

The Student Digest

WINTER 2015

**Public Health/
Community
Nutrition**

a dietetic practice group of the
**Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics**



Message from the Student Committee Chair

Hello PHCNPG students!

Happy New Year! May 2015 be a great year full of satisfying experiences and achieved goals for all.

Welcome to your first issue of *The Student Digest*, the Public Health/Community Nutrition Practice Group's (PHCNPG) newest member benefit. Our newsletter was produced and edited by student members who share your interests and passion for Public Health and Community Nutrition. The Student Committee members worked hard to bring you great informative pieces, highlighting those working to make a difference. We hope these stories inspire all of you to find ways to promote health and wellness in your own communities. In this issue you will learn from young registered dietitians (RDs) who pursued nontraditional paths in their academic and professional careers, which reminds us that our path toward personal achievement is unique. Also, a piece has been dedicated to

finding resources to study for the RD Exam, an important milestone for most of us to successfully complete.

By being an active member in the PHCNPG, I have had enriching experiences that continue to shape me as a nutrition professional. Interacting with dietitians in public health and community nutrition has taught me a great deal about our profession—networking is key for students and professionals from all areas. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a great eMentoring system available to all members on their [webpage](#) under “Resources for Students.” If you are looking for a mentor or mentee, you can search for one using parameters such as location, years of experience, practice area, languages spoken, and even types of mentoring. We encourage student and professional members from the PHCNPG to join this platform and promote mentor/mentee relationships that help everyone to grow.

Throughout the years the Academy has directed special attention towards many student member issues, including preceptor shortage, mentorship, and providing networking opportunities. Our intention is to develop a newsletter that opens a space to discuss all these issues, as well as important topics in public health and community nutrition. I hope that you will join us and send us your feedback to help us improve the newsletter by including what YOU are most interested in reading. We thank you in advance and hope you will enjoy your first issue of *The Student Digest*.



Mayra Crespo, BS

Mayra Crespo
Student Committee Chair

Practitioner Spotlight—Q & A

By: Marielle Counts, BS
PHCNPG Newsletter Committee Member

Valerie Durant graduated from the University of Louisiana, Lafayette with a BS in Dietetics, and completed her dietetic internship at Louisiana Tech University. She is currently a Supplement Specialist at Sandra's Health Food Store in Lafayette, LA.

MC: *What is the typical type of client that you see on a regular basis?*

VD: Sandra's is part grocery store, part café, and part supplement shop, so our clientele is extremely varied. Each day, I talk to people of different socioeconomic status, race, age, and state of health.

MC: *What is the best part about working in your field?*

VD: My favorite part about my job is that it is never boring. I get to play a business role when negotiating with suppliers, be creative

in coming up with new displays and promotions, and best of all, I get to help people. I love working in this environment because it is so conducive to empowering people. I can walk with them around the store and physically show them how to read labels and prepare different products.

MC: *What is the most challenging part about working in your field?*

VD: A huge challenge for me working in the supplement section is unrealistic expectations of customers. The human body is so complex, sometimes simply taking a supplement is not the answer. I try to be honest and give as much information as I can about the ingredients and actions of our supplements so that the consumer can make informed decisions.

MC: *What is the best advice you've ever been given?*

VD: The best advice that I have ever been given is to “let them talk.” It is so tempting to

want to quickly answer a question by putting a product in someone's hand, or to spout off as much information as you can to sound smart, but sometimes people just want to be heard. The process of both listening and talking it out can be healing in and of itself.

MC: *If you could go back and start your career over, what would you do differently?*

VD: If I could go back and do anything over, I would have spent more time volunteering while in school. I think being a hands-on participant of health promotion can make what you learn in the classroom so much more meaningful.



Valerie Durant, RD

Practitioner Spotlight—Q & A

By: Kayla Fitzgeralds, BS
PHCNPG Newsletter Committee Member

Magie Young is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian in Charleston, South Carolina. Dietetics is her second career; she holds a BS in Management from the University of Maryland University College, as well a BS in Dietetics from Kansas State University. She completed her dietetic internship at the Medical University of South Carolina in June, 2014. Maggie is in private practice specializing in diabetes management, weight management, and wellness.

