

(they have “faculty” who participate in the “LVI Faculty Practice,” and they have “graduates” and “graduation ceremonies,” and they have “alumni”). All of these terms are legitimately the purview of accredited universities and dental schools. This institute has now embarked on a master plan of selling the public with prime-time advertising (on programs such as *Extreme Makeover*, and I have seen commercials during *Larry King Live* and *Wolf Blitzer Reports*) to convince the public to contact its “alumni.” And so the circle is complete—sell the courses that sell the dentists to sell the public who see the commercials to see the dentists who bought the courses.

If we in the profession cannot control our own standards of ethical behavior, others will come in and do it for us. If a group within the

profession is seen as misleading the public, and recommending massive irreversible treatments such as full-mouth reconstruction for inadequately informed patients based on pseudoscientific evidence performed by general dentists lacking specialty training in prosthodontics, it is time for the profession to react before Big Brother does.

To potential LVIM wannabees, I say, if you want an advanced degree, spend 2 or 3 years to get a legitimate degree from an accredited university. If you want to do the work of a prosthodontist, get the training from a program at an accredited institution where, by the way, you will find that your teachers are mostly specialists with multiple degrees.

Taking a shortcut to expertise can only result in disaster for the indi-

vidual and the profession that permits it. Let's hope the LVIM “degree” will disappear as quickly as it has reared its ugly head.



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REFERENCES

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RESPONSE TO PERSPECTIVES

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain what it takes to obtain the LVIM. It is not surprising that people would not know what we are all about if they had never visited the five-acre, 60,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art campus or called me or anyone at LVI to explain their “concerns.” The LVI curriculum involves more than just esthetics as we have over 35 courses spanning the range of esthetics, occlusion, endodontics,

periodontics, orthodontics, management, hygiene, implants, removable prosthodontics, emergency medicine, and others. After 10 years of offering dentists superior postgraduate education, LVI decided to validate those who have had extensive training in the area of comprehensive restorative esthetics and occlusion. Instead of just having the course requirements, as for the AGD, those achieving their LVI mastership are required to demonstrate their skills by completing live-patient

treatment programs, presenting cases, and taking a comprehensive test to prove clinical expertise.

Many members of our profession accept that postgraduate certificates such as the MAGD are legitimate and endorse their designation. The requirements for MAGD are as follows. First, candidates must achieve fellowship by completing 500 hours of approved continuing education, with at least 350 of those hours earned in participation course

attendance. After completing the required number of hours, applicants must pass a 400-question examination. Once the fellowship has been awarded, these candidates can apply for mastership after completing 600 hours of approved continuing education, 400 of which are in participation credits. These are the only requirements for mastership; no test or demonstration of clinical ability is required.

The MAGD requires candidates to obtain credits in 16 different categories, with only 184 required in restorative dentistry, fixed prosthodontics, occlusion, and esthetics. Of the total 184 required, only 120 hours of participation credits are necessary.

The Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies is an AGD-approved national sponsor. Our programs offer participation credits that meet the requirements for AGD fellowship and mastership. In fact, I can guarantee you that many of our graduates have received their hours for MAGD at LVI.

To qualify for an application to become an LVIM, candidates must complete three live-patient programs, with participation credits totaling 197 in the area of restorative dentistry, occlusion, and esthetics. They also must complete three occlusion programs, with the participation credits totaling 72. To summarize, candidates for LVIM must complete 269 hours of parti-

cipation credits in occlusion, restorative dentistry, and esthetics, versus only 120 participation credits in the same disciplines for the MAGD. The truth is that most of our LVIM presenters have taken far more than the required programs and have more than 350 hours of participation credits from LVI.

Unlike the MAGD, candidates for LVIM must submit three completed comprehensive restorative cases (at least two full-mouth reconstruction cases). These are to be cases done at the applicant's office, *not* at LVI as part of a course. Cases must be submitted in an intensive printed report that includes all requirements listed in this application. If a case is rejected or does not meet the criteria mentioned in this application, a replacement case must be submitted. This is a valuable learning process as an explanation of nonacceptance would be given to provide the applicant with the ability and knowledge to assist with the next case submission. Acceptance would provide the applicant with the confidence that he or she understands the principles of restorative and neuromuscular dentistry.

The reports include all required write-ups, photographs, images, radiographs, scans (if electromyographic equipment was used), and so on, presented in a *printed* format. The following information is included:

1. Biographical information
2. Patient history, signs, symptoms

3. Treatment plan
4. Diagnostic photographs
5. Treatment photographs
6. Final restorative photographs
7. Before and after models
8. Summary of results
9. Patient testimonials and/or comments

For those who are unaware, some of our faculty members have their certificates in prosthodontics. Dr. Roy Hurst, for example, received his certificate from USC, having undergone what was then a 2-year program under Howard Landesman, then president of the college. Dr. Roy Hurst has provided me with a response to those who are unfamiliar with our training:

Whereas the training in a 2-year program is much more literature intense and has more classes involving peripheral courses such as statistics, LVI's courses are totally state of the art. The courses at LVI are not just "weekend and out" courses. Each builds on the previous courses. On average, it does take 2 to 3 years to go through them and master the knowledge from the courses. I can't expect anyone who has not been to LVI to have a clue about the science behind its teachings.

The LVIM and FAACD are not degrees. They are titles of achievement. They are both well earned and not just handed out by taking courses. The dentists who get these titles have spent years and

usually hundreds of hours in continuing education plus much time honing skills in their offices at great cost to them in time and money.

The faculty at LVI are dentists who have the clinical skills to be considered experts as well as management skills to run a successful practice. The support through the LVI forum and personal communications after our training gives the graduates lifelong access to answers, as if practicing in the best group practice with a mastermind at work. I think I was just an average prosthodontist before; now I feel I deliver far superior work to what I did before my training at LVI.

As an example of the quality of our senior faculty in residence, Dr. Norman Thomas is not only a DDS but an MD and has a PhD in Physiology. Norman was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship (Oxford) to complete an honors degree in medical sciences in 1960. Between 1960 and 1974, he pursued residency and research programs at the Bristol Royal Infirmary, the Royal College

of Surgeons of England, the Medical College of Virginia in the United States, and the University of Alberta, where he is now professor emeritus. From 1970 to 2002, Norman served on the Medical Research Council of Canada, the US National Institutes of Health, and the Canadian Dental Association, gaining a Certificate of Merit from the latter and several fellowships in medical sciences and dentistry. He is a life member of the Alberta Dental Association and retired from clinical practice in 2002. In 1988 Norman was appointed chancellor of the International College of Head and Neck Orthopedics, and in that capacity he has lectured in the United States, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

Norm is just one example of the faculty members at LVI. I'm proud of every LVI faculty member. I'm proud of all those who have even attempted to gain their LVIM, and would put their knowledge and skill against anyone in the area of esthetic reconstructive dentistry. I am also proud that LVI has for 10 years led the field of continuing education to become the leader in postgraduate continuing education. Judging by the number of programs, course atten-

dance, graduates, and, most importantly, participant enthusiasm for what we are doing to help them be the best dentists they can possibly be, LVI leads the profession in postgraduate dental education. I was told a long time ago by wiser men than me to just let our success be the response to our detractors. "When you find yourself the target of other people's bitterness, ignorance, smallness, and insecurities, remember, things could be worse... you could be them."

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to these uninformed and unsubstantiated assertions. I would like to personally encourage readers to find out the truth about LVI for themselves and come and learn. They just may be surprised. In fact, I know they will be. As Omer Reed would say, our detractors "don't know what they don't know!"

William G. Dickerson, DDS
(Founder of LVI)

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