
ACEND Virtual Town Hall Meeting
June 17, 2025 11:00 a.m. Central Time

Host: Rayane AbuSabha, PhD, RD
ACEND Executive Director

Presenter(s): Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD, Sarah Murray,
PhD, RDN, LD, Melissa Hansen-Petrik, PhD, RDN,
LDN, Liz Combs, EDD, MS, RD, LD, Amy LaFalce,
MS, RDN

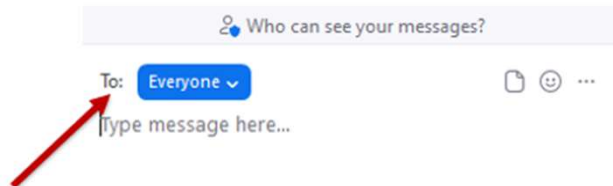


Webinar Recording Link:
<https://vimeo.com/1094148619>

Rayane, Presenters thanked all attendees (230 participants). The meeting ended at 12:26 PM CT.

Welcome!

Lines have been muted. If you have questions or comments, use the chat feature and post to **Everyone**.



To enable closed captioning, select **Show Captions** icon **CC** from the meeting controls toolbar.

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1

Using Chats During ACEND Town Hall



ACEND encourages attendees to use the chat feature to ask questions and express their opinions respectfully


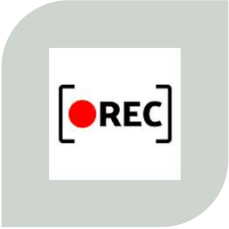


At any point, ACEND reserves the right to remove an attendee from the Town Hall for inappropriate or harassing comments

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2

Accreditation Council
for Education in
Nutrition and Dietetics
the accrediting agency for the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics



This webinar is
being recorded

The slides and recording
will be shared on the
ACEND webpage

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3

Accreditation Council
for Education in
Nutrition and Dietetics
the accrediting agency for the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

ACEND Announcements and Updates

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4

Revisions of the 2022 ACEND Accreditation Standards

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5

Major Items Being Addressed

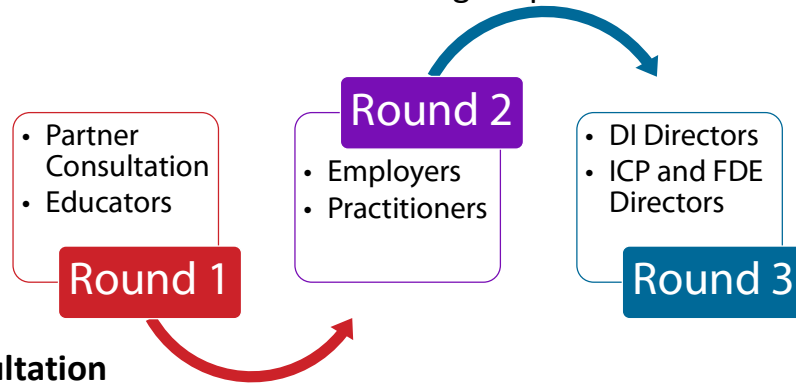


- Release time
- Qualifications
- Graduate level curriculum - laddering
- Transition to CBE
- Clinical skills
- Protect students in intern identified SP
- International students and engagement

6

Feedback on the Draft Competencies

- Competencies: Comments obtained using Delphi method



Final Consultation

- Open public comment period:** Full Standards that include the competencies

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7

Partner Feedback on Competencies and Performance Indicators (Delphi Round 1)

Partners



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8

Responses by Program Type (Delphi Round 1)

Program Competencies and Performance Indicators	Number of responses
Coordinated Program (CP)	84
Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD)	81
Dietetic Technician (DT)	11

Note: DI program directors will be surveyed soon

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9

To Come



Public comments survey Fall 2025-Spring 2026

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10

Dietetics Application Process (DAP) Reminders

- NEW DICAS URL for applications -
<https://dicas.cas.myliaison.com/applicant-ux/#/login>
- The previous URL will redirect through the end of June

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11

DAP Reminders

2025-2026 Application Cycle

All supervised practice programs must
participate in DICAS

*Does not apply to enrolled students selected within
the same institution*

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12

DAP Reminders

- Configuration portal opened; submit for review by July 16th to be live for applicants when the portal opens on August 5th
- Program sets their own application due date

Key Dates:

- Program notifies applicants of decisions (accepted, waitlisted, rejected) on or before November 1/March 1
- May not require decision before November 15/March 15

Traffic Rules and resources on the ACEND DAP webpage

13

Accredited Program Directory Updates

Accredited Program Directory Updates

- **Admission Requirements (DI, GP, CP):** Filter whether a DPD Verification Statement is required by the program.
- **Education Format (All Programs):** Search for programs based on the education format offered (e.g., online vs. in-person coursework).
- **Tuition (All Programs):** Link to program tuition information page listed under program details



Accredited Dietetics Program Directory

- Associate's Programs
- Bachelor's Programs
- Non-Degree Internship Programs
- Master's Programs
- Doctoral Programs
- International Programs

[Learn About >](#)

14

ACEND Portal Update

- Program Directors can view the Site Visit Review Team Details
- View review team details, including CVs/resumes, after approval of the site visit.

Updates will be in the June ACEND Update

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15

Low Unemployment Rates for Nutrition Majors

Nutrition is one of the lowest unemployment rates among college majors:

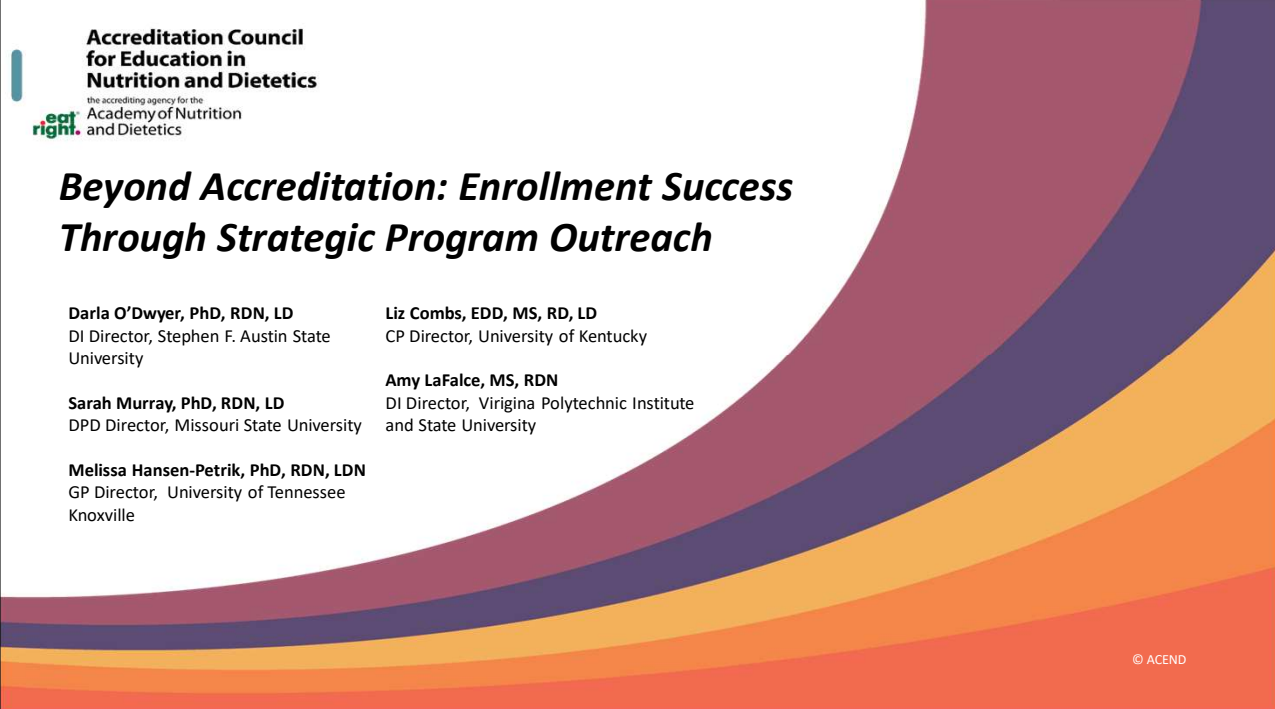
- 0.4% unemployment rate for recent college graduates
- Other health professions:
 - Nursing: 1.4%
 - Pharmacy: 3.2%

MAJOR	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE	MEDIAN WAGE EARLY CAREER	MEDIAN WAGE MID-CAREER	SHARE WITH GRADUATE DEGREE
MISCELLANEOUS PHYSICAL SCIENCES	2.8%	39.7%	\$58,000	\$99,000	50.6%
MISCELLANEOUS TECHNOLOGIES	5.0%	55.6%	\$60,000	\$92,000	18.4%
NURSING	1.4%	9.7%	\$65,000	\$84,000	30.1%
NUTRITION SCIENCES	0.4%	46.8%	\$54,000	\$75,000	47.5%
OVERALL	3.6%	38.3%	\$55,000	\$83,000	39.1%
PERFORMING ARTS	2.7%	62.3%	\$41,900	\$70,000	37.3%

<https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market#:~:explore=outcomes-by-major>

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16



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for Education in
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the accrediting agency for the
Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

***Beyond Accreditation: Enrollment Success
Through Strategic Program Outreach***

Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD DI Director, Stephen F. Austin State University	Liz Combs, EDD, MS, RD, LD CP Director, University of Kentucky
Sarah Murray, PhD, RDN, LD DPD Director, Missouri State University	Amy LaFalce, MS, RDN DI Director, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Melissa Hansen-Petrik, PhD, RDN, LDN GP Director, University of Tennessee Knoxville	

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17



Enrollment Trends

Stephen F. Austin State University

MS/DI Nutrition and Integrative Health

Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD
Dietetic Internship Director

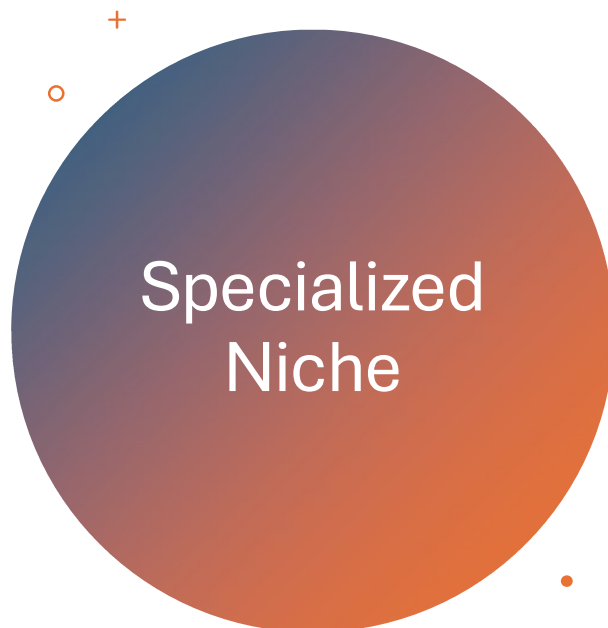
18

Enrollment History

- Applications declining, but steady enrollment.
- Students only applying who want to attend SFA

Cohort Year	Applications	Accepted	Completion	Notes
2025-2027	16	9		5 SFA DPD, 3 TX DPD, 1 out-of-state
2024-2026	13	8	7 expected to complete	5 SFA DPD preselect, 3 matched first round (1 out-of-state, 2 TX DPD). No second round. 1 switched to other conc 2 nd year.
2023-2025	17	9	7	5 SFA DPD preselect. 3 matched first round (2 SFA DPD, 1 TX DPD). 1 out-of-state second round. 2 dropped out of MS/DI 2 nd year (1 SFA DPD switched to other conc, 1 out-of-state QF).
2022-2023	31	10	9	10 matched first round (2 SFA DPD, 5 TX DPD, 2 out-of-state). 1 TX DPD did not accept match. 1 matched second round (out-of-state). 2 SFA DPD, 4 TX DPD, 3 out-of-state.
2021-2022	42	7	7	7 SFA DPD matched first round, none in second round.
2020-2021	26	6	6	3 first round (1 SFA DPD, 2 TX DPD), 3 in second round (1 SFA DPD, 2 TX DPD).
2019-2020	38	10	8	10 matched first round (8 SFA DPD, 1 TX DPD, 1 out-of-state). 1 SFA DPD dropped out first semester, 1 TX DPD dismissed.
2018-2019	No data	9	9	7 SFA DPD matched first round, 2 second round (1 SFA DPD, 1 out-of-state). 8 SFA DPD, 1 out of state.
2017-2018	35	10	10	10 SFA DPD matched first round. 10 completed

19



- Integrative and Functional Nutrition (IFN)
 - Transitioned from a community focus
- Course Curriculum
 - 2017 - Offered the first IFN course
 - 2019-2025 – 3 new courses, plus private practice
 - 2026-2027 – 2 new courses approved, 1 proposed
- Supervised practice – IFN rotations vary/change based on availability
 - 32-160 hours

20



Reorganized as an Independent Degree

- MS Nutrition and Integrative Health
 - 2023 approved by the TX Higher Education Coordinating Board
 - Previously, MS/DI housed under the Human Sciences MS program as a cert program
 - Pros
 - Degree reflects nutrition and dietetics content
 - Identified on transcript
 - Curriculum aligns with major
 - Analytics is separated
 - Cons
 - On the enrollment radar
 - University assessment requirements (Academic Program Review)

21



Two Tracks, One Degree

- MS/DI and Nutrition and Wellness
- MS/DI Track
 - ACEND Accredited, 36 credit hour/1,000 supervised practice
 - MS Mandate-changed from 1.5 year model (supervised practice first w/MS courses, finish in Fall of year 2)
 - Now a 2-year curriculum
 - Online/Distance year 1, F2F year 2 (while in supervised practice)
 - DI Applicant, Personal Statement in DICAS, 2024: "Lastly, I am applying for this program due to its flexibility in the coursework. Being able to stay at-home while working full time will be perfect to make necessary changes to be successful in this internship financially and mentally."
 - Geographic Flexibility – 2 supervised practice sites
- Nutrition and Wellness Track
 - Non-accredited, 36 credit hour
 - Online/Distance
 - Helps enrollment numbers if MS/DI dips
 - Serves students in DI programs that need to affiliate with a university, RD's and other professionals seeking further education in IFN
 - Allows MS/DI students to change in first year seamlessly

22

Marketing Efforts



Update the Applicant Guide to Supervised Practice yearly. Students search keywords



Attend Recruiting Events



Update Website – focus on SEO



Program listed on DIFM website



DI Director regularly speaks in UG courses about unique focus



Scholarships

23

Next Steps

Money-Raising Efforts for Scholarships

Professional Conference
Summer camp
Advancement office
Code courses for
distance learning

Seek more IFN rotations

Multiple contracts are in
review

Increase visibility

Seeking Certified
Nutrition Specialist
(CNS) eligibility
National Board for
Health & Wellness
Coaching (NBHWC)
accreditation


24



25

Increasing Program Visibility

Internally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed course codes for better recognition • Proposed a nutrition course for the general education program
Externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed the name of the undergraduate program



BACHELOR of
**SCIENCE IN NUTRITION
AND DIETETICS**

26

Reducing Financial Barriers

Decreased total
credit hours

Revised
undergraduate
program admission
requirements

Coming Fall 2025-
Accelerated
Pathway!

27

Recognizing Excellence

Contacting high
achieving students in
introductory courses

Hi, Student!

You are doing a great job in DTN 240! We'd love to see you in some of our other courses. Have you considered a degree in [Nutrition and Dietetics](#)? You may also be interested in the [Nutrition minor](#) or some of our other [certificates](#). I am happy to talk with you more about the exciting field of Nutrition and Dietetics, just let me know if you want to learn more. Again, congratulations on a job well done in DTN 240!

28

Improved Enrollment



17% ENROLLMENT
INCREASE



33% RECRUITED
BY INSTRUCTOR



ACCELERATED PATHWAY –
INCREASE INTO THE GRADUATE
PROGRAM AND WILL BE
ATTRACTIVE FOR UNDERGRAD
STUDENTS

29

Conclusion and Questions

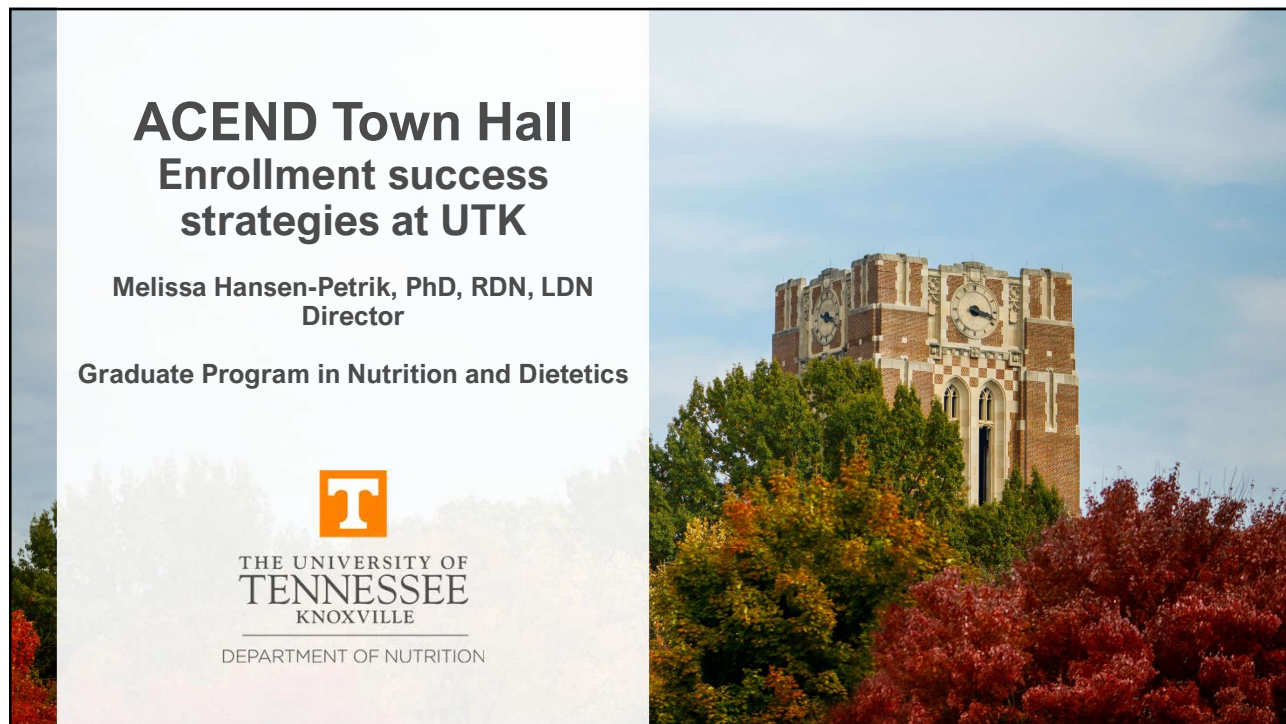


@missouristatedietetics



Missouri State University Nutrition and Dietetics

30



31

Success strategies we use to support robust enrollment

- **Program structure** that works and is attractive to prospective students, families, and university administration
 - Primarily an accelerated 5-year program model
 - Maintenance of DPD as alternative
 - In-person and rigorous with integration of didactic learning/supervised practice
- **Marketing**
 - Social media - Instagram
 - Career and Technical Education (CTE) high school recruitment as well as connections with community colleges
 - Website and program guide

32

Program Structure

Give them what they want

33

TIME



MONEY



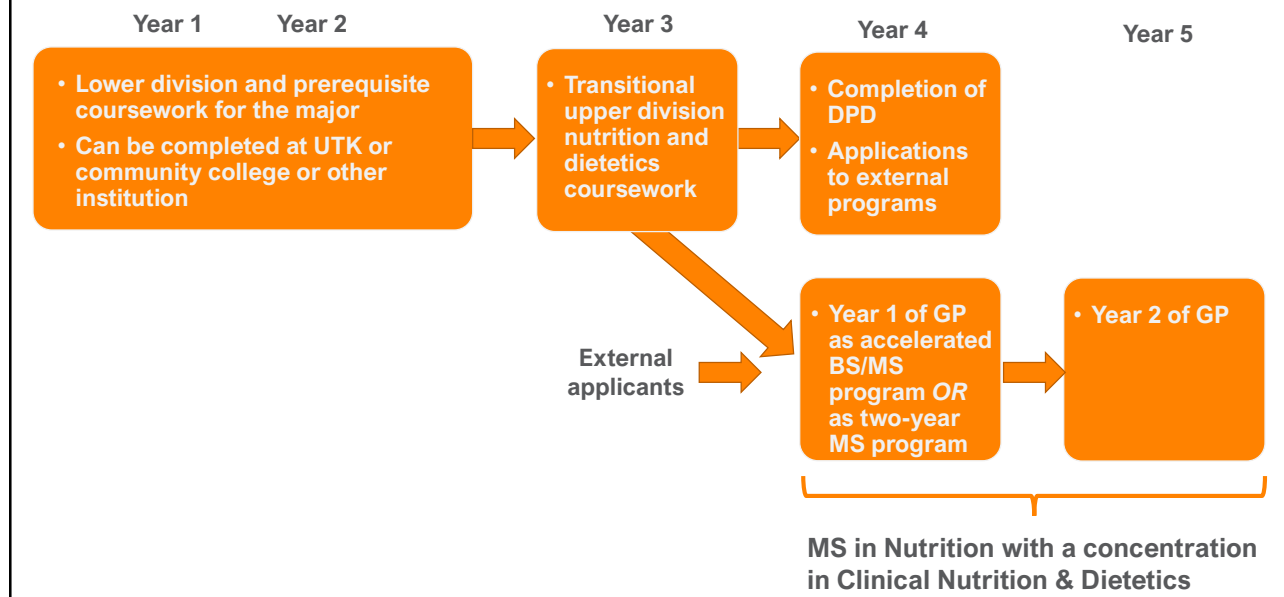
**RIGOROUS IN-PERSON
APPROACH WITH SAFETY NET**



