FROM THE DESK OF THE REGISTRAR (MRS PERTUNIA NKUNA)

Dear Valued Stakeholders

Firstly, although we are already in the second month of the year 2016, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, your staff and loved ones a very happy and prosperous 2016 and trust that you have had a well-deserved rest. A special welcome goes to our newly registered Dental Technicians/Technologists who have registered with SADTC after graduating/completion of their studies.

The SADTC believes that a sustainable regulatory council is derived from and maintained by fostering good relations with you, our valued registered members. Thank you for your support in 2015 and we look forward to a very productive and prosperous 2016. On reflection, I am pleased to report that we have had a very busy 2015 with Council and its Committees are ready to start a fresh with our work for 2016. I will report briefly on the following:

- Council and its Committees
- CAD/CAM Task Team
- Pension fund matters for Technicians
- Council Roadshows
- Communication platforms

Sincerely
Annual fees

According to the South African Dental Technicians Act 19 of 1979 (the Act) in terms of Section 49, the SADTC may determine the registration and annual fees payable by registered persons. The non-payment of fees will result in a registered person being suspended from the register. Once this happens it is illegal for such person to continue working as a dental technician/technologist, or to be employed as such by any registered commercial or dentist-owned dental laboratory. It is equally illegal for any medical fund to entertain the payment of any claims that may arise from dental technology work performed by such unregistered person. The way the SADTC will deal with such a person is via the criminal justice system, which may lead to the arrest and confiscation of assets apart from what the outcome of criminal court will be. Council sincerely hopes that it will never be necessary to institute such action against any person who previously was registered and legally working as a true professional, serving the best interests of the people of this country. The only way to correct the situation is to apply for re-registration, which is a rather costly exercise bearing in mind that any outstanding fees remains payable before re-registration can happen.

The SADTC determines the quantum of these fees on an annual basis, taking into account Council’s budget for the forthcoming year and other economic factors such as inflation that have an impact on the expenses of the Council. Invoices for 2016/2017 financial year are due by not later than the 31st of March 2016. All registered members of SADTC are expected to pay an annual registration fee of R 1,500.00 and those who own laboratories are expected to pay an additional fee of R 4,000.00 to continue conducting their commercial dental laboratory businesses.

One of the main cost increases that Council had to consider was the modernization of its administration system. To this end it was decided to implement a web based computer registration management (CRM) platform that will ensure both secure and easy accessibility to both members of the profession and the staff of the Council. This includes a CPD record keeping feature that will automatically and continuously update individual’s information.

Resignation of Council members

The Council took leave of Adv. Rebaone Gaoraelwe, who formally resigned as a member of the Council with effect from 1 September 2015. Adv. Gaoraelwe represented Council on a number of portfolios including the Legal Committee, the Audit and Risk Committee amongst others. We wish to thank Adv. Gaoraelwe for his exemplary work ethic and the virtuous manner in which he lead the Council in all matters which required legal expertise. The void he left in the Council is profound and would be difficult to fill.

Subsequently, and with the assistance of the Department of Health, Mrs. Hellen Phaleng-Podile was appointed to serve Council on the account of her knowledge of the law and to replace her predecessor, Adv. Gaoraelwe, on 4 December 2015. Mrs. Phaleng-Podile was cordially invited to Council’s last meeting held on 11 and 12 December 2015 where she appeared to be an enthusiastic character, full of energy and keenness to assist Council. Disappointingly, on 13 January 2016 Mrs. Phaleng-Podile tendered her resignation citing unanticipated workload as the reason. We take this opportunity to wish her well in her endeavors.
The Council further took note of the resignation tendered by Mrs. Charlotte Mavhungu on 10 January 2016 citing the need to give attention to her business as the cause for her resignation. Mrs. Mavhungu was a diligent member of Council and assisted Council to the best of her ability. We wish her well in her future endeavors.

Council will continue to work in tandem with the Department of Health to appoint suitable candidates to fulfil the respective portfolios. As soon as the appointments are made, Council will disseminate the information to the profession.

