

**MARSHALL UNIVERSITY
DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS
YEARLY ASSESSMENT REPORT
AY 2005-2006**

I. Assessment Activities:

A. Program Goals:

The Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) has three primary goals, and faculty members meet annually to review them and determine their appropriateness. Likewise, these goals are reviewed every April by the Dietetics Advisory Committee which is composed of alumni, administrators, and preceptors. Recommendations of these stakeholders are considered and appropriate changes to the mission, goals, and objectives of the program are reflected in the next year's assessment report.

Current program goals continue to be as follows:

- Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully compete for dietetic internship positions.
- Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully complete a dietetic internship.
- Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to pass the Registration Examination through a variety of experiences in the classroom and community.

B: Learning Outcomes/Data Collection:

The Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education, the program's accrediting body, has rigorous assessment guidelines that must be followed. Because of this, it was determined that an amended version of the University's Assessment Summary Chart would better fit program needs. The amended chart is included for your review and summaries of assessment and evaluation strategies are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The attached program assessment plan outlines outcome measures, expected outcomes, data collection responsibilities, time frames, and progress toward goals (expected outcomes). The program has attempted to measure progress toward achieving program goals through a variety of methods.

Both qualitative and quantitative assessments were utilized to examine program outcomes. In the spring, the Dietetics Advisory Committee gathered to discuss program goals, achievements, and areas for improvement. Additionally, informal individual discussions took place with each program graduate to discuss similar issues. Data gathered from these meetings were used to improve the program.

A confidential survey was also given to program graduates to address their satisfaction with the program and the degree to which their goals were achieved. In other years, an internship director survey has been used to assess MU DPD graduate competence in the field and classroom; however, during this assessment period, no students attended an internship other than Marshall's.

Finally, student GPA and scores on the Registration Examination were monitored in accordance with recommendations of the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education.

C. Results

Results of each outcome measure are identified in the "progress toward goal" column of the program assessment plan. During the past year, the program has identified several areas for improvement that are described below.

First, the most recent five-year summary data on the Registration Examination passage rates indicated that Marshall's DPD percentage was 81.0%, which falls below the expected outcome. Data showed that 29 of 36 students taking the exam passed on the first attempt. While this remains above the mandatory 80.0% pass rate established by the accrediting body, it is not satisfactory to program administration. It should be noted that most of those failing on the first attempt passed upon retaking the exam. However the Commission only acknowledges the pass rate of first time test takers, even if they successfully complete the examination at a later date.

One issue affecting pass rates is the relatively low number of students taking the exam annually. One person failing can drop the pass rate significantly. Another challenge is that DPD students generally do not take the exam until one to one-and-a half years after they have graduated. During this time, most graduates complete a supervised practice requirement since eligibility to sit for the registration exam requires completion of both a didactic program and supervised experience.

With the guidance of the Advisory Committee, course requirements were updated two years ago. Several new courses were added as others were

deleted. In addition, faculty are currently meeting to further revise the curriculum. As a result, the program has and will be able to address emerging issues in the field of dietetics. Since January 2006, the DPD has had a 100.0% pass rate (n=4) with four additional graduates preparing to take the exam. If possible, graduates are contacted after taking the exam for the first time to assess whether or not they believe themselves to have been prepared.

A second area of improvement with regard to measuring outcomes is the graduate survey. As mentioned before, qualitative data is obtained from informal discussions with program graduates and more information is requested in the form of a quantitative survey. Response rates to the survey have historically been poor and faculty have discussed when the most appropriate time would be to distribute the survey. Graduates need time in the supervised experience to be able to assess their knowledge gained in the DPD; however if too much time passes the likelihood of having the incorrect contact information increases. Because of this, surveys will be sent via mail and e-mail during the fall semester following their graduation to increase the chance of reaching the graduate.

Finally, the Senior Practicum Evaluation is currently under revision. In the past, students have had to spend a set number of hours with a dietitian or supervisor in the areas of clinical and community nutrition and foodservice management. Feedback from students revealed that the “hands on” experiences were not being actualized as they were usually only able to shadow individuals. Furthermore, evaluations were not being returned by the preceptors. Because one of the objectives of the class is to assess the students’ abilities to synthesize knowledge gained throughout the DPD experience, the direction of the course has changed.

Beginning this semester small groups of students will design a one hour nutrition education program to be presented to the public. In order to do this, they will have to pull together their knowledge of basic nutrition, community nutrition, food science, marketing, education, and foodservice management to develop the programs. Throughout the process, students will reflect on past courses and describe their reflections through journaling and class discussion. All DPD professors will be asked to participate in the evaluation of the presentation in addition to one or two local dietetic professionals.

II. BOT Initiative 3 Compliance:

In dietetics, knowledge and skills are assessed nationally through the registration examination. This is a computerized test of approximately 100 multiple-choice questions that is required for registration status. In order

to sit for the exam, a student must have completed the educational requirements of a DPD and supervised practice experience.

As previously mentioned, the most recent five-year summary data indicates that Marshall's pass rate is 81.0%, which is above the mandatory pass rate of 80.0%. At this time, the five-year national pass rate is 79.2%, thus Marshall's DPD pass rate has exceeded that of the national pass rate.

While Marshall's overall pass rate is above the national average, the department would like to improve the rate beyond its current figure. As discussed in the results section of this report, the required DPD curriculum was changed two years ago and continues to be revised to address emerging issues in the field of dietetics. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee continues to offer support and guidance with curricular issues as well.