KF: As students we are all looking forward to the day when our hard work pays off and we secure an internship. What did you enjoy the most about your program?

MY: I was a distance student, so interacting with my peer group was my favorite part about my internship. Most of the other interns were students who had just completed their first degree, so in that aspect I was a “non-traditional” student. Nevertheless, I think it gave me an advantage because I brought 20 years of life experiences

as an adult. Those experiences include traveling, volunteering, leadership, management, project management, and general life skills like handling stress and multi-tasking.

KF: What advice do you have for students preparing for the internship application process?

MY: Get to know the interns from the previous class because they will be able to give you an idea of what to expect from the program. If I hadn't reached out to them I think I would have been really surprised. Understand what the internship wants and follow directions. Do your research on the requirements and make sure to follow them. This is the easy part!

KF: There are so many things that you can do as an RD, how did you decide on what area you wanted to focus?

MY: I still don't know! I thought my internship would help me figure out in what area I wanted to work, but I had so many great experiences that it ended up making it really hard to decide. It did help me to figure out a

few areas that I don't want to work in. My program had a clinical and community focus. I feel that the community portion helped me understand the people I will be working with, and the clinical portion gave me the knowledge that I will need to better teach the people in my community.



Magie Young, RDN, LD

KF: Big changes are coming in 2024 with RD's being required to obtain a Master's degree. What are your thoughts on programs that combine a Dietetic Internship with a Master's program?

MY: I think if you find a program that is right for you and it includes a Master's degree, you should take advantage of the opportunity. Several interns in my class already had Master's degrees, and I think more and more students will continue to pursue this option in order to stay competitive.

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This issue's collaborators:

Mayra S. Crespo, BS
Dietetic Intern
University of Puerto Rico
Medical Sciences Campus
mayra.crespo1@upr.edu

Peggy Gomez, BS
Student
Arizona State University
peggy.azrealtor@live.com

Kayla Fitzgerald, BS
Student
Kansas State University
kayla.beltowski@gmail.com

Marielle Counts, BS
Dietetic Intern
University of Louisiana, Lafayette
marielle918@gmail.com

Magdaliz Bonilla, BS
Dietetic Intern
University of Puerto Rico
Medical Sciences Campus
magdaliz.bonilla@upr.edu

Study Tips for the RD Exam

By: Magdaliz Bonilla, BS
PHCNPG Newsletter Committee Member

Once we finish the journey of the internship, there is a final step: passing the RD exam. Taking an exam of this magnitude can cause anxiety. However, do not become overwhelmed! There are many ways to study and a variety of resources available to prepare for the exam. Each person must decide for himself/herself what suits him/her best. The test is comprised of “real life” applications. Therefore, it is important to understand the concepts well, and develop the decision-making skills necessary to solve each problem.

Although you can take the test at any time, it is best to take it as soon as you are ready and able. The first step is to determine a realistic date for the test, then plan a study schedule. Some RDs recommend studying intensley for at least 6 weeks; the *CDR Study Guide* recommends studying for 2-3 months. Enough time should be planned to study the four domains, then review the contents of sections that were difficult to understand or remember. A good practice is to start with the domains that are more challenging, then determine times and dates to study the other

domains. Also, don't forget to plan study breaks. A good strategy is to take a 15 minute break for every 1 hour of studying.

There are many good resources to study for the exam. Some of these resources include:

- [Hess & Hunt Review of Dietetics: Manual for the Registered Dietitian Exam](#)
- [Inman's Review of Dietetics, CDR Study Guide for the Registration Examinations for Dietitians](#)
- [RD in a Flash](#)

Mobile alternatives to the above include phone or iPad apps, such as [Registered Dietitian Test Prep](#). It is helpful to form study groups to discuss key concepts and ask questions. It is also vital to find ways to decrease stress by exercising, meditating, using relaxation techniques, and practicing activities that you like. Finally, do not study during the 24 hours prior to the test; instead, do something relaxing. Taking the RD exam is an important step for your future and service to others; keep your eye on the prize!

Reference

Hess, MA. *Review of Dietetics: Manual for the Registered Dietitian Exam*, 2012-2013 ed. Hess & Hunt, Inc.