**Appointment of the new Deputy Registrar**

Council welcomes the appointment of the Deputy Registrar, Mr. Thomas Modiba who started in September 2015. He is a qualified lawyer with experience with the Veterinary Council of South Africa. Council is looking forward to his significant contribution to the office of the SADTC. Apart from working very closely with the registrar he is specifically tasked with controlling the register, conducting all levels of inspections in collaboration with his inspectorate team and dealing with all levels of disciplinary enquiries. Please receive him in the same friendly manner as you have done in the past with other officials visiting your dental laboratories. Please feel free to contact him directly with questions and or queries concerning the areas of responsibility indicated above.

**LEGAL COMMITTEE**

The following regulations have been finalised and forwarded to the Department of Health for final promulgation:

- ✓ Regulations relating to scope of practice.
- ✓ Regulations relating to the supervision of dental laboratories.
- ✓ Regulations relating to the informally trained persons as dental technicians (with restricted registration) and dental laboratory assistants.

The following regulations were finalised by the Council and forwarded to the Department of Health for public comments:

- ✓ Regulations relating to the Acts and Omissions i.t.o. which disciplinary action may be instituted against dental technicians/technologists.
- ✓ Regulations relating to registration and training of student dental technicians/technologists.

Please visit the SADTC and DENTASA websites and be informed about the deadlines for these comments. Remember you as a professional and a member of the public has the democratic right and obligation to engage with these publications and to respond in writing before the deadline. It is quite sad to see the lack of responses received in the past. Remember if you do not participate nobody will be aware of your thoughts and the outcome will just be that poorer because of the lack of your input. Please participate in the best interests of dental technology profession that in turn must serve the best interests of the public.

The following regulations are at present under review. When called upon to assist by giving your personal input and experience, please participate for the same reasons as indicated above:

- ✓ Regulations on the control of unmounted artificial teeth
- ✓ Regulations on the election of members of Council
- ✓ Regulations related to the conduct of the business of Council
✓ Registration of dental laboratories
✓ Institution of inquiries in terms of section 35 of the Act
✓ Annual fees payable to the Council
✓ Direct claiming of fees payable by dentists and medical aid schemes

The following new regulations may come about as a result of changes experienced and the proposed amendments to the existing Act or the new Act to replace the existing one:
✓ Professional Code of Ethics/Practice
✓ CAD/CAM and future technologies
✓ Recognition of Voluntary Associations (VAs)
✓ Conduct of Councilors
✓ The future of clinical dental technology
✓ Others

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE

Complaints procedure
Any member of the public may lay a complaint against a dental technician/technologist, who is registered with SADTC in terms of the Act, who they believe is in contravention of the Act and or regulations. A complaint against a registered person should be submitted in writing by way of an affidavit under oath. For contact purposes, the complainant must provide his/her name and contact details. The affidavit should include an overview of the alleged issue of concern and the time-frame of events. Members of the dental technology profession may also lodge a complaint against any fellow member registered with the Council.

Inspections
The inspectorate is empowered by section 31 of the Act to carry out its duties of conducting inspections and to exercise its powers over both registered and illegally operating dental laboratories. This is one of the main activities of the Council to fulfil its mandate of maintaining an accurate, up to date register and to ensure that the public receives a fair and responsible service from professionals they trust, simply based on the fact that these professionals are registered and are regulated.

The purpose of conducting inspections of registered dental laboratories and those that are applying for a new registration status is to ensure that all dental laboratories comply with the Regulations as set out in the Dental Technicians Act 19 of 1979, as per the provisions of Regulation R.308 of 26 February 1982.
### Dental Laboratories Inspected in last quarter of 2015/2016 Financial Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Inspection</th>
<th>Gauteng</th>
<th>Eastern Cape</th>
<th>Mpumalanga</th>
<th>Limpopo</th>
<th>Free State</th>
<th>Western Cape</th>
<th>KwaZulu-Natal</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Labs</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-Inspections</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
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</table>

![Gauteng Inspector Chart](chart.png)

*Figure 1 Inspections conducted in Gauteng*
Figure 2 Inspections conducted in Eastern Cape

Figure 3 Inspections conducted in Mpumalanga
Figure 4 Inspections conducted in Limpopo

Figure 5 Inspections conducted in Free State
Figure 6 Inspections conducted in the Western Cape

Figure 7 Inspections conducted in Kwa-Zulu Natal
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Re-curiculation process
Control of education and training is regulated by section 16 of the Dental Technicians Act, 1979. As indicated above, the regulations in terms of which students are registered and trained have been reviewed. All Universities of Technology (UoTs) as well as the profession via DENTASA participated in this process. The main focus was to align the regulations to the new qualifications soon to be rolled out. Durban University of Technology will probably register their first students on the new curriculum in 2017 with CPUT to follow soon thereafter. TUT decided to follow a different model and will soon embark on implementation. Although the UoTs are no longer providing identical education and training it remains the Council’s responsibility to ensure that all training institutions adhere to the minimum requirements as determined by Council, in consultation with the Education Committee and the education inspector. The revised regulations will in all probability be signed by the Minister of Health in the very near future.