T NUTRITION

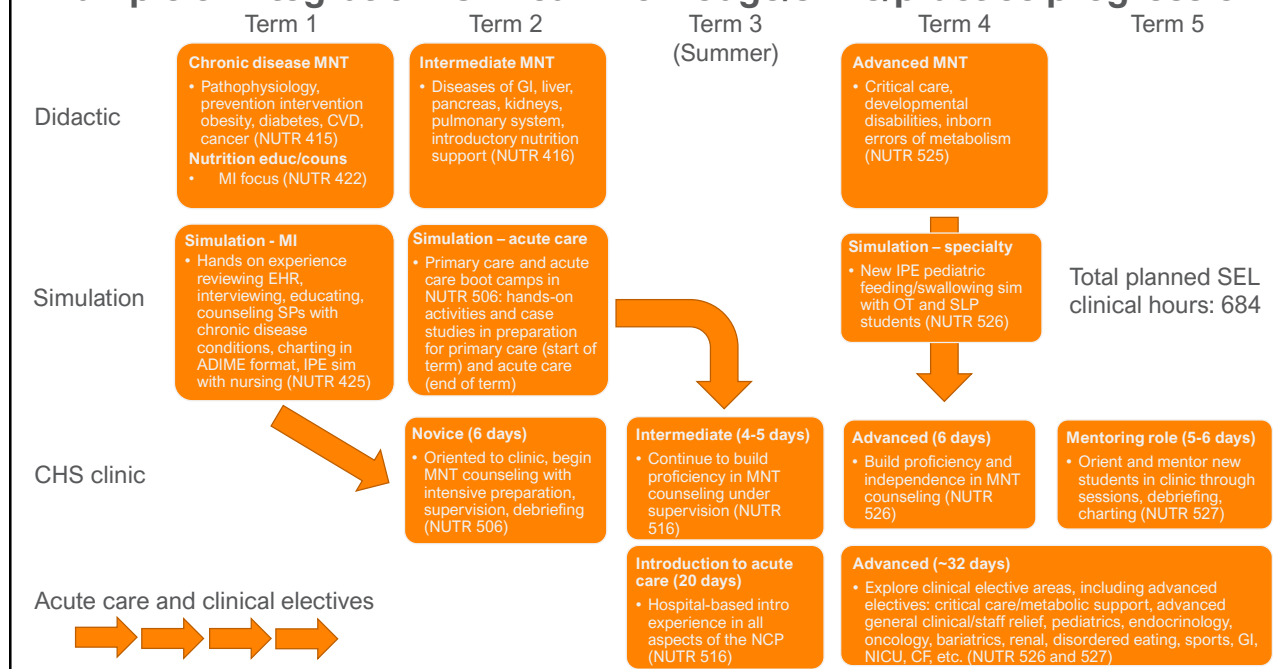
34

Structure of the DPD/GP as a 5-year pathway



35

Example of integration: Clinical knowledge/skills/practice progression

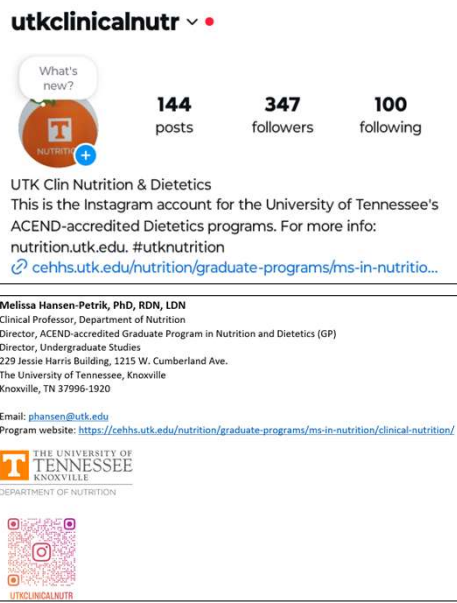


36

Marketing


Reach the target audience

37

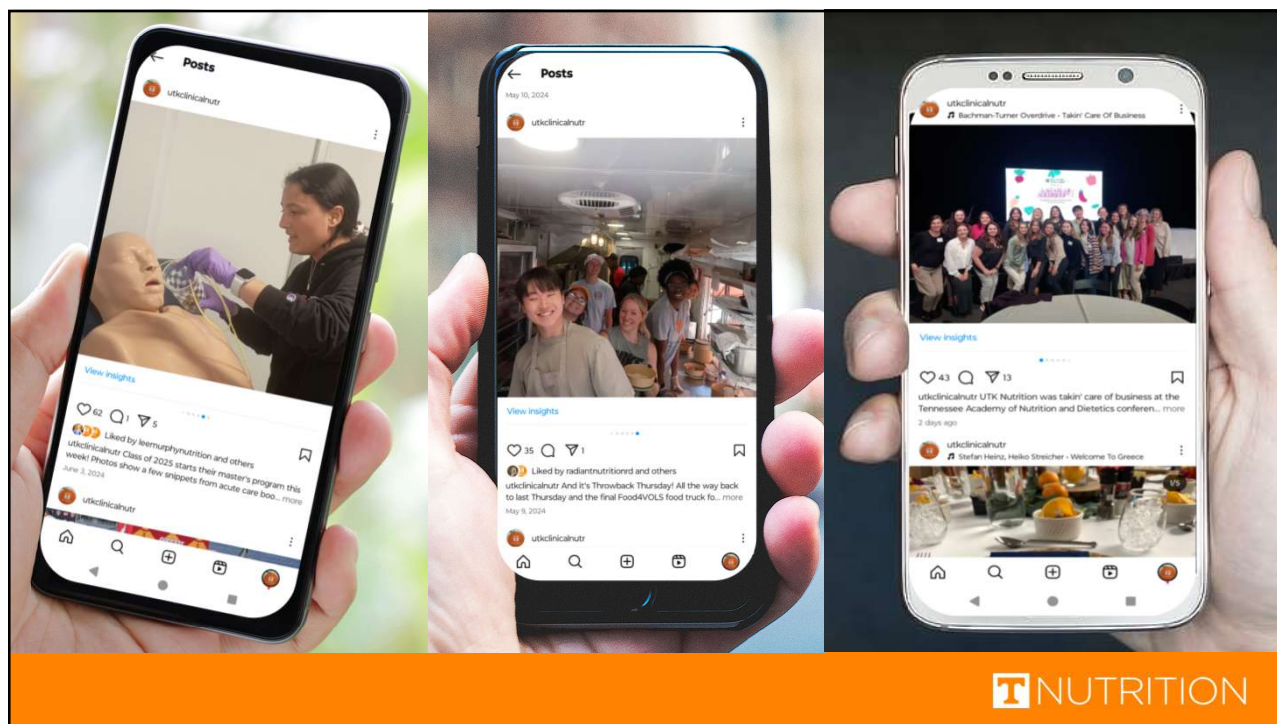


Instagram as a marketing tool

- Instagram is a prime social media choice - popular among high school and college students as well as organizations
- Started spring 2022 with Takeover Tuesday features of our first GP graduating cohort
- We build community: Students + their friends and family members, preceptors and healthcare facilities, UTK departments, administrators, and others – follow strategically, engage by liking posts
- We market to prospective students
 - Use handle on website, in presentations
 - QR code in email signature
- Professional posts are nice, but a more personal and casual approach can be effective, too



38



39

Recruiting from secondary schools and community colleges

- Capitalize on Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
 - The National Career Clusters® Framework at the state level
 - CTE contacts at local and state level
- Work with admissions and recruitment to engage with high school and community college counselors and teachers in key courses
 - Participate in college and career fairs
 - Host on-campus events

T NUTRITION

40

CTE in our state and local high schools



Career & Technical Education

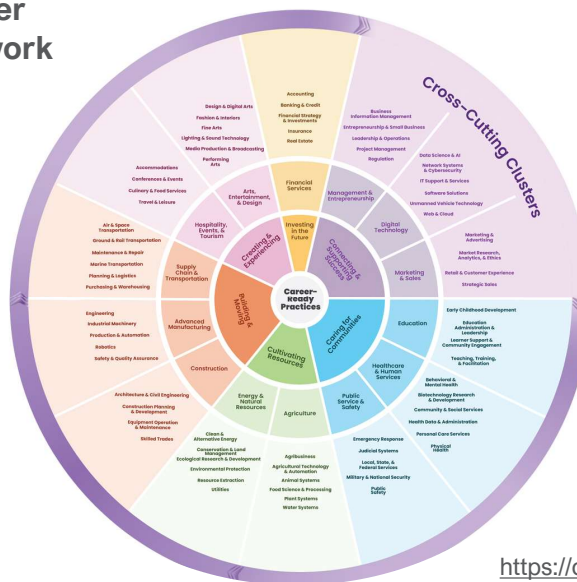
Career and Technical Education (CTE) provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. CTE prepares these learners for the world of work by introducing them to workplace competencies and makes academic content accessible to students by providing it in a hands-on context. In fact, the high school graduation rate for CTE concentrators is about 90% – 15 percentage points higher than the national average.

Foundational to CTE is rigorous program standards. This section will help define what high-quality CTE looks like in the 21st century, with extended resources on the [Common Career Technical Core](#) and program of study standards, built on the [National Career Clusters Framework](#)[®].

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41

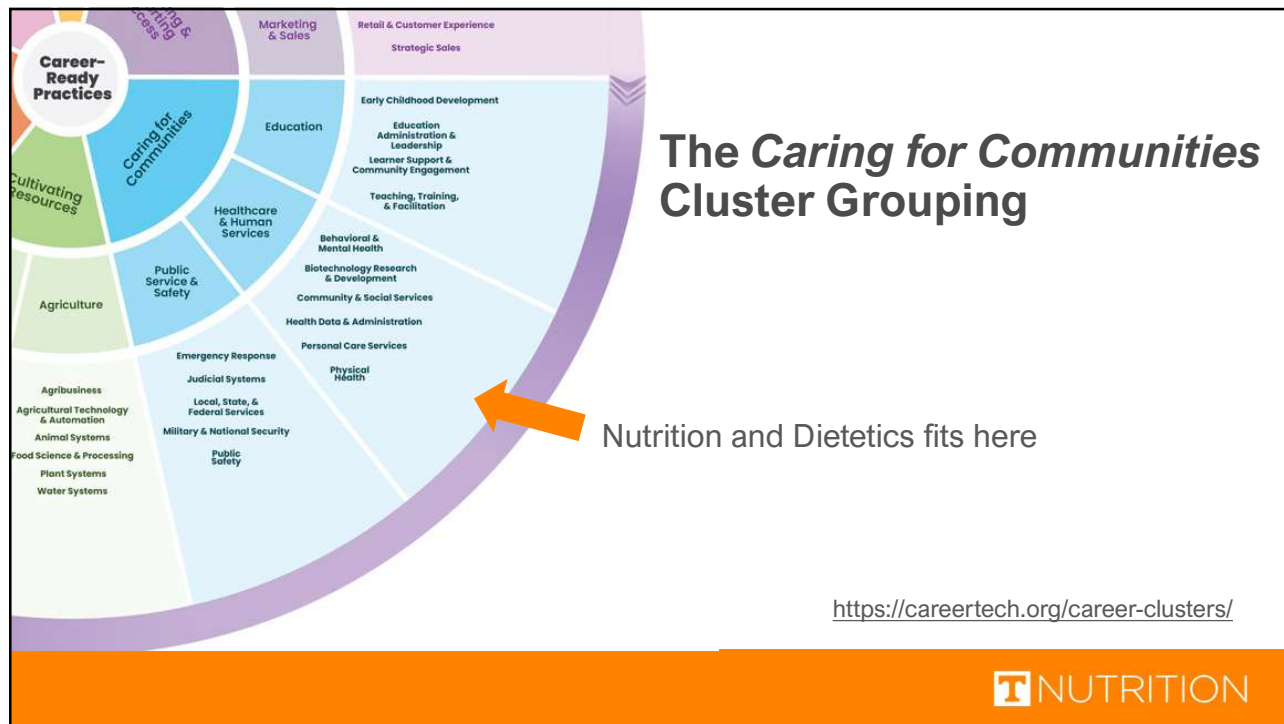
The National Career Clusters[®] Framework



