

**December 2, 2022, email communication from Academy President Ellen R. Shanley, MBA, RDN, CDN, FAND, to Allison Hodge, Editor-in-Chief, *Public Health Nutrition***

Dear Dr. Hodge:

I send this Expression of Concern to you today on behalf of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' leadership and its constituents, hopeful that we can begin a positive exchange to correct misrepresentation of information and errors in PHN's recently published article, "[The corporate capture of the nutrition profession in the USA: the case of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.](#)"

This October 2022 article by Carriedo, Crosbie, Ruskin and Mialon remains of significant concern to the Academy, as it contained pernicious and unfounded statements regarding the Academy's relations with corporations and its Board of Directors' integrity. While, over the last month, we have engaged in addressing the specious allegations within the article, and the spinoff article published in the [Washington Post](#) so that we can correct the information for the public and our professional members, we now turn our efforts toward correcting the source of the misinformation, published, unfortunately, in *Public Health Nutrition*.

Please review our [follow-up comments](#) related to the inaccurate and misleading report as a backdrop of this Expression of Concern.

We ask for redress for what we believe to be flawed research and misleading and erroneous statements:

Research Methodology section

- Was the search strategy or hypothesis defined a priori?
- What was the coding scheme for which emails were processed? This was not defined.
- Were all results presented or available for the reader to see full documentation acquired via FOIA?
- Was an environmental scan performed that would illustrate types of acceptable/transparent research as defined by the authors (who themselves disclose significant funding to their respective institutions)? Otherwise, the information, potentially cherry-picked, about the Academy's funders is presented in a vacuum.

Erroneous statements:

- PHN, p 3: "*We also noted that corporations: (a) financed early career nutritionists and their research; (b) interfered with AND position papers on key nutrition related topics and themes and (c) led to the shaping of internal policies that benefit corporate partners.*"

- *“...However, the documents gathered through FOI show they privately continued to engage with corporations by: (i) investing AND funds in shares of Nestlé, PepsiCo and several pharmaceutical company stocks; (ii) accepting corporate contributions without disclosing their size, (iii) allowing BOD members to work for or consult for companies with interests that conflict with the mission of the AND, (iv) discussing internal policies within the BOD to fit industry needs, ignoring the work of the SATF, (v) allowing corporations to support AND’s members research and (vi) releasing public positions favouring corporations.”*
- PHN, p 11-12: *“The AND also publishes the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, a monthly peer-reviewed scientific journal. The journal has become a means for the AND to publish its official positions on certain topics(35). For example, the AND has published controversial positions that have been amended over time and appear to be aligned with corporate interests. For instance, in 2017 the AND CEO mentioned to some directors she received an email from the president of the National Dairy Council, concerned about the AND position on vegetarian diets published in the journal(36). The Council’s president indirectly questioned the science behind the public statement mentioning that the National Dairy Council was funding the AND. According to the AND CEO: [I] Heard an earful yesterday on the phone from Jean as President of Dairy (NDC) about our Vegetarian position paper (six months later?) that has a line in it about dairy and meat. Nothing in the paper says don’t eat dairy or meat or be a vegetarian or vegan but she was saying that Dairy is helping us with funding to elevate the Academy’s science and evidence and it’s so disappointing. I resented the correlation of the sponsorship. (Patricia Babjak, 28th April 2017).*
- *The original position paper on vegetarian diets published in 2015 was retracted at the request of the AND’s Academy Positions Committee, as they “became aware of inaccuracies” and a new version was made public in December 2016, eliminating any mention of specific animal source foods(36). These actions resonate with the commitments to “return specific rights and benefits” to AND/ANDF sponsors, as mentioned in internal documents (JS email, 6th July 2015) but contradict AND’s principle of “non-influence” (point 4, Fig. 2)(37).*

The Academy finds no evidence provided in the article to support the statements above. Regarding influence on the vegetarian diets position paper, the 2016 revised paper mentions animal products in several places throughout the article, so it is unclear what Carriedo et al refer to when stating “eliminating any mention of specific animal source foods.” Also, an inference is made that the National Dairy Council, through the Academy CEO’s email cited April 2017, influenced the revision of the 2016 vegetarian diets position paper. It is unclear how this is possible given the timeline provided by Carriedo et al. The vegetarian diets paper was retracted in 2015 because of independent review and notification of inaccuracies and omissions by five registered dietitian nutritionists unaffiliated with the animal products industry. How could a paper published in 2015, retracted, and revised in 2016, be influenced by communications occurring in 2017?

Finally, we hesitate to engage in an unmediated or non-confidential discussion of the article with the authors, as one of the senior authors has recently [publicly broadcast his sentiments](#) regarding the Academy's response to the article. Our hope in this endeavor is to engage in professional, meaningful and objective dialogue regarding the published record.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ellen R. Shanley, MBA, RDN, CDN, FAND  
President, 2022-2023  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics