THE FULL PLATE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR PACE UNIVERSITY'S COORDINATED MS IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS PROGRAM

PACE UNIVERSITY
College of Health Professions

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A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings Students, Alumni, Preceptors, and Colleagues,

As we wrap up another successful and exciting semester, I am proud to share the latest updates and accomplishments from our exceptional Nutrition and Dietetics Department. Throughout the semester, our students and faculty continued to excel in academics, experiential learning, research, professional development, and community engagement. In this newsletter, we are excited to highlight the many achievements, events, and hands-on learning experiences that reflect the passion, dedication, and hard work within our department. We are incredibly grateful for the continued support and contributions of our students, alumni, preceptors, faculty, and community partners as we work together to make a meaningful impact within the profession, the Pace community, and beyond.

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Honoring Achievement and Excellence

College of Health Professions Awards Ceremony

Congratulations to Carly Martone, recipient of the Outstanding Student of the Year Award, and Kendra Mayers, recipient of the Opportunitas Award, in recognition of their exceptional achievements, leadership, and contributions to the College of Health Professions.





Class of 2026 Commencement

Pictured to the right, graduate Ethan Chorney carried the College of Health Professions banner during commencement, proudly representing the college and the achievements of its students.



A Taste of the Teaching Kitchen

Mediterranean Fish Stew

A Mediterranean-inspired fish stew featuring cod, tomatoes, olives, and beans. This nutrient-dense dish provides lean protein, fiber, heart-healthy fats, and antioxidants. Common throughout coastal Mediterranean regions, meals like this reflect a dietary pattern associated with improved cardiovascular health and longevity.





Bibimbap

Bibimbap is a traditional Korean dish that combines rice, vegetables, protein, and flavorful seasonings into one balanced meal. Rich in carbohydrates, protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, it showcases the importance of variety and balance in Korean cuisine while offering a colorful and nutrient-packed plate.

African-Inspired Lentil and Vegetable Stew

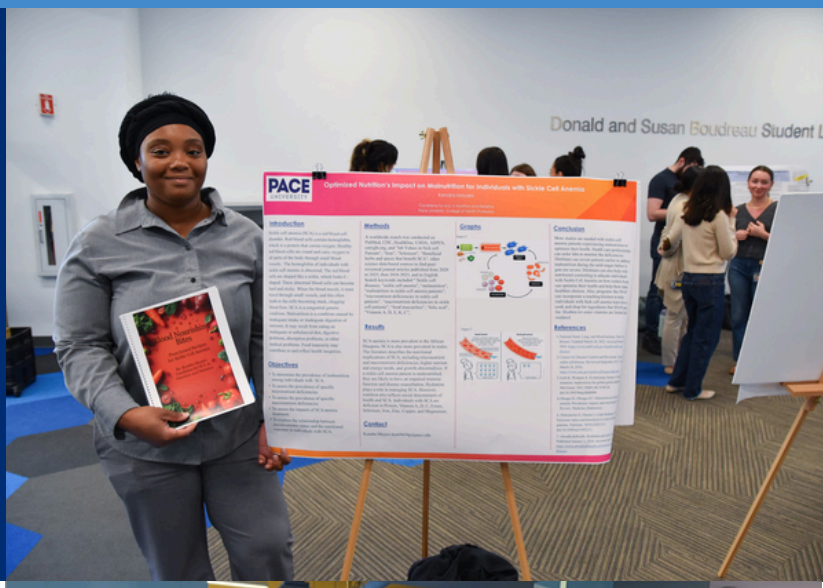
This African-inspired meal features lentils, vegetables, and whole grains, providing plant-based protein, fiber, iron, and other essential nutrients. Legumes are a staple food in many African cultures and are valued for their affordability, versatility, and nutritional benefits.



