

1 **Resolution Number:** 400-2024

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3 **Title:** Inclusion of Dentistry as a part of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Designated
4 Degree Program.

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6 **Reference Committee Assignment:** Professional Issues

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8 **Sponsor(s):** Advanced Standing Committee: District 11 – Shweta Annaldasula, Vijay Sah, Varun
9 Sehgal, Viraj Ketkar, District 9- Mohita Sharma, District 2- Sonaj Vardhaman.

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11 **Financial Impact:** None

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13 **Board of Trustees Comments:** The Board recommends a yes vote.

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15 **Reference Committee Comments:** The Reference Committee recommends a yes vote and that it
16 be placed on the Consent Calendar.

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18 **Background:**

19 Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a temporary employment that serves to allow international
20 students on an F-1 Student visa to work for 12 months following their graduation. The
21 introduction of the STEM OPT extension in 2008 for STEM graduates aims to retain talent and
22 adoptive innovation, yet its exclusion leaves international dental students concerned about
23 prospects since Dentistry is not a part of STEM yet. The omission disregards dentistry's
24 substantial scientific knowledge and fails to align with its inherent STEM attributes, raising
25 questions about the STEM Classifications. According to the Standard Occupation Classification
26 (SOC) Policy Committee recommendation to OMB, attachment A, dental occupations are
27 classified under the domain of Science- and Engineering-Related Domain in the Health
28 Occupations subdomain. The students who are studying under STEM Eligible subjects are
29 granted the option of Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment extension, which is a 24-
30 month extension after the initial 12 months. However, since Dentistry is not considered a STEM
31 degree by USCIS, foreign-trained dentists are given only a 12-month window after graduation to
32 secure a work visa which is lottery-based and works on probability. If their classification were to
33 shift to STEM, these students would then be eligible for a longer 24-month period i.e., an extra
34 2 years. This distinction is important because it increases the likelihood that well-educated
35 professionals will be eligible for advanced visas, such as the specialty work (H-1B) visa, and
36 gives them more time to find stable employment opportunities. For this reason, incorporating
37 dentistry into STEM could improve conditions for international dental graduates and enhance
38 the U.S. healthcare system, therefore, be it

39

40 **RESOLUTION**

41

42 **Resolved,** that...

43 The American Student Dental Association endorses the inclusion of dentistry as a STEM-
44 designated degree program. It is the position of the American Student Dental Association to

45 actively engage in efforts to encourage relevant federal authorities to officially recognize
46 dentistry as a STEM degree.

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48 **Action:** The Chair moves 400-2024 with a recommendation of a yes vote and to be placed on the
49 Consent Calendar.

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