



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs

Cc: Carrie King, Committee Chair & Professor of Dietetics & Nutrition
Melissa Chlupach, Term Assistant Professor of Dietetics & Nutrition

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Dietetics & Nutrition MS and Dietetic Internship GC

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): The Dietetic Internship GC is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role:

The Dietetic Internship GC provides the supervised practice experience that is required by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to sit for the registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) examination. Students who are already credentialed as a RDN through the Commission on Dietetic Registration can seek additional study in dietetics and nutrition in the Dietetics & Nutrition MS. The MS was developed in 2018, in anticipation of graduate degrees becoming required to take the national entry-level registration exam by 2024. The Dietetics & Nutrition MS can also be combined with the dietetic internship. The employment growth for dietitians and nutritionists is expected to be strong (+19.5%), but the average number of annual openings is expected to be low (+13). However, this is more than the program's capacity which stands at 12 students per cohort. Dietitians make a significant contribution to the College of Health mission to advance the health and wellbeing of people and communities. They work in a wide variety of settings (including health care, business and industry, community/public health, education, research, government agencies and private practice) to assist in the promotion of health and the control of disease.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity:

The number of students pursuing graduate education in Dietetics and Nutrition has been low. During the review period, the Dietetic Internship GC had an average of 6.4 majors per year. The Dietetics & Nutrition MS had eight majors in FY19. The average number of graduates has been 6.4 per year. During the review period, the program successfully prepared 45 students in Alaska to take the national entry-level registration exam. This is a significant contribution to Alaska's healthcare workforce needs. Tuition revenues are high. On average, full tuition revenues cover 85% of the program's instructional costs. Student credit hour production is expected to increase when the minimum educational requirement for taking the national entry-level registration exam becomes the MS degree. Student credit hour production will also increase when the program is at full capacity (12 students per cohort).

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success:

The Dietetic Internship GC is externally accredited through the Accreditation Council on Education for Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND; the Dietetics & Nutrition MS is not currently accredited). The program is transitioning to a graduate degree that will integrate the existing Dietetic Internship GC with the Dietetics & Nutrition MS. This new curriculum will be delivered in AY22. All courses are available online. Experiential learning experiences are incorporated as degree requirements. The program has struggled to use its annual accreditation work to inform our internal academic assessment activities. The program's Assessment Reports lack sufficient detail on key outcomes and recommendations for program improvement. Despite this limitation, it is clear that these are high quality programs. Students are well prepared for the national entry-level registration exam. The one-year national certification exam pass rate for graduates of the Dietetic Internship GC is 95%.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness:

There are no other graduate programs in Dietetics and Nutrition in the state of Alaska.

Commendations and Recommendations:

The graduate programs in Dietetics and Nutrition are essential to meet the workforce demands for dietitians and nutritionists. This is the only program in the state of Alaska that prepares students for licensure as a registered dietitian. Program capacity is limited by the availability of clinical rotation sites. The program has attempted to increase the number clinical sites, especially in rural locations, but these efforts have not been very successful. The program is encouraged to continue its efforts to increase student enrollments up to full capacity (12 students per cohort). Starting in 2024, the graduate certificate will no longer meet the requirements for taking the national entry-level registration exam. The program faculty are working to merge the graduate certificate with the MS into one externally accredited program. Overall, the program is serving its students and meeting its mission and goals. The program should be continued. Regular, ongoing program improvements should occur as part of the annual academic assessment process.

Decision:

Continuation.