Come on Baby, Light My Fire: Tips for Matching a Dietetic Internship

Sharon Sweat; Dietetic Intern

Suzanne ("Suzi") Domel Baxter, PhD, RD, LD, FADA, FAND; SCAND Diversity Liaison

This webinar is part of the SCAND Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
Objectives for Webinar

After attending this webinar, each attendee will be able to:

1. List 2 ways to strengthen their dietetic internship (DI) application,
2. List 2 things to begin doing now to strengthen their DI application, and
3. Identify where to go on the SCAND website for information about diversity and inclusion.
SCAND Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion

SCAND Diversity Mini-Grant Awards

SCAND is excited to announce 11 award winners of the Diversity Mini-Grant funded by the Academy. Each winner has their Academy membership paid for the current 2020-2021 year and registration paid for the SCAND 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting. Each award winner is from an underrepresented group. The 11 winners consist of 7 students, 1 intern, 2 RD/NDs, and 1 DTR/NDTR. Of the 11 award winners, 7 were not Academy members. Please congratulate the following 11 award winners and help them become active in their local district, SCAND, and the Academy:

https://www.eatrightsc.org/diversity-and-inclusion
Three Major Entities for the DI Process

• Applicant Guide for Supervised Practice

• DICAS

• D&D Digital
Applicant Guide for Supervised Practice

• Search *early* for DI(s) that is/are good fit for you

• Most up-to-date reference available

• Detailing Dietetic Internships (DIs), Coordinated Programs in Dietetics (CPs/CPDs), Individualized Supervised Practice Pathways (ISPPs), and Future Education Model Graduate Programs (FEMGPs)
DICAS (Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Services)

- Online applicant portal for students who apply to DI programs that participate in DICAS Match

- Convenient, state-of-the-art, web-based application service that allows students to apply to any number of participating DI programs by completing a single online application
D&D Digital

- Clearinghouse to help applicants obtain an internship from their rankings and to help DIs obtain applicants from their choices

- Eliminates unfair pressures and premature decisions in appointments by internships and acceptance or rejection of appointments by applicants
What DI Application May Consist of

- Personal Statement
- **Up-to-date** resume
- Transcript/GRE Score
- Verification Statement or Declaration of Intent
- Letters of Recommendations
  - # requested varies by DI program
What DI Application may Consist of (cont)

- Additional Supplements
  - Electronic portfolio
  - Application Coversheet
Get Down On It! Start Your Application

• Prepare your application **as early as possible!**
  – Do not wait until the last minute to put it together and ask for letters of reference/recommendations
  – Easy to spot a rushed application:
    • Spelling/grammatical errors
    • Missing supplemental documents
    • Not having up-to-date information
    • Incorrect DI Director name or program
Search High and Low, for the Info that Glows

- Attend dietetic association meetings (local, state, national) and DI Open Houses
  - Ask appropriate questions and send follow-up emails
    - Helps you to show interest and for DI Directors to see your interest

- Spend time reviewing DI programs
  - Identify which programs would be good fit for you
  - Highlight in your application why you are a good fit for them and why they are a good fit for you
Do Your Research!

- DI Directors enjoy students who look into specific rotations/offerings their programs have and discuss them in their personal statement.

- It is **not** a game changer to say things like, “I am excited to join the DI program at ______ for it’s mission and goals”

- Mention something unique from their website or in open house presentation that drew you to apply.
Get Personal with Your Personal Statements

- Tailor each personal statement to a specific internship
- Not every internship has a similar structure of focus
- When describing your strengths, give specific examples to illustrate them
- Don't say “I am a self-starter and highly productive.” Give an example of an experience, project or campaign that illustrates those qualities
Get Personal with Your Personal Statements (cont)

• Look up the verbiage from Competencies for the Registered Dietitian (CRDNs) and work that into your personal statement

• Have other people review your Personal Statement and resume
  • Utilize resources at your university and from your DPD Director
Share Your Work Experiences

• Paid or volunteer experience with RDNs truly helps
  • Hospital nutrition department or kitchen
  • RDNs in private practice or consulting
  • online at preRD.org

• If unable to gain these experiences before applying, list experiences to showcase your strengths
  • Leadership skills, flexibility, cooperating with other team members, etc
Show off your skills… BUT DON’T MILK IT!

- Padding your application by expanding too much on every experience is not very welcomed
- It doesn’t necessarily increase your chances of getting matched
- Use the more meaningful experiences instead of the ones that you only spent an hour with
Offer a Helping Hand by Volunteering

- Be active in the Student Dietetic Association and local, state, and/or national Academy

- Consider other opportunities such as food banks, soup kitchens, Meals on Wheels, community events

- Get your name and face out there to be known and hear about opportunities!
Be Descriptive!

• Give details about the company/program under your work/volunteer experiences

• Explain WHAT each company/program actually is; paint a picture of what takes place there!

