

## PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY

1. **Reporting Institution** Eastern Illinois University
2. **Program Reviewed** MS in Nutrition and Dietetics
3. **Date** January 28, 2019
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### 5. **Overview**

The Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics includes two options: the long-standing Dietetic Internship Option and the newer Nutrition Education Option, which officially accepted students for the first time for fall semester, 2016. Both programs have a focus on nutrition education throughout the life span with the Nutrition Education Option having both an online and on campus track.

#### *Dietetic Internship Option*

During this review period, the DI underwent a self-review and accreditation review with the Accreditation Council for the Education of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Based on that intensive review, the DI continues its full accreditation status. The DI has grown to 10 sites in east central Illinois.

The **mission** of the MSND: Dietetic Internship Option, with its Nutrition Education Emphasis, is to integrate research and theory-based nutrition education through innovative, rigorous, and collaborative supervised practice experiences, and to prepare entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists to enter the diverse workforce and devote their careers to empowering individuals, families, and communities through lifelong learning, professional engagement, and community service.

The ***Student Learner Outcomes (SLOs)*** include the following:

- a. Exhibit the professional competencies of a registered dietitian nutritionist as identified by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
- b. Apply scientific principles related to nutrition needs and processes through the life cycle in health and disease.
- c. Demonstrate ability to function effectively within different health, education, and community organizational systems.
- d. Apply principles of education in the development of group and individual nutrition programs.
- e. Demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and investigative skills.

### Nutrition Education Option

The mission of the MSND: Nutrition Education Option focuses on educating and empowering individuals, families, and communities on making healthier food choices.

The **Student Learner Outcomes (SLOs)** include the following:

- a. Apply scientific principles related to nutrition needs and processes through the life cycle in health and disease.
- b. Demonstrate ability to function effectively within different health, education, and community organizational systems.
- c. Apply principles of education in the development of group and individual nutrition programs.
- d. Demonstrate critical thinking, problem solving, and investigative skills.

The dietetics faculty remained active in research activities with the presentation of peer-reviewed research at national conferences as well as the publication of peer-reviewed systematic reviews. Engagement of professional service at the community, university, state, and national levels remained constant. Additionally, Dr. Burns' scholarship in teaching and learning was recognized by two different leading professional organizations, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior.

## 6. Major Findings and Recommendations

### a. Description and assessment of major changes in the program/disciplinary context

Since the last program review in 2011, a significant increase in enrollment has occurred (Table 1). In response to the growing demand for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs), a limited number of available Dietetic Internships nationwide, and the need for nutrition education professionals without the RDN status, the MSND expanded the number of interns accepted annually from our historic 16 interns to 25 interns. Additionally, the MSND added a Nutrition Education (NE) Option which does not include the DI. The Option was later expanded to offer both online and on-campus tracks.

Table 1. Enrollment Data based on the Official Fall Count

	FA11	FA12	FA13	FA14	FA15	FA16	FA17	FA18
<b>Dietetic Internship</b>	13	29	29	29	30	27	39	38
<b>Nutrition Education</b>						9	11	19

After passing the RDN exam (see Table 2 for exam passage rate data), many of the alumni from the DI Option work as clinical dietitians in the hospital or long-term care environment. Other areas of employment include working for community agencies, such as WIC, SNAP-Ed, and Extension; school food service; nutrition consulting firms; and medical equipment companies, such as Medtronic. Of the three graduates from the NE Option, one was already a RD, so she continues to work in the clinical environment, and the other two just graduated in December 2018.

Table 2. Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Exam Data

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Average*
10/14	11/12	12/18	17/19	15/19	10/14	15/17	90/113
71%	92%	67%	88%	79%	71%	88%	80%

\*ACEND target pass rate is 80%.

Many MSND graduate students conducted and reported research findings on campus at the Grad Expo and/or the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences' Research and Creative Activity Fair as well as at state and national levels. Between Fall 2011-Fall 2018,

- ✓ 21 nutrition theses were deposited at Booth Library,
- ✓ 2 Research and Creative Activity grants were awarded to MSND students from the EIU Graduate School,
- ✓ 19 students were awarded a Williams Travel Grant from the EIU Graduate School, and
- ✓ 24 students presented at the Illinois Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Spring Assembly, the Illinois Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Conference, the Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Conference, the Food and Nutrition Conference and Exposition, or the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior Annual Conference.

## b. Description of major findings and recommendations for program improvement

### Dietetic Internship Option

Assessment data collection is rigorous within the DI Option due to the stipulations of the accreditation. Data are collected from a variety of sources: course assignments, comprehensive exam performance, preceptors, alumni surveys, employer surveys, and student exit surveys. Based on data collected from 2012-2016, only 4 of the 37 RDN accreditation competencies were not achieved. Two of these competencies (billing for services and supervising dietetic technicians during the internship) were not achievable based on the practices of our affiliated medical centers (these two competencies were removed by ACEND in 2017 as they were not achieved by the majority of DIs). The other two competencies, effective communication skills and overall knowledge of medical nutrition therapy, were addressed in the updated curriculum through the development of a written and oral component in every required course (and detailed grading rubrics) and the extension of the two Medical Nutrition Therapy courses from 2 credit hours each to 3 credit hours each.

Student satisfaction data collected from 2012-2017 revealed the following strengths of the program: diversity of opportunities within the various DI sites; quality and level of expertise of the faculty and site preceptors; and the nutrition education focus. Areas of improvement noted more time for medical nutrition therapy; more rigor in the graduate coursework; preceptor training due to the turnover of preceptors in the DI sites; and more elective course options. These areas for improvement were addressed

in the most recent curriculum revisions as well as in the development of an online preceptor training for the EIU DI preceptors.

In addition to the SLO Assessment Plan generated for accreditation purposes, the larger MSND program maintains an EIU Assessment Plan. The Student Learner Outcomes have been achieved based on the results of this plan.

#### Nutrition Education Option

A separate EIU Assessment Plan hasn't been developed for the option due to the limited number of students and the transient and diverse nature of the students. Based on the FA18 student base (n=17), 3 were international students, 4 were "special students" (defined by ACEND as those students who are completing their undergraduate dietetic course deficiencies but already have an undergraduate degree), 7 were ultimately denied a match with our DI for the second time, 1 dropped out of the DI and his degree was changed to the NE Option, and 2 were in the degree as their first choice for the degree (1 is already a RDN). Many of the students in this option apply for a second time to our Dietetic Internship. Given the increasing number of students in this option, the program is gaining momentum.

#### **c. Description of actions taken since the last review**

Several actions have taken place since the last review. Four are highlighted below:

- i. The Nutrition and Dietetics Department became a stand-alone program with the restructuring of the former Department of Family and Consumer Science and the subsequent formation of the new College of Health and Human.
- j. Implementation of a new Nutrition Education Option which is offered both online as well as on campus
- ii. Increase of the number of students who are able to match with our Dietetic Internship (historically 16 students annually, now 25)
- iii. Continued accreditation status of the DI with ACEND
- iv. Implementation of a streamlined, more cost-effective graduate program that includes a reduction of required hours, but maintains the necessary and historic rigor of the program

#### **d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review**

Goals for the upcoming review cycle include the following:

- i. Continue to grow the enrollment in the Nutrition Education Option
- ii. Staff tenure-track faculty lines
- iii. Continue to investigate the feasibility of re-implementing the Nutrition Education Specialist as defined by the Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior.
- iv. Develop and track assessment data for the Nutrition Education Option separate and in addition to the Dietetic Internship Option
- v. Maintain the academic rigor of the program through the selection of stellar students

## 7. Responses to Institution-Assigned Issues

### ***Strategies implemented to support the integrative learning experience at EIU and improve critical thinking skills***

- a. Students in the two Medical Nutrition Therapy courses (NTR 5150 and NTR 5154) counsel actual admitted patients at the OSF Heart of Mary facility in Urbana, IL.
- b. Students enrolled in the Principles of Nutrition Education and Behavior course (NTR 5155) plan, implement, and evaluate a nutrition education session within the community.
- c. Students enrolled in Medical Nutrition Therapy (NTR 5150) plan, implement, and evaluate a nutrition education for developmentally challenged individuals participating the Charleston Transitional Facilities.
- d. Students enrolled in the Nutrition in the Life Cycle course (NTR 5153), plan, implement, and evaluate a visual recipe that is designed for those participating in food pantries.
- e. Students enrolled in the Research Methods in Nutrition and Dietetics course (NTR 5600) complete a systematic review of the literature and present the results as a technical presentation, a written systematic review, and as a poster presentation.

### ***Unique, noteworthy activity that distinguishes the MSND at EIU from other similar programs.***

The nutrition education focus of both of the programs is the hallmark of our program. Currently, there are only 5 Dietetic Internships nationwide with this emphasis area. Our online MSND: Nutrition Education Option is unique in its online format with this focal area.

## 8. Outcome

### 8.1 Decision:

- Program in Good Standing  
 Program flagged for Priority Review  
 Program Enrollment Suspended

### 8.2 Explanation

On behalf of the office of Academic Affairs, I appreciate the faculty and program's commitment to assure high quality student outcomes through in-depth assessment of the DI Option and curricular innovation. The department is to be commended for its efforts with respect to accreditation standards. Lastly, the report demonstrates the faculty's commitment to academic excellence and student success.