Dietetic Internships 101

GENERAL INFO:

- Completion of an accredited dietetic internship is required to be eligible to sit for the national exam to receive the RD credential.

- Internships are a minimum of 1200 hours and can range anywhere from 8 months to 1+ years. The length of time and scheduling of rotations varies by internship.

- Internships are offered in multiple formats: standard internships, internships that offer graduate credit, and internships which are combined with a graduate degree program.

- Each internship is required to provide a specific number of hours in the areas of medical nutrition therapy (MNT), foodservice and management, and community rotations in various areas.

- Each internship has specific criteria for selecting applicants; however, the following things are consistently prioritized in a potential applicant:
  - GPA (3.0 or higher)
  - Nutrition and food related work experience (may be paid or volunteer)
  - Some internships may also have more specific criteria such as specifications for grades in certain coursework, a minimum number of hours of previous experience, minimum DPD or major GPA, GRE scores, etc.

Applying for a dietetic internship is a standardized process and the majority of internships use an annual February application deadline for which applications are submitted through an online system called DICAS. A fewer number of internships use a September application deadline. Selection is done using a computer matching system so each applicant will only be matched to a maximum of one internship, regardless of how many they apply to (and may be qualified for) in an application round.

The national average for applicants accepted who apply each year is ~50%. Students are encouraged to begin building their resumes through extracurricular activities and work experiences as early as possible in order to be as competitive as possible when application time comes.

Students are encouraged to begin looking at internships they may apply to as early as possible in order to become familiar with their specific requirements and areas of focus. This will help guide you towards making a strategic plan to be particularly competitive for the internships you plan to apply to.
BECOMING COMPETITIVE:

Some activities you may consider getting involved with are:

- The Nutrition Club (or other active clubs on campus)

- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) student membership. This is ~$50 for the year and also connects you to the local AND chapters in Arizona and Tucson. Events hosted by the local chapter are a GREAT way to network with the local dietetic community, and to potentially get in touch with people who are directly involved with local internships.

- Undergraduate internships (often found on campus)

- Undergraduate research

- Regular volunteer activities- You may consider volunteering in the food/nutrition area of a hospital or school, the community food bank, or other organizations that offer food/health/nutrition services.

- It is also a great idea to attend relevant conferences, workshops, and lectures on nutrition when you hear about them.

- There is also a 2 credit class that is available to NSC majors called NSC 395A, which helps prepare students for establishing volunteer connections on their own. The course also connects students with a volunteer where they are required to do 3 hours of volunteer work each week. This is a great opportunity to get volunteer experience while earning 2 units of upper division credit.

RESOURCES:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) internship search: http://www.eatright.org/BecomeanRDorDTR/content.aspx?id=8473
- AND tips for students: http://www.eatright.org/BecomeanRDorDTR/content.aspx?id=8473
- Nutritional Sciences Website: http://nutrition.cals.arizona.edu/undergraduate-education