

Restructuring Education Preparation, Credentialing and Career Options

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly named the American Dietetic Association)

Profile: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with more than 75,000 members is the world's largest organization of nutrition and dietetics professionals. Most members are registered dietitians/registered dietetic nutritionists (RD/RDN). The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics accredits academic education preparation programs. The Commission on Dietetic Registration certifies individual RDs/RDNs and dietetic technicians registered (DTRs).

Change Challenge: Increase the level of education preparation for the RD to a graduate degree while recognizing and supporting multiple pathways into practice and advancement for nutrition professionals.

History: The Academy from its founding in 1917 has shaped the profession's development and future direction. Initial interest in changing education preparation and credentialing can be traced back to a 1972 task force. Subsequent study groups broached the potential for changes in 1984, 2005 and 2008. This is a case study in the time, challenge and complexity involved in getting all stakeholders to agree to a systematic plan for executing major changes. Workforce requirements and marketplace conditions changed over this period of time. The design principle that ultimately guided the changes was best summed up at the 2011 Future Connections Summit: *Multiple levels of practice and innovative ways to reach these levels and credentials enable the profession to grow and develop in a vibrant and challenging environment while protecting the public.*

Change Methods:

The Academy's leaders and stakeholders engaged in an intense multi-year dialogue with a number of initiatives serving as change methods.

1. Study commissions in 2005 and 2008 analyzed and recommended significant changes. Significant resistance to change was built into how education preparation is traditionally structured in different colleges and universities; many RDs were uncomfortable requiring new entrants to hold a graduate degree that they don't have; and licensing laws and employment practices offer RDs little protection in a competitive marketplace.
2. A major workforce study undertaken in 2010 and completed in 2012 produced a better understanding of supply and demand and what the future of dietetic practice might be.
3. A Future Connections Summit convened in March 2011 examined the continuum of education, credentialing and future practice. This innovative summit highlighted future opportunities and design principles for restructuring education, credentialing and future practice.
4. The Council on Future Practice, tasked with convening the summit, followed up with a visioning report that translated these design principles into a set of specific

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recommendations for change. The House of Delegates as well as the general membership were invited to review and comment on these recommendations.

5. Representatives of the organizational units required to execute these recommendations met in January 2013 to adapt the recommendations into a coordinated plan for system-wide change. This meeting established a process for resolving the myriad details in changing education accreditation standards and credentialing.

Outcome:

The Commission on Dietetic Registration will begin requiring a graduate degree for the RD/RND in 2024. CDR also is establishing an advanced practice certification. The Accreditation Council on Education in Nutrition and Dietetics has initiated formal processes to revise standards for program accreditation. The Academy board approved a new title for baccalaureate graduates, nutrition and dietetics associate (NDA), that will be maintained through continuing education requirements based on the Academy's certificate programs.

Signature i, LLC Role:

We had periodic and sustained involvement with these issues beginning as a project advisor to the workforce supply and demand task force. During this project we did environmental scanning and scenario planning about the profession's future. We were then tapped to design and facilitate the Future Connections Summit. And we also facilitated and documented the plan and agreements the organizational units developed in January 2013 to execute the change. Then as a coda in July, we facilitated an Academy board retreat that led to the NDA title and changes to the strategic plan to keep the profession moving forward.

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