

## **DIETETICS and HUMAN NUTRITION ADMISSION POLICY & JUSTIFICATION**

The Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition (formerly Nutrition & Food Science) is proposing an admissions policy to control undergraduate enrollment in the dietetic and human nutrition programs. These programs have experienced exponential student growth in the past five years, particularly in human nutrition. In one year (Fall 2010 to Fall 2011), undergraduate enrollment in human nutrition increased by 22% and in dietetics increased by 4%. As of Fall 2011, 446 students have declared dietetics or human nutrition as a major (245 human nutrition and 201 dietetics). To maintain the quality education expected by our students, while operating with limited resources, the department must control enrollment in these programs. An admission policy, using a GPA model, has been developed based on the policies of other undergraduate programs at the University of Kentucky. Upper-level admission to the dietetic or human nutrition programs will be granted based on GPA after completion of set pre-major courses. The Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition and the recently hired Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition Academic Coordinator will facilitate the admissions process for the Department. The goal of the department is not to significantly reduce majors, but to prevent further growth in human nutrition and dietetics. As well, it is the department's goal to ensure that students who are graduating from the dietetics and human nutrition programs are competitive as they apply for dietetic internships, graduate school, and professional programs.

### **Admission Policy**

Admission to the University is sufficient for lower-division admission to the human nutrition & dietetics majors. However, lower-level admission to the majors or any admission to the University does not guarantee upper-division admission to either of the degree programs in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition. In general, admission depends upon the qualifications and preparation of applicants, as well as the availability of resources for maintaining quality instruction.

Upper-division admission into the human nutrition or dietetics degree programs is necessary in order to be granted a baccalaureate degree from the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition. Students who have attained a 2.8 or higher grade-point average in the pre-major component required for all students in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition will be assured admission.

To be considered for upper-division admission to either the human nutrition or dietetics undergraduate degree programs, an applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Enrollment in the University of Kentucky. (Students are considered for acceptance by the Department only after acceptance by the University of Kentucky.);

2. Completion of the pre-major component (Pre-major courses include: CHE 105, CHE 107, CHE 111, CHE 113, BIO 152, DHN 212, and DHN 241) required for all students within the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition with a minimum pre-major coursework grade-point average of 2.8.\*
3. Submission of an application form to the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition Academic Coordinator.

\*A student can repeat a pre-major course to meet this GPA requirement. If a student repeats the course as one of their three University-accepted repeat options only the repeat grade will be factored into the pre-major coursework GPA. If a student repeats the course outside of the University-accepted repeat options then the course grades will be averaged and then factored into the pre-major coursework GPA.

Applications from students outside the University of Kentucky seeking admission to the Human Nutrition or Dietetics degree programs, whether for upper-division or lower-division status, must be received by the University Admissions Office no later than April 15 (first summer session); May 15 (second summer session); August 1 (fall semester); and December 1 (spring semester).

Students enrolled in other UK programs on campus should apply for admission prior to the priority registration period. (The appropriate deadlines are listed in the University calendar for approved times to change major.)

Lower-division students enrolled in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition should apply for upper-division admission to the Human Nutrition Program or Didactic Program in Dietetics during the semester they are completing the pre-major course work. The application for upper-division admission should be made before the priority registration period for the upcoming semester.

### Appeal Process

Students with a GPA below 2.8 and who have completed all pre-major requirements may appeal for admission into the human nutrition or dietetic programs. If the Appeals Committee feels that there is persuasive evidence that personal, academic or professional circumstances have affected a student's grades and the student shows promise for successful completion of a degree in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition, acceptance may be granted. Materials and information necessary for the appeals process will be available in the School of Human Environmental Science Advising Resource Center. The deadline for submission of the appeals is generally 45 days prior to the beginning of the semester; however, appeals materials are not accepted for the first summer session.

## **Admission Policy Justification**

Student enrollment in the Department of Dietetics & Human Nutrition has increased steadily over the past five years. Enrollment in the department was 321 students in 2009, 381 students in 2010, 423 students in January 2011, and 446 students (245 human nutrition and 201 dietetics) in October 2011. Table 1 summarizes enrollment and graduation numbers for human nutrition and dietetics over the past ten years. The rapid rise in students is of concern to the department for several reasons.

1. **Instruction** – Class sizes have increased significantly. Enrollment in junior- and senior-level capstone courses has reached 110-120 students per section. Faculty members have had to change pedagogy to accommodate this large number of students. Faculty doubt that this provides the best education to our students with upper-level sections of over 100 students. In addition, the department is experiencing difficulty obtaining adequate lecture space and having adequate laboratory space to accommodate large numbers of students at one time.
2. **Advising Resources** – Prior to Fall, 2011 faculty advised all dietetic and human nutrition students. As of October, 2011 a full-time Academic Coordinator in Dietetics & Human Nutrition has been hired. The Academic Coordinator will be advising all freshman and sophomore-level human nutrition and dietetic students. Faculty members continue to advise junior- and senior-level majors. Even with the Academic Coordinator, faculty members continue to have heavy advising loads. This has placed an enormous burden on faculty who are spending significantly more of their time advising, leaving less time for research, teaching, and other scholarly work.
3. **Quality of Students** – Students majoring in dietetics complete a supervised internship following completion of required coursework. Nationally, competition for internships has increased significantly over the past five years with only 51% of the 4000+ who apply for an internship succeeding. The nationally competitive computer match for an internship determines that students who do not hold a GPA greater than 3.0 rarely qualify for a spot. The Department has 20 internship spots available per year and, like national counterparts, competes for excellent students who will pass the national registration exam

Human nutrition is a pre-professional program. Most students in human nutrition plan on applying to medical school, pharmacy school, dental school, physician assistant school, optometry school, or graduate school in nutrition or a related field. Admission to graduate or professional school is unlikely with a GPA less than 3.0.