<https://careertech.org/career-clusters/>

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42



43

Tennessee Dept of Education 2025-26 Career Clusters

Meta Cluster: Improving Society → Caring for Communities

Current Career Cluster	Revised Career Cluster	Programs of Study
Education & Training	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching as a Profession Early Childhood Education Educational Guidance & Social Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Science Human Services 	Healthcare & Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral Health BioSTEM Dietetics & Nutrition Cosmetology Barbering Human & Social Services Diagnostic Services Emergency Services Nursing Services Sport & Human Performance Therapeutic Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law, Public Safety, Corrections, & Security Government & Public Administration 	Civics, Public Service, & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal Justice Pre-Law Fire Management Leadership in Government (JROTC)

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/2025-26_CTE_Career_Cluster_Framework.pdf

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44

Tennessee high school profile – Dietetics and Nutrition Science course of study

Figure 5. Open Enrollment Analysis

School Year	Schools Offering Dietetics and Nutrition Science
2020-21	79
2021-22	75
2022-23	72

Tier 3



Figure 5a. Student Enrollment

School Year	Introduction to Human Studies	Nutrition Across the Lifespan	Nutrition Science and Diet Therapy	Human Services Practicum	Dual Enrollment
2020-21	6,059	3,051	1,433	248	38
2021-22	6,037	2,651	1,192	237	116
2022-23	5,279	2,531	1,067	183	199

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/ccte/HumanServices_JustificationDocument_2024.pdf

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45

Tennessee Promoted Student Industry Credentials that align with Dietetics & Nutrition

- New focus on nationally-recognized credentials rather than state-developed certification tests
 - Certified Feeding Assistant
 - ServSafe Food Handler
 - ServSafe Manager Certification
 - Certified Personal Trainer
- Recommended CTE level – Tier 3

<https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education/student-industry-certification.html>

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46

How does CTE work in *your* state?

Home » Our Vision » CTE in Your State

CTE In Your State

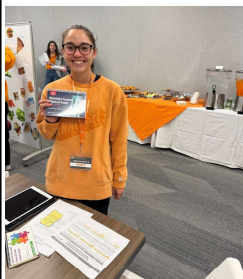
Career Technical Education (CTE) is working in every state and territory to help meet the country's very real and immediate challenges of economic development, student achievement and global competitiveness. In total, some 11.2 million students are enrolled in CTE programs across the country.

<https://careertech.org/our-vision/cte-in-your-state/>

Also be sure to search your state Department of Education and school districts for CTE information

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47



Recruiting from high schools

- Connect with:
 - State-level CTE programs
 - College/career counselors, teachers in food/nutrition and health sciences
- Coordinate efforts with recruitment and admissions staff on your campus
- Ideas:
 - Visit high school classes and organization meetings (FCCLA, HOSA, etc.)
 - Host a table at college and career fairs
 - Hold on campus events with hands-on activities and tours (February 2025 event at left)
 - Recruit undergraduate dietetics students to help develop and lead activities if possible

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48



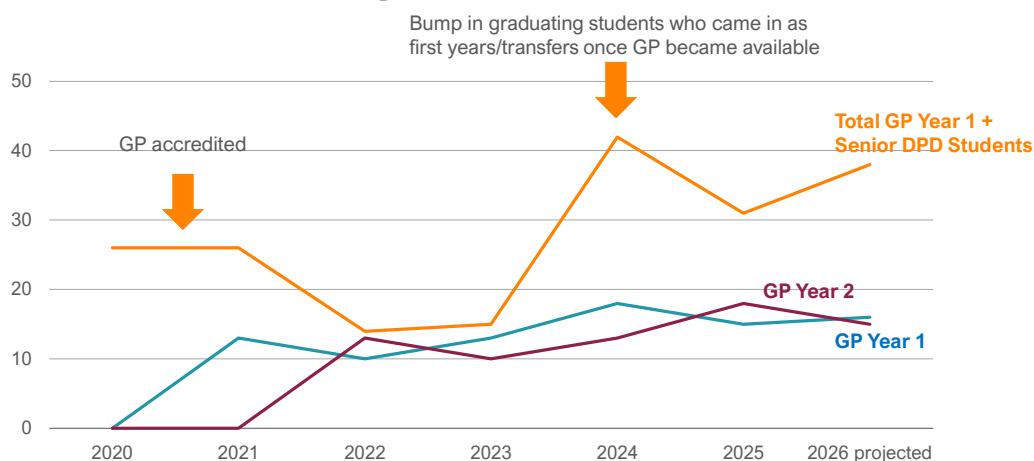
Recruiting from community colleges

- Connect with counselors who guide students in transferring to 4-year programs
- Participate in recruitment events (photo at left)
- Know their curricula and do what you can to make transfers seamless
- 2023-2025 and 2024-2026 GP cohorts each had 4 students who came to us directly from an associate's degree program

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49

UTK dietetics programs enrollment 2020 to present



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50

Key program features – summary

- What students and families want that brings them to UTK: efficiency with time, cost; some level of guarantee – opportunity for GP plus option of DPD in an in-person format
- Effective marketing – including user-friendly website
- Other notable features that students often identify as major draws:
 - Integration of didactic coursework with supervised practice for progressive skill development
 - Well-structured near-peer mentoring component
 - Engaged and effective preceptors
 - Local placements arranged by the program
 - Program focus

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51

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY ACCELERATED COORDINATED PROGRAM

All-in-one, accelerated program that includes a BS in Dietetics, MS in Nutrition and Food Systems, and Supervised Practice Program.



