

PROGRAM REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

Dietetics and Human Nutrition

2023-2024

Recommendation 1. Work with departments in HES, M-G CAFE administration, and the Office of Philanthropy and Alumni to develop creative plans to raise funds to improve current facilities and to address future facilities for the department.

Assessment method: With college personnel in Philanthropy and Alumni Relations, the Chair will annually collate results.

Results: The Department Chair and other departmental representatives continue to regularly meet with the college's philanthropy and alumni relations team to strategize plans to raise funds for departmental needs. During this report year, the department has prioritized streamlining and coordinating award and scholarship processes. This includes the Breeding-Smith Edge Leadership in Dietetics Scholarship and Buster and Killpatrick Fellowships. The department received \$700,000 in funding for The Bill Gatton Foundation Dietetics Scholarship Fund, providing scholarships to students completing the Accelerated Coordinated Program in Dietetics (10 scholarships to be awarded in 2025, \$10,000 each). The Food as Health Alliance, housed in Dietetics and Human Nutrition, has secured over one million dollars to support Alliance programming, research and priorities.

Analysis of results and reflection: DHN will continue to work with college and UK Philanthropy to strategize opportunities to engage alumni and raise funds.

Ongoing improvement actions: Fundraising and associated alumni engagement continues to be an area of growth and improvement for DHN. DHN leadership will continue to collaborate regularly with college and university philanthropy and alumni staff. Key fundraising goals are to support the Campus Kitchen at the University of Kentucky, as well as student scholarships and professional development opportunities (including education abroad).

Recommendation 2. Work with College and UK administration to develop a comprehensive plan to improve teaching environments to enhance student-learning experiences.

Assessment method: Teaching and learning environments in Funkhouser Building and Erikson Hall need continual upgrades to enhance and support high-impact student-learning experiences. The Chair will annually track upgrades to DHN teaching and learning spaces.

Results: The Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition has been included in renovation planning for Scovell Hall, with an anticipated move in date of Spring 2026. This space includes modern classroom space, offices and meeting rooms as well as a state-of-the-art 4000 sq ft teaching kitchen and dining area with seating capacity of 100 for the Lemon Tree Café. The Performance Nutrition and Body Composition Lab (PNBC Lab) has committed space in Scovell Hall for DHN to expand research, outreach and educational opportunities, including providing nutrition counseling.

Analysis of results and reflection: Renovations of Scovell Hall are underway. All aspects of the new space will improve teaching environments to enhance student-learning experiences. Student, faculty, staff and community partners are all anticipating moving into the new space and the exceptional opportunities that will be provided.

Ongoing improvement actions: Continuing to work with college and university officials in the specifics of Scovell Hall, particularly related to the teaching kitchen and dining area. This includes working with the college of re-branding of the Lemon Tree Café and exploring opportunities for expansion with both Lemon Tree Café and the Campus Kitchen offerings. DHN recently joined the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative to gain best practice recommendations and networking in support of the exceptional teaching kitchen space and opportunities.

Recommendation 3. Develop long-range plans to address stability and growth in the department.

Assessment method: A Department Search plan was recommended that included the appointment of a permanent (six-year term) appointment. A resource analysis was conducted relative to staffing needs of the unit to support departmental growth.

Results: A permanent (six-year term) Department Chair was searched for and appointed in February 2021. Ongoing resource analyses are conducted determining staffing needs in the DHN Business Office. This currently includes three full time business staff - Business Officer and two Administrative Support Services positions. Part-time instructors have been hired to fill instructional gaps with DHN courses and the dietetic internship (supervised professional practice). DHN has hired staff into several new positions including a Teaching Kitchen Operations and Food Systems Coordinator, Extension Specialist Senior, Marketing and Promotions Specialist, Research Coordinator, and multiple Program Coordinator (I and II) positions to support the work of the department. The department is working through the process of updating the DHN Evidences of Activity and Rules and Procedures with a goal of completion by Spring 2025.

Analysis of results and reflection: DHN appointed a Chair (six-year commitment) to provide consistent leadership to the department. The Chair then led efforts related to staffing needs for the department to support the teaching, research, and outreach work of the unit. Policies, procedures, and standard operating procedures are continually evaluated and, when needed, updated.

Ongoing improvement actions: The department will continue to evaluate resource needs, including staffing needs related to the Food as Health Alliance (FAHA) and departmental initiatives.

Recommendation 4. Establish a clear trajectory for faculty mentorship that builds into the strengths of departmental teaching, research, and extension; and provides mentorship specific to individual faculty career goals, as well as departmental goals.

Assessment method: The Chair will annually track results.

Results: DHN faculty and staff have served as both mentors and mentees in the college-wide faculty and staff mentoring programs. The Chair has developed a DOE and instructional matrix that spans two years. The unit has prioritized consistency in instructional responsibilities, while also making adjustments when needed based on changes to DOE (e.g. research and administration). DOE discussions now occur as part of APR conversations, in February each year, and, for transparency, DOEs are shared with all faculty. Part-time instructors with expertise in relevant areas have provided coverage for instructional needs. This includes DHN staff with instructional time included as part of major job responsibilities.

Analysis of results and reflection: The department has developed a structured staff and faculty mentoring program with an implementation goal in 2025. Staff mentoring is facilitated through the DHN Business Office. Staff Synergy is a new quarterly initiative for all staff in DHN to connect and network, providing mentoring opportunities. DHN Research and Extension Conversations are held monthly, an opportunity for collaborating and networking for both faculty and staff.

Ongoing improvement actions: DHN will continue to evaluate mentoring programs and initiatives for both faculty and staff. Staff major job responsibilities are continually evaluated and adjusted, when appropriate. Faculty have proposed updates to the DHN Statement on Evidences of Activity with a goal of implementation in Spring 2025.