III. Plans for the current year:

The program will continue will all the outcome measures identified in the program assessment plan. We will work to revise the senior practicum evaluation and improve the response rates to the graduate surveys. In addition, we will continue to evaluate progress on the plan to improve scores on the Registration Examination and work with various stakeholders to update program goals and objectives.

We will also continue to share the outcomes of our assessment with students, faculty, preceptors, and Advisory Committee members through the Student Dietetic Association, departmental meetings, site visits, and the annual meeting of the Advisory Committee respectively. Moreover, we will seek their feedback regularly in an effort to continually improve the program and its graduates.

IV. Assistance Needed:

Feedback from the University Assessment Committee on the appropriateness and usefulness of the assessment plan will be beneficial in future strategic planning for the program. Any input to improve the program would be much appreciated.

V. What one most important thing has the department/program learned through this process?

Having assumed the responsibilities of program director one year ago, this assessment has helped me better understand the history of the program

and the procedures that need to be implemented or maintained to ensure a quality didactic program in dietetics at Marshall University.

**Marshall University Didactic Program in Dietetics
Assessment Summary Chart**

Goal	Objective	Outcome Measures	Expected Outcome	Individual Responsible	Time Frame	Progress Toward Goal
1. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully compete for dietetic internship positions.	2. Program graduates will remain competitive in obtaining dietetic internships upon graduation.	GPA	100.0% of DPD students will maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater for program completion	Program Director and COHP Record Officer	A minimum of annually in Junior and Senior years	100.0% (n=4) of December 2005 and 2006 graduates completed the program with a GPA in excess of 2.5
		Acceptance Rate to Dietetic Internships	80.0% of program graduates seeking placement will be accepted to Dietetic Internship programs	Program Director	Annually	100.0% (n=4) of Dec. 2005 and 2006 graduates who applied for internships were accepted to programs
		Course Evaluations	100.0% of courses are rated with minimum mean scores of 2 (agree)	Institutional Research	Each Semester	Evaluation of all courses for Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 indicated that outcome was achieved
		Graduate Survey	90.0% of respondents report satisfaction with the program	Program Director	Annually in Fall	100.0% (n=3) of Dec. 2005 and 2006 graduates reported satisfaction
		Senior Practicum Evaluations	100.0% of students will receive "satisfactory" score for practicum performance	Course Instructor	Annually in Fall	No evaluations were returned for the Fall 2005 course. Course requirements are being revised to better meet the needs of both students and local preceptors.
		Annual Report of Faculty Member	100.0% of faculty rated at a minimum of effective	Dean & Department Chair	Annually in Spring	In Spring 2006, all (n=3) full-time faculty received a minimum overall rating of "good"

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1. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully compete for dietetic internship positions.	3. As a graduation requirement, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 or higher.	GPA	100.0% of DPD students will maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater for program completion	Program Director and COHP Record Officer	A minimum of annually in Junior and Senior years	100.0% (n=4) of December 2005 and 2006 graduates completed the program with a GPA in excess of 2.5
1. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully compete for dietetic internship positions.	4. Academic and clinical experiences will prepare graduates for dietetic internships and entry-level work in the field after graduation.	Course Evaluations	100.0% of courses are rated with minimum mean scores of 2 (agree)	Institutional Research	Each Semester	Evaluation of all courses for Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 indicated that outcome was achieved
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		Annual Report of Faculty Member	100.0% of faculty rated at a minimum of effective	Dean & Department Chair	Annually in Spring	In Spring 2006, all (n=3) full-time faculty received a minimum overall rating of "good"
		Internship Director Survey	90.0% of respondents report students are adequately prepared for dietetic internship	Program Director	Annually in Fall (~18 months post graduation, when applicable)	No DPD graduates attended internships other than MU during the time of this program review.

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1. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully compete for dietetic internship positions.	5. Faculty will advance professionally through attainment of terminal degree, attendance at professional meetings, and maintaining clinical practice.	Annual Report of Faculty Member	100.0% of faculty rated at a minimum of effective	Dean & Department Chair	Annually in Fall	In Spring 2006, all (n=3) full-time faculty received a minimum overall rating of "good"; one completed PhD. in Aug. 2006 and one is completing terminal degree requirements, all (n=3) maintained clinical practice and attended professional meetings
		Course Evaluations	100.0% of courses are rated with minimum mean scores of 2 (agree)	Institutional Research	Each Semester	Evaluation of all courses for Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 indicated that outcome was achieved
2. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully complete a dietetic internship.	1. Program graduates will pass the Registration Examination for Dietitians on their first attempt at a rate higher than the national average.	Registration Examination	90.0% pass rate for first time test takers	Program Director	Annually	81.0% pass rate on most recent 5-year report; plan to improve has been agreed upon by faculty and implemented in didactic courses. Improvements are expected in the forthcoming academic years.
2. Provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to successfully complete a dietetic internship.	3. As a graduation requirement, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 or higher.	GPA	100.0% of DPD students will maintain a GPA of 2.5 or greater for program completion	Program Director and COHP Record Officer	A minimum of annually in Junior and Senior years	100.0% (n=4) of December 2005 and 2006 graduates completed the program with a GPA in excess of 2.5

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