DEPARTMENT OF
DIETETICS AND HUMAN NUTRITION

UK Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

52

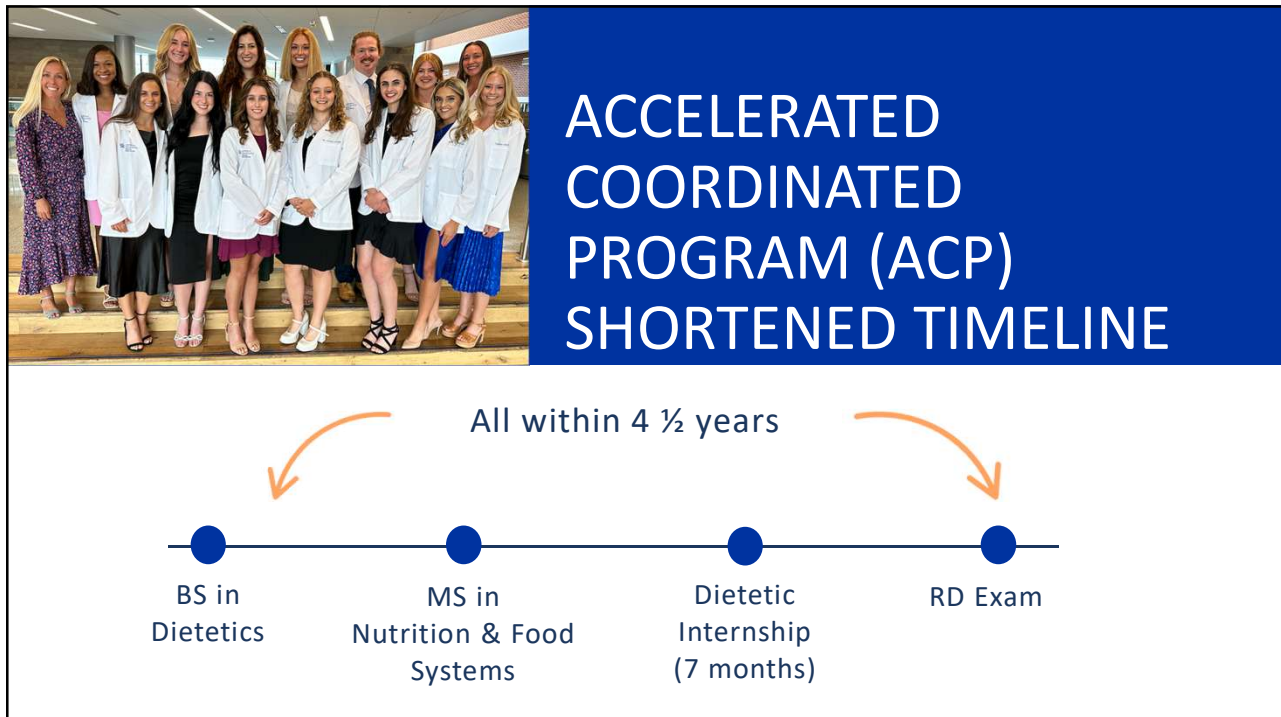
Three Main Areas to Help with Recruitment & Retention

Shortened
Timeline

Robust alumni
& preceptor
network

Strong
financial
support
through
multiple
sources

53



54

SHORTENED TIMELINE

BS IN DIETETICS

Graduate in December 2026

- Most semesters are 15-18 credit hours
- Includes required summer courses, online
- Limited options for extras

MS IN NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Graduate in December 2027

- Includes required summer course, online
- Non-thesis program with several electives
- Completion of an evidence-based project
- Includes internship-related coursework

ACCREDITED DIETETIC INTERNSHIP


May 2027 - December 2027

- Required supervised practice hours
- Hand-selected internship placements based on interest areas
 - Can be placed **ANYWHERE** in Kentucky

55



56



ROBUST ALUMNI & PRECEPTOR NETWORK

March	May	August	October
Free 2-day Interprofessional Conference	Mentoring Coffee Hour	Virtual Job Fair & Networking	ACP Annual Bonfire FNCE Meet & Greet

57

STRONG FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT AND OUTSIDE DONORS

- The Bill Gatton Foundation
- The Breeding Smith-Edge Scholarship
- The Barnstable Brown Diabetes Fellowship
- Teaching Assistantships
- Undergraduate Instructional Assistants
- Area Health Education Centers Housing and Fuel Stipends



58



WHY THE ACP?

FASTER

Typically, 1-2 years faster than many other routes

CHEAPER

1-2 years LESS tuition,
1-2 years MORE pay

SUPPORT

Cohort of 14 students,
meet regularly

Working with faculty
for 4-5 years

PEACE OF MIND

Know your path as a
junior compared to
other graduate
programs or dietetic
internships

59

QUESTIONS?

Feel free to reach out!



Dr. Liz Combs, EdD, MS, RD

ELMARS2@UKY.EDU

Program Director

60

Virginia Tech Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics

Riding the wave of decreased dietetics enrollment through:

- ✓ Alumni engagement
- ✓ Individualization
- ✓ Geographic flexibility
- ✓ Collaboration and support

61

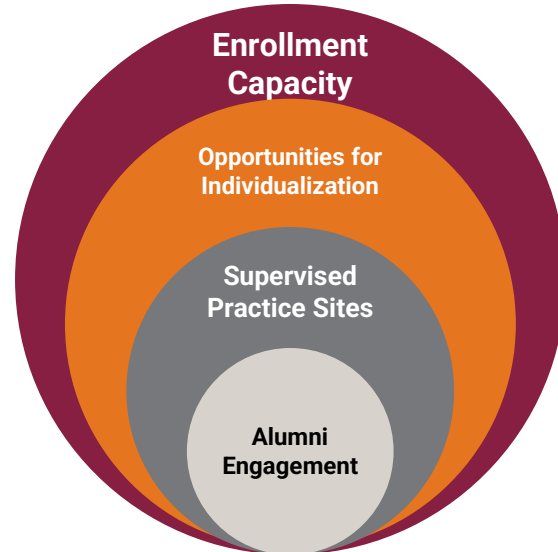
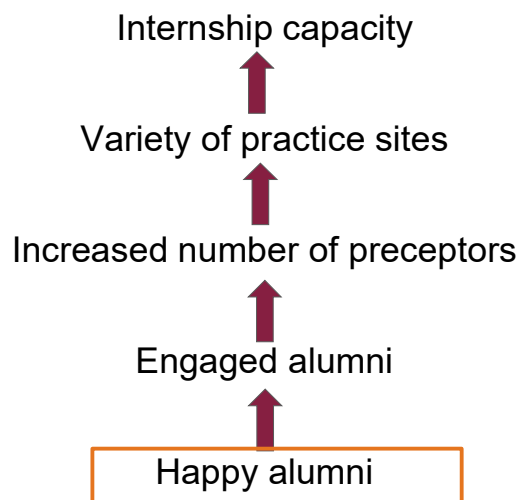
Background Information:

- The internship is one of three ACEND programs at Virginia Tech
- A “standalone” internship since 1996 with two primary locations
 - Washington, DC metropolitan area
 - Blacksburg/Roanoke, VA
- Generalist program; leadership and professional development focus
- Nearly 500 alumni
 - First RDN job: ~50% choose MNT/clinical
 - 50% of preceptors are alumni



