

Dietetic Internship Newsletter

Issue XV Fall 2021



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Letter from the Director 1
- Semi-Annual Pinning Ceremony 2
- Intern Provides Nutrition Education to Parents 3
- Advocacy Video Series Featuring UMaine Alumni & Faculty... 4
- Meagan Per-rault's Master's Thesis 5
- Alumni News 6
- Share your news with us! 6

Junior Dietetic Interns, September 2021



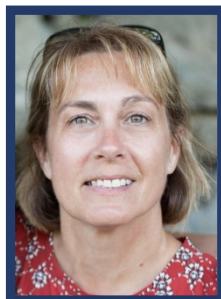
Dietetic Interns (from left to right)

Top row: Amelia Sullivan, Sarah Griffiths, Erica Magnuson, Jessica Swazey

Middle row: Lily Brickman, Sarah Loring, Ashley Reynolds, Danielle Breunig

Bottom row: Maddie Giordano, Patty Neel

Letter from the Director



Dr. Mona Therrien
DI Director

Hello, preceptors, faculty, interns, and alumni, and welcome to the 2021 edition of the UMaine Dietetic Internship Newsletter! My thanks goes out to our preceptors and site coordinators for another great year of supervised practice experience for our interns. Despite the continuing presence of COVID-19, all of our interns were able to complete rotations successfully this year, in large part thanks to the flexibility and ingenuity of our many dedicated site coordinators and preceptors.

Continued on next page

Letter from the Director, continued...

In addition, we held our first ever virtual pinning ceremony in December of 2020 and were happy to see family members, friends, and preceptors attend the event, many of whom would not have been able to attend in person. This past year, we have also brought new preceptors and sites into the UMaine Program including Colby College Athletics, UMaine Dining, Healthcare Services Group, and the New England Eating Disorder Program at Sweetser. We welcome them into our great network of preceptors and are excited about these new opportunities for our interns.

My congratulations goes out to our finishing interns in 2020/2021. They include Laurel Simone, Angela Czur, Michele Chenard, Jacob Rich, Kris Michaud, Elizabeth Lemin, Marissa Lynch, Madison McWilliam, Sable Altvater, Kalee Tinker, Matt Walker, Natalie VandenAkker, Aubrie Gross, and Halley Karlok. Despite challenges brought on by the pandemic and a rigorous schedule, these interns represented the UMaine Dietetic Internship to the best of their ability, exceeding expectations and adapting to an ever-changing world. We are so proud of their accomplishments.

I wish all of you a great end to your summer. Thank you for your continued support of the University of Maine Dietetic Internship Program. As always, feel free to contact myself or my colleague Julie Milan with any questions. We look forward to another great year of working with all of you!

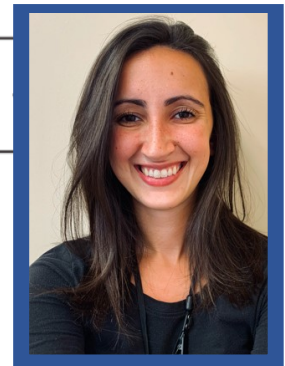
Semi-Annual Pinning Ceremony

Celebrating their entrance into the dietetics profession, interns from the classes of 2020 and 2021 were awarded the RDN pin (to be worn when they pass the registration exam) and a certificate of completion from the UMaine DI Program. Ceremonies took place virtually in December 2020 and August 2021. Graduating interns' family members, UMaine faculty, and preceptors attended via Zoom. Congratulations, graduates!

Class of 2020 -- December Graduates



Kris Michaud



Kalee Tinker



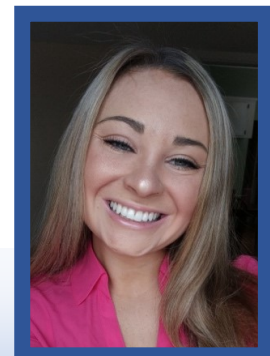
Sable Altvater



Marissa Lynch



Elizabeth Lemin



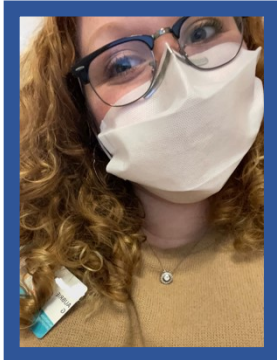
Madison McWilliam

Semi-Annual Pinning Ceremony, continued

Class of 2021 -- August Graduates



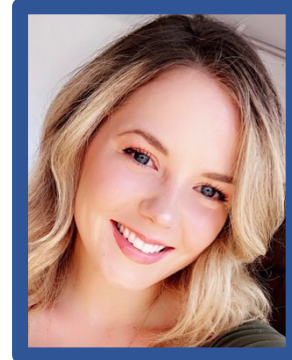
Matthew Walker



Aubrie Gross



Natalie VandenAkker



Halley Karlok

Intern Provides Nutrition Education for Parents



Matthew Walker

During his community rotation, Matt Walker provided nutrition education to a group of parents in attendance at “Football for You”, which is a football clinic and community funding program for young athletes, aged 9-14. Educational concepts included MyPlate, the importance of breakfast, replacing sugary beverages with milk or water, and hydration. Matt took part in this educational session while completing his community rotation with Katie Hoffman, MS, RD, who is the School Program Manager at the Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council.