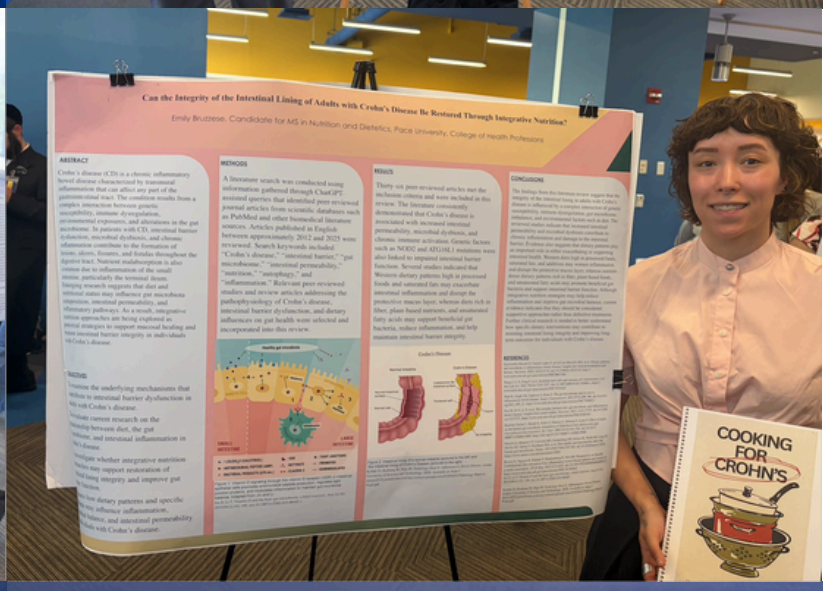
STUDENT HAPPENINGS

Capstone Poster Presentation Highlights

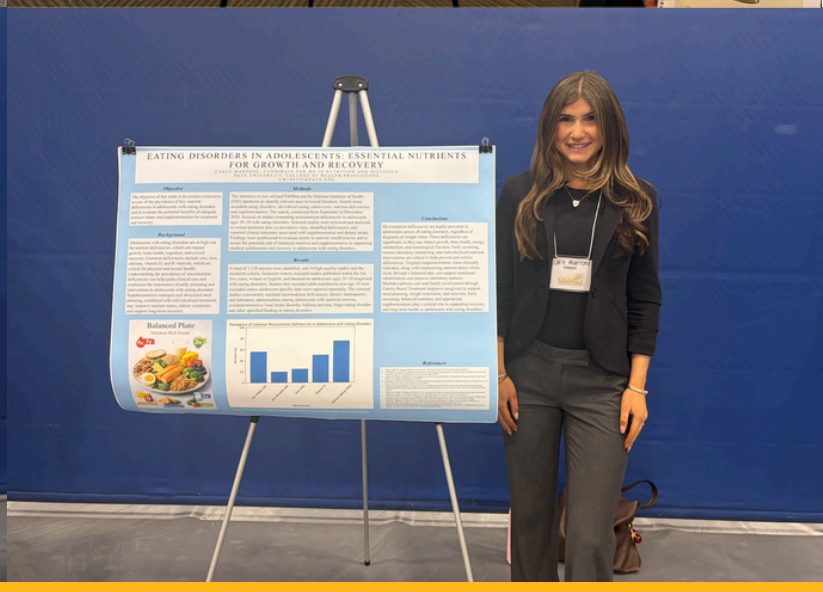
Nutrition and Dietetics students showcased their capstone research through poster presentations at both CHP Scholarship Day and the NYSAND Annual Meeting & Expo (AME). These opportunities allowed students to share their work with academic and professional audiences, gain valuable presentation experience, and contribute to ongoing conversations in the field of nutrition and dietetics.











Fueling Performance: Educating Pace Athletes on Sports Nutrition

By Ethan Chorney, Cohort 7

I had the opportunity to present a sports nutrition presentation to Pace athletes, which was both a rewarding and valuable experience. I led two separate sessions, one for the team captains and athletic leaders, and another for current freshmen. I focused on the importance of nutrition in supporting athletic performance, recovery, and overall health. The presentation covered key topics including the importance of carbohydrates as the primary fuel source, adequate protein intake for muscle repair and recovery, and practical strategies for fueling before and after workouts and competitions. I also discussed hydration tips and the potential risks of under-fueling.

The athletes were engaged during both sessions and asked meaningful questions about sports nutrition. It was amazing to translate evidence-based nutrition concepts into practical strategies that the athletes could apply to their daily lives to optimize performance and overall health. I felt very valued as a person, especially when students came up to me after and personally thanked me. The experience helped me strengthen my confidence in presenting and reinforced my interest in pursuing a career in sports nutrition, making it an important milestone in my professional journey.



STUDENT HAPPENINGS

World Foods: Connecting Culture, Nutrition, and Creativity

Cohort 7 was featured in The Pace Chronicle article highlighting the World Foods course. The article showcased students' experiences learning about global cuisines, cultural food practices, and the role of nutrition in patient care. Students shared how the course encouraged creativity in cooking, expanded their understanding of diverse cultures, and strengthened their ability to connect nutrition science with practical meal preparation. The feature also highlighted student capstone projects and emphasized the importance of food as a tool for cultural connection and health promotion.