Task Team to investigate the feasibility of re-introducing a Council registration assessment
This refers to what was known as the "Board Exam". Many of the older members will recall having to travel to Pretoria in days gone by to do a 2-3 day practical exam before they could register as a dental technician. This was a "carry over" from the even older apprenticeship system that was out and out aimed at testing practical competency. With the introduction of the formal training model in the early 70’s this practice remained for some years until the National Higher Diploma replaced the Council Diploma. This model provided for the old Technikons to conduct this assessment on behalf of the Council. To ensure good standards, Council appointed an Education Inspector, who was tasked with setting minimum requirements and to verify that these were met. With the inception of the UoTs about ten years ago, the playing field steadily changed. These new institutions resulted not only in a change of name, from Technikon to University of Technology, but also brought fundamental changes in character and philosophy. Where Technikons were profession/industry driven, the UoTs are increasingly moving their focus to research, leading to postgraduate qualifications. The Council recognizes the value of research and its role in driving the future of any profession. We must remain mindful of the fact that the quality and more specifically the practical skills of qualifying dental technicians and technologists remains at the highest level. After all, what is a professional who does not demonstrate both knowledge and skill? If he/she cannot demonstrate the required practical skill how can such person claim to be a professional?

A further concern is the fact that the UoTs are increasingly demanding that moderators and external examiners are sourced from the profession with one qualification level higher than the students being assessed. Although a noble and commendable idea it is not possible in our profession as yet. Real difficulties are experienced at BTech level where all moderators/external examiners are required to have at least a masters degree. Council is aware that there are very few professionals and specifically in the private sector, with such qualifications. Departments at UoTs are under continuous pressure to find suitably qualified persons and the risk is that moderators/examiners are appointed purely on qualification and often at the expense of professional experience. Often those with masters qualifications have obtained such in areas not even related to the practice of dental technology.

UoTs are also under pressure to appoint more academic staff with masters and higher qualifications to lecture. Although this may be acceptable and commendable at a theoretical level, it is definitely not working for the Council and this drive is at the expense of proper and relevant practical experience. Council is hearing more and more of very young and inexperienced dental technologists being appointed as lecturers. Bringing in young and new blood is always
good but never can the Council sit back and allow this to happen at the expense of high level skills being transferred to the future professionals.

Council is mindful and respects the fact the UoTs have its mandate and goals and can appoint academic staff based on their own criteria. What remains the mandate of Council is to ensure the future of the profession, by validating the skills that graduates demonstrate at the point of registration; that of being “fit for purpose”. The UoTs award academic qualifications while Council awards professional registration qualification.

Based on the three points stated above, Council discussed the matter at the Audit and Risk Committee and its other structures. There is a real possibility that the education and training of future students may be placed on the Council's Risk Register. With that, Council is NOT saying that there is a risk at present, but that there may be a reason for concern right now and that a real risk may present itself in future.

Council at its last meeting on 12 December 2015 appointed a task team to investigate the matter and to report to Council by its mid-year meeting. Although it is premature, the possibility exists that Council may revert back to some form of assessment before registration will be considered. Let's leave the discussion to the task team and when you as professionals are asked to participate in the investigation please avail yourself and help Council to do what is in the best interest of the profession and ultimately that of the public.

The Task Team members are:
- David van Eyk. (Member of Council)
- Dr M Motopi-Peri (Member of Council)
- Thomas Modiba (Deputy Registrar of Council)

The task team is mandated to co-opt, as they deem necessary, additional members to strengthen the team, as they deem necessary. They will interview whoever they deem necessary to gather the required information before presenting a report to Council.

