

Executive Summary

Status of the Rutgers School of Health Professions Department of Allied Dental Education Programs November 2016

The Rutgers School of Health Professions Department of Allied Dental Education (ADE) is home to two programs: Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting. The Department of ADE is housed in a building located in Scotch Plains that is leased from Union County College (UCC). The long-term lease expires in June 2019. Before that time, the Rutgers SHP programs that are housed in that building must be relocated to a Rutgers building.

In the case of the Department of ADE, rebuilding the dental teaching space at another location is cost prohibitive. The teaching clinic space and fixed equipment will belong to UCC as of June 2019. As a result we are evaluating several options regarding the future of the ADE programs, including, but not limited to, the transfer of those programs to UCC.

The vast majority of dental hygiene and dental assisting programs across the nation are situated in two-year degree granting community colleges or vocational-technical institutions. The required education for licensure is an Associate's (AS) degree for dental hygiene, and a post high school certificate for dental assisting. Rutgers is a four-year, research intensive, doctoral degree level, national University and as such is not necessarily the appropriate environment for AS level degree programming. Union County College, a two-year institution, offers excellent vocational-technical programming at a lower tuition rate than a University, and is thus a more suitable institutional home for such offerings.

While the Rutgers SHP dental hygiene program made a decision several years ago, before the current administration was in place, to move the dental hygiene program to a Bachelor's (BS) degree from a joint Rutgers-County College AS degree, in the context of the expiring lease arrangement, a BS degree program is no longer feasible as UCC can not offer a four-year degree.

It should be noted that the decision not to offer admission to applicants to the dental assisting program this year was based not on the above, but on a small applicant pool. **There were only seven (7) applicants to the dental assisting program, and only one (1) applicant met the minimum academic requirements for admission to the program.** The school administration decided that it was not feasible to run a program for one student.

Likewise, the applicant pool for the first class of the new BS in Dental Hygiene program was small. **There were seventy (70) applicants and only eight (8) applicants met minimum requirements for admission into the program.** Again, the school administration determined that it was not feasible to run such a small program. Additionally, there were concerns that if a BS level class were admitted who were not academically prepared to succeed in a rigorous BS level program, some students may not graduate before the Rutgers SHP lease expired and the building transitioned back to UCC.

As a result of all of the above, we are currently exploring a number of options for the future of the BS in Dental Hygiene program, the primary one being the transfer of this program as an AS degree program to UCC, the owner of the space in which the program currently resides.

Note that there are six (6) entry level Dental Hygiene Programs in the State of NJ, one of which is offered by Rutgers. Rutgers SHP, however, offers the only AS to BS degree completion program in

the state. **It should be noted that it is the intent of Rutgers SHP to continue to offer the degree completion program (SHP's BS Degree in Health Sciences, Allied Dental Track). This degree completion program provides associate degree level, licensed dental hygienists the opportunity to transfer credits to SHP and complete two years of on-line coursework towards their bachelor's degree.** Regardless of what happens to the entry level program located in Scotch Plains, UCC building, this bachelor's level programming will still be available to dental hygienists in the state who wish to pursue a BS degree to prepare them for careers as teachers in dental hygiene programs, or for advancement in management, laboratory, or other careers beyond clinical practice.