Student Emily Bruzzese explained her experience with World Foods: "Since I fell in love with nutrition, cooking has always been a part of my life. I think what this class really offers is diversity into learning different types of cultures and ways of cooking, which I am new to." Bruzzese also discussed her final capstone project: "For my paper, I'm researching how to heal the intestinal lining for patients who have Crohn's Disease, so my recipe book is for those patients. That has been really fun to build because the recipes are based off science. I've been able to be creative, I taste test the foods at home and see what I want to add."

Another student, Carly Martone, also shared her experience with the class: "I love making new recipes, and especially with this class, it's great to get my Monday started by doing something I enjoy," Martone said. "I love being able to explain the nutritional benefits of each meal, and also be able to enjoy each meal with everyone. It is a challenge figuring out how to cook recipes that I've never cooked before, but it's also rewarding because I get to learn new recipes."



Professor Mary Opfer also shared her perspective on the importance of the World Foods course and hopes students recognize the power of food as a connector. "Students should be aware that food is a way for them to connect with their patients. If they know something about their culture of foods, you make friends. The patient sees you as worthwhile to talk to." Opfer also offered advice for students trying to make healthier choices: "Try to eat less processed foods. Students can go to the food pantry on campus, and have access to online recipes. It's also important to know how to read a label."



STUDENT HAPPENINGS



TEXT

Forget TikTok, Ask a Nutrition Expert!

By Payton Snead, Cohort 8 and Dr. Christen Cooper

Our department took advantage of National Nutrition Month (March) to spread the word about healthy eating, particularly "debunking the junk" that is frequently viewed on social media platforms like Tik Tok.

Emily Bruzzese and Brittany Sanchez (both of Cohort 7), as well as Casey Stanton and Maren Tarleton (Cohort 8) tabled in Kessel Hall with Dr. Cooper.

Cohort 7 student Payton Snead states, "this event was such an informative experience as an incoming dietitian. While I've learned so much as a nutrition student, it was eye-opening to be on the other side—answering nutrition questions and providing guidance to fellow students, from incoming freshmen to experienced nursing students. The experience taught me a lot about nutrition outreach and highlighted just how much confusion and misinformation about nutrition exists among the general population. It reinforced the importance of making evidence-based nutrition information accessible, relatable, and practical for everyone."

Reflecting on the events, Dr. Cooper explained "The students spoke so eloquently to undergraduates and graduates alike. They pointed out the highlights of their nutrition and dietetics education at Pace. It was a wonderful reminder of all the terrific things our students do to make our program great."

STUDENT HAPPENINGS



Celebrating National Nutrition Month

By Carly Martone, Cohort 7

This year's National Nutrition Month theme was "Discover the Power of Nutrition." The campaign focused on how intentional food and beverage choices can fuel your body, support lifelong health, and improve overall quality of life. Key messages included fueling your daily life through optimal nutrition to support both physical and mental energy, making informed choices by relying on credible nutrition information from sources such as Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, and implementing small, sustainable changes—such as incorporating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains—that can lead to long-term health benefits.

As an intern at Northern Westchester Hospital, we hosted two tabling events to promote this message throughout the hospital community. During the events, we handed out samples of a nutrient-dense recipe, created an interactive nutrition trivia wheel with questions, and provided handouts featuring easy, healthy snack swaps. I loved helping out with these events and educating others on the powerful role that a balanced diet plays in both long-term health and everyday life.

National Nutrition Month is a wonderful opportunity to encourage individuals to reflect on their eating and lifestyle habits and learn how nutrition impacts overall well-being. It promotes balanced, sustainable approaches to eating and healthy living while empowering individuals with evidence-based nutrition knowledge. By highlighting simple, realistic strategies, the campaign helps people build habits that can support their health for years to come.

Research Highlights: Ethan Chorney and Dr. Cooper Publish Article on RED-S

ABSTRACT

Background: Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) is a syndrome characterized by impaired physiological and psychological functioning, resulting from low energy availability in which dietary energy (calories) is insufficient to meet the demands of exercise and normal physiological processes. RED-S affects both male and female athletes, extending beyond the original "Female Athlete Triad," to include the syndrome's manifestation in both genders. Nutritional intake has a direct impact on athletes' overall health and athletic performance.

Methods: A literature search was conducted on peer-reviewed, English language studies published between 2015 and 2025, using keywords such as "RED-S and injury," "macronutrients and micronutrients and athletes, "RED-S and injuries," and "RED-S and stress fractures," and "antioxidants and athletes."