**CPD COMMITTEE**

Council resolved to conduct roadshows across the country in order to afford the members of the profession with an opportunity to earn CPD points and make these activities more cost effective for those who cannot afford to travel to conferences or other courses. Council also resolved that all members should be audited on the 2014/2015 CPD cycle. The current audit scores available on the system will be communicated to everyone and each member will be given an opportunity to declare a dispute about what was not recorded. Please engage with the registrar’s office in this regard. All queries can be addressed to Louise Fraser (012 342 4134) or via email to louise@sadtc.org.za

A new CPD cycle started on 1 January 2016 and will end on 31 December 2017. During this cycle 60 CEUs must be obtained. All members are expected to do 30 CEUs per calendar year and a document outlining the various ways to obtain these CEUs can be found on the SADTC website www.sadtc.org.za. The document is labeled as CPD 006 for your convenience. Please take the time to study the content and familiarize yourself on the various options. If at any point you have a suggestion to make that will assist the profession to gain their CEUs, it will be welcomed. Council wants all members to comply and in doing so wants to ensure that compliance is easy.
and possible. If you decide to ignore the call to comply you are putting yourself at risk of ultimately being erased from the register. There is no monetary fine that can be paid toward restoration and or re-registration. In order to be restored/re-registration the erased member will still have to comply by catching-up on unfulfilled CPD obligations. Let's work together on this matter!

Council further resolved at its December 2015 meeting to defer non-complaint members during the 2014-2015 cycle to the next CPD, 2016-2017 cycle with a strong word of caution and some with a word of reprimand to comply with the CEUs required for both cycles. All members who do not meet the required CEUs during the past cycle are encouraged to attend the roadshows in the area closest to them. Members are reminded once again that CPD is now mandatory for all who are registered. All members can check/verify their CEUs by logging-in to the CPD portal on the SADTC website and by contacting the office as indicated.

Let's work together on this matter not only from a compliance point of view but more importantly towards personal growth and continuous professionalism.

**CAD/CAM Task Team**

At the start of the present Council's term of office, a CAD/CAM Task Team was established to advise Council about the regulation of this and other future technologies that may impact on the dental technology profession. This task team met at the end of 2014 for the first time with the main task of establishing a terms of reference (ToR) for approval by Council. This was done and submitted to Council and approved at its meeting on 13 December 2014. Unfortunately certain groups felt left out and although it was clearly indicated in the ToR that they would be included in future discussions SADA took it upon themselves, without consulting the Council's office and reported both the SADTC and DENTASA to the Consumer Commission for "uncompetitive behaviour". The SADTC responded in writing to the allegations and provided the required information and evidence. On 11 December 2015 the registrar, Louis Steyn and Axel Grabowski met with one of the commissioners and after a very fruitful discussion, the Commission Tribunal informed Council on 28 January 2016 that the case was closed and that the matter requires no further investigation. SADA was informed accordingly. At the most recent EXCO meeting a revised ToR for the Task Team was tabled. The latter will serve at the first Council meeting in March 2016 for adoption.

This delayed the work of the Task Team and the matter is back on the Council's action list. In April 2016 the Task Team will resume its work. This matter is of great concern to Council as it is not only limited to CAD/CAM but rather sharply focuses on all future technologies. When members of the profession are called upon in future to assist the Task Team we trust that you will oblige and provide the crucial information only practitioners can give.
PENSION FUND MATTERS

In terms of the Dental Technicians Act ("the Act"), membership to the South African Dental Technician Employees Umbrella Fund ("the fund") is compulsory to all registered dental technicians/technologists who are in the fulltime employment of a dentist or dental technician contractor. A compulsory monthly contribution of seven percent of an employee's monthly pensionable salary shall be deducted by an employer and paid to the fund. An employer shall contribute an amount equal to the employee's monthly contribution to the fund. It should be noted that "pensionable salary" means the gross earnings as stated on a member's employee tax certificate, i.e. IRP5 as issued by an employer. A member’s pensionable salary may therefore not be manipulated to reduce contributions towards the fund.

The Dental Technicians Act however allows the SADTC to exempt certain employers under very special circumstances from the requirements of the Act. The Council will consider each exemption on individual merit in consultation with the board of trustees of the fund. Criteria for exemption include contribution to another registered fund in line with the Act, with similar or better benefits than the fund. Employers who do not currently comply with the Act are urged to apply for exemption as a matter of urgency. The request must be addressed to the Council and must contain full details of the employer’s current retirement fund for its individual employees.

