

Benedictine University
College of Education and Health Services
Nutrition Department
2006-2007 Annual Program Assessment Report

I. Quality of Program

- a. Program Assessment Matrices;
- Nutrition DPD Matrix 2007 with supplemental Nutrition DPD Learning Outcomes 2007
 - DI Learning Alignment Outcomes (2005)
 - MSNW Learning Outcomes Alignment (2005)
- b. Program/course changes/improvements initiated in 2006-2007:

Nutrition Program (Didactic Program in Dietetics - DPD)

As a result of a major curriculum review of the foods and food science components of the curriculum in 2005-2006, the Nutrition Program implemented significant changes to the curricula during this past year.

- Following review of catalogs of area community colleges, food science courses at other community colleges, and trends in dietetics - the food science course sequence was altered from two courses with labs (six credits) to one four credit course – and a comprehensive final examination was written and instituted for the course. This better enables acceptance of transfer courses by catalog description or syllabus – if high level food science – or by exam if lower level food science. We developed a policy and fee structure for taking this exam option.
- To promote the development of culture awareness and appreciation within the discipline, as well as maintain the same amount of laboratory experience previously gained through the previous curriculum, a new course was developed – cultural foods lecture and lab.
- Content was shifted between food service operations and management, and a new course in sanitation for certification was designed. Students will now have the opportunity to graduate with this added certification due to the change. The curricular change also allows courses to better articulate with community college courses.
- Minor changes in course content occurred between the medical nutrition therapy courses (NUTR 341 and 371) resulting in credit hour shifts. The change appeared to better prepared students completing case studies and concept flow charts who were enrolled in the NUTR 372 Clinical Nutrition Assessment Lab.
- We discontinued the requirement for the practicum since (a) most students who were applying to dietetic internships were already gaining volunteer and work experience on their own, (b) it was not required anymore to meet the program objectives, and (c) site placements were in conflict with our needed internship site placements. We offer it as a summer option.

Following administration and analysis of results of a survey of other DPD programs' policies on course acceptance and validation of external credits - during this past year the Nutrition Department wrote and approved a policy for "Course Acceptance and Validation" of transfer credit.

MSNW & Dietetic Internship Programs

The MSNW program had numerous course improvements:

- NTR 614 was redesigned into predominately an advanced human nutrition course to serve as the foundation for the other graduate nutrition courses.
- NTR 621 (Obesity) was redesigned to integrate applications, and case studies were added to foster development of and assess higher level critical thinking in students.
- NTR 629 (Research Planning) required a weekly homework assignment using WebCT to foster critical analysis of journal articles.

- To improve preparedness for NTR 691 (summer course), NTR 692 met biweekly in the winter term and several times in the spring to teach students applied statistical techniques.
- The nature of the NTR 691 (Research Analysis) course was changed from “lecture” to “lab”, increasing the contact hours, to meet the learning needs of the students in this computer-based workshop style course.
- NTR 542 (Applied Nutritional Physiology) was modified to include greater depth and broader spectrum of disease. Case applications were provided.
- NTR 625 (Complementary and Alternative Nutrition) added a journal critique assignment and presentation to foster critical analysis of journal articles in this specialty area, as well as foster an understanding of the research foundation of this field.
- NTR 624 (Portfolio) course was enhanced for the students enrolled in the dietetic internship concentration.

We launched the Sports Nutrition concentration and certificate this academic year, offering the first course in the concentration in fall 2006 and Eating Disorders course in summer 2007. The sports nutrition concentration was developed using the content outline for Board Certification as a Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) by the Commission on Dietetics Registration.

2. Assessment of Student Learning

a. Evidence:

Nutrition Program (Didactic Program in Dietetics)

The evidence (whether direct or indirect) and criteria for achievement are indicated on the “Nutrition DPD Matrix 2007.”

