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## At Last: Dietetics Coordinated Program Granted Candidacy

 MAY 5, 2010 BY **ADMIN**



OXFORD, Miss. – For years, faculty and students in the University of Mississippi's dietetics program have anticipated the time when all eligibility requirements for national registration would be met in-house.

The wait is over.

The Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association has granted an expansion of the dietetics program to the UM Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management. The upgrade allows dietetics students to complete their entire professional course requirements, including supervised practice competencies while completing their master's degree in food and nutritional services. These achievements prepare them to take the national registration exam to become a registered dietitian.

UM's undergraduate dietetics and nutrition program was granted full accreditation by CADE as a teaching program five years ago. Upon successful completion of the program, students applied for CADE-approved dietetic internships.

"When I began my career almost 30 years ago at the (UM) Medical Center, this was being talked about," said Teresa Carithers, department chair and associate professor of nutrition and hospitality management. "This is the realization of a long-awaited dream for many. What a feeling of fulfillment to have worked with such a dedicated faculty who helped make this a reality. It is even more rewarding that such a program is not just meeting the needs of our students, but preparing professionals who can address the nutrition and food service needs of our state and our nation."

The expansion brings a welcome transition from previous procedures.

"Before having the coordinated program, our students would have had to fulfill classroom requirements here and then apply to another program that had a clinical portion," said Kathy Knight, associate professor of nutrition and hospitality management.

"The students who will be doing their rotations next year have already been taking classes in our master's program."

Melinda Valliant, assistant professor of nutrition and hospitality management, will conduct the two-week orientation to the clinical rotations in the summer intersession.

"Following the white coat ceremony, rotations will start in June and continue through spring semester 2011," Valliant said.

The accreditation process is long and exacting, Valliant said. "Many departments are unable to fulfill the strenuous requirements to obtain the program," she said.

Dietetics students expecting to fill the eight positions for the coordinated program may be even more thrilled by the news than the faculty members are.

"I was extremely excited to hear that the Department of Nutrition was approved for the coordinated program," said graduate student Rachel Kieckhafer-Wenzel of Oxford. "Adding the coordinated program is the 'icing on the cake' because it gives students a chance to finish their undergraduate, master's and also the required internship in order to become a registered dietitian."

Curriculum in the DPD program integrates human nutrition, biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, food science and food service systems management, business, and social sciences into a comprehensive program. Dietetics students have opportunities to participate in district, state and national dietetic meetings and conferences.

Twenty-three students are enrolled in the Master of Science in Food and Nutrition Services program.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Career opportunities for dietitians range from employment in small communities to large cities, in hospitals, wellness centers, health agencies and public health programs, long-term care facilities, food industry companies, pharmaceutical companies and the armed forces. Other career opportunities are available in research, consulting and business.

For more information about the Department of Nutrition and Hospitality Management, visit [http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/fcs/Dietetics\\_and\\_Nutrition/](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/fcs/Dietetics_and_Nutrition/) or call 662-915-7944.

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