Food Science and Human Nutrition

Why Study Food Science and Human Nutrition at UMaine?

Students in the Food Science and Human Nutrition program have the opportunity to work in state-of-the-art facilities. Hitchner Hall’s commercial kitchen teaching lab offers experience cooking on commercial grade equipment and the Highlands Pilot Plant facility allows students to learn how to operate food processing equipment. The program also offers students the opportunity to gain practical experience in the Sensory Evaluation Center for one of the highest-paid and sought-after food science specializations. The School of Food and Agriculture is the only food science program in New England which has full sensory evaluation facility equipment with a digital data collection system.

Food science classes typically have fewer than fifteen students, allowing for many hands-on opportunities. Most students work in a professor’s laboratory during their first two years of college in order to gain experience. Students are encouraged to seek industry or government internships and a background working with faculty is often key to successful internship applications. In the past few years, students have interned with NASA, Jeanie Marshal Foods, World Harbors, Cabot Creamery and McCormick. Students who complete FSN 512–Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points receive National Seafood Alliance HACCP certification.

The Didactic Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (Human Nutrition and Dietetics Concentration) is the only program in the state of Maine accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics. The curriculum also meets entrance requirements for medical, dental and veterinary schools if an additional semester of physics is taken as an elective.

Our Faculty

Our faculty are dedicated to providing quality undergraduate and graduate education. Faculty and staff conduct both basic and applied research, using human and animal nutrition models, as well as studies in the areas of fruit and vegetable products, food safety, seafood quality and product development. Faculty members maintain valuable partnerships with the food industry, health care and community settings throughout Maine and conduct collaborative research with colleagues within the state, the nation and around the globe.

Our Undergraduate Program

In the Food Science and Human Nutrition program, students choose from one of three concentrations — human nutrition and dietetics, food science, or food management. The human nutrition and dietetics concentration provides undergraduate preparation for students who wish to become Registered Dietitians and prepares students to pursue a broad range of careers in nutrition or to continue with graduate studies, including those at medical schools with completion of additional courses in physics, chemistry and mathematics. Human nutrition and dietetics majors may choose to take electives in exercise science, business administration, psychology or other areas in preparation for future careers. Students may be involved in research or teaching by taking credits for special projects, or through work-study.

The food science concentration focuses on food product development and food safety. Food science is the study of the chemistry, microbiology and processing of foods. The food science concentration is a challenging program and requires a strong background in mathematics and science. The curriculum also meets entrance requirements for medical, dental and veterinary schools if an additional semester of physics is taken as an elective.
Food management provides a unique combination of food and business to prepare students for a wide variety of career opportunities. This option provides flexibility in planning a curriculum to suit an individual’s needs. Upon completion of basic requirements, students can choose professional electives that best prepare them for future employment.

OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM

The area of food science and human nutrition in the School of Food and Agriculture provides students with the opportunity to obtain a M.S. degree in food science and human nutrition and a Ph.D. in food and nutrition sciences, an interdisciplinary program. Students may opt to focus their coursework in food science, human nutrition, or a combination of the disciplines. Thesis and non-thesis options are available. The Dietetic Internship provides supervised practice to become a Registered Dietitian and may be pursued in combination with any of these options.

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCEL

The Food Science Club, a chapter of the IFT Student Association, is open to all students and provides a social as well as professional network. The College Bowl team competes against other food science programs at regional events. Other activities include factory tours, barbecues and trips to Northeast Section Institute of Food Technologists meetings.

The Nutrition Club sponsors guest speakers and community nutrition education projects. Outstanding students are eligible for the Kappa Omicron Nu and Phi Tau Sigma honor societies. Students also have opportunities to attend such annual professional conferences as the Institute of Food Technologists (Northeast Student Chapter), The Food and Nutrition Conference Expo (FNCE) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Maine Chapter of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Maine Nutrition Council.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The future outlook for employment in nutrition is promising since more people are realizing the role of nutrition in health. With a B.S. in food science and human nutrition employment opportunities exist in wellness and community programs; sports nutrition; hospital dietetics; private practice; home health care; government; foodservice; food industry; health-oriented organizations such as the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society; and research laboratories.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Visit umaine.edu for an application, as well as information about academics and life at UMaine.