

**NDEP FEEDBACK to ACEND: RE: Program Director Survey – FEM Talking Points for Parents and Students - Summary of Responses**

- Post NDEP Council discussion (8/19/20), send to ACEND (8/24/20), and posted to NDEP website (8/25/20).

Program Type	%Responses	n	In Process of Transition to FEM (all program types)	
DI	42.37	50	YES	23 (19%)
DPD	33.90	40	NO	95 (81%)
CP	9.32	11		
FEM Graduate (FG)	6.78	8	<b>Considering Transition to FEM (all program types)</b>	
DT	3.39	4	YES	31 (26%)
DPD/DI/CP with an ISPP	2.54	3	NO	87 (74%)
FEM Bachelor (FB)	1.69	2		
FEM Associate (FA)	0.00	0	<b>Not Currently Transitioning and Not Considering Transitioning</b>	
TOTAL:	100%	<b>N=118</b>	<b>N = 87/118 current non FEM- programs (74%)</b>	

**(% of individuals that commented) – ACEND statement - Individual Comments/Suggestions for Change of Wording**

- 1) **(30%) The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) has released the *Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate (FA), Bachelor's (FB) and Graduate (FG) Degree Programs, which are competency-based education (CBE) programs that integrate classroom learning with supervised experiential learning.***
  - FEMS are very different target audiences. Recommend one talking points for FA, one for FB and one for FG so that the messaging makes more sense and is targeted throughout the rest of the document.
  - This too "education-speak" for most lay people to understand.
  - **Inclusivity issue:** The CBE/FEM approach limits diversity in programs.
  - This statement implies that FEM, alone, provide CBE which is misleading--all programs are competency based. It is unjustly denigrating the DI, CP, ISPP. It is more accurate to say that ACEND sets competencies (CRDNs) for all accredited undergraduate and graduate programs preparing students for the RDN credential.
  - Explain what supervised experiential learning is. They are used to hearing the term dietetic internship. SEL is a new concept.
  
- 2) **(36%) Nutrition and Dietetics is joining the other allied health profession that have switched to CBE model, such as physical therapy, speech language pathology, occupational therapy, audiology, nursing and pharmacy.**
  - **Suggestions:** similar to Talking Points for Administrators suggestions.
  - It would help to explain why this is better than what is currently used (using data and references, evidenced based).
  - State that the CBE model gets all professionals to a higher level of skill, professionalism.
  - Some parents and students may not fully understand "allied health professions" or that by dietetics making this switch to FEM, the value is greater.
  
- 3) **(48%) One of the advantages of CBE is that it fosters work readiness. In the FEM Accreditation Standards, the curriculum is guided with the competencies and their respective performance indicators, which are clearly defined based on the desired behaviors and job skills targeted.**
  - We do not yet have any evidence that the FEM fosters better work readiness over existing programs.
  - This implies that non-FEM programs are inferior as they are not guided by competencies and performance indicators.
  - Must be clarified that current stand-alone dietetic internships are also using CBE, and are held by the same standards.
  - There is a disconnect between academia and hospitals/clinics, etc in what they are teaching, so what is being taught in the classroom may not be what is practiced.
  - Most lay people would not know what a performance indicator or competency is.
  - If we indicate we are only training for a specific trade, why doesn't this become a vocational degree?
  - Students must have the ability to critically think and that is far more than CBE - it is literature and writing.
  - It will be very difficult to make the case for parents/students to spend the money it takes to obtain a four-year degree only to be work ready to be a technician.
  - **Suggestion:** eliminate first sentence...begin with "In the FEM Accreditation."
  
- 4) **(53%) Employers see potential value in job applicants who will study using CBE since it aligns academics with the skills they seek in their employees.**
  - Employers have not provided this evidence. If they have, then please share with educators and preceptors.
  - Implies that graduates of FEM programs may be more marketable to potential employers than graduates of other programs. Not only is that an unfounded claim, it also guides applicants away from other programs as they will now be perceived as "second tier" educations.

