

# NDEP-Line

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## From the Chair...

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Well, here we are: already over a month into 2018. Did you find yourself making some New Year's resolutions not too long ago? If so, perhaps you targeted making choices associated with healthier lifestyles. Perhaps some resolutions having to do with trying to reduce and manage some of the stress that so often accompanies the myriad responsibilities of our professional and personal lives?

In the midst of trying to make choices that help achieve and maintain personal health and happiness in various realms, you are part of a group that's dedicated to the future of our profession and our future colleagues. As educators and preceptors in a multitude of settings, you are so often stretched quite thin with all that you do to support our students and our interns as well as each other. I thank each and every one of you for all that you are doing. We are the profession, and we are doing the work of the profession each and every day through the roles that we play in the practice of nutrition and dietetics.

I do hope that you are finding that the resources provided by and through your fellow NDEP members are helpful to you by supporting the valuable work that you are doing, and perhaps even helping you to achieve some of those resolutions in some way.

Following are some of the accomplishments and initiatives of your NDEP Council, your Regional Directors, and our NDEP committees that have been accomplished and/or are underway to help support you and your fellow educators and preceptors:

- The 2017 NDEP Student Internship/Supervised Practice Fair at FNCE in Chicago was a tremendous success, attended by over 700 students, with program directors and representatives of 168 ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internships, Coordinated Programs, and ISPPs providing face-to-face contact for those students with valuable information and answers to their questions.
- The listing for program Open Houses, compiled yearly and continually updated by NDEP member Victoria Getty, can now be accessed not only on our own NDEP website, but by students, program directors, and others via both the ACEND and Academy websites, regardless of membership status.

# Teaching Entrepreneurship in Dietetics

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From an informal survey of undergraduate dietetic education programs, at least 30% of students want to open a private practice upon graduation but do not have the educational tools to move forward in this type of venture. The lack of business skills among dietetic graduates creates more opportunity for non-trained, yet business savvy individuals to position themselves as “nutrition professionals” serving our consumers.

Society is now in the entrepreneurial age. More than ever, individuals are breaking free and starting their own businesses vs plugging into the corporate regimen of “9:00 to 5:00.” Although unemployment rate today is 4.3% - the lowest it has been since 2001<sup>1</sup>, the largest section of the unemployed are millennials due to a variety of factors. Baby boomers are staying in the job market longer, crowding out the younger generation. In addition, millennials are more selective about their work, as they are looking for “meaningful” jobs. This younger generation is also more likely to follow the entrepreneurial track, with millennials starting businesses at average ages younger than when boomers began their own ventures.

Millennials also work differently, and their buying habits are contributing to the decreased need for brick and mortar operations<sup>2</sup>. From a nutrition career point of view, we have seen the younger generation more interested in virtual businesses, including counseling. However, this poses licensure issues when crossing state lines. A dietitian licensed in Illinois for example, whom wants to work with a patient in Florida virtually, would also need to be

licensed in Florida – whether or not insurance participation was a factor.

In this country today, we have also seen salaries decreasing in relation to cost of living, making entrepreneurship more desirable in terms of earning power.

## **Let’s look at statistics related to job growth for dietitians:**

- The need for dietitians will rise "because of increased emphasis on disease prevention, a growing and aging population and public interest in nutrition"
- Employment for dietitians in hospitals is expected to show little change because of anticipated slow growth, reduced patients' lengths of hospital stay and outsourcing
- For employment of dietitians and nutritionists in the year 2015 and beyond, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates a 40-60% increase in health and fitness facilities and diet workshops
- The least growth, into the new millennium and beyond, is forecasted for what once were traditional employment settings for dietitians and nutritionists - hospitals (7%) and government (0.5)<sup>3</sup>

## **Below are industries, as a whole, with the highest growth potential today:**

- Personal computers, phones, tablets
- Software
- Internet
- Biotechnology drugs