The selection of major program evidence/artifacts for the portfolio occurs as a part of an annual department discussion. At our April 10th Nutrition Department meeting we refined our program mission and re-affirmed the selection of evidence for the portfolio. The DPD director tracks and documents the evidence at the program level. Instructors track and document achievement of learning at the course level – and provide results to the program director.

All Nutrition/DPD learning objectives (#1-14) do have evidence cited, primarily as part of the capstone portfolio (Refer to “Nutrition DPD Matrix 2007” document). Instructors will now be encouraged to develop **Course Learning Impact Reports** (reports schedule spread over five years). We still need to create or refine some rubrics for measuring performance (refer to “Action” column in “DPD Learning Outcomes 2007” document).

MSNW and Dietetic Internship Programs

The Dietetic Internship is a concentration in the MSNW. The evidence and criteria for achievement of this concentration are indicated on the DI Learning Alignment Outcomes matrix. The evidence and criteria for achievement of the core of the MSNW program are found in the MSNW Learning Outcomes Alignment 2005 document. Instructors will be encouraged to develop **Course Learning Impact Reports** (reports schedule spread over five years). We still need to create or refine some rubrics for measuring performance.

As part of evidence of achievement:

- All MSNW graduate students complete a thesis. Thesis reports are bound and an electronic copy is maintained by the department. A listing of thesis topics is posted on the departmental web site.
- All MSNW graduate students present thesis results. The 1st annual “Current Trends in Nutrition Research” presentation was in November 2006. Students developed PowerPoint presentations that outlined the background, hypothesis, methods, results, conclusions, and applications. Students fielded questions about their research study at this time and in a follow-up defense with the departmental faculty members. A booklet of the PowerPoint presentations was compiled. An evaluation form was included in the booklet for completion by participants.

- Dietetic interns present case studies. The 2nd annual “Case Studies in Nutrition Seminar” was in spring term 2007. Students developed PowerPoint presentations about their case study and then fielded questions at the end of their presentations. A booklet of the PowerPoint presentations was compiled. An evaluation form was included in the booklet for completion by participants.
- b. In what ways does your program currently analyze and use evidence (in part 2a) of student learning? What did you learn about student achievement in the program?

Nutrition Department

Evidence is analyzed by program directors against pre-established benchmark goals/criteria (refer to outcomes matrices for programs). Information is recorded at least biannually. If goals are not being met, materials and/or curriculum will be adjusted as appropriate and student learning will be reassessed. We solicit feedback from alumni and students through surveys. A record is kept and presented to the department members, department chair, and annually the Advisory Board for discussion.

Results are incorporated into the department annual report and supplemental reports. The reports provide outcomes and discussion about areas such as curricular strength, achievement of student learning, and improvement. This evidence provides rationale for program improvements, particularly for those with budgetary impact such as our labs.

Nutrition Program (Didactic Program in Dietetics)

Per the Nutrition DPD Learning Outcomes 2007 document, **students demonstrate achievement of program knowledge and skills, including a high level of critical thinking and problem solving skills.**

Two Course Learning Impact Reports were developed this year, as a new initiative. The report for NUTR 241 confirmed a strong positive student response to course improvements and verified student engagement. The three-year report for NUTR 372 demonstrated successful course improvements and achievement of a high level of critical thinking and problem solving skills by students (Refer to the reports posted online). Other instructors submitted short reports reporting the success of course improvements and student learning.

The capstone course, NUTR 391, is the primary source of evidence of student learning. Projects developed in courses throughout the curriculum are submitted as part of this portfolio. Each student submits reflective statements about how he/she achievement the program objectives as part of this cumulative digital portfolio project. The instructor of the course is currently the program director – who reviews the reflective statements as a form of feedback about the program. The department also maintains one copy of the CD-ROM created for each student as an archive. The course format and mode of using this for collection of program evidence needs re-examination.

An area of newly identified strength of the multiple programs is that some students want to substitute graduate courses for undergraduate ones as part of the affiliation with the MSNW program. We plan to formalize this affiliation or “bridge.”