All employees are urged to take this matter up with their employer/s. Remember this fund will be providing for a time when you will no longer be able to earn a living by working. This may be as a result of reaching your natural retirement age, or due to bad health or becoming physically incapacitated. Whatever the reason, this fund may well be your only source of income. Contributing to the fund is a responsibility of both employee and employer. This is a statutory requirement not only from the side of Council but also nationally. The taxation system makes generous allowances to both parties in this regard.

Please contact the Council’s office for further information or compliance requirements.

Roadshows

In order to take the Council closer to the profession, improve communication and in so doing add value to the CPD requirements, Council will embark on a series of roadshows.

The first in the series is set to start on 18th of March in George, and will take place from 13:00 – 18:00. The format will be that of a mini conference including four presentation sessions directly related to the professional interaction between members and Council. This will be followed by a session where members will be able to raise issues with Council, with the intention to resolve, inform and improve them. A fifth session will focus on future technology and looking at dental technology down the line. This will be followed by a session where members will be able to raise issues with Council with the intention to inform, improve and resolve them.

A total of eleven cities/towns have been identified and include the following:
George, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, Durban, Johannesburg/Pretoria, Polokwane, Cape Town and Potchefstroom

Kimberly, East London, Nelspruit are planned for but, needs to be finalized. This depends on the support that can be expected. Members from these areas must please indicate their support to the office as cost effectiveness remains high on the Council’s agenda. Please respond to Ms Louise Fraser (012 342 4134) or info@sadtc.org.za at your earliest convenience. It may well be possible for members to travel to the venues indicated in the first category.

It is anticipated that the CPD reward will be between 10 and 12 CEUs. This hopefully will be seen as a reasonable reward for attending without any further cost to members other than own transport and where applicable accommodation.

Council is in the process of raising sponsorships to cover the venue and catering costs.

The proposed program will include:

- Presenting the proposed New Act for information and comments (1 hour)
- Discussion on CPD and how to comply (1 hour)
- Disciplinary matters (1 hour)
- Is it about the law or is it about what is right? The ethics dilemma (1 hour)
- Future technology? Or is the future already here! (1 hour)
- Question and answer session:

Please note that the last session will be open to matters not discussed in any of the topics above. At the end of each presentation allowance has been made for topic specific questions. If the time allows at the end consideration will be given to further questions on topics already covered.

Please forward any specific questions you may have to the Registrar’s office. Some of these may well be included in presentations and will allow for proper responses.

At the end of each event there will be a box where unasked questions can be posted. This will assist the office of the Registrar to deal with such matters either personally if so requested or in future newsletters.

Registration issues will be addressed at these roadshows and Registration Cards will be issued to those members who have not received theirs at the last DENTASA AGM.

As a Council, we are committed to protecting both the profession and the public, and to fulfil our main objectives we need to regularly review and enhance our registration system thereby increasing efficiency, security as well as integrity.

Through engagement with registered dental technicians/technologists, the Council would be able to address any concerns in respect of registering with the council, and inform them on the system.
The SADTC serves the role of regulating the Dental Technology Profession through standard setting, policy development, accreditation and quality assurance of education and training, registration of professionals in the dental technology field and professional conduct management.

The roadshows are set to run from the 18th of March 2016 until September 2016.

COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS

When the present Council took office on 2nd of October 2013 and at its first strategic planning session it was decided to directly engage with members of the profession with one purpose and that is to take the Council to the profession, improve communication and foster good relations. To this end Council provided regular newsletters and attended DENTASA AGMs. Both proved to be successful. Council is mindful that members are extremely busy and may have limited time to read lengthy newsletters. Extracts from these newsletters will be posted via other public media platforms in shorter focused versions.

The SADTC is now on social media and we would like to invite you, as a member of the SADTC community to add your comments and follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Twitter handle is @sadtc.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Council is determined to continuously and relentlessly strive to serve the interests of the profession as much as it serves those of the public at large. Council is also intent on continuing to be responsive to all the challenges facing the profession of dental technology. In this regard Council shall continue to take whatever measures necessary to stamp out activities that are in violation of the Act.

Please feel free to continue communicating with me via email: registrar@sadtc.org.za or through the “contact us” form of the SADTC website www.sadtc.org.za.