



Dental Assisting National Board

March 12, 2026

**Summary of major actions taken by DANB's Board of Directors at the  
2026 Winter Board Meeting**

Austin, TX

February 5-6, 2026

Including a meeting of the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees

February 4, 2026

**DANB Directors in Attendance:**

Barbara Mousel, D.D.S., CDA, RDH, Board Chair; Sandra L. Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM, Chair-Elect; Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A., Secretary-Treasurer; Kimberly Plate, CDA, CPFDA, CRFDA, B.S., Immediate Past Chair; Vicki Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H.; Tanya Dorf Brunner, M.S., Public Member; Stephanie Bustos, CDA, RDA; Carlos Gaxiola, CDIPC, RDA, RDHAP, RDH; Frank Maggio, D.D.S.; Renee McNally, CDIPC, COA, CRFDA, CPFDA, CDA, RDA; Kishan Patel, CDA, COA, CPFDA, CRFDA; Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S., MSgt, USAF, Certificant-at-Large; Lindsay Yates, D.D.S.; Jason Lawrence, D.D.S., Leader-in-Training (nonvoting)

**DALE Foundation Trustees in Attendance:**

Sandra L. Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM, Board President; Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A., Secretary-Treasurer; Vicki L. Brett, CDA, RDH, B.S.D.H.; Janée Tamayo, CDA, CPFDA, B.S., MSgt, USAF

DANB's Chief Executive Officer Laura Skarnulis serves as an ex officio member of DANB's Board of Directors and the DALE Foundation Board of Trustees.

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The Boards of the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the DALE Foundation met in early February to review progress, consider strategic initiatives, and take action on several forward-looking priorities. The following highlights reflect key outcomes and areas of focus.

**Assessment and Certification Updates**

Dental Assisting Professional Model

Representatives from across the dentistry profession created the [Dental Assisting Professional Model](#), with the goals of supporting dental assistants, the dental community, and the public. The Model has earned endorsements from leading dental organizations that recognize its potential to strengthen the profession and build a consistent, qualified workforce. Their endorsement underscores the growing support for more professional uniformity — and invites others across dentistry to join in advancing this shared vision. Phase II of the Dental Assisting Professional Model work is underway with the Orthodontic Assisting Workgroup.

General Chairsides (GC) Exam Pathway Research

DANB conducted research on two potential new pathways related to eligibility for the General Chairsides (GC) exam within the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification to support the dental assisting profession, encourage workforce development, and increase access to earning the CDA certification. Based on the results of the research, the Board made recommendations regarding next steps for exploring the new pathway. Additional information will be shared once finalized in the second half of 2026.

## **Awareness, Education, and Engagement Activities**

DANB and the DALE Foundation continue to advance initiatives that elevate awareness of dental assisting credentials and expand access to professional development. Efforts in 2026 include targeted outreach, strengthened partnerships, and exploration of new education offerings aligned with emerging workforce trends. DANB remains committed to engaging certificants, educators, and industry stakeholders to ensure programs and resources reflect the evolving needs of the profession.

## **Strategic Discussions**

The Board reviewed the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan initiatives and outcomes to date and discussed emerging issues in dental assisting, including expanding functions for dental assistants including those listed in the Oral Preventive Assistants model, and the growing role of artificial intelligence.

## **Other Priorities and Initiatives**

### Board Governance Updates

The DANB Board approved updates to the DANB Bylaws and the Exam Programs Committee Charter to ensure alignment with current governance practices and external partner requirements.

### Legislative Activity and Government Relations

DANB continues to monitor and develop strategies to address new laws and regulations affecting dental assistants, as well as emerging state-level issues related to dental assisting requirements and scope of practice.

## **Board Leadership Updates**

### DANB Director Re-Elections

The DANB Board of Directors re-elected the following DANB Directors for terms to commence on September 1, 2026, and expire on August 31, 2029:

- Tanya Dorf Brunner, M.S. (Public Member) – Second 3-year term
- Kerri Friel, CDA, COA, RDH, M.A (ADEA) – Second 3-year term
- Lindsey Yates, D.D.S., FACD, FNAP (ADA) – Second 3-year term
- Sandra Garcia Young, CDA, CDIPC, RDA, FADAA, FAADOM – Second 3-year term

Additionally, Carlos Gaxiola, CDIPC, RDA, RDHAP, RDH, will be concluding his final term on August 31, 2026.

### New Leader-in-Training Appointment

Due to an opening within the Leaders-in-Training program, the DANB Board of Directors appointed Merli Vedia, as a Leader-in-Training, to the Board for a term effective February 6, 2026, and concluding August 31, 2027. This development initiative is designed to cultivate future leaders within DANB and the oral health profession at large. Per the bylaws, Leaders-in-Training are nonvoting members of the DANB Board.

## **DALE Foundation Updates**

The DALE Foundation Board met on February 4, 2026. During the meeting, the Board reviewed its 2026 workforce and career development activities, including potential partnerships and expanded outreach efforts to support dental assisting career pathways.

## **Upcoming Meetings**

The 2026 Annual Meeting will be held in Chicago, IL from July 23-24, 2026.