

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS**  
**ACCREDITATION REPORT AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Action Requested:** Receive the accreditation report for the Didactic Program in Dietetics at the baccalaureate level in the Colleges of Human Sciences and Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University.

**Executive Summary:** The program (1) underwent a self-study that addressed the standards defined by the accrediting body; and (2) had an on-site visit by peer evaluators. The program was accredited for the maximum ten-year period through 2018. However, the next review of the program will be in 2013, the five-year interval of the ten-year accreditation period, when the Program Assessment Report (PAR) is due. This accreditation report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to “offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students.”

**Background:**

- ◇ Description of undergraduate program. The Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) provides coursework for an undergraduate degree in dietetics or for concurrent undergraduate and graduate degrees in diet and exercise. Graduates of the program are eligible to apply for admission to accredited/approved dietetic internships/supervised practice programs. Upon successful completion of the experience program, graduates are eligible to take the national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration to become a Registered Dietitian (R.D.) and to practice in the field of dietetics.
- ◇ Purpose of Accreditation. An accredited educational program is recognized by its peers as having met national standards for its development and evaluation.
- ◇ Accrediting Agency. The accrediting body is the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) of the American Dietetic Association.
- ◇ Review Process. The self-study prepared by the Didactic Program in Dietetics contained the responses to the appropriate standards required by the accrediting body – program planning and outcomes assessment; curriculum and student learning outcomes; and program management.
- ◇ On-Site Team Report. In April 2008, the visiting team determined that the Didactic Program in Dietetics met the requirements for accredited status, although two components of the standards were only partially met.
- ◇ Sample Strengths Identified by the Visiting Team.
  - ☑ “Dedicated program director with excellent skills in program management.”
  - ☑ “Outcomes assessment plan integrated with department, college, and institution with a strong link between outcomes data and curriculum planning.”
  - ☑ “Innovative teaching techniques and assignments used throughout the curriculum.”
  - ☑ “Departmental advisor to assist students in curriculum planning and post-graduation plans.”

◆ Conditions partially met.

- ☑ Outcomes and measures to assess achievement of goals and program effectiveness (#1). “Three goals have been identified. The Advisory Committee commented they were included in the writing of the outcome measures and establishing realistic benchmarks. However, as discussed onsite, it is not clear how the outcome measures aligned to goal three assess the full intent of the goal, as they do not measure graduates who provide health care in Iowa and beyond its borders. Therefore, additional graduate outcome(s) with target measures must be identified in order to fully assess the intent of the goal.”

*Following discussions with the review team at the time of the site visit, an additional outcome measure for program goal three was created to more directly measure achievement of the goal – 60% of alumni survey respondents will indicate employment in a dietetics-related position. The ISU DPD alumni survey has been revised to include the appropriate questions to obtain employment information and track achievement of program goal 3. The revised survey will be administered in Summer 2008 and annually thereafter; survey results will be reviewed by the departmental outcomes assessment committee during fall semesters.*

- ☑ Program information provided to prospective students (#3). “Students indicated that all of the CADE-required information is provided to them through advising, freshman orientation, the website, and in the *Introduction to Dietetics* course. However, most students felt they still were not truly aware of the need to do a Dietetic Internship until they were enrolled in *Introduction to Dietetics*. The program director discussed how to better provide this information and is in the process of developing a DPD Handbook to include all the required information. In addition, the program is exploring the possibility of changing the curriculum/course content in order to have the information introduced earlier in the curriculum. In addition, while the BS/MS in Diet and Exercise option is mentioned in the Frequently Asked Questions on the Dietetics Academy web page, there is no connection to the undergraduate program. As the BS/MS is an option of the DPD, the web page must be clear that both options are part of the CADE-accredited program and therefore ensure that all of the CADE-required information is provided for the BS/MS option as well.”

*As a follow-up to web page comments of the site visit report, the ISU DPD web pages have now been revised to more clearly communicate program information to prospective and current students. Previously, there were separate web pages for the undergraduate program in dietetics and the new concurrent undergraduate and graduate program in diet and exercise. To illustrate more clearly that both programs meet the academic requirements as the DPD, the header on the dietetics web pages as well as the text on the welcome page, DPD information page, and program requirements page now include information about both tracks.*

- ◆ Accreditation Status. In November 2008, the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association awarded initial accreditation to the Didactic Program in Dietetics at the baccalaureate level at ISU for a ten-year period through 2018 subject to a review of the program in 2013 when the Program Assessment Report (PAR) is due. The PAR documents the comprehensive evaluation of the accredited program that has occurred during the previous five years. Maintenance of the program’s accreditation status is dependent on the CADE board’s acceptance of the PAR, which reaffirms continuation of the accreditation status of the program for the next five years.