• Show the number of hours you completed for each experience (by week/months/year)
  – 4 hours vs 40 hours can make a big difference in matching your application
## Examples of Work/Volunteer Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION TITLE</th>
<th>POSITION TYPE</th>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th># HR</th>
<th># WK</th>
<th>TOTAL HR</th>
<th>DUTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant/server</td>
<td>VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>Toastie Cafe</td>
<td>1/2018 - 2/2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helped prepare snacks &amp; toiletry items; prepared &amp; served meals; cleanup &amp; dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION TITLE</td>
<td>POSITION TYPE</td>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td># HR</td>
<td># WK</td>
<td>TOTAL HR</td>
<td>DUTIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant /server</td>
<td>VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>Toastie Cafe</td>
<td>1/2018 - 2/2018</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Helped prepare to-go bags with snacks &amp; toiletry items for homeless &amp; low-income adults; prepared &amp; served breakfast &amp; lunch to homeless in Dining Hall; helped with cleanup &amp; sanitation of kitchen &amp; dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for Speaking Engagement</td>
<td>VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>Over The Hill Rec Center</td>
<td>12/2016 - 12/2016</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prepared &amp; presented PowerPoint Presentation on child nutrition, healthy eating habits, &amp; sleep habits for single parents. Distributed take-home materials for parents to improve their children’s health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSITION TITLE</td>
<td>POSITION TYPE</td>
<td>SITE</td>
<td>DATE</td>
<td># HR</td>
<td># WK</td>
<td>TOTAL HR</td>
<td>DUTIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Outcomes Program Enrollment Specialist</td>
<td>PAID</td>
<td>Unique Health Center</td>
<td>1/2016 – 7/2020</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>4176</td>
<td>Provide application assistance &amp; enroll eligible patients &amp; community members in community-based programs. Encourage participation in underserved &amp; under-represented communities. Help educate patients, consumers, businesses, community organizations &amp; stakeholders about Program. Help build new relationships &amp; maintain existing ones with community entities who provide services. Promote outreach activities, health fairs &amp; health screenings in service area for all Cooperative sites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scholarships, Awards, Activities, and Memberships

- List Scholarships received
  - Academy Foundation, Affiliate, Academic, etc.
- List awards received, especially nutrition/dietetics
  - Outstanding Dietetic Student, etc
- List activities, memberships, and student leadership positions (specify elected vs appointed)
  - President of Student Dietetic Association at *(school)*, Academy, Dietetic Practice Group (DPG), Member Interest Group (MIG), Affiliate, local dietetic association
Letters of Recommendations (LORs)

• Only ask people who can provide an outstanding recommendation for you
  – Ask supervisors, professors, etc; never ask friends or family members
  – Ask them early to give plenty of time
  – Provide them with your updated resume which highlights your grades, experience, and activities
THINGS TO AVOID!

• Avoid posting embarrassing or unsavory personal information or photographs on the Internet.
  • May be seen as an indicator of poor professional judgment.

• Avoid criminal behavior which may make you ineligible to work in many healthcare facilities and prevent you from completing your education.

• Never misrepresent or falsify information regarding your education, work experiences or credentials.
  • Could ruin your professional reputation and jeopardize your career.
Before You Hit Submit….

• Double check your application(s)
  • Personal statement matches with DI program
  • All necessary supplemental documents are included with each program (which may vary)
    • Letters of recommendation, transcript/GRE score, resume
• Manage your time for the DICAS application
  • Tech issues may occur
Sell Yourself During the Interview

- There may be a virtual/in-person interview if you are selected as a potential candidate for a program(s). Respond promptly!
- If shy/nervous, try rehearsing some potential interview questions through mock interviews. Relax and be yourself.
Sell Yourself During the Interview (cont)

• Carry yourself in a respectful and professional manner, and have a positive attitude and outlook.
• Believe in yourself!
The Fire Has Been Lit! Match Day!

- There is a 50/50 chance of getting matched with a DI program

- If you receive a match on Appointment Day… CONGRATULATIONS!
  - You should be given instructions to contact the DI director of that program and accept your match within the required timeframe designated by D&D Digital
If At First You Do Not Succeed….

• Use opportunity to improve future application(s)
  • Contact DI Directors the day you find out that you were not matched
    • Ask why you weren't matched
  • Pursue 2\textsuperscript{nd} rounds
    • Apply to programs that have unfilled positions
      • Individualized Supervised Practice Pathways (ISPPs) become available
      • Distance DIs (interns secure own rotations)
Diversify Dietetics

• Provides a community for students, professionals and educators dedicated to increasing ethnic and racial diversity in the nutrition and dietetics profession.

• MISSION: To increase the racial and ethnic diversity in the field of nutrition by empowering nutrition leaders of color.

• VISION: A nutrition profession that reflects the diverse communities we serve.

• https://www.diversifydietetics.org/
Summary of Today’s Webinar

• Ways to strengthen your DI application,

• Things to begin doing now to strengthen your DI application, and

• Where to go on the SCAND website for information about diversity and inclusion.
Food for Thought

• **Variety** is every dietitian’s business.

• **Diversity and inclusion** must also be **every** dietitian’s business.
Resources

• :: Internship Matching Procedures :: (dnddigital.com)
• :: Internship Matching Questions & Answers :: (dnddigital.com)
• [https://preRD.org](https://preRD.org)
• [https://www.diversifydietetics.org/resources](https://www.diversifydietetics.org/resources)
• [https://www.diversifydietetics.org/dicas-application-support](https://www.diversifydietetics.org/dicas-application-support)
• [https://mailchi.mp/ca5fca9e77d9/ultimate-dicas-checklist](https://mailchi.mp/ca5fca9e77d9/ultimate-dicas-checklist)
Acknowledgements

• Neva Cochran, MS, RDN, LD, FAND; Nutrition Communications Consultant and Preceptor, Dallas, TX
• Vivian Haley-Zitlin, PhD, RDN, LD; DPD Director, Clemson University
• Kelley L. Martin, MPH, RDN, LD; DI Director, Medical University of South Carolina
• Stephanie A. Nielsen, MS, RD, LD; DI Director, Winthrop University
• Carmen Thompson, MS, RDN, LD; DPD Director, South Carolina State University
• Leslie Thompson Van Horn, MS, RDN, LDN; DI Coordinator and Instructor, Winthrop University
• Individual Interns
Q AND A

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA
THE DI MATCH IS IN YOUR HANDS!