (CODA) 2017 Communication Survey, which culminated in development of the 2019-2023 CODA Communication Plan. Following review, the subcommittee developed a draft 2023 Communication Survey, which was considered by the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology in Summer 2023. In accordance with the Standing Committee's recommendations, the Commission, at its Summer 2023 meeting, directed that the 2023 Communication Survey, be distributed in Fall 2023.

Communication Survey data were collected in October/November 2023 and analyzed by the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology. The Standing Committee determined that, based on the data, a 2024-2028 Communication Plan and Strategy should be developed.

Statement of Purpose

The 2024-2028 Communication Plan and Strategy provides goals and strategies to enhance communication with the Commission on Dental Accreditation's broad communities of interest. The 2024-2028 Communication Plan and Strategy is aligned with the Commission's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and is intended to support CODA communication and technology initiatives.

2023 Communication Survey and Executive Summary Report

The 2023 CODA Communication Survey aimed to attain information from the Commission's communities of interest on their awareness of CODA, interest in receiving communications from CODA, and preferred methods of communication from CODA, to develop the Commission's communication plan. An online survey was sent on October 18, 2023, to 3,374 individuals representing the Commission on Dental Accreditation's community of interest. Recipients received a reminder on November 1, 2023, and the survey closed on November 8, 2023. There were 1,431 respondents, resulting in a 42% overall survey response rate. Of the total respondents, accredited programs represented 70% (N=1,133), Commission volunteers represented 26% (N=421), and dental associations and boards represented 4% (N=55). It should be noted that 178 respondents of 324 individuals surveyed represented both an accreditation program and a CODA volunteer; therefore, the responses of these individuals were included in both subgroups. The Executive Summary Report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Audiences With Whom CODA Communicates

- Dental Education Programs (CEOs, CAOs, and Program Directors of CODA-accredited programs and programs seeking CODA accreditation)
 - Policies and procedures to maintain accreditation
 - CODA application process and timeline to achieve accreditation
 - Accreditation Standards required for accreditation

- Reporting to CODA, deadlines, and protocols for reporting
- Quality and consistency in CODA's accreditation process
- Accreditation Standards revision process
- CODA Volunteers (i.e., Site Visitors, Review Committees Members, Commissioners, and Appeal Board Members)
 - Policies and procedures to conduct program and policy reviews
 - Accreditation Standards required for accreditation, including changes in educational requirement
 - Quality and consistency in CODA's accreditation process
 - Trends and changes in higher education
 - Accreditation Standards revision process
- Dental Sponsoring Organizations/Associations, Certifying Boards, and Licensing Boards
 - Understanding policies and procedures used by CODA
 - Updates on CODA activities and dental education
 - Listing of accredited programs
 - Listing of upcoming site visits
 - Quality and consistency in CODA's accreditation process
 - Accreditation Standards revision process
- The Public (e.g., students, public, patients, professionals, other accrediting agencies, USDE, media)
 - Quality and consistency in CODA's accreditation process
 - Updates on CODA activities and dental education
 - Listing of accredited programs
 - Listing of upcoming site visits
 - Understanding policies and procedures used by CODA
 - Accreditation Standards revision process

Primary Communication Channels:

- CODA Email Alerts
- CODA Communicator Newsletter
- CODA Website
- CODA Training Programs (in-person, and webinars both live and on-demand)
- CODA Annual Report
- CODA Staff Emails

2023 CODA Communication Survey – Executive Summary Report

Objective

The 2023 CODA Communication Survey aimed to attain information from the Commission’s communities of interest on their awareness of CODA, interest in receiving communications from CODA, and preferred methods of communication from CODA, to develop the Commission’s communication plan.

