**Notice of Intent**

**Bachelor of Science in Dentistry (BSc DENT) – College of Dentistry**

The College of Dentistry, University of Saskatchewan is proposing a new program, the Bachelor of Science in Dentistry (BSc DENT).

The BSc DENT program will allow interested dentistry students to conduct a research project while enrolled in the undergraduate dentistry (DMD) program, and obtain a University degree appropriate for their efforts. The timing for student participation in the BSc DENT program is the summer months when students are not engaged in their DMD studies, thus safeguarding success in the undergraduate dentistry program. The BSc DENT program will give students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills in research, foster interest in academia and research career paths, and facilitate acceptance into highly competitive dental graduate programs (i.e., Orthodontics, Prosthodontics).

For the College of Dentistry, this BSc DENT program is the preferred replacement for a long-standing Student Table Clinic initiative. Incorporated within the DMD program, the table clinic initiative required students to complete 5 Credit Units of study in research methodology, conduct a small research project requiring about 40-hours of evening and weekend effort, and present their results in an annual research competition. While we are proud of our historic student research accomplishments and have won the National dental student research competition several times, the table clinic initiative had several drawbacks. It was onerous of both student and faculty supervisor time, was unpopular with most students due to the lost personal time and career goals, and has negatively impacted the research productivity of dental faculty since few student projects had sufficient rigor or magnitude to warrant grant support or publication. The proposed BSc DENT program will avoid these drawbacks by being optional for interested students, allow sufficient time for meaningful research, give students appropriate credit for their invested time and effort, and support faculty research productivity by having students join existing interdisciplinary research teams.

The proposed BSc DENT program will consist of 2 summer terms, each of at least 10 weeks duration (670 hours total), with oversight provided by the Undergraduate Research Committee. Students will work with a designated supervisor to design and conduct research in an area of basic science or clinical science. Students must submit a progress report at the end of the 1st term before moving on to the second term of the program. Upon completion of the 2nd term and the research project, students are required to present the results of their research at the annual Undergraduate Research Day, and submit a final report in a format suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The BSc DENT degree is conferred at the same time as the DMD degree for those students who successfully meet the requirements for both degrees.

**What is the motivation for proposing this program at this time? What elements of the University and/or society support and/or require this program?**

The College of Dentistry has developed the *College Strategic Plan 2025.* As part of strategic planning, a SWOT analysis was conducted which identified “low research output” as a major College weakness. As previously detailed, the historic Student Table Clinic initiative was onerous of both student and faculty supervisor time, was unpopular with most students due to the lost personal time, and has negatively impacted the research productivity of dental faculty since few student projects had sufficient rigor or magnitude to warrant grant support or publication. These drawbacks are the motivation for proposing the BSc DENT program, as we expect the program to provide the following advantages:

* Improved student satisfaction by eliminating the need for every student to participate in a research project. This change also addresses a ‘Suggestion’ recently received from the Commission on Dental Accreditation in Canada, to reduce the amount of research training in the DMD undergraduate program. The proposed BSc DENT program targets interested students.
* Eliminating the need for faculty to supervise 34 students conducting small research projects each year will allow faculty to redirect their research efforts into more productive directions.
* The duration and rigor of the BSc DENT program is higher than was the Table Clinic initiative, such that each student research project can make a substantial contribution to an existing faculty program of research and grant applications. Each BSc DENT project is submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, thus contributing to the number of College publications.
* The BSc DENT will provide a competitive advantage to USask dentistry graduates who apply for admission to dental specialty graduate programs (i.e., Orthodontics and Public Health Dentistry). The competition for admission into these programs is intense, and the BSc DENT credential is a recognized indicator of candidate quality and ability.
* Lastly, the BSc DENT program plays an important role by expanding the career path options for those students interested in academia and/or research.

**What is the anticipated student demand for the program? Does the program meet a perceived need, particularly within a national or international context? What is the projected student enrolment in the program initially and over time, and on what evidence is the projection based?**

Most dental students will not be interested in the BSc DENT program. However, we anticipate the demand for the program will be higher than the number of seats in the program (maximum 5 students per year). Student interest in the program is improved by providing a small stipend ($5,000.00) for each summer in the program. The highest demand for the program will come from the top dental students who view the BSc DENT credential as an important tool for gaining admission to dental graduate programs (specialty training). The graduate program directors and admissions committees put high value in the credential and use it (as well as any resultant publications) as one of their tools to select top candidates for admission to specialty training programs.

We anticipate admitting 5 students into the BSc DENT program each year, although the actual number admitted will vary slightly as a function of student interest, faculty supervisor availability, and research grant support for student stipends. The University of Manitoba has operated a similar program for decades, and admits 5 to 12 students into the program each year with very little attrition. We anticipate slightly higher demand at USask, as we admit 34 undergraduate students per year as compared with Manitoba’s 29 students.