Results: Thirty-six articles meeting criteria were retrieved and analyzed to paint a picture of the manifestation of RED-S through insufficient caloric intake in men and women.

Conclusions: Evidence supports the importance of maintaining adequate energy availability, balanced macronutrient, and sufficient micronutrient status to prevent physiological dysfunction and injury. RED-S can lead to health problems such as bone and reproductive health issues and impact overall athletic performance. Eating disorders are often an antecedent to RED-S. When sports dietitians or doctors specializing in sports medicine detect RED-S in an athlete, they might implement nutrition education, including meal planning and tips for practical fueling, which are strategies essential for supporting athlete health, minimizing injury risk, and optimizing performance.

Ethan Chorney of Cohort 7 completed his capstone on the topic of Relative Deficiency of Energy in Sport (RED-S). This condition was formerly referred to as the “Female Athlete Triad,” characterized by inadequate caloric intake that leads to disruptions in the menstrual cycle, lowered bone density and consequently, low performance. The new designation includes men, who can also suffer from this condition with unique male-specific symptoms. Ethan and Dr. Cooper worked to refine and condense the capstone into a narrative literature review that was accepted in a single week by the peer-reviewed European Society of Medicine's journal, Medical Research Archives.

Ethan commented: “Having the opportunity to be published on a topic like RED-S was both exciting and rewarding. I think one of the biggest challenges was learning how much time and detail go into the research and writing process, but it has helped me grow professionally and gain more confidence in myself. After graduation, I hope to work in an outpatient setting or private practice, as I enjoy counseling and building relationships with others. Long-term, I would love to pursue sports nutrition as part of my career.”

Dr. Cooper said: “There is no greater joy than working with amazing students like Ethan, helping them to add their knowledge to the existing body of literature available in the public domain and seeing them grow into authorship that makes them stand out as future Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN).”

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Nutrition and Dietetics Students Attend Annual WRDA Career Panel at NYSAND AME

By Professor Deanna Ellison

This spring, Pace University Nutrition and Dietetics students held their annual Career Panel in partnership with the Westchester-Rockland Dietetic Association (WRDA). This year's event was especially exciting because it was held during the New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NYSAND) Annual Meeting and Expo, hosted at Pace University.



The highlight of the event was a diverse panel of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) who shared their unique career journeys and professional experiences. Panelists represented a variety of practice areas, including pediatric clinical nutrition, sports nutrition with experience working alongside professional athletic organizations, private practice, and nutrition communications and media. Their stories demonstrated that there is no single path to a successful career in dietetics and showcased the breadth of opportunities available within the profession.

The event provided meaningful networking opportunities for prospective and current students while giving Pace students hands-on experience in professional collaboration, leadership, and event planning. The Nutrition and Dietetics Program extends its gratitude to WRDA and the panelists, whose time, expertise, and mentorship contributed to the success of this year's event.



Panelists (from left to right): Kimberly Haider, Jahnvi Shah, Elisa Bremner, Emily Thiel, Emily Kaley, and Jennie Waegelein

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Dr. Cooper Participates in and Moderates an Interdisciplinary Panel on Human Trafficking at Pace NYC

On April 29, Dr. Cooper participated in and moderated an interdisciplinary panel on human trafficking alongside colleagues Dr. Cathryn Lavery and Prof. David Mulcahy of Pace's Criminal Justice Department. The theme of the conference was: "The Human Experience: Research, Creative Work, and Interdisciplinary Dialogue." Dr. Cooper and her colleagues spoke interactively with professors from a variety of departments about the legal and healthcare ramifications of human trafficking. Dr. Cooper was also recently featured in a Pace Chronicles article, "Nourishment & Healing," which is linked below.

Dr. Cooper is the first RDN to research and publish research on the role of food in human trafficking. Whether in sex trafficking or labor trafficking, food is often used as a bargaining chip. Many victims do not receive food until they complete their 'duties.' She says: "Dietitians can play an important role in spotting and assisting trafficked individuals. The top conditions that victims present with in the ER or hospital are dehydration and malnutrition, which lie directly in our purview. RDNs can also learn about the role of food in recovering from severe trauma like human trafficking. We have an opportunity to help patients and clients own and nourish their bodies again, which is particularly important because their bodies have not been truly theirs while in captivity. There is a lot of shame, disconnection from one's body and even eating disorders that occur within the trafficked population.

