



Department of Preventive & Restorative Dental Sciences

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am the Program Director of the Dental Hygiene Master of Science degree program established in 2011 at the University of California in San Francisco (UCSF). I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the selection of West Los Angeles College (WLAC) Dental Hygiene Program as one of the pilot programs to implement SB 850, which would allow for applied baccalaureate degrees in areas of high workforce demand at the community college level in California.

The WLAC Dental Hygiene Program was established in 1972 and has a long history of success. It has clinical affiliations with UCLA, Veteran's Administration and several Non-Profit Dental Clinics. Furthermore, it was accredited without any recommendations. Their facility is state-of-the art with a new dental lab and equipment (a 23 chair clinic will eventually be opened to the community). Their faculty meet the accreditation standards in that they all have a minimum of a Bachelor degree and half hold a Master's degree. The WLAC Dental Hygiene Program has a history of a 100% pass rate on National and State Board examinations and an excellent reputation in the dental community. For example, surveys of WLAC dental hygiene graduates report 100% employment in the dental field.

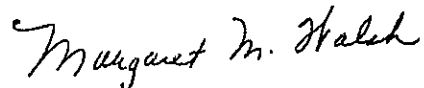
There is a great need for having community colleges confer a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene, Applied Science given the increasingly complex health histories of recipients of dental hygiene care across the life span, the connection between oral health on general health, and the increasing need and demand for the prevention of oral disease and the promotion of health by the public. The Dental Hygiene Department at WLAC offers an excellent environment to pilot test an applied baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene.

The WLAC Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene would establish an educational pathway to the UCSF Master of Science degree in Dental Hygiene. Moreover, awarding an applied baccalaureate degree in Dental Hygiene at WLAC is warranted given the current rigorous accredited dental hygiene curriculum at WLAC.

Please consider in your deliberations that the only dental hygiene baccalaureate degree programs available in California are at private colleges and universities. WLAC dental hygiene students take the same National Dental Hygiene Board examination and the same clinical licensing board exams as students from baccalaureate degree programs. In terms of workforce and future job opportunities, dental hygienists may work in the fields of research, education, the corporate oral health industry, public health, administration, as well as in clinical practice. Most of these positions outside of clinical dental hygiene would require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree for entry to the field. It is vitally important that there is access to a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene in California public education institutions such as WLAC. With the evolving models of healthcare, mid-level healthcare providers and the evidence of oral and systemic health relationships, the dental hygienist will be an important player in these new, emerging models.

I am confident that WLAC Dental Hygiene program is well placed to develop a baccalaureate degree program. The program is well respected throughout California. Therefore, WLAC Dental Hygiene program is an excellent choice to develop a bachelor's degree program in a community college setting. Our MS degree program faculty joins me in support of a bachelor degree program at WLAC.

Thank you and best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret M. Walsh".

Margaret M. Walsh, MS, MA, EdD, RDH
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