62

Expanding from 16 to 20 interns in 2017



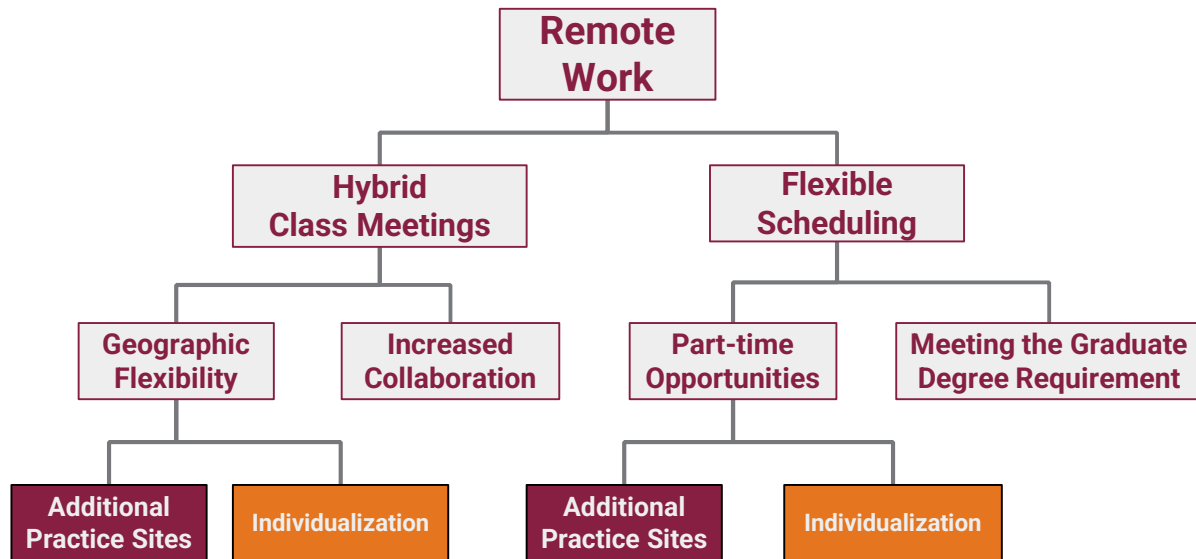
63

3 Strategies to Facilitate Individualization of Supervised Practice Experiences

- 1. Invest time in getting to know students in advance; communicate regularly.**
 - a. Before planning for an intern's experiences, gain detailed info about their personality, learning style, background, goals, and interests.
 - b. Meet 1:1 with interns as often as needed; schedule meetings at least once per month.
- 2. Use an adjustable calendar template for scheduling rotations.**
 - a. Make adjustments to accommodate interests (e.g. more outpatient or different specialties).
 - b. Allow flex time when needed for paid work or graduate coursework.
- 3. Adopt broad project/assignment guidelines to support flexibility.**
 - a. Example: Our community program plan assignment can be implemented at any of our practice sites.
 - b. Broad guidelines enable you to measure competencies in a wide range of settings.

64

2020 and Beyond: Embracing Remote Learning

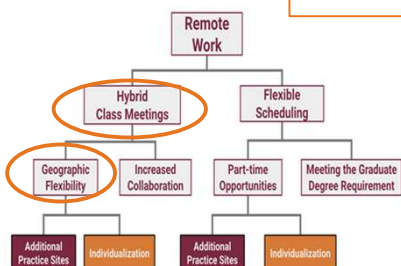


65

How do hybrid class meetings and geographic flexibility enable increased enrollment?

Student Benefits:

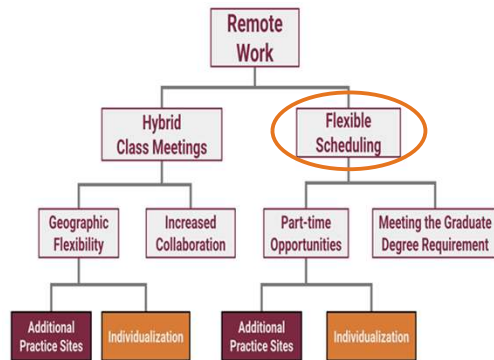
- ✓ Expanded opportunities
- ✓ Expanded professional network
- ✓ Financial savings



**Reduced commuting
+
Increased collaboration
=
Happy alumni**

66

How does flexible scheduling enable increased enrollment?



1. Accessibility for non-traditional students

- Audie's story
- Jing's story
- Pia's, Estefany's, and Sam's stories

1. Paving the way for multiple pathways

- Internship alone
- Graduate degree + internship simultaneously

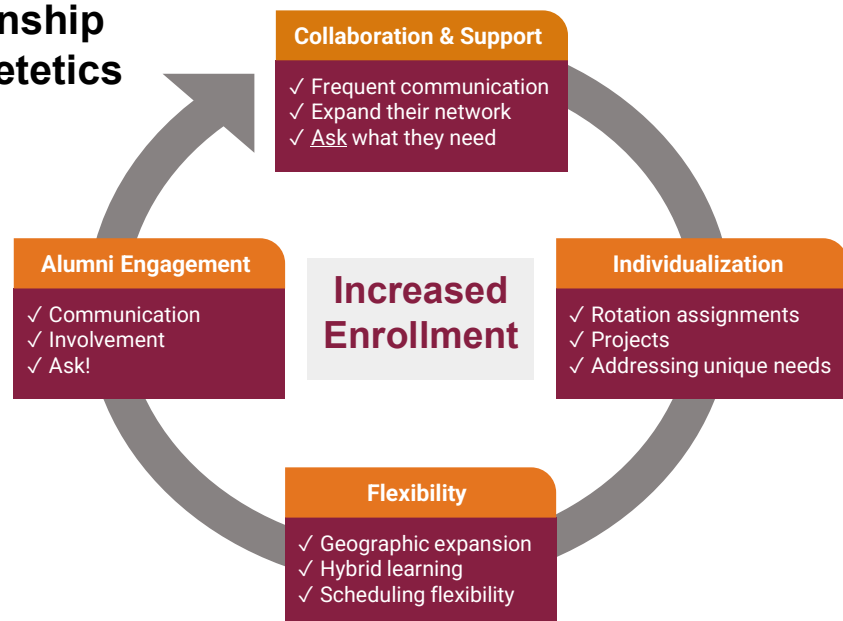
Interns whose needs are supported are more likely to succeed and more likely to stay engaged when they graduate.

Engaged alumni → more preceptors → increased enrollment capacity

67

Virginia Tech Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics

Summary of successful strategies for riding the wave of declining dietetics enrollment



68

- **ACEND UPdate**
 - Monthly update from ACEND posted on the website
- **Upcoming Virtual Town Halls**
 - Tuesday, July 8th, 11:00 AM CT- 12:00 PM CT
- **ACEND Staff**
 - 800-877-1600 x5400
 - acend@eatright.org

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