## Teaching your students how to hone their entrepreneurial skills

For starters to your course, have your students take this self-test:

### Are you an entrepreneur?

Fill in the blank with either Yes or No

1. Are you ready for long hours and little sleep? \_\_\_\_
2. Are you able to tolerate uncertainty? \_\_\_\_
3. Are you a risk taker? \_\_\_\_
4. Is your self-confidence high? \_\_\_\_
5. Are you Persistent? \_\_\_\_
6. Do you have concrete goals and objectives? \_\_\_\_
7. Can you deal with unforeseen obstacles? \_\_\_\_
8. Are you ready to experience failure? \_\_\_\_
9. Are you comfortable asking for help? \_\_\_\_
10. Are you ready to accept responsibility for your decisions? \_\_\_\_
11. Are you willing to totally immerse yourself in your business? \_\_\_\_
12. Do you have strong professional ethics? \_\_\_\_
13. Do you have a “take charge” personality? \_\_\_\_

Have your students review and rate their scores.

**10 or more YES** Your student has the entrepreneurial spirit needed for success!

**6 – 9 YES** Almost ready, but needs to be comfortable with a higher degree of risk taking and uncertainty

**5 or less YES** Entrepreneurship may not be for this student, but offering an entrepreneurship course in dietetics may help change the mindset of your student and inspire them!

In your course development, you can help your student evaluate opportunities for starting a new business:

#### Helping your student evaluate opportunities for new businesses

Your course in entrepreneurship should include:

–**The opportunity:** seeing the idea through from start to finish

–**Customer need:** can you name your specific

customers?

–**Timing:** economic cycles, avoiding “fads”

Here are some ways you can facilitate this process by educating your student on the following:

#### Consumer Spending

Today, discretionary income is going towards “experiences,” including dining out, travel, and entertainment. How can a dietitian position themselves here? We have seen a trend in healthy options for dining out. Here is a great niche for a dietitian to fill through menu analysis, catering, meals to go, or even opening up their own restaurant.<sup>4</sup>

#### Purchasing Patterns

The retail industry is down; with online purchase increasing.<sup>5</sup> Standard brands are passé, with boutique brands on the upswing. Today’s consumer also wants an experience in decision behind their purchase. For example, the dietitian-related websites that offer interaction in determining BMI, health related questions to determine product and service needs, etc. – a great way to draw potential

purchasers to your website and business offerings. Healthcare is going the way of less insurance-based services, but like tangible brands-more boutique services of interest.<sup>6</sup>

### **Technological trends**

How does the following impact a dietitian's business or how can they capitalize on this opportunity?

- ❖ Current demand for products in the nutrition industry
- ❖ What is replaced by "new" and "improved"?
- ❖ Emerging technology
- ❖ Internet shopping
- ❖ On-line business opportunities
- ❖ Virtual experiences

For example, electronic medical records (EMR) are pretty much standard in the healthcare industry today. In the last few years, dietitians are offering electronic forms and also platforms for medical records themselves.

### **An assignment in writing a business plan**

A great exercise for your students is to develop a concept for a business by executing a business plan. This is even more dynamic when accomplished in small groups.

The business plan would outline and summarize the plans of the company regarding financial resources, needs and uses; marketing, advertising, and promotion strategies; inventory resources and requirements; demographics of the community and customer; and the backgrounds and role of the owner (s).

It would also include:

- Executive summary
- Business description
- Structure and management
- Products and services

- The market
- Action plan
- Contingency plan
- Marketing plan
- Financial projections

The more experiential you can keep this course lends itself to learning and creating. Many of your young students will already have a knack for business. Your role is to cultivate their talent in executing their ideas in a rationale fashion. Inviting nutrition entrepreneurs in your community, to speak to your students, is another great way to inspire students and encourage questions. Treading into the area of entrepreneurship may be overwhelming and intimidating. However, planned steps will make this course successful and a large draw to your program.

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