REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Background: The charge of the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology 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.

The 2019 Standing Committee membership includes Dr. Tariq Javed, chair, Dr. Susan Callahan-Barnard, Dr. James Geist, Dr. Christopher Hasty, Dr. Kevin Haubrick, Dr. Adolphus Jackson, Dr. Bradford Johnson, and Ms. Nancy Mo.

The Standing Committee on Communication and Technology was unable to identify a meeting date during which a quorum of members would be available to conduct a meeting before the Commission’s Summer 2019 Meeting. Following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) it was determined that Dr. Tariq Javed, chair of the Standing Committee, should present the following update report for the Commission’s consideration.

Commission Directives to the Committee: In accordance with the Commission’s actions, ongoing activities related to Commission directives, with progress on these directives and actions, are highlighted below.

Monitoring Utilization of the Newsletter and Website: Per the Commission’s directive, CODA Staff continue to monitor usage of the Commission’s newsletter and website to identify areas where communication and functionality could be enhanced. The CODA Staff has transitioned its website analysis tool to Google Analytics, and received performance data for CODA Alert emails and the CODA website for the first half of 2019. CODA Alerts, specifically “opens” and “clicks,” performed as expected, with figures comparable to prior years. Data for the CODA website, comparing 2019 Q2 to Q1 (the only period thus far for which data is available from the new system) showed a slight drop in Pageviews and a slight increase in Time Spent on Page.

Development of an Electronic Accreditation System: CODA Staff and the ADA’s Enterprise Solutions team continue to develop an electronic accreditation system for the use of CODA Staff, volunteers and programs. Development and user acceptance testing of the database replacement component of the electronic accreditation tool occurred from 2018 Quarter Three (Q3) through 2019 Quarter Two (Q2). Implementation of the replacement of the current database is scheduled to occur in August 2019, which will be a major milestone in the project. Building
and testing of the web portal (external) version of the electronic accreditation tool will begin after the database replacement, and will continue through 2019 and 2020.

2019-2023 Communication Plan (Appendix 1): Production of new webinars, as well as progress on a project to build online training courses to support the Commission’s Mandatory Annual Training initiatives are well underway. The mandatory online site visitor training program is expected to launch in fall 2019.

Technology Assessment and Strategy / Mandatory Annual Training: In addition to the purchase of multi-media conferencing tools for Staff, Staff has investigated a number of online training tools, and chose to implement training via a combination of ADA Connect and the Quatrics survey tool. These tools offer curriculum delivery and scoring/tracking through technology already used by CODA staff and volunteers. Year One of training is designed as a trial of the technology and the curriculum, with further review of success and enhancement to follow in Year Two.

Annual Report to the Communities of Interest: At its Annual Meeting in Honolulu in October 2018, the American Dental Association’s House of Delegates adopted Resolution 39H, a governance change for the Commission on Dental Accreditation. It was also informed that there will be a new item, named “Annual Report,” under Article VII - MISCELLANEOUS of the Commission’s Rules.

In accordance with these changes, beginning in 2019, the Commission on Dental Accreditation will not be required to submit to the House of Delegates the ADA’s Annual Report that is required of other ADA Councils and Commissions. However, CODA will instead develop an annual report to distribute to CODA’s broad community of interest, including the ADA. The CODA Annual Report will include information that is relevant to all of the Commission’s communities of interest.

Staff is currently working on layout and content ideas for the Commission’s annual report. Sample annual reports of other organizations and accrediting agencies are being used to gauge the type of information that may be of interest to communities of interest. CODA’s annual report will not be published until late 2019, which will be after the September ADA meeting.

Update on Process for Submission of Self-Study Documents: In an effort to acclimate educational programs and site visitors to CODA’s future electronic accreditation tool, staff has updated the process for the submission of Self-Study documents, meant to reduce the amount of printed materials created in the process. In lieu of submission of a complete paper and electronic copy of the self-study to each site visitor and CODA, programs will now submit a paper copy of the narrative, only, and electronic copy of the narrative and all supporting exhibits, appendices and other documents.

Summary: At its Summer 2019 meeting, the Commission on Dental Accreditation is requested to consider the report related to the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology.
Commission Action:

Prepared by: Mr. Gregg Marquardt
CODA Communication Plan 2019-2023

Background
At its July 6, 2017 meeting, the Standing Committee on Communication and Technology reviewed a survey data executive summary and the data results from a Communication Survey deployed in Spring 2017 as a follow up to the communication survey deployed in 2012.

The Standing Committee concluded that, based upon the 2017 Communication Survey, the CODA Communication Plan associated with the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan should be developed.

Statement of Purpose
This Plan provides communication execution details which supports specific Objectives of the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) 2017-2021 Strategic Plan. The Standing Committee on Communication and Technology will present this plan to the Commission on Dental Accreditation at the CODA Summer 2018 Meeting.

