

Survey of the Dental Curriculum

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*An Effort to Devise a Curriculum for the
Training of Dentists*

THE purpose of this paper is to describe the effort of the American Association of Dental Schools to devise a new curriculum for the education of dentists. In order that the problem of the Survey may be clearly stated, a few salient facts from the history of dental education will be presented.

The first attempt in North America to give formal instruction in dentistry occurred at the University of Maryland in 1837-38. It consisted of a course of lectures for medical students and was conducted by one of the foremost dentists of the day. After one year this instruction was discontinued. Following other unsuccessful endeavors to include dental education in medical schools a group of four doctors of medicine, two of whom were also dentists, opened the first school of dentistry in America, the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, in 1840. A few other schools of dentistry were organized later, and by 1867 nine, all of which were independent of other institutions of higher education, had been established. In 1867 the Dental Department of Harvard University was organized in close association with the Medical Department. It was the first time in this country for dentistry

to be given an important place in a university and brought into formal relation with medicine.

The number of dental schools in the United States increased slowly until about 1880, after which for a period of about twenty years the number was multiplied beyond the actual need. The financial rewards to be had from a privately owned dental school account in large measure for this unnecessary development. Some of the schools were mere diploma mills, and others gave a low grade of training. Beginning about 1900, when there were 57 dental schools in the United States, the situation changed. Slowly the number has decreased until at present only 38 remain.

The first dental school in Canada, which has continued to the present, was founded at Toronto in 1875 under the auspices of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario. It became an organic part of the University of Toronto in 1925. Four other dental schools, all of which are integral parts of universities, have been established at Dalhousie, Montreal, McGill, and Alberta.

During the past fifty years several associations were formed for the purpose of advancing dental education.