RD exam pass rates provide general feedback about success – general because the results are divided into just two areas of knowledge and skills. **Our 2006 Registered Dietitian (RD) 1st time pass rate is 100%.** Our two year, five year, eight year, ten, and 21-year RD 1st time pass rates and repeater pass rates *exceed the national average.* Our Dietetic Internship Match Rate also consistently *exceeds the national average.* Our program is viable and attractive to prospective students, as evidenced by our strong enrollment numbers; the Nutrition Program was the 9th largest undergraduate program in the university, and experienced a 32% *increase* in enrollment this past year.

MSNW & Dietetic Internship Programs

RD exam pass rates provide feedback to the Dietetic Internship Director about the potential success of program changes, although many variables impact that rate.

Preceptors and employers provide valuable feedback about the students and graduates of our dietetic internship program.

Use feedback from participants at seminars to improve the student learning experience and seminar delivery.

Based on the student learning experience this year, planned course improvements include:

- Students in the NTR 542 course needed more nutrition applications to supplement the theory, per their feedback. This course will be merged with NTR 543, creating a single 4 quarter hour (3 semester hour) course beginning next year.
- Students in NTR 614 needed supplemental worksheets/homework to foster learning. Changes will be implemented this fall, and outcomes assessed.
- Students in program need more applied statistics. More guided instruction will be provided through instructor facilitated journal critiques in NTR 629 this fall.

- c. Preparing for the future --- How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts/processes to assess and improve student learning?

We solicit feedback from the department members, other university nutrition and non-nutrition program directors, Deans, and departmental Advisory Board about processes and evidence choice.

We will be analyzing data (2001-2006) from the Career Development Office this fall. Due to a low response rate of nutrition alumni completing the university surveys (based on preliminary results), we plan to administer a departmental Alumni Survey in August 2007.

Nutrition Program (Didactic Program in Dietetics)

The current processes are more refined and less cumbersome since we moved the primary point of data collection to the capstone course. At the program level we also decided to report the data for some evidence by determining numbers who did or did not achieve the criterion versus tracking individual students who succeeded at each point. We can use the capstone course to review program artifacts. We can use the outcomes to determine points of program weakness and strength. Grade sheets are maintained for more in-depth analysis in case a problem is identified – and the history can be examined. However, although we can measure and report outcomes, it could be more efficient and effective. The Course Learning Impact Reports (*new* addition this year) provide quantitative and qualitative direct and indirect evidence of student learning and evidence of improvement.

One problematic point is our alumni data collection – although we send out surveys every few years, a non-representative sample is returned and no undergraduate has returned an employer survey. We need to investigate a better process for collecting this data.

In addition to the plans outlined in the DPD Learning Outcomes 2007 document, we plan to:

- Explore data collection processes to develop more feasible and efficient method. Current examination is centered around electronic portfolios, such a Livetext, that can provide data analyses of standards and objectives while serving as the portfolio development tool. This would require training of all instructor on the electronic tool (e.g., rubric grading online), development and/or refinement of the current *Portfolio Manual*, and possible training of other instructors to teach the course. Work with adjunct instructors to develop/refine rubrics for grading assignments.
- Refine a DPD “bridge” MSNW program.

- Next year solicit input from students on perceived program strengths and what students value in the undergraduate program.
- Continue to expand the department web pages to report assessment plans and outcomes.
- Solicit formal listing of accomplishments from Nutrition Club.

MSNW Program

Next year we will begin to develop Course Learning Impact Reports. A five year cycle will be established. These will include the courses in the concentrations over time.

We have two evaluation forms ready for use during field experiences. During 2007-2009, we will be collaborating with area corporations, fitness, and other health facilities, in addition to sports dietitians to establish appropriate field experiences.

We literally only have a couple of graduates from the program, since the 1st student completed the program in December 2006. In the future we will pursue alumni for feedback.