- Implies that employers won't or don't seek job applicants who graduated from non-FEM programs.
  - If an undergraduate student is awarded a degree from a FEM program in a University, will the employer know it was CBE? I don't know of any employers who would choose an RD based on whether they graduated from a FEM, CP or DPD+DI.
  - **Legal/ethical issues:** There has been no employer market survey nor a series of employer market survey to substantiate these claims. Without data - these statements raise ethical issues. .... provide the data, evidence.
- 5) **(46%) Students completing *Future Education Model* programs can provide employers with functional resumes that define in-depth skills they will have and indicating they are competent at performing those skills when they enter the workplace.**
- **Suggestion:** "students will be prepared with in-depth skills and competent in those areas so that they are able to enter the workplace..."
  - This no different than what could be said about a student completing any other type of ACEND accredited program, but it gives the impression that students completing FEM programs will have more compelling resumes than other graduates. Current interns have "functional resumes" too. They have to do 1200 hours of "hands-on" skills, so they should be competent to perform entry-level skills when they enter the workplace.
- 6) **( 58%) Similar to a graduate nutrition and dietetics coordinated program (CP), students will benefit from programs following the *Future Education Model* Standards. The new standards' one-step approach to complete educational requirements versus the most common dietetics two-step process will yield additional benefits to students including:**
- **Guaranteed ability to sit for the registration exam once the *Future Education Program* is successfully completed. In the most common dietetics education model, students usually need to competitively apply to a supervised practice program after earning their degree; the current low acceptance rate into supervised practice programs means there is no guarantee of being able to sit for the registration exam in the current two-step approach;**
  - **Decrease in expenses due to enrollment in a single program versus enrollment in two programs; and,**
  - **Potential ability to complete program in less time because classroom learning and supervised experiential learning are integrated into a single program.**
  - This section makes no sense for the FA and FB...yes, can take the DTR exam but they can already do that. Again, you need a separate talking points doc for the FG.
  - There is no evidence this FG program pathway is less expensive, if there is data, provide.
  - If there is a low acceptance rate that is worth mentioning with current data.
  - **Suggestion:** The new standards' one-step approach to complete educational requirements will allow students the guaranteed ability to sit for the registration exam once the Future Education Program is completed. The more common dietetics two-step process requires students to apply for internships while completing their degree, not after.
  - **Suggestion:** Perhaps this is the greatest benefit to the FE model - a one-college model that allows the student to work through the Bachelor's, supervised practice, and masters in one place. Perhaps that should be placed at the beginning of the sentence rather than the end.
  - Many FG programs have all the course work within the program? It seems like the two steps are still there. How are CP and FG different?
  - **Suggestion:** remove the first introductory statement and start the sentence with "Students will benefit from..." then explain that "an example of a one-step program is a CP, where the knowledge requirements.
  - **Update:** the current match rate from the April 2020 match was 71% first round with 95% estimated placement if all slots were filled - so the statement of "the current low acceptance rate into supervised practice programs" is both factually incorrect and misleading.
  - Statement is not completely true. Students will not be able to automatically enroll in a graduate FEM without an undergraduate degree.
  - **Diversity and Inclusivity issue:** A student has to successfully finish the FEM program before they can sit for the exam. If they are not successful, what do they have? No bachelor's degree, no graduate degree, not eligible to sit for the exam - nothing!
- 7) **(44%) Results of recent qualitative data collected by ACEND from current FEM programs reveal additional tangible benefits to *Future Education Model* programs, such as:**
- ***Future Education Model* programs are flexible because they allow students to learn at their own pace. When the student demonstrates competence, they have the ability to move on to other more advanced competencies.**
  - **Better preparation of students for the future of dietetics practice by including enhanced competencies (competencies that are set for a higher level of practice compared to those included in current dietetics education programs).**
  - **CBE training is engaging because the education includes both classroom learning and supervised experiential learning at the same time, making the content more relevant and helping students more quickly make the connection between theory and practice; the integration of practical skills with didactic knowledge allows for greater retention of those skills.**

- I would eliminate this benefit. Most programs I am aware of have cohorts of students and don't have any allowance for student working at their own pace. If they don't achieve a certain course completion, there is a significant delay in completion of the program and eligibility
- How is ACEND able to predict the future of dietetics practice and thus, set competencies that will elevate practice, without evidence?
- Even if students complete all of their required competencies, program lengths are what they are, and students cannot graduate early, which is how I would interpret this statement as a student.
- Are students guaranteed a higher salary if they receive a Master's degree? In order to make an informed decision, parents and students must also be aware of both the benefit and cost of attending a FEM program.
- While some programs might choose to be more student centered and more pure CBE in their approach, most programs I've been hearing from are using a hybrid model (still very much rooted in a time based approach).
- So does this mean students can take as long as they want so beyond the traditional 2 years for master's. Can students pick and choose when they complete rotations/competencies. Is it truly at their own pace or self-paced?
- **Suggestion:** perhaps the wording should turn it around and say something that "students who are advanced in an area can progress more quickly or be offered advanced activities", implying that if you have experience you can go on to the next thing more quickly.
- While this is the ideal of CBE, this is not the reality - at least in our program. Universities have rigid rules relating to credit hours and contact hours. Seems a little too early to claim. As a Director who is transitioning a graduate level CP to a FG, it is very challenging to logistically schedule rotations to match an individual's learning speed and I believe it will take some time to truly realize this benefit across programs.
- **Suggestion:** "Results of PRELIMINARY qualitative data..."
- They are no more flexible the DI, ISPP, and CP--in fact, ISPP (note the INDIVIDUALIZED) are more flexible. The FEM is lock-step and it has created 'made up' degrees (e.g., MSCN) and diminished the importance of the research process associated with a DI+MS.
- Students in university settings are still tied to a curriculum, and when in the didactic portion they are still learning together and at the same time. Where it changes is in the SEL portion, that is where they can advance more rapidly, or slowly.
- How does the CBE offer new job opportunities and improve the student's skill set. Studying at their own pace and providing a functional resume to the employers does not provide good information on how this is superior to the current model.
- How were the enhanced competencies determined? Provide definitive list of "enhanced competencies".  
I would also like to see the questions and how the data was collected.
- Are we "better preparing" students in one type of program than another if they are all going to sit for the same exam and earn the same credential?
- Most programs using the FEM are simply utilizing their current undergraduate courses with minor additions..this does not constitute Higher level competency.
- There is a dumbing down of the master's degree when programs incorporate them into undergraduate programs (5 year FMP). This leads to NO additional time and NO higher level of practice. Alternatively, dumbing down of the master's degree when it's only one year for the master's and one year of supervised.

8) **(33%) Any additional comments/questions.**

- Unnecessarily complex and provides information that overreaches what we know at this point about the benefits.
- Biased and unfair to programs which are not FEM.
- How are questions/concerns about DT programs (both current and FEM) to be addressed?
- Need to provide quantitative data.  
This would help everyone to see what the pros and cons are in an objective manner.
- **Inclusivity issue:** Information that this document provides is an unfair advantage to FEM programs and shows favoritism by ACEND that is not based on evidence based facts. It also perpetuates discrimination against persons from low income families.
- FEM programs were launched with the message that outcomes data would be collected, analyzed, and reviewed before new standards would come out. By marketing FEM programs without having evidence of their "benefits", ACEND is engaging in practices that go against what they professionally promised to AND paying members.