Communication Environment Analysis
- CODA continues to develop its relationship with its organizational sponsor, the American Dental Association (ADA).
- As such, CODA continues to expand its operational and financial autonomy with its sponsor.
- With this come communication opportunities and logistics challenges for technology currently provided and supported by ADA shared services, including its websites for the public and for CODA volunteers, email processes, and more.
- Studies deployed by Commission staff, such as the 2017 Communication Survey, indicate most audiences (but not all) understand what CODA is and what it does as the USDE-recognized accrediting agency for dental and dental-related education programs.
- While other industries and their audiences have well-developed technological and social media practices, CODA’s audiences have yet to embrace advanced accreditation technology; plus, they indicate a strong preference for standard communication channels such as email and websites.

2017 Communications Survey
In Spring 2017, CODA Staff deployed a survey to its Communities of Interest to determine current attitudes toward CODA communications and preferences for specific communication channels. High-level results indicated:
- CODA’s community of interest continue to prefer email as a communication channel, with websites as a second choice;
- CODA’s community of interest also prefer webinars as a means of gaining information from CODA;
- CODA’s community of interest indicated no strong preference for video or social media tools such as YouTube or LinkedIn, and
- Findings suggest there is an increased level of understanding among the community of interest about the CODA-ADA relationship.

An Executive Summary Report is presented at the end of this Plan.
Primary Communication Channels

- CODA Alert Email
- CODA Website
- On Demand Webinar (posted on Website)
- Presentation (speech + PowerPoint)
- ReadyTalk
- ADA Connect

CODA Personas

Frequent Communications

- Program Director
  - Concerned that their program maintain accreditation
  - Ensuring their programs comply with CODA standards
  - Want to know as much as possible about CODA process & deadlines
- Site Visitor
  - Eager to participate in the accreditation process
  - Doing it right
  - Instruction and training
- Community of Interest Member
  - Have an interest in dental education (faculty) and the profession (practitioners)
  - May be prospective or current students, patients, the public
  - Represent licensing bodies, certifying boards, and national professional membership organizations
  - Issues vary but want to ensure that students/residents are educated to safely and competently practice and serve as a positive representative of the profession.
- Review Committee / Appeal Board / Commission Member
  - Maintaining educational quality and the integrity of the dental profession
  - Carving out the time to review materials
  - Wants reports from site visitors and updates from staff

Other Groups with Whom CODA Communicates

- Constituent Dental Society
- United States Department of Education and other accrediting and state regulatory agencies
- Journalist
- Student / Resident [primarily through the “Find a Program” page on the CODA website]

CODA Goal 1:
The Commission on Dental Accreditation will be a leader in accreditation of dental education programs by recognizing the emerging areas of dental education, practice, research, and trends in higher education.

CODA Objective 5:
Create a comprehensive communication plan to enhance CODA visibility.
CODA Action Items:

- By summer of 2017, CODA will conduct a follow-up survey of the 2012 Communication Survey to its communities of interest to assess its progress toward enhanced communication and report the results to the Commission.
- By winter of 2018, CODA will research methods to reach and communicate information to its varied communities of interest in association with review and revision of its communication plan.
- By summer 2018, CODA will review and revise its communication plan and strategies to address findings of the Communication Survey and identified best practices of communication with its stakeholders.
- Every 3-5 years, or as the need arises, and following development of the communication plan and strategies, survey CODA’s communities of interest to assess its effectiveness in responding to and communicating with stakeholders.

Communication Objective:

- Increase the visibility and transparency of Commission actions

High-Level Communication Deliverables

- [Continue late 2018 through 2023:] Use webinar technology to deliver live and on-demand training and informational webinars
- [Begin late 2018, complete by attrition:] Brand All CODA stand-alone materials
- [2019 through 2023:] Use Aptify to communicate with accredited programs
  - Message boards, dashboards and online alerts
- [Begin early- to mid-2019, ongoing:] Use online training software to train CODA volunteers
- [Mid-2019:] Update the design of Communicator
  - Work with the Web Content and Communications Manager to update layout
- [Mid- to late-2019:] Improve use of CODA Alerts
  - Update the branding, layout and content of CODA Alerts
  - Increase the frequency of corrections and updates to mailing lists
- [Mid-2019 through 2020:] Improve usage of CODA Website
  - Re-organize the site architecture based on analytics data
  - Re-design website layout with more imagery
  - Launch automatic site visit schedules portal

Communication Metrics:

- Increase year-to-year CODA Alert Click rates
- Improve website user, download, and bounce rates
- Increase Communicator page visits

CODA Goal 2:

The Commission on Dental Accreditation will be a leader in the field in accreditation of dental education programs by ensuring long term sustainability in governance and autonomy, resources, best practices in higher education accreditation, and building relationship, partnerships and collaboration.
CODA Objective 3:
Build and strengthen relationships by enhanced communication with CODA’s communities of interest.