Assessment plans include:

- Explore data collection processes to develop more feasible and efficient method. Explore inclusion of a requirement of portfolios for graduation.
- Collaboratively adapt grade sheet to develop a case rubric for use among multiple NTR courses.
- Refine journal critique grade sheet into a rubric for use across multiple NTR courses.
- Collaboratively refine a presentation rubric for the MSNW program.
- Next year solicit input from students on perceived program strengths and what students value in the graduate program.
 - Continue to expand the department web pages to report assessment plans and outcomes.
 - Establish a timeline (next 3 years) and update the assessment and outcomes matrix to include the evidence and criteria for the remaining three MSNW concentrations.
 - Assess the outcomes associated with the thesis learning experience.

Dietetic Internship Program (MSNW concentration)

Assessment plans include:

- Explore data collection processes to develop more feasible and efficient method. Explore inclusion of a requirement of portfolios for graduation.
- During 2007-2009, solicit input from preceptors on perceived program strengths and what preceptors value about the affiliation and mentoring interns. Develop a summary report.
- Develop a report about use of employer and alumni feedback.
 - Continue to expand the department web pages to report assessment plans and outcomes.
 - During 2007-2009, evaluate the dietetic internship course NTR 689 holistically.
 - Update the assessment and outcomes matrix.

3. Evaluation of Nutrition Department Members

- Refer to Excel spreadsheet for the quantitative Nutrition Department Summary.
- Qualitative highlights of 2006-2007 accomplishments of department members include:
 - In addition to completing her doctorate in Educational Psychology and graduate certificate (educational statistics), **Catherine Arnold** delivered three national and international presentations that were peer-reviewed for acceptance. The related three abstracts were published in the *SELF Proceedings* and *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. The research article, Nutrition and Self-efficacy, was published in the *Proceedings of the 4th international SELF Conference*. By the International Society for Self and Identity in 2007. She serves as co-chair on a state dietetic association committee and was appointed to a national task force of the American Dietetic Association. Catherine was recipient of Who's Who in American Education award in 2007.

- **Julie Davis** was the recipient of the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year Award by the West Suburban and the Illinois Dietetic Associations in 2007. A juried poster session, related to research of which she was a collaborator, was presented by her colleague in summer 2006. She is the elected Treasurer of the local West Suburban Dietetic Association and serves the state dietetic association as a committee member.
- **Deepa Handu** was awarded a \$10,000 grant by the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) to study the impact of nutrition education on obesity prevalence in three Chicago public schools. She is working on two additional grant collaborations with potential awards close to \$400,000.
- **Julie Moreschi** was the recipient of a \$75,000 grant from "WeGo Together for Kids' Safe Schools/Healthy Students" funded by the Department of Health and Human Services. It is a three-year, \$25,000 per year grant to cover salary and research supplies to conduct community-based interventions in the West Chicago school district. An abstract, related to research of which she was a collaborator, was published in *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Julie was a recipient of a Benedictine University "An Emphasis on a life lived in balance" award in March 2007.

4. Evidence of Student and Alumni Accomplishments

- The undergraduate nutrition enrollments increased 32% this fall - to an all time high.
- Presentations delivered by graduate nutrition students: 16
- Number of hours of practice experience completed (by 16 dietetic interns): - 18,000 hours
- Estimated number of hours of service learning completed by (undergraduate and graduate) students: 155
- The dietetic internship program maintains nearly 75 external affiliations.
- Professional Presentations by alumni at dietetic association conferences:
 - Peggy Yip (co-author with C. Arnold) presented Poster Presentation: "Impact of the Fun, Food, and Fitness Camp" at the Illinois Dietetic Association state assembly, Oak Brook, IL (March 2007).
 - Beth Kalina (co-author with C. Arnold) presented Poster Presentation: "Impact of Nutrition Education on the Fruit and Vegetable Consumption of Children," at the Illinois Dietetic Association state assembly, Oak Brook, IL (March 2007).