**Palomar College**

**Family and Consumer Science-Nutrition**

**Advisory Committee Minutes   
March 24, 2017**

**ATTENDEES**

* Sarah Coffin, MS, RD: Health and Wellness Nutrition Educator, Dialysis Therapy and Data collections, Palomar Adjunct
* Ellen Gowen, MS, RD: North County Health Services WIC Program Manager
* Jessica Keene, MS, RD: Menu Systems Development Dietitian, San Diego Unified School District
* Brenda O’Day, MS, RD: Palomar Adjunct, SDSU Instructor, Clinical Dietitian
* Mary Sammer, MS, RD: VP Nutrition Services, WIC Program Director
* Naomi Shadwell, MS, RD: Director of Nutrition Services, Oceanside Unified School District
* Solange Bushra Wasef, MS, RD: Associate Professor, FCS-Nutrition Lead Faculty, Department Chair of Design and Consumer Education at Palomar College

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Solange welcomed the attendees thanked them for attending.  She introduced herself and asked that everyone introduce themselves and their job descriptions.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Solange reminded everyone that the purpose of the committee was to gather input and feedback from the members to impact the direction of the program and the way students are served.

**PROGRAM UPDATES**

* **Enrollment:**Enrollment is very strong.  Our classes fill very well, even though we had one class that did not make it this semester.  There has been a state wide and college wide decline in enrollment, however Nutrition has been avoiding that and adding classes to the point where a class didn’t fill.  Solange did not believe the lack of enrollment had to do with lack of interest, but instead may have been due to the time the class was scheduled, which may have been undesirable.
  + Though our classes are filling, we will focus on marketing.  The reason for this is that at our class size will probably be increasing.  Even though we will offer the same amount of classes, there will be more seats per class.  We want to ensure that with the increase in class size that we still maintain high percentages of enrollment.
* **Student Achievements:**  The latest project was in January where the students went to the YMCA. They authored, designed, and delivered a 35-40 minute presentation for a full-sized class of 3rd and 4thgraders about healthy eating and exercise.  They presented like professionals.  Solange was so proud of these students because these projects take so many hours of their time and they don’t get credit or points for it.  The students do this because they love it.  They know that it is good for them to get more experience and learn more about nutrition.  The students are already revving up for their spring activity, where they will either go back to the YMCA or work with foster youth like they did last time.  These students are putting in a lot of hours and working hard and doing some very exciting outreach.  Solange is very impressed by their motivation.
* **Program Updates:** Solange gave a brief background of the Nutrition discipline, which was once called Family and Consumer Sciences.  Once the name change officially occurred, Solange submitted the paperwork for an Associate’s Degree, however the paperwork being held up at the state level.
  + Currently, our students who graduate in the program are graduating with an A.S. Degree in University Studies: Math & Science.  It encompasses everything that a Nutrition Associate’s Degree would cover.  The classes are all the same; it’s just that we don’t have on paper a Nutrition AST yet.  The projection approval of the Nutrition Associate’s Degree is by Fall, 2018.
* **Labor Market Update:**  Despite the high completion for internship opportunities in the field, about 50% who apply for an internship actually get one. There are a lot of opportunities in the nutrition job market.  Students just have to get through the difficulty of finding an internship. Our program focuses on how the students can be strategic for that internship aspect, because that is probably going to be the biggest hurdle for the students.
* **Actions Taken Since Last Meeting:**   Last year, there was discussion that some of the Nutrition 165 courses were taught by Health Ed instructors who didn’t have a nutrition background.  Solange surveyed everyone and the consensus was that it is was important that the classes are taught by nutrition instructors. There was also a discussion about the two levels of classes that are offered:  the Majors Nutrition and the General Nutrition.  Now, there is a notation in the schedule that says “If you are a nutrition major, please see an advisor to determine if the advanced class is the right fit for you.”  So students who want to register for Nutrition 165 will see that notation and contact us so we can capture them put them in the 185 class.  Students who are majoring in Nutrition for the purpose of Nutrition career paths will more likely enroll in a class that is taught by dietitians.
  + There was discussion last year about online portfolios for students and this year we have started rolling out those in our introductory class, Nutrition 100, which is about the profession of dietetics.   We’ve also added the professional networking component and the interpretation of journal articles.  There were some other items on the list from last year, but we are adding them slowly.
  + Solange asked if the committee members had seen an online portfolio and what they thought about it as a way for students to promote themselves, especially when applying for internships.  A few members had seen them and thought that the online portfolios are great but if there was a lot of information they may not look at the whole portfolio. The consensus was that students should tailor their portfolios to the job they are applying for.   However, online portfolios seem to be the direction where things are headed.  It is up to the schools to teach the students how to use their online portfolios and information wisely.  Solange stated this would be a good topic of discussion for next year.