In her article, Dr. Cooper and her research collaborator, Lydia McRoberts, report on their survey of 241 dietitians who are members of the Women's Health Dietetic Practice Group (DPG) and/or practicing in the state of Indiana. They found that most dietitians lack confidence in their ability to spot and treat human trafficking victims and survivors, even in professional teams. The years of practice in dietetics make a difference in confidence with dietitians with three to five years of practice landing at the top. Both entry level dietitians and the most seasoned dietitians reported the least confidence.



Left to right: Dr. Cathryn Lavery, Chair, Criminal Justice, David Mulcahy, Criminal Justice Faculty, and Dr. Cooper

An upcoming article by Dr. Cooper will address the need for including trauma-informed, culturally appropriate care to not only trafficking survivors, but those with post-traumatic stress disorder or history of abuse. Because our profession is competency-based and not based on exposure and work with specific conditions, it is difficult to know how many programs are teaching this approach.

RDNs and Human Trafficking Article Link

Pace Chronicles Article Link

Dr. Cooper Addresses International Rotary Club Ending Human Trafficking

On May 28, Dr. Cooper spoke before the international Rotary Club Ending Human Trafficking. The club's members hail from all corners of the globe, from South and Central America to Africa, from Europe to North America.

She lent her knowledge on the role of healthcare providers in battling human trafficking and the unique role that dietitians can play in spotting and treating victims with a compassionate, trauma-informed approach. She discussed the "red flags" that healthcare providers should look for when treating potentially trafficked patients. She says: "What may look to a doctor, nurse or dietitian to be prostitution or domestic violence may be human trafficking. Up to 80% of trafficking victims visit the ER or hospital during their captivity. This visit provides a window of opportunity for us to identify and help victims. Our observations could make the difference between life and death. Human trafficking affects adult women and men, and especially children, who garner the highest profit in the trafficking market.

Here are some "red flags" that RDNs can look for when something "doesn't seem right" with a patient, according to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center:

- Patient accompanied by another person (who could be a man or woman) who refuses to give information or insists on speaking for the patient.
    - In a case such as this, the provider may ask the patient to go to a separate room for a scan or another procedure in order to make space to talk more closely with the patient
- Patient is hesitant to ask questions
- Patient demonstrates nervous behavior and/or avoids eye contact
- Patient has tattoos of dollar signs or a bar code or words such as "for sale" or "property of"
- Patient is resistant to assistance or exhibits hostile behavior
- Patient lacks clothes appropriate for the season and weather
- Patient is unaware of their location and cannot provide a specific address
- Patient is not in possession of their documents, such as a driver's license or passport
- Patient is not in control of his/her own money
- Patient is not being paid or payment is being withheld

If a patient is a minor (under the age of 18), healthcare providers are mandated to report suspicions of human trafficking to authorities. If a patient is an adult, providers can provide information about getting help and safety. Adult patients, however, have a right to refuse reporting or reaching out for help. This is a great challenge for healthcare providers, including RDNs. Should you suspect human trafficking in a patient, here are resources for getting support and help:

Recommended Resources

Below is a list of resources that provide information on identifying, treating, and combatting HT:

- Nurses United Against Human Trafficking, PA (www.nuaht.org) offers accredited HCP-specific education, membership to its professional association, consulting services, and advocacy efforts to combat and prevent HT
- The US Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign (www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign) educates the public, law enforcement, and other industries to recognize and appropriately respond to HT indicators
- The National Center on Sexual Exploitation (www.endsexualexploitation.org) conducts research, advocacy, and litigation to combat HT
- Polaris (www.polarisproject.org) operates the US National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888)

Alumni Highlights



Madison Jacobs

Cohort 6, Class of 2025

What have you been doing since you graduated?

Since graduating Pace University, I have started my career as a certified registered dietitian at Stamford Hospital. I accepted this job prior to passing the RD exam and graduating, as I was determined to utilize the skills and knowledge I gained from all my education as soon as possible. I passed my exam in October about two months after graduation. For my current role at Stamford hospital I am assigned to the internal medicine floor where I typically see patients with a variety of nutrition needs. Some of the most common include diabetes, kidney disease (on and off dialysis), acute and chronic pancreatitis, and nutrition support.

What does a typical day looks like for you?

A typical day starts with screening the new patients on my floor for high vs low nutrition risk. I then attend IDDT rounds where case managers, social workers, nutritionists, physical therapists, and nurses come together to hear from the doctors assigned to each patient. The doctors will typically share any pertinent updates about the patients and discuss discharge planning with the team. After rounds I begin my day seeing patients, normally aiming to see 7-8 patients per day.

