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Minnesota College of Dentistry Given Top Rating; Praised In National Report



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WHO is it one likes when he's not needed, dreads when he's most necessary, and knows to be the only friend one can bite without insulting?

It would be impossible, of course, to give any answer except, "the dentist. It may be added that "the dentist" is correct.

Minnesota dentists, meaning those trained in the College of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota, can afford to be good-natured in the face of weak efforts at wit, judging from the report recently sent out by the Dental Educational Council of America, which has made a thoroughgoing investigation of the standards and performances of 44 schools of dentistry in the United States. Of the 44, the investigating body placed 20 in the highest class, 15 in the next highest, and the remainder in lower groups.

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The president of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Lotus D. Coffman, has been informed that the college of dentistry at Minnesota has received a straight 'A' rating. Furthermore the Dental Educational Council of America has sent a letter to Dr. Alfred Owre, dean of the college of dentistry, paying him and his college liberal compliments.

"The council offers your school its sincere congratulations upon the attainment of an 'A' rating and expresses the wish that no deviation from the policies and activities that made possible this achievement will occur, unless it be to further enhance the record of service to students, the state, and dental education of the University of Minnesota," says the communication.

Elsewhere the report said: "Certain institutions stand forth in the educational world because of their power to inspire students with the desire for knowledge and with the love of hard work, also because of their ability to impart knowledge effectively and exactly. The University of Minnesota College of Dentistry is such an institution."

Calling Dean Owre "the guiding spirit of an energetic and progressive faculty," the report goes on to say:

SCHOOL'S POSITION CALLED EMINENT

"This school has been developed in such a wholesome manner that it now occupies a position of eminence in the field of dental education, made possible, however, largely by the devotion and sacrifice of the dean and faculty.

"The council is impressed by the excellence of the curriculum, the opportunities for individual instruction, and by the conduct and management of the infirmary. The council feels that quality, and not quantity, is made the standard of students' work in this institution. It desires especially to commend the order and cleanliness maintained throughout the building, for these qualities are cardinal elements in dental education. The sympathetic and cordial co-operation of the college of medicine and of the graduate school and the advantages of the Mayo Clinic all aid in giving this school the highest standing."

It is urged in the report that the college of dentistry awaken fully to the need for training men who will enter the profession with a view to becoming teachers of dentistry. All who show aptitude and who look forward to a life work of teaching dentistry rather than to its practice should receive special help and encouragement, it asserts. That part time as well as full time teachers should receive pay comparable to that given medical teachers is one of the notable recommendations in the report.

Coming at a time when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is about to make public a report of its nationwide investigation of the teaching of dentistry, the report of the Dental Educational Council, and its particular enthusiasm for the achievements at Minnesota, is especially significant.

CHANGES IN DENTISTRY AT HAND

There is no doubt that important developments in the field of dental education are at hand. Among these will be the application of professional and public pressure to bring all institutions teaching dentistry up to the plane of the best. Incidental to this change will come, probably, the elimination of private schools of dentistry, conducted for profit, or the affiliation of such schools with reputable universities. The state of Minnesota has never had this problem, the private schools of dentistry having been impossible under the laws for 25 years. Elsewhere, however, the policies of such schools and the ethics of some of their graduates have been thorns in the side of those who wished to see the profession of dentistry rate exactly as high as that of medicine.

Hopes of the Dental Educational Council of America have been outlined in a statement by its secretary, Dr. Albert L. Midgeley. It is worth observing that the College of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota has achieved most of the objectives he names. Dr. Midgeley writes:

"The course of study for a degree in dentistry in the United States will be lengthened from four years to five. All the dental schools will be brought to a higher standard of excellence, especially in medico-dental subjects. Hereafter in the

preservation of the general health of the individual there will be closer co-operation between the physician and the dentist. These results will follow the survey and classification recently conducted.

“Great changes are taking place in dental education owing to recent discoveries of the intimate connection between the condition of the teeth and general health. It has been clearly shown that decayed and abscessed teeth often cause heart disease, rheumatism, neuritis, eczema, mental disorders, and other serious diseases. So important has the relation between sound teeth and good health become that it is necessary now to raise educational standards in order to prepare students properly to meet the public needs and to maintain the position of world wide supremacy that American dentistry has always held.”

Too few Minnesotans have a thorough realization of the service given every resident of the state by a school which contributes as much to the safeguarding of the general health as does the College of Dentistry in the university. American dentistry, as the report of the council says, is the most skillful and most highly developed in the world. That their institution stands at or near the top of the dental colleges of America is a distinction of which every resident of the state should be proud. To have at one's elbow practitioners trained in a college so efficient is a privilege as well as a guarantee of effective treatment and health preservation when these are needed.