

Dawn Smith, Ph.D. is a professor, director of the Division of Dental Hygiene and a faculty member in the Department of Comprehensive Care at the Howard University College of Dentistry. She brings dual expertise as a registered dental hygienist and medical sociologist, integrating clinical practice, sociological analysis, and public health perspectives into her teaching, scholarship, and leadership.

Smith contributes extensively to national dental education and assessment standards. She serves on the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) Dental Hygiene OSCE Committee (DHLOSCE), the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE) Fairness and Sensitivity Committee, and the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE) Test Constructor Committee. Since 2023, she has also contributed to multiple JCNDE initiatives, including the DHLOSCE, INBDE, Test Construction, and Fairness and Sensitivity committees.

Her national service includes work as a grant reviewer for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and as a District of Columbia Department of Recreation (DPR) grant reviewer (2025–present), supporting workforce development, community programming, and educational equity in oral health. She serves on the Screening Committee for the Fulbright–Fogarty Fellowship in Public Health, reviewing globally focused health research and training proposals.

Smith is also engaged in accreditation and institutional quality assurance. She is a peer reviewer for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and a working group member for Howard University’s 2027 MSCHE accreditation cycle, contributing to institutional self-study, standards alignment, and evidence-based evaluation.

Her commitment to community-engaged scholarship includes participation in the Collaborative Oral Health Research and Education (CORE) Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN) and service as a co-faculty facilitator for the University of Maryland–Howard University Student Focus Group (June 11–12, 2026) in Cambridge, Maryland. She also supports community outreach through Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) (2024) and Remote Area Medical (RAM), including service at the Fishersville, VA clinic (2022).

Smith is deeply invested in faculty development and academic leadership. She served as a Scholar Coach for the Howard University Junior Faculty Creative Works Academy in 2017 and 2026, mentoring emerging scholars in research productivity and academic advancement. She is also a 2026 graduate of the Excellerate HU Leadership Program, strengthening her capacity to support institutional growth, strategic planning, and academic innovation.

Her scholarly interests span clinical practice, health disparities, oral-systemic relationships, and interdisciplinary approaches to dental and health science education. She welcomes collaborative opportunities that advance innovation in curricula, promote equitable access to care, and strengthen evidence-based practice in oral health research.