What do you enjoy most about your job, and what challenges have you encountered?

Since beginning this job, I have discovered a passion for diabetes education. I thoroughly enjoy taking the time to go through everything about diabetes with the patient, starting from the pathophysiology of insulin and carbohydrates to creating goals with the patients regarding food choices and lifestyle/behavior modifications. A challenge I faced in the beginning of this job was certainly imposter syndrome. As someone who started their career before receiving their credential this was heightened. Regardless, I was asked to do the same job as any registered dietitian therefore I had no choice but to perform as best I could. Luckily, my team of dietitians at Stamford hospital were nothing short of supportive from the second I arrived. They have their own floors to cover and patients to see, but anytime I had a question they were happy to help. I have since gained much more confidence and passing the RD exam certainly helped!

What advice would you offer to current students preparing for the RD exam or starting their careers?

I began studying for the exam before graduation, and continued into the first few weeks of full-time employment. As someone who has always taken pride in their time management skills and has had strong desires to become financially independent as quickly as possible - I would not do anything differently. Studying for the exam while working full time was tiring. My best advice would be to utilize as many resources as possible and find your preferred study method. For me, that was writing practice questions repetitively. When I got one wrong I would rewrite the information in different ways to test my ability to interpret the question in various verbiage. Practice questions are going to be your best friend. That being said, everyone is different and only you know what works best for you. This advice is based on my own experience, and you should do your best to find your own preferred method of studying as early as possible.

What has been your proudest professional accomplishment so far?

My proudest professional accomplishment since starting my career at the hospital would have to be learning how to communicate with patients who have various levels of education, language barriers, and who are managing personal stress. I absolutely love when I can connect with a patient and conversation flows, allowing for a meaningful discussion about behavior change and nutrition. Patients always show their gratitude for this too, making it extremely rewarding.

Alumni Highlights

Jennie Waegelein

Cohort 1, Class of 2020



What have you been doing since you graduated?

It's hard to believe how long it's been since I graduated! Since graduating, I've been working as a dietitian. I started initially in a private medical office and now in my own private practice here in NYC where I focus predominantly on women's health and athletes.

Can you describe your current role and what a typical day looks like for you?

I currently run a private practice and act as a consultant for a health tech company in NY. It's amazing to be my own "boss" and to be able to see all of the different aspects that goes into owning a business while also still having the privilege to work with patients and help other companies do the same.

In saying that, truly no day looks the same, and things are always changing! My day always starts the same, a nice cup of coffee as I check email and go over my schedule for the day. I see a few patients 1:1 either in person or virtually, look at lab results and write up notes and client summaries for my appointments. The remainder of the day is spent working on some of my side projects. I run a group program, teach an undergraduate sports nutrition course here at Pace, and usually have a few consultant meetings. And of course, I must include time for some of the "less glamorous" parts of business - invoicing, working with my accountant, making sure I am on top of taxes or credentials, etc. Overall I probably spend anywhere from 4-6 hours meeting with patients directly, and the remaining time on admin.

What do you enjoy most about your job, and what challenges have you encountered?

I love working with people. If I could talk to people all day long I would be happy! It is such a privilege to have others trust me with their health and I don't take that for granted. Seeing patients happy makes me happy. I am learning every single day, and not knowing is a daily challenge. We don't necessarily learn about business owning in school and it's more fun to work with patients than figure out how to run the logistics of a business.

What advice would you offer to current students preparing for the RD exam or starting their careers?

You will learn every single day! Don't be afraid to put yourself out there, ask for help or take risks with your goals. Your education doesn't stop after school, it really just begins. Reach out to more seasoned dietitians to see how you can learn more about the field or how to reach your goals within the field.

How do you stay current with industry trends and continue growing professionally?

Our field requires 75CEU (continuing education credits) which ensures we stay on top of new research and developments within the field. In the world of technology, I will admit I look to social media to see what topics people are buzzing about so I can be prepped for questions I might get from patients, and often have to "debunk" some of the nutrition misinformation being spread. Outside of that, I subscribe to a few medical/nutrition journals and try to make it to at least 1 conference a year to stay on top of new research.

What skills or experiences from your time at Pace have been the most valuable in your career?

We learn so much in school and I will always stand by time management being one of the best "skills" that school teaches us. Showing up, meeting deadlines, and thinking critically and applying skill is something we have to do daily in any field and Pace did a great job at giving us not only the education for nutrition, but also the practical application of how to use what we learn daily.

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