Video Series Featuring UMaine Alumni and Faculty Discussing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on their Profession

To celebrate National Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Day on March 10, the Maine Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) Public Policy Panel has created a series of short videos with Maine Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) working in various settings to share their professional experiences and how their work has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of these interviews highlight alumni and faculty of the University of Maine undergraduate and graduate programs.

MAND works closely with students and faculty at the University of Maine to cultivate professionalism with a focus on public policy and career advocacy. UMaine's unique program concentration for dietetic interns includes the design, implementation, and evaluation of the students' public policy project. This year, two interns, Kayla Parsons and Leigh Neptune, worked on this unique project.

The videos are available online at <https://www.eatrightmaine.org/advocacy>. More information about Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day is on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics [website](#).

UMaine Community Members Featured in the Videos:



Nutrition Education & Training - Eileen Molloy & Mona Therrien

- **Kate Yerxa, MS, RDN:** UMaine Cooperative Extension Professor, alumna of UMaine graduate and undergraduate programs.
- **Alexandria Gayton, MS, RDN:** UMaine Cooperative Extension, alumna of UMaine undergraduate program.
- **Mary Emerson, MS, RDN, LD, SNS:** School Nutrition Director, alumna of UMaine graduate and undergraduate programs.
- **Leslie Ouellette, MS, RDN:** Private Practice Owner, alumna of UMaine graduate and undergraduate programs.
- **Mona Therrien, DCN, RD, LD:** Internship Director & Human Nutrition faculty in the School of Food and Agriculture.
- **Eileen Molloy, MS, RDN/LD, CDE:** Undergraduate Program Coordinator & Human Nutrition faculty in the School of Food and Agriculture, alumna of UMaine undergraduate program.
- **Kay Mullin, RDN, CDE:** Maine Medical Partners, alumna of UMaine undergraduate program.

Career Readiness of Recently Credentialed RDNs

What is the topic of your research, and why did you choose to pursue this area?

The topic of my research is career readiness of recently credentialed RDNs (≤ 5 years). I chose to pursue this area of research because in the United States, there has been limited research conducted on career readiness in the field of nutrition and dietetics. I think it is important to understand how RDNs feel their coursework and supervised practice in dietetics programs prepared them for the workforce, and if there were areas that need improvement. Understanding career readiness provides an important perspective that contributes to the growth and improvement of the field of dietetics.

Would you give a brief summary of your research, including some background information, methods and major findings?

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) is an autonomous accrediting agency for education programs that prepares students to become Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN). ACEND has standards that each program must meet to be considered accredited. Students who wish to become an RDN, must enroll in an accredited ACEND program. In the US, these education programs have not been evaluated. The purpose of this research is to analyze how recently credentialed RDNs perceive they were prepared for their career.

A survey was developed using the 2017 Accreditation Standards for Nutrition and Dietetic Internship Program competencies. The survey was electronically mailed to 5,000 RDNs across the US. A total of 275 RDNs met the inclusion criteria and completed the survey. The major findings were that RDNs' mean rating of career preparedness indicated that they "agreed" with their perceived ability to perform the competencies. Additionally, the domain in which RDNs felt most prepared was competence and accountability. The area that RDNs indicated they were least prepared was utilization and management of resources.

What are some limitations and implications for your research?

Some limitations for this research are that it was a small group of RDNs who participated in the survey, the survey respondents have differing education experiences, and that the results of the survey were based on an individual's perceived ability to complete the competencies.

Despite the limitations of this research, there are several valuable conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. The evaluation of RDNs' experiences in dietetic programs provides valuable feedback for program improvement. In turn, this contributes to the success of RDNs in the workforce and the understanding of their needs.



Maegan Perrault

Master's Student & Senior Dietetic Intern

Maegan holds a bachelor's degree in Food Science & Human Nutrition from the University of Maine. She plans to graduate in the summer of 2022 from the Dietetic Internship and Master's degree program.



Alumni News

Dates are year starting the DI Program

Class of 2008

Valerie (Dionne) Curtis lives in Old Town, ME with her husband, Matt, children Bailey (6) and Noah (4) and cat, Zoey (10). She has been working as a Clinical Dietitian with Northern Light Surgical Weight Loss since 2012.

Class of 2014

Brandon Hay is now Head Dietitian at St. Joseph Hospital in Bangor, ME.

*Stay Connected with the
UMaine DI Program!*

Share your news with us!

Send alumni updates to:
Julie Milan, Assistant Director
umaine.diprogram@gmail.com



Here's What Alumni Think of our DI Program's Concentration Area Nutrition Services & Professional Advocacy

Based on our DI Program's Alumni Survey, program graduates agree that they are adequately prepared to be an advocate for patients, themselves, and their profession.

"I believe it gave us a chance to fully understand how powerful we can be as a profession if we continue to advocate for ourselves and show everyone how we can impact our patients."
~ DI Program Graduate ~



Follow the UMaine DI Program on LinkedIn!

Click [here](#) to access our LinkedIn page!



Dietetic Internship Program
5735 Hitchner Hall
Orono, ME 04469-5735

University of Maine Dietetic Internship