



A photo of the 2022 class of students in the Dental Hygiene program (Photo courtesy of the Dental Hygiene program)

FEATURES

Program spotlight: Dental hygiene

Keythin Thomas 02/23/2023

Students who see themselves as hard working individuals who have a passion for helping people in need will find that the Dental Hygiene program at Mesa Community College is more than happy to set them up for success in the upcoming college year.

Dental hygiene is one of the most important things about taking care of your body, and for some, it's neglected entirely.

The World Health Organization estimates that almost [25% of Americans have untreated dental decay](#). It's clear that there is a need for those trained in this field to help such a large amount of people.

However, without skilled dentists who are able to provide the dental care we need, that task becomes a lot more difficult to upkeep.

For those wanting not only to help people struggling with dental issues, but also to help people feel more comfortable with their smile, then this career path is the right choice.

Kimberlee Zitek is the Dental Hygiene program director at MCC. She believes that not only is a hard-working attitude crucial for success, but the ability to communicate effectively is also as important.

"It's important that students enjoy communicating and interacting with others, are able to incorporate social skills and are willing to build new relationships. Also, successful students reach out for additional help and guidance if they are having difficulties or need assistance in any way," Zitek explained.

The program takes students two years to complete, however the work doesn't stop for potential graduates after getting their degrees.

Once students have obtained their degree, they become eligible to take their board exams, which allows them to get officially licensed.

This is no easy feat, which Zitek says is one of the hardest parts about completing this program.

Zitek noted, "The hardest part is the time away from friends and family while in the program. It takes dedication and commitment to succeed and sometimes it requires making difficult decisions."

But, for those seeking a challenge or have a passion for this specific field, this program is worth the challenge.

You won't be alone in completing this work as well, as the faculty surrounding the program go above and beyond in ensuring that nobody is left behind.

Zitek noted that, "The dental hygiene program at MCC is unique in that all of the faculty are invested in our students' success. We all develop strong relationships with our students and do what we can to help them achieve their goal of becoming a healthcare provider."

Zitek also pointed out that her personal favorite part about the program is watching the students that come into the program and leave the program as exceptional dental hygienists.

"The best part for me is watching the growth, both professionally & personally, in all of our students as they move through the program," Zitek stated.

It's also worth noting that the hard work and dedication put into this program results in a career that is very rewarding, both personally and financially.

Zitek explained, "It's a very lucrative part-time or full-time career that provides a lot of job satisfaction. A dental hygiene professional provides necessary services and establishes fulfilling relationships with their patients and colleagues."

For those interested in beginning their dental hygiene career at Mesa Community College, contact [Kimberlee Zitek](#) via her email kimberlee.zitek@mesacc.edu. You can also visit the program's webpage at:

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Keythin is a journalism major and is an avid sports fan. He has lived and breathed valley sports since he was in preschool. When not pouring over stat sheets or the latest sports, he enjoys watching movies, playing video games, and hanging out with friends and family.

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