

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SITE VISIT PROCESS AND TRAINING

Background: At its August 2020 meeting, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) considered ongoing operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on site visits. The Commission directed that it pursues alternative site visit methods, as needed to employ in 2021. The Commission further directed investigation and development of policies and procedures for alternative site visit methods, with a report to CODA in Winter 2021. Finally, the Commission directed the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to study virtual site visits, including development of policies and procedures for the conduct of virtual visits, for consideration by the Commission in Winter 2021. The Ad Hoc Committee on Alternative Site Visit Methods met from Fall 2021 through Summer 2023 related to alternative site visit methods required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ad Hoc Committee submitted reports to the Commission during its period of assignment.

In Summer 2023, following extensive discussions, the Ad Hoc Committee noted that a change to CODA's current site visit process was not warranted. However, the Committee believed CODA should continue to monitor the Department of Education's regulations related to site visit processes permitted for use by recognized accrediting agencies. The Committee also believed the ongoing review of CODA's site visit process, including feedback from programs and site visitors through CODA's Post Site Visit Survey and the ongoing training of site visitors, aligns with CODA's strategic plan for continuous quality improvement of the Commission. While no changes were warranted to the site visit process at that time, the Ad Hoc Committee believed that the Commission should consider transitioning the Ad Hoc Committee to the "Standing Committee on Site Visit Process and Training." At its Summer 2023 meeting, the Commission concurred with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee and directed formation of the Standing Committee on Site Visit Process and Training, with the following Charge.

Standing Committee on Site Visit Process and Training:

- Monitor trends and USDE regulations related to CODA's site visit process;
- Evaluate site visit feedback from site visitors and programs;
- Review and develop protocols and materials to enhance the site visit process;
- Oversee and provide input on training for new and reappointed site visitors;
- Oversee and provide input on training for programs preparing for site visits; and
- Oversee and provide input to educate new program directors on working with the Commission.

Report of the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee on Site Visit Process and Training met on Tuesday, December 12, 2023. The following individuals were in attendance:

Committee Members: Dr. Frank Licari (chair), Dr. Victor Badner, Ms. Margaret Bowman-Pensel, Dr. Ngoc Chu, Dr. Paul Luepke, Dr. Monica Nenad (attended a portion of the meeting), Dr. Miriam Robbins, and Dr. Deborah Weisfuse. **Commissioners:** Dr. Maxine Feinberg, chair, and Dr. Frank Licari, vice chair, *ex-officio*, Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

Commission Staff: Dr. Sherin Took, senior director, and Ms. Jamie Asher Hernandez, Ms. Katie Navickas, Ms. Yesenia Ruiz, Ms. Peggy Soeldner, and Ms. Kelly Stapleton, managers, CODA.

The Standing Committee began its discussion with a review of its charge and the history of the Committee. The Committee discussed the numerous training programs that were offered to site visitors and programs in 2023, including: site visit orientation (March 2023); site visitor update (March 2023); site visitor training (June and October 2023); Program Director 101 (April and October 2023), and various other communications and notifications throughout the year. The Committee noted that all trainings were conducted virtually, in a synchronous manner, with excellent attendance. Further, indications from the Commission's recent Communication Survey suggested that virtual training, both synchronous and asynchronous, are preferred.

Regarding CODA's policies and procedures related to site visits, the Standing Committee noted that these are reviewed by the Standing Committee on Documentation and Policy Reviews on a cyclical basis. However, the Standing Committee on Site Visit Process and Training may review and suggest modifications to policy and/or procedures to the Commission as part of its charge to review and develop protocols and materials to enhance the site visit process.

The Committee additionally discussed CODA's current site visitor training protocols and discussed how the Commission addresses corrective actions needed with site visitors. The Committee learned that CODA staff, and sometimes staff along with CODA Review Committee Chairs and CODA Leadership, will engage in discussions with visitors, provide remediation, and address questions and concerns through email. Additionally, when trends are identified, CODA staff circulates emails to all site visitors to remind them of CODA's expectations and policies.

In further discussion, the Standing Committee noted several topics of interest for future meetings, as a new Standing Committee. The Standing Committee believed the greatest priority is the need for assuring consistency and standardization among site visitors. The Committee noted that the Accreditation Standards are written to allow flexibility in compliance; therefore, this flexibility may be interpreted by site visitors in different ways. The Standing Committee discussed whether the Commission should develop supplement documents that express what must be in place for a program to show evidence of compliance. The Committee noted the document could be prepared by the Review Committees and Commission and become part of the Self-Study Guide and would be used by site visitors as a check-off list of required evidence for compliance by a program during its on-site evaluation visit. The Committee also considered developing a training cycle for all disciplines under the Commission's purview, in which all active site visitors must attend the training to remain active with CODA. The training could include frequently cited standards, review interpretations and CODA's expectations, and provide updates on policies and procedures. Following discussion, the Standing Committee believed more work could be done to ensure site visitors are well trained and calibrated for consistency; therefore, these topics will be further discussed at the Standing Committee's next meeting.

At its next meeting in Spring 2024, the Standing Committee will consider data received on site visits through the Commission's post-site visit survey and will further discuss how to better train

and calibrate site visitors, including a training cycle for each discipline and development of discipline-specific scenarios for training. The Committee will also further discuss the concept of required elements to demonstrate compliance with Accreditation Standards, as a method to standardize program reviews.

Recommendations: This report is informational in nature and no action is required.

Commission Action: