

The Full Plate

The Newsletter for [Pace University's](#)
Coordinated MS in Nutrition and Dietetics Program



A Note From the Chair

Greetings and Happy New Year!

We are so excited to kick off 2023 with the second edition of the Nutrition and Dietetics program newsletter. Our students have been quite busy over the past few semesters and we are thrilled to be able to share their accomplishments.

Let's start with a hearty "Congratulations" to Cohort 3 who graduated in August 2022. We were sad to see them go but cannot wait to hear about all they accomplish as they begin their careers as RDNS! And of course a huge thanks to all the preceptors who guided them along the way!

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Congratulations to Cohort 3!



We are pleased to introduce Cohort 5 who joined us in September. We were finally able to return to in-person orientations and it was wonderful to see how quickly this group has bonded. Both cohorts have been busy engaging with course work, supervised practice rotations, and extracurricular nutrition related activities. This past semester has seen the Pace Nutrition Club return to live tabling events and cooking demos around campus. We look forward to sharing even more nutrition tips and tasty samples for the entire Pace Community in the coming months.



Welcoming Cohort 5 at Orientation.



Lastly, we had the opportunity to check in with some of our recent alumni to see how things are going since graduation. Be sure to check out the Alumni Highlights at the end of the newsletter to see what some familiar names are up to!

Student Happenings

PACE Mobile Food Pantry

By Vida Velasco-Popov, Cohort 5

This fall, I volunteered with Pace's Mobile Food Pantry which is organized by Graduate Residence Director Wen Xi with Student Affairs and supplied by Feeding Westchester. The mobile food pantry is a judgement-free event where Pace students, faculty, staff, and members of the surrounding communities are invited to stop by and pick up free food. Each event changes slightly as the donated food varies based on what is available. Feeding Westchester delivers the food from different grocery stores such as ShopRite, Wegmans, Target and Trader Joe's and volunteers help with sorting and displaying the food so people can easily stop by and pick up what they like.

In my time volunteering, I found three main reasons which prevented some people from taking home fruits or vegetables. These reasons included time limitations, not having access to a kitchen, or simply not liking the taste of vegetables. With this in mind, I compiled some healthy recipes and created meal kits to help address questions about how to prepare these foods and make them taste good. Offering easy preparation tips and ideas is just a start for addressing these issues.

For weeks, I met with several other interested students in the ND Program to discuss some approaches for volunteering at the following food pantry. Together, we decided to continue making recipes and meal kits for the food pantry. We also decided to offer some resources on the storage and shelf-life of certain foods by creating a QR code where people could easily learn more while shopping. The event went well and almost all the meal kits we made were taken! I am grateful for this Food Pantry experience and excited to apply the skills I have gained when I begin my internship next year!



Student Happenings

Kitchen Lab Technician

By Isha Patel, Cohort 5



This fall semester, I began working as a Kitchen Lab Technician for the Nutrition and Dietetics Program. My responsibilities included buying groceries for our Food Science labs at Zwilling J.A. Henckels, organizing the pantry, doing inventory checks, and setting up all the cooking stations for the labs. This work has helped me gain knowledge of uncommon or unfamiliar ingredients that I had never used before. Over time, I became more familiar with food costs and products that future patients and clients will likely be using.

There were some challenges that came along with this position. The biggest challenge for me was when certain ingredients were out of stock in the store, so I would have to go to multiple stores to try to find these ingredients or alternatives. Another challenge was learning how to handle meat since I am a vegetarian. I was not familiar with a lot of things that were on the supply lists and had trouble communicating with the butchers sometimes. In the end, however, I felt accomplished knowing that I had learned so much about meat products that I normally would not have had exposure to on my own. A fun aspect of being a Kitchen Lab Technician was conversing with locals at the grocery stores. I specifically remember talking to an elderly woman at Stop & Shop about our culinary labs. She got very excited and asked me lots of questions about our program. By doing all the shopping for our labs and organizing the pantry, I was able to help out my classmates and make our time in the culinary studio much easier.

Having the opportunity to do our Food Science labs in the Zwilling J.A. Henckels kitchen is incredible! These labs are extremely useful for educational purposes as it gave us the chance to practice hands-on skills with lots of different ingredients, cooking techniques and kitchen tools. Having this hands-on experience is essential for us to excel in our program and in our future profession as RDNs. I am looking forward to our future classes that will be held in Zwilling!

Student Happenings

CHP Interprofessional Collaboration Activity

By Christina Papadopoulos, Cohort 5

This semester, we had the unique opportunity of meeting and briefly working with students in other programs in CHP at Pace. I was initially nervous because I was still relatively new to the ND program, so I immediately became plagued with imposter syndrome. To prepare, I looked into the basics of different professions, like PA, RN, OT, NP, SLP, by reading through some helpful resources provided by the faculty. After learning a few fundamental points, I still did not fully comprehend what goes into being a healthcare professional outside the classroom.

For the activity, all group members had to read through a sample case study about a teenager who suffered a severe head injury. At first, I felt blindsided by all the medical jargon that I had never heard before; however, after reading through it a few more times, I started noting details that the other group members did not pick up on and tracing them back to nutrition. For example, the patient's head injury eventually led to malnutrition and put him at risk for various micronutrient deficiencies and inflammation. When we began discussing our treatment plan, I was the only person who mentioned the risks of malnutrition. After hearing my point of view, everyone agreed to prioritize the patient's diet and even admitted that they did not consider that perspective before I mentioned it.

Through this activity, I became more confident that I was positively contributing to the patient's recovery and to my fellow group members' learning. I learned that in the real world, teamwork is a major part of being a RD and that it is acceptable to not know everything. After participating in this activity, I feel a bit more prepared to tackle any future doubts in my abilities. This activity was also a great opportunity to network within CHP. Hopefully I will be able to meet and collaborate with more CHP students while we are in school as well as out in the field!



Student Happenings

Student Athlete Tabling

By Holly Woodbury, Cohort 5

This semester, several ND students volunteered to host a tabling event on campus to educate student athletes about various nutrition topics. As Pace students, we understand how hectic life can get when juggling classes, work, and athletic practice. It can be difficult to meal prep regularly or cook nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. This is especially true for athletes who need to prioritize their nutritional needs in order to perform and recover at peak ability. We have been learning about fitness and sports nutrition in our classes, and felt so passionately about this topic that we were overjoyed when given the opportunity to share our expertise.

We met with the Pace athletic director and came up with fun ways to engage with the athletes and advise them on their nutritional health. The information we presented focused on practical ways to consume appropriate ratios of essential macronutrients and find optimal times to eat depending on their individual training schedules. Our demonstration table in the gym was filled with nutritious, protein-packed energy bars and protein smoothies for the athletes to try. We also tested their prior nutrition knowledge with a trivia game and clarified any misinformation they might have heard.

Our hope was to offer the athletes inspiration and information to optimize nutrition on-the-go in their daily lives. Even if they took two minutes out of their day to answer a nutrition trivia question, it was a great first step towards encouraging students to stop and think about their nutritional needs. As an athlete myself, I recognize how important of a role nutrition plays when it comes to improving athletic performance and recovery. Since many athletes have practice after school, it is crucial that they know what kinds of snacks will help improve energy levels, increase focus, prevent injuries, and replenish their muscles. I am glad we had the opportunity to connect with fellow Pace students and shed some light on the topic!



Notes From the Field

Feed The Kids - Food Service Rotation

By Nautica Smith, Cohort 4



Jersey City Public Schools

Providing Enrichment Acceleration Resources
and Support for all Students

What is your school lunch memory? That is a question I was asked during my rotation. I still remember the day the healthy meals act was implemented; I was in fifth grade. When lunchtime came, I was expecting the regular aluminum tray lunch filled with beef and mashed potatoes. I was surprised to see instead a black container filled with whole wheat penne alfredo packed with vegetables. I was confused and hesitant to try it at first, but after one bite, I was sold. This singular memory shaped my relationship with healthy food for the rest of my life.

Interning in school food has allowed me to revisit that memory and witness the kids of today make their own memories. One of the best parts of working in K-12 food service is seeing the smiles on the kids' faces while they eat a full, balanced meal. My internship at Jersey City Public Schools Food Service Department has taught me a lot. My experiences range from administrative work to working in the kitchen to attending USDA events. For most of my internship, I have been doing on-site reviews at different schools, which look at everything from meal counting, claiming to food safety, and meal pattern adherence. We make sure that the schools are accounting for meals correctly so that they can be reimbursed. All aspects of my food service management class were used in the food safety review, including my ServSafe certification. We also made sure that the schools were following the correct meal pattern, adhering to the menu plan and serving reimbursable meals.

I also got some hands-on experience with the kids in the kitchen and enjoyed seeing them excited to eat the food I helped prepare. This was my favorite part because I got to use some of my culinary skills alongside the wonderful food service workers. Most recently, I attended the USDA Foods Conference. This was a state-wide event where all the different school districts came together to learn about updated rules and regulations, along with the USDA programs available to them. It was also followed by a food show where we got to try different commodity foods available to purchase for the schools.

“Feed the kids” is something that I hear every day. The goal is to feed ALL kids a nutritious meal during school hours. Many families may not realize they have to apply for free lunch, or know how to apply, or they may be unable to apply for various reasons. In one instance, a mother called the office because her son had a balance on his account. She was blind and her son was autistic, which made the application process very challenging. While the department was able to help them apply, they were still left with a negative account balance that will have to be repaid. This is just one example of barriers that families face when they have difficulty paying for school lunches. Passing the Universal School Meals Program Act would provide free lunch to ALL students, regardless of income eligibility, which would help families overcome these barriers and ensure healthy meals for every student.

Notes From the Field

Clementine Hudson Valley - Community Rotation

By Cassandra J. Moseley, Cohort 4

For my community rotation, I interned at Monte Nido Clementine Hudson Valley, which is a residential treatment center for adolescents with eating disorders (ED). I quickly learned what a residential setting was on my first day when I approached what looked like a typical Westchester house, with a driveway colored with chalk and covered in children's handwriting. The adolescents who are admitted to this treatment facility live in this house-like setting for the length of their treatment, and are assigned to a full treatment team, medical supervision, and chef. The treatment team includes medical staff, ED therapists for individual and family therapy, ED Registered Dietitian, recovery coaches, program manager, and clinical directors; all with the same goal to nourish, support, and plant the seeds for a full recovery.

During my time at Clementine Hudson Valley, I worked closely with my preceptor and the whole team. I attended weekly team meetings where we went over treatment plans for each client and recorded their progress. I worked with my preceptor and the chef on weekly cooking groups for the clients, which gave them exposure to cooking and creating their own meals. My favorite part of working with clients in the cooking groups was watching them become more confident in the kitchen again and seeing how far they progressed since the start. It was so rewarding to see them start to use the mindfulness skills they developed over the course of their treatment in the kitchen setting.

The other unique part of residential treatment is group meals and snacks, in which clients would have three meals plated by the chef with portions that matched their RD-curated meal plan, and snacks that were chosen the night before and portioned by staff. During my time here, I was able to sit down for meals twice a week - once for cooking group and then for meal outing day - where I really had the opportunity to connect with the clients. Mealtimes can be stressful for many clients in terms of completion, food being served, time checks, etc. Therefore, providing support in the form of mindful practices, group bites, and mindful distraction for them during meals was of utmost importance.

Every week I was able to sit in and observe my preceptor conduct sessions with clients. I got to experience both admission sessions, which included completing a full assessment of the client and their ED, and discharge sessions, which were focused on setting the client up with all the tools they needed for continuing treatment as an outpatient. These tools included a new meal plan with food/recipe ideas curated by the client, grocery lists, and tips on how to overcome potential barriers once they return home. Discharge sessions became my favorite type of session mostly because it was when clients would usually reflect on their recovery progress on their own with little guidance from my preceptor.

My time at Clementine was an invaluable experience that was driven not only by the staff, but also the clients. My biggest takeaways from this experience were the medical and nutrition related information about ED's as well as complications and symptoms. Most importantly, I learned how important it is to build trust with your clients. There is no way to progress without some level of genuine trust between clients and healthcare providers.

Alumni Highlights



Danielle Musto

Cohort 2, Class of 2021

1. What have you been doing since you graduated?

During my last semester at Pace, I was completing my elective rotation at Clementine, an adolescent eating disorder treatment center. Through that experience, I was offered a job at the adult residential program, Monte Nido. I have remained in the eating disorder treatment world and have transitioned from residential care to IOP and outpatient care.

2. Tell us about your current role. What does a typical day look like for you?

My current role as a RD at a treatment center includes individual work, group work, and a lot of collaboration among clinical teams. A typical day includes individual counseling sessions with my clients, followed by charting and updating other members on the clinical team. Similar to a hospital setting, I participate in rounds almost daily to collaborate with the rest of the treatment team and discuss each client's treatment trajectory, progress, and current goals. Twice per week, I eat dinner with the clients and run a nutrition education group to ultimately help model behavior, provide support, and process emotions around the food.

3. What are some of your favorite things about your job? What are some challenges?

My favorite thing about my job is how rewarding it is to be a part of a client's recovery and helping them reach their goals and be able to live their lives without the restraints of an eating disorder. When clients discharge, they typically write their treatment team a thank you note, and their words and appreciation make all of the challenges in this field worth it to me. The other favorite part of my job is weekly supervision. Every week, the dietitian team gets supervision from a highly experienced dietitian supervisor. Each client may present with different challenges and it is great to have the space to receive advice and support from other RDs. Supervision has also opened my eyes to the fact that even the most experienced dietitians have questions and are constantly learning new things. The challenges that I often face are recognizing that recovery looks different for everyone and remembering that I cannot recover for someone else. I always want the best for my clients, so it is hard to watch them struggle and not be able to remove all of their pain or get emotionally invested.

4. How did your experience at Pace impact your career path?

My education at Pace helped prepare me for my career as a RD, but the aspect of the program that I am most appreciative of is how the clinical director really listened to my interests. Through Pace's internship rotation, I was able to experience 4 completely different areas of dietetics, which is not common in other dietetics programs. I was so thankful that Professor Tosto listened to my interest of wanting to work in the eating disorder field and helped match me with a treatment center for my elective rotation. My last rotation at the treatment center solidified my desire to work in this field.

5. Where do you see yourself in five years?

I see myself continuing to work in eating disorder treatment, primarily in the private practice setting. I would also love to be an adjunct professor to teach a class specifically on counseling clients with eating disorders. The typical dietetics coursework includes very little on eating disorders outside of the clinical signs and symptoms. There is a lot about eating disorders that I would not have learned if it wasn't for my experience through my dietetic internship. I have learned so much through my experiences thus far and have gained a lot of valuable knowledge through supervision that have made me a more confident and successful dietitian today.

Alumni Highlights



Gabrielle Dobies

Cohort 3, Class of 2022

1. What have you been doing since you graduated?/Tell us about your current role. What does a typical day look like for you? What are some of your favorite things about your job? What are some challenges?

Since I graduated, I have been working as a dietitian at the Stony Brook WIC program on Long Island. As a WIC dietitian, I counsel participants on nutrition related topics like infant nutrition, breastfeeding support, child nutrition, and prenatal/postpartum nutrition. My favorite thing about my job is that I get to help people every day. The community sector of dietetics makes a real impact on our local communities and helps those in need. Due to the formula shortage, a lot of parents haven't been able to find formula, but my WIC program has pharmacies that we work with, so it always brings me joy when we're able to help a family locate formula.

2. How did your experience at Pace impact your career path?

When I started the nutrition program at Pace, I didn't know where I wanted to go with becoming a dietitian. As I worked through the curriculum and started my internships, I found my passion in maternal nutrition. Professor Tosto understood my desired path in nutrition and she made it a point to help me secure internships that would further my knowledge in the niche I wanted to be in. After completing my internship at Westchester Medical Center in their high-risk OB clinic, I knew that I was heading where I was meant to be.

3. What advice do you have for students as they prepare for the RD exam and begin their careers, especially if they are experiencing self-doubt?

Self-doubt is impossible to avoid, especially when you're starting something new. On the bright side, the beauty of dietetics is that we are always learning and constantly educating ourselves so that we can develop the skills we need to be the best dietitians we can be. You're not meant to know everything there is to know when you first enter the working world. We learn best when we put our knowledge to practice. So be patient with yourself, be kind to yourself, and know that this is just the start of a beautiful career.

4. Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years, I hope to have my own private practice that focuses on maternal nutrition as well as breastfeeding support. I am currently in the process of receiving my lactation counselor certification, and throughout this journey, I've learned that society is especially failing our prenatal and postpartum patients. I hope to be able to help bridge the gap in the care of these patients and provide them with the resources they need to feel secure in their journeys.

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