Recommendation 5. Hire the business officer position. A portion of the responsibilities of this position should be focused on faculty and staff needs in pre- and post-award grants management.

Assessment method: A hiring plan was recommended that included a DHN Business Officer with 1.0 FTE in DHN.

Results: DHN now has a full-time Business Officer that supports both general departmental operations, as well as the Food as Health Position. The DHN Business Office has expanded to three full-time staff who support the depth and breadth of work of the department. Business Office operations have been enhanced with new processes and procedures to best support the work of the unit.

Analysis of results and reflection: Having three full-time staff in the DHN Business Office has supported growth of the department, including more staff, hourly workers, and graduate assistants, as well as an increase in grant-related work.

Ongoing improvement actions: The department continually evaluates DHN Business Office needs.

Recommendation 6. Enhance existing relationships with extension agents and alumni to advance program offerings.

Assessment method: Data collected from Extension reports, and annual reporting of DHN faculty and staff. The Chair maintains record of undergraduate research activities of the unit (funding, mentors, presentations, journal articles, etc.).

Results: DHN hired a full-time Senior Extension Specialist in Fall 2023. This position has allowed for enhanced support with Extension agents and other stakeholders. DHN Extension faculty and staff have collaborated with the Food as Health Alliance on new programming and resources. As part of college-wide efforts to support documenting and reporting on student engagement in Extension programming, Extension faculty now document guest lectures and other collaborative projects. Funding has been secured from internal and extramural sources to support experiential learning opportunities, including Extension. Multiple peer-reviewed journal articles have been published on such collaborations, as well as presentations at regional and national conferences. The DHN website includes an Undergraduate Research Opportunities page with current opportunities available to students as well as guidance on how to connect with faculty and staff with research opportunities. That website page is updated every semester. Faculty and staff have worked with students to secure undergraduate research funding from multiple sources, including college and university funding (e.g. UK Summer Sustainability Research Fellowships). DHN hosted an “Ask Me Anything” series for DHN alums; due to the pandemic, these were all hosted virtually, which also supported higher attendance. An “Alumni Series” event was hosted in February 2022 – “Building a more sustainable future: Sustainable food panel.”

Analysis of results and reflection: DHN has proactively explored innovative and impactful opportunities to advance program offerings. Positive steps have been taken to engage alumni and community partners.

Ongoing improvement actions: DHN has made strides in enhancing existing relationships with extension agents and alumni, but has more work to be done. This includes developing an assessment survey to determine the engagement types, levels, and opportunities for alumni. Opportunities for DHN alumni to visit campus and engage with faculty, staff, and students will be explored.

Recommendation 7. Develop plans to implement the new online MS program that includes goals for staffing needs and student recruitment and retention.

Assessment method: The Chair maintains records of relevant activities.

Results: DHN secured \$50,000 in funding to support the development of distance learning (DL) coursework and a fully online option for the MS in Nutrition and Food Systems. The fully online MS NFS online program was approved by the University Senate in Spring 2022 and marketing commenced immediately using \$5,000 in marketing funding secured from UK Online. The unit was one of five programs invited to participate as a pilot program in the new marketing plans from UK Online, strategically marketing at the university level. The DHN Chair serves on the UK Online strategic planning committee.

Analysis of results and reflection: A fully online option for the MS in Nutrition and Food Systems was approved with students enrolled in the program for Fall 2022. All core and elective courses (in DHN) are now available as fully online options. Enrollment in the MS NFS has grown as a result of the online offering – 22 MS NFS students in Fall 2022 and 47 in Spring 2024 (approximately half in the fully online option).

Ongoing improvement actions: The unit will continue to actively market and recruit for the online MS NFS program. A program change proposal is being submitted in Fall 2024 to reduce the number of credit hours from 36 CH to 30 CH and to update the core curriculum (15 CH). DHN is also exploring options for fully online offerings of the DPD coursework and dietetic internship (supervised professional practice) with a goal of having fully online opportunities for students interested in becoming registered dietitian nutritionists (RD/RDNs).

Recommendation 8. Outline long-range plans for multidisciplinary PhD program to enhance departmental growth. Develop a benchmark program demand study to understand potential enrollment size and unique aspects of a potential new PhD program. Integrate faculty research efforts into PhD program plans.

Assessment method: ACEND, the accrediting body for the dietetics profession, has made changes to the credentialing requirements such that a master's level degree is now required (as of 2024) for entry-level professionals.

Results: With the two new programs (ACP and fully online MS NFS), DHN has not yet explored opportunities for a multidisciplinary PhD program. The Accelerated Coordinated Program (ACP Dietetics) in Dietetics was approved the University Senate as well as the accrediting organization (ACEND) in 2022. The first cohort of students in the ACP Dietetics (n=14 students) was selected in Fall 2022 and these students will complete that program in August 2025 and be eligible to sit for the registered dietitian credentialing exam. As outlined under Recommendation #7, the fully online offering of the MS in Nutrition and Food Systems is now available as an option for students. As well, faculty have included post-doctoral positions as part of NIH grant proposals and faculty serve on doctoral committees for other units, both in the college but also across colleges.

Analysis of results and reflection: With changes to the dietetics profession and the requirement for an earned master's level degree to sit for the registered dietitian nutritionist credentialing exam, DHN has proactively explored opportunities to best support students and ensure the University of Kentucky is producing RDN's to meet the needs of the Commonwealth. The department will next explore multidisciplinary opportunities for a PhD program.

Ongoing improvement actions: Faculty will continue to include post-doctoral positions as part of proposals submitted for extramural funding. With the two new programs (ACP Dietetics and fully online MS NFS), DHN has not yet explored opportunities for a multidisciplinary PhD program, but such opportunities will be explored once the other two new programs are more well-established.