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2020-2021**

June 29, 2020

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Nutrition Edge Communications and
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Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Dear Ms. Chin,

The recent tragic events have underlined how our colleagues and students of color are impacted daily from the trauma of racial injustice. We must all look more closely at ourselves and not minimize the impact that racism has on our colleagues. It takes a unified effort to end the systemic racism and its consequences of social injustice.

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) is a programmatic accreditor and focuses on specific programs within institutions. Following the United States Department of Education (USDE) regulations, ACEND is legally unable to impose requirements on institutions or impose on its programs requirements that are against their institutional mission and policies. ACEND's Accreditation Standards set the expectations for performance of our education programs. Programs that do not meet the standards are out of compliance. Adding requirements that address diversity, equity and inclusion in the ACEND standards is one of the strongest messages that ACEND can send to its stakeholders.

As such, upon hearing stories of microaggression and discrimination faced by our students and interns, ACEND took action. ACEND would like to share with you the recent actions that we have taken to affirm our strong position that we will not tolerate any instances of inequity nor any form of racial or other discrimination in our nutrition and dietetics education programs.

1. The Board added several required elements to the Draft 2022 Standards that will be available for public comment Fall 2020. The intent of these statements is to strengthen ACEND's stance on anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion:
 - Revised the Core Knowledge and Competency statements and added new ones to ensure students and interns receive training on diversity, equity and inclusion. These statements extend beyond the concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion, to address cultural humility, self-reflection of biases, social justice, racism and oppression.

- Added a requirement to ensure that program faculty receive the training needed to eliminate any instances of microaggression and discrimination in their program.
 - Added a requirement to ensure that preceptors receive the training needed to eliminate any instances of microaggression and discrimination in supervised practice.
 - Added a requirement for fair recruitment and admission practices to enhance diversity of the student body.
 - Added a requirement to ensure program policies protect students and interns against inequity, racism, microaggressions and discrimination. This policy will provide ACEND with the ability to investigate complaints received from students and interns with regards to inequity or acts of racism and discrimination.
2. Based on a recommendation from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Diversity and Inclusion Committee, ACEND updated the format of the annual report to include more inclusive language and improve the accuracy of data collected on students'/interns' race, ethnicity as well as gender identification.
 3. ACEND is creating a webpage to provide resources (e.g., webinars, recorded lectures, workshops, data and trends) to programs to train their students, faculty and preceptors on diversity, equity and inclusion. The *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* page will also include best practices to recognize programs that support Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) students/interns and highlighted BIPOC related educational activities.

These critical conversations must be ongoing. The ACEND Board will meet on July 22nd-24th and will continue discussing your call to action at that time. As highlighted in this letter, whatever further actions ACEND takes, we promise they will be thoughtful, strategic, and demarcated to obtain outcomes that support inclusive education and learning environments. Additionally, any actions will be communicated with our stakeholders to promote ongoing discussions.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback along with concrete suggestions for implementation. ACEND's mission is to ensure the quality of nutrition and dietetics education to advance the practice of the profession. We will continue to engage in conversations with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Diversity and Inclusion Committee to ensure ACEND is properly addressing these pressing concerns. We value our stakeholders' input to assist us in driving the profession forward. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Rayane AbuSabha, ACEND Executive Director, at rabusabha@eatright.org.

Sincerely,



Barbara Hopkins, MMSc, RD, LD, Chair