Methodology

An online survey was sent on October 18, 2023, to 3,374 individuals representing the Commission on Dental Accreditation’s community of interest. Recipients received a reminder on November 1, 2023, and the survey closed on November 8, 2023. There were 1,431 respondents, resulting in a 42% overall survey response rate. Of the total respondents, accredited programs represented 70% (N=1,133), Commission volunteers represented 26% (N=421), and dental associations and boards represented 4% (N=55). It should be noted that 178 respondents of 324 individuals surveyed represented both an accreditation program and a CODA volunteer; therefore, the responses of these individuals were included in both subgroups.

Key Findings

Approximately 43% of respondents indicated they are extremely familiar with the work of the Commission, while 55% indicated moderate familiarity.

A majority of respondents were extremely familiar with the Commissions: 1) accreditation policies and procedures (53%); and 2) process to accredit educational programs (50%). A majority of respondents were moderately familiar with the Commissions: 1) process of developing Accreditation Standards (59%); 2) process of revising Accreditation Standards (58%); and 3) their ability to provide input to CODA (via Third Party Comments, Hearing on Standards, and Proposed Revision of Standards; 53%).

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of respondents understood the Commission’s role in accreditation as a peer-review process that determines whether dental education programs meet certain quality standards. Most respondents understood that the Commission’s role does not include certifying that an individual is capable of practicing dentistry (83%) nor is the Commission’s role to determine whether dental graduates are competent to begin the practice of dentistry (73%); however, between 15% to 27% of individuals believed these were CODA’s roles or were unsure.

Regarding how well-informed respondents are regarding the latest CODA proceedings, activities and policies, 25% were extremely informed while 66% were moderately informed.

Respondents indicated the accreditation information important for their work by order of importance: 1) Accreditation Standards changes (98%); 2) policy changes (81%); 3) process changes (75%); and 4) current issues in higher education (65%).

Survey data indicates that the CODA Alert Emails are the most often read communications (79% always or often read; 53% always read, 26% often read), followed by the CODA Annual Report (55% always or often read; 29% always read, 26% often read) and the CODA Communicator E-Newsletter (53% always or often read; 24% always read, 29% often read). The Commission's website is always or often read by 44%, ADA news by 32%, and ADA website by 27% of respondents.

The top four (4) primary sources for receiving information about CODA are the: 1) CODA newsletter or blast emails (72%); 2) CODA website (66%); 3) CODA meeting major actions and meeting minutes (44%); and 4) CODA presentations (31%). Less than 10% of respondents rely on phone calls with CODA staff as their primary source of receiving information about CODA.

Regarding the frequency of CODA communication, 82% of respondents indicated these were adequate and timely, while 11% indicated communications were not frequent enough.

Respondents indicated the accreditation information they would like to receive from CODA, includes:

- Revisions to Accreditation Standards – 89%
- Training for program directors – 68%
- Meeting minutes from CODA semi-annual meetings – 54%
- Process to revise Accreditation Standards – 48%
- Accreditation status of programs – 48%
- Schedule of accreditation site visits – 47%
- Accreditation business/policy updates – 45%
- Updates to communities of interest – 32%
- Training for CODA volunteers – 28%
- Requirements/criteria for being a Commission volunteer – 19%

When asked to select all that apply, an overwhelming majority (98%) of respondents prefer receiving future CODA communications by E-Mail, while 30% prefer the CODA website, 27% prefer the CODA newsletter or similar method, and 2% prefer social media.

When asked to select all that apply, respondents indicated their preferred method for receiving CODA training in policies and procedures include: 1) on-demand webinars (76%); 2) live

webinars (52%); 3) in-person training at dental meetings (30%); and 4) in-person training at the ADA building (17%).

Finally, there appeared to be little to no current interest (48-88% of respondents, various tools) in CODA utilizing social media sites/tools (i.e., LinkedIn, X, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Push Notifications) as a method to engage with the communities of interest. Of the social media platforms noted in the survey, the preferred tool is YouTube, with 51% of respondents indicating if CODA would engage in this tool, they would be somewhat likely or very likely utilize it.

