

GSU Nutrition Alumni Newsletter

December 2022

Hello Nutrition Alumni!

You are reading the first alumni newsletter of the Georgia State University Department of Nutrition! We created this newsletter to keep you informed on what has been happening at GSU, as well as highlight and celebrate our alumni and their many accomplishments.



Cohort 28 Hooding Ceremony

NEW PHD PROGRAM

In the fall of 2022, the Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing and Health Professions accepted its first class of students pursuing the new PhD in Health Sciences program. This program has four concentration options: Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Translational Rehabilitation Science, and Cardiopulmonary Care. Nutrition faculty member, Jessica White, MS, RD, LD, NBC-HWC, was one of the first two students to be accepted into the Nutrition concentration.

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NEW HEALTH COACHING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The health coaching certificate program was created to provide undergraduate nutrition students with another career pathway, without the need for a master's degree.

The Health and Wellness Coaching Certificate program began in Fall of 2021. Students in the program take 3 semesters of coursework, including Nutrition and Disease, Health Coaching I, and Health Coaching II. The beginning of the program focuses on education, while the end of the program places an emphasis on coaching practice and skills assessments. Students are required to complete 50 coaching hours to sit for the National Board for Health & Wellness Coaching (NBHWC) exam. The first program cohort graduated in May of 2022 and became eligible to sit for the exam in October of 2022.

As part of creating the program, Health Coaching Program director, Jessica White, MS, RD, LD, NBC-HWC became a health coach herself. She felt that completing the program bolstered what she had learned during her time in the coordinated program. Jessica noted that the certificate program focuses heavily on intrinsic motivation techniques, which translated into her everyday interactions, not just in coaching.

A health coach's main role is to be a behavior change motivator and guide. They work largely on helping clients to overcome barriers in reaching personal goals, through intrinsic motivation coaching techniques. While health coaches cannot make prescriptions, they can help clients incorporate dietitian prescriptions into everyday life.

Six of the cohort I health coaching students have since been accepted into the Coordinated Program. These students are already demonstrating a robust understanding of counseling techniques and are soaring through supervised practice. Having a health coaching background allows students to use empathy first and education second when it comes to patient interaction. It also makes these future RDs more competitive in the job market.



Jessica White, MS, RD, LD, NBC-HWC

CPE OPPORTUNITY: The Department of Nutrition and the Department of Kinesiology & Health developed the NUTR-KH lecture series in 2020 and provides CPEs to RDNs. Check it out here: <https://lewis.gsu.edu/nutrition/lecture-series/>



Alumni Highlights...

Laura Brown MS, RDN, LD: Laura, who graduated in August, 2020 in cohort 24, has recently been promoted to **Nutrition and Culinary Manager** over Veritas Atlanta.

Page Love, MS, RDN, LD, CSSD: Page presented at the Food and Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE): *Athletes and Eating Disorders: Unique Nutrition Assessment and Treatment Parameters.*

Julie Field Schwartz, MS, RDN, CSOWM, CSSD, LD, ACSM-EP, NBC-HWC: Julie was recognized by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with a Medallion Award, one of eight given by the Academy in 2022.

FEATURE

Alisha Virani, MS, RD, LD, CDCES

Founder of Wholesome Fuel, LLC

Alisha is an alum of the Coordinated Program, class of 2018. For the past 6 years, she has worked in the Diabetes Center at Grady Memorial Hospital as a Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. Alisha works with Atlanta's underserved population, helping people living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes manage their overall health and wellness. She also focuses some of her time addressing health equity in her patient population by leading quality improvement projects to help people with Type 1 diabetes have better access to overall diabetes care.

In 2017 Alisha founded her own private nutrition consulting business, Wholesome Fuel, LLC. Alisha uses evidenced-based information to help people manage chronic illness to improve their overall quality of life. Through her business, Alisha offers her nutrition expertise through contracting with companies and institutions looking to build programs and initiatives targeted towards diabetes management. She is also working on launching a virtual diabetes prevention program!



****Tell Me Something Good!****

Do you have an update on your post-graduation life? We want to brag about you! Help us share your accomplishments by emailing nutrition@gsu.edu!



FIRST STUDENT IN NUTRITION'S PHD PROGRAM NEARS GRADUATION

The Department of Nutrition partnered with the Department of Chemistry to create a Nutritional Sciences concentration within the Chemistry PhD. This partnership allows Nutrition faculty to mentor doctoral students pursuing nutritional biochemistry-related projects. The PhD program was established in 2017 through the effort of Dr. Anita Nucci and Dr. Desiree Wanders, under the leadership of Dr. Huanbiao Mo. In 2018, Dr. Rafaela G. Feresin became the PhD program director, and the first student, Rami Najjar, was accepted into the program.

Rami Najjar:

Rami was the first student to be accepted into the Chemistry PhD program, with a concentration in Nutritional Sciences. He currently has 13 peer-reviewed publications, with eight of those publications stemming from the work he has done at Georgia State. Rami has presented at national conferences, including the American Society of Nutrition. He has also received numerous awards, including the Outstanding Doctoral Student award from the Department of Nutrition, first and second place awards for outstanding poster presentation from the Department of Chemistry and the Lewis College, and was awarded a USDA predoctoral fellowship to study the physiological effects and mechanisms of raspberry consumption as a potential therapeutic strategy in the treatment of congestive heart failure. Rami is expected to graduate in 2023 and would like to pursue postdoctoral work at GSU, researching the role of plant-based diets in cardiovascular diseases after graduating.



Meet the other PhD Students:

Maureen Meister:

Maureen has 9 peer-reviewed publications, four stemming from her work at Georgia State. She has presented at national conferences, including the American Society for Nutrition. She has also received numerous awards, including the graduate teaching award and the first-place oral presentation award from the Department of Chemistry, as well as a USDA predoctoral fellowship to study blackberry consumption as a therapeutic strategy in chronic lung disease induced by electronic cigarettes in hypertensive rats.

Hannah Land Lail:

Hannah, a Brains and Behavior fellow, is in her third year of her PhD program and is preparing to take the qualifying exam to become a PhD candidate. She has focused her research on investigating the role of the hormone, FGF21, in high-fat diet-induced changes in learning and memory. She has two publications and has received numerous awards, including first place presentation at the Lewis College Research Conference. She has presented at national conferences, including the American Society for Nutrition.

Jessica Danh:

Jessica is a graduate of the Coordinated Program and is currently pursuing her PhD investigating the role of intestinal barrier function as it relates to cardiovascular health and disease. Jessica recently passed her qualifying exam to become a doctoral candidate. Jessica has one publication and has received the Outstanding Graduate Student award by the Department of Nutrition in 2020. She also is an outstanding instructor; she teaches NUTR 2100: Principles of Nutrition for the department.