As of January, 2011 (see Table 2), 17% of students had a cumulative GPA less than 2.6 and 27% had a cumulative GPA less than 2.8. Of seniors, 12% had a cumulative GPA less than 2.6 and 22% less than 2.8. Internship and professional/graduate school options are limited for these students. To become competitive these students must take remedial class work and/or gain relevant work experience.

## **Impact of Admission Policy**

- Based on the current number of students in our majors it is anticipated that student enrollment will drop by approximately 20-25% in both majors. Based on Fall 2011 enrollment of 446 students and a GPA cut-off of 2.8, we anticipate student enrollment of approximately 350 students, equally divided between human nutrition and dietetics. The department wishes to maintain student enrollment at 350-400 students; the proposed 2.8 pre-major GPA requirement will allow for such control.
- Students per teaching FTE will drop from 54:1 to 44:1. While this ratio still exceeds teaching resources, enrollment control will allow faculty to have more time to devote to recruiting, advising, teaching, retaining students, and ensuring quality graduates.
- Students will be admitted to the dietetic and human nutrition majors early in their college career. If students do not meet the minimum GPA requirement, this will allow them ample opportunity to pursue work in a major that better fits their interests and strengths. Students interested in health and wellness may pursue work in several majors, including kinesiology, health promotion, or education.
- We do not anticipate students not attending, or leaving, the University of Kentucky because of this admission policy. Eastern Kentucky University, Murray State, and Western Kentucky Universities offer undergraduate dietetic degrees. ECU and Murray State also have internship programs. These three programs are all much smaller than the program at UK with ECU and WKU also having program admission requirements (see Table 3). UK is a leader in dietetic education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and is the first choice for students seeking a major in dietetics.

**Table 1: Enrollment and graduation rates in Dietetics and Human Nutrition over the past ten years.**

Academic Year (August, Dec, May)	Dietetics	Human Nutrition*	TOTAL	Total # of Students in Human Nutrition & Dietetics
2000	22	0	22	
2001	32	1	33	
2002	37	2	39	
2003	33	10	43	153
2004	20	17	37	154
2005	23	11	34	205
2006	22	23	45	247
2007	30	19	49	282
2008	40	26	66	312
2009	45	22	67	321
2010	29	41	70	381
2011 (Spring)				423 (199 diet, 224 hunu)

\*Human Nutrition evolved from the former Food Science and Human Nutrition program in the Department. In 2000 the program was changed to Human Nutrition.

**Table 2: Impact of GPA requirement on student numbers in dietetics and human nutrition.**

	<b>Total</b>		<b>Freshman</b>		<b>Sophomore</b>		<b>Junior</b>		<b>Senior</b>	
	<b>Current</b>	<b>Predicted</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Predicted</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Predicted</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Predicted</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Predicted</b>
All Students	<b>423</b> GPA < 2.6 = 70 GPA < 2.8 = 113	GPA < 2.6 = <b>353</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>310</b>	90 GPA < 2.6 = 21 GPA < 2.8 = 27	GPA < 2.6 = <b>69</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>63</b>	84 GPA < 2.6 = 14 GPA < 2.8 = 21	GPA < 2.6 = <b>70</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>63</b>	119 GPA < 2.6 = 20 GPA < 2.8 = 36	GPA < 2.6 = <b>99</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>83</b>	130 GPA < 2.6 = 15 GPA < 2.8 = 29	GPA < 2.6 = <b>115</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>101</b>
Dietetics	<b>199</b> GPA < 2.6 = 33 GPA < 2.8 = 55	GPA < 2.6 = <b>166</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>144</b>	36 GPA < 2.6 = 9 GPA < 2.8 = 12	GPA < 2.6 = <b>27</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>24</b>	36 GPA < 2.6 = 7 GPA < 2.8 = 12	GPA < 2.6 = <b>29</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>24</b>	53 GPA < 2.6 = 10 GPA < 2.8 = 16	GPA < 2.6 = <b>43</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>37</b>	74 GPA < 2.6 = 7 GPA < 2.8 = 15	GPA < 2.6 = <b>67</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>59</b>
Human Nutrition	<b>224</b> GPA < 2.6 = 37 GPA < 2.8 = 58	GPA < 2.6 = <b>187</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>166</b>	54 GPA < 2.6 = 12 GPA < 2.8 = 15	GPA < 2.6 = <b>42</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>39</b>	48 GPA < 2.6 = 7 GPA < 2.8 = 9	GPA < 2.6 = <b>41</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>39</b>	66 GPA < 2.6 = 10 GPA < 2.8 = 20	GPA < 2.6 = <b>56</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>46</b>	56 GPA < 2.6 = 8 GPA < 2.8 = 14	GPA < 2.6 = <b>48</b> GPA < 2.8 = <b>42</b>

Data from: UK Business Warehouse Report, January 2011 (cumulative GPA at the end of the Fall 2010 semester)

**Table 3: Dietetic Programs in the Commonwealth of Kentucky**

	Didactic Programs in Dietetics - # of students *	Dietetic Internship	Admission Requirements
Eastern Kentucky University	38	Yes	GPA of at least 2.5 on at least 45 college credit hours. "C" or better in basic chemistry classes and "B" or better in introductory nutrition classes.
Murray State University	14	Yes	None.
Western Kentucky University	47	No	GPA of at least 3.0 on at least 30 college credit hours, including biology and chemistry.

*\*Data from CADE, American Dietetic Association [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)*