CODA Action Items:
- In accordance with the Communication Plan, develop communication and marketing tools to provide more information about CODA accreditation to CODA’s communities of interest, including its mission, vision, values, plans (including plans to enhance communication) and benefits.
- On a continuing basis, CODA staff will provide workshops and host hearings at national meetings (e.g., ADEA, ADA, other dental meetings) to foster relationships and provide current information about CODA, its mission, the benefit of accreditation and CODA’s activities.
- Annually, CODA will develop and/or update 2-3 webinars and/or reports on contemporary topics and will create and maintain a library that is accessible to CODA’s volunteers, program directors, and communities of interest.

Communication Objective:
- Increase knowledge about CODA among specific audiences

Topics Segmented by Personas and Other Audiences:
- **Program Director:** Maintaining a program’s accreditation
- **Site Visitor:** Annual training / Best practices for site visits
- **COI:** Updating “Advanced Education” Terminology in all CODA materials
- **COI:** CODA is the sole accreditor of U.S. dental and dental-related programs
- **COI:** Re-publishing external stories about or which mention the Commission
- **COI:** General Updates / Editorial and thought leadership articles
- **Review Committee/Appeal Board/Commissioner Member:** Process and best practices
- **Annual CODA Report:** deliver to CODA Communities of Interest

High-Level Communication Deliverables
- [Current through 2023:] Include message in as many pieces as possible that CODA is sole accrediting body of all dental and dental-related education programs in the United States
- [Late 2018 through 2023:] Increase development and utilization of training and educational tools (webinars, training modules)
- [Early 2019 through 2023:] Produce & promote live webinar sessions
- [2020 through 2023:] Publish & promote editorial/thought leadership articles

Communication Metrics:
- Number of editorial articles published & webinars posted or held live
- Webinar Page: increase Page Visit rate
  - Track individual video downloads to determine topics of interest
- Feedback via next Communication Follow-up Survey in 2021
CODA Communication Survey 2017 – Executive Summary Report

**Objective**
To gauge awareness, effectiveness, and knowledge of CODA communications in order to craft a communications plan that addresses the express needs of all communities of interest, as well as to measure improvement in communication initiatives to those communities.

**Methodology**
An online survey sent to 2,675 Community of Interest individuals and 10,000 ADA member dentists on 4/10/2017 [In 2012 the survey was sent to 2,800 COI and 5,000 ADA members] The recipients received a reminder on 4/20/2017, ten days into the open survey, and the survey was closed on 5/5/2017, 25 days after launch. The response rate at the time of close was approximately one submission per day.

There were 702 COI respondents (26%) and 359 member dentist respondents (6.3%). [In 2012 there were 1,732 COI respondents (62%) and 509 member dentist respondents (10%)] 156 (43%) member dentists selected ‘not familiar at all’ on the first question and were exempted from all remaining questions except for organization affiliation [In 2012, 115 selected ‘not familiar at all (24%)] Member dentist responses on all other questions were sourced from the remaining 203 individuals. The margin of error was 3% for COI, 7% for member dentists.

**Findings**
For the most part, member dentists are far less informed and interested in CODA operations. These findings are similar to the results of the 2012 survey. When it comes to participating in CODA events, COI individuals are most interested in webinars, somewhat interested in ADEA annual meetings, and less interested in ADA meetings and open sessions (this also aligns with the 2012 survey findings).

The preferred method of receiving CODA communications is email (93.4% n=656); this preference has not changed from 2012. The preferred method of training is the webinar (50.8% n=357), which also aligns with respondents’ answers in the 2012 survey.

COI respondents showed little interest in social media as a means of CODA communication, with the exception of YouTube, which showed a slightly higher interest as compared to the other social media channels listed in the survey (22.8%, n=160). While this slight increase is not enough to warrant a formal CODA channel on YouTube, it does support the interest respondents have in webinar training and indicates they have a comfort level with obtaining information via online multi-media.

In 2012, respondents showed an interest in Facebook. However, because of the privacy and data security challenges which make Facebook a less viable communication tool for CODA, the social media platform was not offered as a choice in the 2017 survey.

COI individuals consider themselves well informed on CODA activities, which remains similar to the attitude respondents revealed in 2012. Readership of CODA Communicator and Alert emails is quite high, and most respondents feel the Communicator fulfills its objective (71%, n=498).
The primary sources for policy updates and accreditation decisions are the Communicator and the CODA website. The topic of most importance to COI individuals is ‘policy changes;’ in 2012, the topic of most importance was ‘accreditation status.’

Finally, one area that indicated strong improvement from the 2012 survey was respondents’ understanding of the relationship between CODA and the ADA. In the 2017 survey, 83% (n=583) of COI respondents chose the correct description of CODA as “semi-independent agency of the ADA.” In 2012, 41% (n=709) chose correctly.