

impact

of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Society-Ready Graduates Dietetics Program

Issue

The demand for registered, credentialed dietitians has increased in the United States, largely because the public is more interested now in general nutrition, disease prevention, and the health of the aging. According to figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the American Dietetic Association, "employment of dietitians is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2005," at competitive salaries. Registered dietitians work in health care facilities, sports nutrition and corporate wellness programs, food and nutrition-related businesses and industries, private practice, community and public health settings, at universities and medical centers, and in research.

What has been done?

The Department of Nutritional Sciences offers a Didactic Program in Dietetics which is accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education. To earn an RD credential, students undertake the bachelor's degree program of study in dietetics, complete an approved, supervised internship program at a healthcare facility, community agency, or a food service corporation, and pass a national examination.

Impact

Students completing the UA's dietetics coursework have a 95 percent placement rate for internship programs, compared with the national average of 60 percent. This experience

gives them the skills and abilities they need to pass the national registered dietitian (RD) exam. As of the year 2003, UA dietetics graduates are yielding a 97 percent pass rate. Alumni comments:

"I like the internship a lot so far. It's very challenging, but I feel well-prepared coming from the U of A."

"You will be well-prepared for this internship by going to the U of A. I felt that I was stronger in certain areas than some of the other interns in the program, including one girl who already had her Ph.D."

"...all the dietitians said they felt that when they went to their internships they were a step ahead of all the other interns as far as knowledge and experience, because of going through the program at the U of A. I totally feel the same way."

Funding

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