Training Provided and Enhancements to Process (January - December 2024)

Training/Information for Programs:

- Program Director 101
 - March 9, 2024 (at ADEA meeting) – about 20 people
 - April 11, 2024 (virtual) – 305 people
 - Materials posted to CODA website for on-demand access:
<https://coda.ada.org/site-visitor-resources>
- Q&A Session – March 10, 2024 (at ADEA meeting) – about 120 people
 - Materials posted to CODA website for on-demand access:
<https://coda.ada.org/site-visitor-resources>
- Site Visit Orientation – April 8, 2024 (virtual)
 - Predoctoral – 75 people
 - Advanced – 113 people
 - Allied – 155 people
 - Materials posted to CODA website for on-demand access:
 - <https://coda.ada.org/site-visits/coda-dds-dmd-site-visits>
 - <https://coda.ada.org/site-visits/advanced-dental-site-visits>
 - <https://coda.ada.org/site-visits/allied-dental-site-visits>
- Allied Dental Program Directors CODA Update (at ADEA Allied Director’s Meeting) – 200 people

Training/Information for Site Visitors:

- Site Visitor Update – April 15, 2024 (virtual)
 - Predoctoral – 70 people
 - Advanced – 71 people
 - Allied – 82 people
 - Materials posted to CODA website for on-demand access:
<https://coda.ada.org/site-visitor-resources>
- Chair Training
 - Advanced – May 16, 2024 – 15 people
 - Allied – June 25, 2024 – 6 confirmed and 5 more to RSVP
 - Predoctoral Chair Training – October 14, 2024 -24 people
- Site Visitor Training (New Site Visitors, Returning Site Visitors, and Invited Review Committee and Commission Members) – June 13-14, 2024

- Survey of Site Visitors to Obtaining Questions and Scenarios for Future Training– August 27 – September 9, 2024

Enhancements to Site Visit Process (Protocols and Materials):

- Reviewed and Updated Site Visit Letters to Programs
 - Letter 2, 3, IA Developing – Allied and Advanced
 - Letter 3 – Predoctoral
 - Special Focused Site Visit and PACV Letters
 - Updated and enhanced email templates for site visit mailings
- Updated/Enhanced Educational Activity Site Form
 - To align with data reported in site visit report.

Enhancements to Guidelines and Documents Programs (Protocols and Materials):

- All Guidelines (To reflect New Verification Info)
 - Completely Revised PACV Post-Observation Individual Consultation Materials and Presentation
 - Revised all CODA Standards and documents, with web postings, following each CODA meeting.
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**Future Training and Enhancements to Process
(To be conducted and/or developed; Blue could be priority)**

Training/Information for Programs:

- Program Director 101
 - Spring 2025
- Q&A Session – Spring 2025
- Site Visit Orientation – Spring 2025
 - Predoctoral
 - Advanced
 - Allied

- Create Micro-Videos on Reporting Changes, Electronic Document Submission Process, and Other Topics

Training/Information for Site Visitors:

- Site Visitor Update – Spring 2025
 - Predoctoral
 - Advanced
 - Allied
- Chair Training
 - Predoctoral – Spring 2025
 - Advanced – 2025
 - Allied – 2025
- Site Visitor Training (New Site Visitors, Returning Site Visitors, and Invited Review Committee and Commission Members) – June 2025
- Create Post-Training Survey for Each Session
- How to Review a Program Application for Accreditation

Enhancements to Site Visit Process (Protocols and Materials):

- Continue to Review Site Visit Letters and attachments to clarify, streamline and enhance pre-site visit communications.
- Develop Site Visitor Manual, with sections for Predoctoral, Advanced and Allied.

Enhancements to Guidelines and Documents Programs (Protocols and Materials):

- Develop Process Charts for Programs to Report Changes (See most recent PD 101)
- Modify Guidelines to Create Working Table Format for Submission
- Review Self-Study Guides and Site Visit Schedules; increase length of IA visit (predoc)