

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.

June 17, 2024 Meeting of the Communication and Technology Committee: The Standing Committee on Communication and Technology met on June 17, 2024. Members of the Committee: Dr. Keith Mays (chair), Dr. Carolyn Brown, Ms. LaShun James, Ms. Martha McCaslin, Dr. Garry Myers, and Mr. Noah Williams attended the meeting. Dr. Indraneel Bhattacharyya and Dr. Keith Beasley were unable to attend the meeting. Consultant: Dr. Joel Berg, immediate past Commissioner and former chair of the Standing Committee, consultant, *ex-officio*, was also in attendance. Commissioner: Dr. Frank Licari, vice chair, *ex-officio*, Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) attended the meeting. Commission Staff: Dr. Sherin Tooks, senior director, and Ms. Jamie Asher Hernandez, Ms. Katie Navickas, Dr. Yesenia Ruiz, Ms. Peggy Soeldner, and Ms. Kelly Stapleton, managers, CODA, were also in attendance.

The Committee began its meetings with a review of the Standing Committee's charge. The Committee discussed the following items:

CODA Website Analytics: The Standing Committee reviewed the Commission's website analytics for the period of January 1, 2024 through March 31, 2024. The Committee noted consistent high traffic to the website.

CODA Communication Plan: The Standing Committee reviewed the proposed Progress Tracking Sheet (**Appendix 1**) for the 2024-2028 CODA Communication Plan and Strategy, and Executive Summary Report. This Tracking Sheet also includes the Communication Plan and Executive Summary, for ease of reference by the Commission. The Committee agreed that CODA's progress will be reported cumulatively, with each year noted in the tracking sheet, so that longitudinal data is collected over the course of the next four years.

Additionally, the Standing Committee reviewed its 2024 priorities for the Communication Plan and Strategy, for which progress and achievements will be reported in Winter 2025. 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 reports 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 also noted the significant amount of training provided by the Commission staff in Spring 2024 (**Site Visit Process and Training, p. 1904, Summer 2024**). Additionally, the Committee recalled a recent announcement made by the Commission to provide information to educational programs regarding upcoming changes to the Federal Student Aid program.

Electronic Accreditation Platform: The Standing Committee discussed the Commission's continued need for an electronic accreditation tool. The Standing Committee learned that there had been some minor delays, but the project was presently moving forward. The Committee noted that updates would be provided as 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 (updated date)

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.	
	Increase program appreciation of the value of accreditation, through Program Director Q&A Sessions and Program Director 101 training sessions.	
	Provide greater guidance to programs on the use of CODA's new technology (electronic accreditation)	
	Develop a library of tools, expanding resources, and improved templates to assist	

	programs in submission of various types of reports.	
	Survey programs to determine if CODA's approach is comprehensive.	
The Commission continues to be the trustworthy accrediting agency for all dental education programs with communities of interest, including licensing entities.	Monitor licensure requirements in the United States and Canada, and provide CODA-specific information to state agencies, as appropriate.	
	Educate the professional associations, practicing and licensure communities on the role of CODA and value of Commission accreditation, through community of interest informational sessions.	
	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.	
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.	

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.	
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.	
	Develop enhanced electronic processes for material review by site visitors, Review Committees and the Commission.	
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.	

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

Goals	Strategies	Progress Made
<p>The Commission regularly assesses its communication, messaging strategies, and platforms to enhance its impact.</p>	<p>Conduct a short communication survey at mid-point of communication plan (2026/2027) to determine impact of strategies.</p>	
	<p>Monitor electronic platforms to ensure most appropriate tools are used to communicate with various audiences.</p>	
<p>The Commission effectively involves its communities of interest in the work of the Commission.</p>	<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>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>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• General updates regarding CODA activities	

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.