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

* **Marketing and Promotion:**

Solange asked the Committee,   “What drives prospective students to a career in dietetics?” The committee gave varied answers from having a friend or family member who had a diet-related illness, to speaking with career counselors, having a desire to help others, or just taking their first course in nutrition and finding out that it was a major which would to open up the pathway to a career in dietetics.

Solange asked the Committee, “How did they or their dietetics employees/students learn about nutrition as a major?”  The major consensus from the committee was speaking with career counselors or taking a career search class.  Also, attending a career fair along with having student organizations out on campus taught them about nutrition as major.

Solange stated that as far as marketing, she felt that the fields that were the least represented were personal motivation and athletics.  She wondered if medical or weight loss centers would be open to marketing materials for Nutrition classes.  She asked the Committee if they could think of creative ways to market to those who are in athletics or are interested in nutrition for personal reasons.  The Committee discussed going to high schools to promote the program.

Solange indicated that Palomar College is now starting dual enrollment programs and summer academy programs for high school students to encourage high schoolers to take classes here.  In fact, Nutrition is going to offer its first summer academy this summer.  It will be called “Food, Fitness, and Fun for Life”, and it is part Health Education and part Intro to Nutrition.  However, the program has not gone out to the high schools to promote, so that may be something for the department to implement.

The committee members also recommended promoting with Physicians but there was not a consensus on exactly how to do so since it is such a hard mindset to penetrate.

Solange asked the Committee if they ever had, in their work setting, anyone come up to them and ask them what a dietitian is. Some of the members indicated that yes a lot of people know the term dietitian, but they don’t necessarily understand the difference between a dietitian and a nutritionist.

Solange was asked, while marketing the program, was she informing potential students the bridge between a degree in Nutrition and a job in Dietetics.  Solange stated that Nutrition does hold, each semester, a “Nutrition Majors Info Session”, which is a 4.5 hour event where students find out about the job market and what jobs are available to them once they have a degree.  The session also informs students on the steps to becoming a Registered Dietitian and how to strategically plan for their career path.

Solange was asked if Nutrition did any social media outreach.

Solange asked the Committee what types of outreach projects could help promote student and community interest in Nutrition as a major. The committee recommended social media. Solange indicated that the Nutrition Club participates in social media, but the program does not have social media.  Solange thought it was a great idea for the program to implement it.  The committee also recommended programs like “Feeding America.”

* **Functional/Alternative Medicine and Nutrition:**

Solange told the committee that she is getting more inquiries from people who are interested in non-traditional things in Nutrition.  She asked the committee how, if at all, is functional medicine or alternative nutrition utilized in their industries.  The committee members agreed that this is a topic that is becoming more mainstream and is being studied very much.  It makes Nutrition more relevant on a larger scale.  Nutrition and exercise should be front line therapy.  Yet, many dietitians have yet to be reimbursed for the additional courses/conferences they take on this topic, since many theories still need to be proven.

Solange asked the committee, what, if any place does functional medicine and other alternative nutrition practices have in undergraduate curriculum.  The committee stated that “Integrative and Functional Nutrition” are included as curriculum required under the 2017 ACEND competencies at SDSU. Students should be introduced to alternative nutrition to some degree to make nutrition more relevant and to teach “Whole body” nutrition and Nutrigenomics.

Solange shared with the committee that she took an online course on Integrative and Functional Nutrition focusing on various diseases and the use of the elimination diet.  She gathered that a lot of information that was presented was based on case studies and the diet that they promoted was extremely restrictive.  She had a real hard time creating a meal plan that had the basic components of what is considered a healthy.  She then brought this information to her advanced class as information that was not standard curriculum.  The difficulty she stated was that she could not site a lot of studies on a lot of the topics because it is an emerging topic where more research is needed.

The committee stated that event though there are not a lot of studies, there still is enough to warrant integration of this idea.   There are a lot of people who are having significant health benefits due to alternative nutrition.  People will continue to go to naturopaths and acupuncturists because Dietetics is not putting itself on the cutting edge.  What needs to happen is to get the Academy on board with this.

The committee also recommended that the program reinforce critical thinking when it comes to emerging ideas in the alternative nutrition area, but that this area should be incorporated on some level in nutrition curriculum.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR NEXT YEARS ACTION ITEMS**

Solange asked the committee if there was any topic they would like to see on next year’s agenda regarding the Associates Degree and jobs.  The committee recommended informing students about careers at each level on the ladder of becoming an RD while emphasizing that associate level jobs are more directly food related.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Solange adjourned the meeting and thanked the committee members for their participation and feedback.

Next Advisory Meeting to be scheduled for March 2018.