**The university has articulated new strategies for internationalization, Indigenization, and interdisciplinarity in its strategic and visionary planning. How does this proposal fit with the priorities of the current college or school plan, the *University Plan 2025,* and the university’s *Vision, Mission and Values*? If the program was not envisioned during the college/school strategic planning process, what circumstances have provided the impetus to offer the program at this time? Are there measurable benefits to offering the program at this time?**

The College of Dentistry has completed its *Strategic Plan 2025*, which will become a component of the *University Plan 2025.* The Strategic Plan clearly identifies the BSC DENT program as part of the educational plan for the College, and ties the program to our strategic efforts in research where we are building capacity in two focus areas, Indigenous Oral Health and Precision Medicine. In the past 2 years, the College of Dentistry has added 3 new PhD researchers to its complement (expertise in HIV research, precision medicine, and endodontics) and 2 new dental public health researchers (expertise in indigenous health and health policy) who’s research efforts are perfectly aligned with the articulated new university strategies. As previously described, all student research will be supervised by, and contribute substantially to, the research efforts of College faculty and thus will contribute to the priorities of the College and University plans.

The measurable benefits have already been described, namely improved student satisfaction, competitive advantage for our graduates, addressing an Accreditation suggestion for DMD program change, free-up faculty time by eliminating the onerous student table clinic initiative, and increased College research productivity.

**What is the relationship of the proposed program to other programs offered by the college or school and to programs offered elsewhere (interactions, similarities, differences, relative priorities)? What effect will the proposed program have on other similar or related programs, and, in particular, on student enrolment in these programs? Is there justification to proceed regardless of any perceived duplication? Will a program be deleted as a result of offering the new program?**

The BSC DENT program is completed jointly with the DMD program, although the timing of student participation avoids any concurrent expectations. Relationships with other programs and Colleges at USask will primarily be through collaborative research programs and existing faculty supervisor relationships. There is no anticipated negative effect, including student enrolment, on any other programs in the College or University. There is no similar program at USask.

There will be no program deleted as a result of offering the BSc DENT. The College has already taken steps to eliminate our traditional Student Table Clinic initiative, largely in response to the Accreditation suggestion. The decision to discontinue that initiative, and the 2 research methods courses supporting the initiative, was independent of starting this program.

**Please describe the resources available and committed to the program, both in terms of one-time costs and ongoing operating costs. What tuition will be assessed for the program and what is the rationale for the tuition proposed? Does the college or school possess the resources required to implement and support the program (faculty teaching and supervision, administrative and other support, student funding, classroom space, infrastructure)? Will additional university resources be required, for example, library or laboratory resources, IT support? Has the Provost or the Institutional Planning and Assessment Office been involved in any discussions related to resources? Please attach a letter of support outlining the resource commitments that have been made to the new program.**

The College of Dentistry already possesses all the resources and infrastructure required to implement and support the program. No additional resources are required from the University. Instruction/mentoring time by supervising faculty is the single greatest resource need, and we easily meet that need with current faculty time (in fact this will be a substantial reduction in total faculty time required by the former table clinic initiative). Financial resource implications for the new program are limited to the cost of student stipends, some of which will be funded by faculty research grants. The College of Dentistry will use mostly existing funds to provide up to $60,000.00 per year to support BSc DENT student stipends, by redirecting the existing $25,000.00 per year of support to the historic Table Clinic initiative, as well as the existing $30,000.00 per year committed to summer student research (there are currently 4 dental students participating in the initiative). Total student intake numbers will be limited each year by the number stipends that the program can support (grant funded + College funded).

We propose to assess only a nominal tuition for registration in the program (amount to be determined), as admission is limited to dental students who are already paying about $50,000.00 per year in combined tuition, student fees, and instrument costs. Any substantial tuition will be a barrier to student participation.

The Provost has been informed about the BSc DENT program as part of College Strategic Planning consultations. No additional resources needed.

**Please describe the risks, assumptions, or constraints associated with initiating this new program at this time. Has a risk analysis of this program been conducted, relative to the probable success of the program and those factors that impact on the likelihood of success? What risks are associated with not proceeding with the program at this time?**

A preliminary risk assessment of the College of Dentistry identified several threats including little ongoing research and no graduate programs. These threats create risk because of their possible impact on the College in terms of its annual budget determined through TABBS, sustainability, and reputation. The addition of the BSC DENT program, in conjunction with other College of Dentistry research initiatives, helps to mitigate the threats. In fact, there are risks to the College of Dentistry from not proceeding with the BSC DENT program including reputational and sustainability risks to the College. The College of Dentistry currently has no graduate programs, which are the research factories for all other dental schools in Canada. The proposed BSc DENT program is one mechanism whereby the College can build research capacity and productivity upon the strength of its undergraduate dental program.

**What is the anticipated start date of the program? What considerations apply to the start date, including changes within the Student Information System?**

The anticipated start date of the program is early in May 2019. This timing is necessary to coincide with the end of the DMD Year 1 and Year 2 final examination period, and in order to avoid concurrent and competing program requirements. The minimum 10 weeks of study per summer allows students to select and enjoy 2-3 weeks of summer vacation and still complete the BSc DENT term requirements before the start of the DMD program fall term.