

GRADUATE COORDINATED PROGRAM IN DIETETICS

2025 REPORT

In August 2025, the UW Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics celebrated the graduation of 13 MS & MPH-Nutrition students. By early September they were all eligible to sit for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist exam, and by late September we began receiving notification of their new MPH RDN & MS RDN credentials. This report will summarize their achievements, recognize the 2025 Outstanding Preceptor awardees, and provide updates about the program and dietetic education.

INTERN ACHIEVEMENTS

Our graduating students completed 88 community-based fieldwork, practicum, and dietetic rotations. They were mentored by 100 preceptors from 30 organizations across Puget Sound. Rotation sites included: Alimentando Al Pueblo, Auburn School District, Highline School District, Northshore Farmers Market, Seattle Children's, The Emily Program, Latinx Diabetes Clinic, Washington State Lactation Collaborative, UWMC-Montlake, UWMC-Northwest, HMC, VMC, and OSPI to name a few. Once again, interns were selected for Maternal and Child Health Bureau traineeships with Western Public Health Partners, LEND, PPC, and LEAH. The MPH students completed a public health practicum while the MS students completed an advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy rotation. Specific project information and achievements of our 2025 MPH and MS students are listed below.



2025 UW MS & MPH-Nutrition Graduates

MPH RDN Graduates

Haley Chapman

MPH Practicum: Developing a Data and Performance Measurement Framework for the Food Action Plan

Thesis: Food Policy Entities in Washington State: A Qualitative Exploration of Social Capital

Awards and Scholarships: 2024 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation General Scholarship, FSNH Top Scholar Award, Dora Agee Waller Scholarship Endowment Fund



Evelyn Grijalva-Martinez

MPH Practicum: Community Health Engagement and Nutrition Advocacy for the Latine Community in Washington State: Development of a Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Booklet

Thesis: Towards Achieving Latino Food Equity: Insights from Latino Community Leaders in Central Eastern Washington

Awards and Scholarships: ASPHN DNPAO Nutrition and Physical Activity Traineeship, 2024 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation Commission on

Dietetic Registration Expanding the Reach of Dietetics Scholarship, FSNH Top Scholar Award, Edith A. Moulton Scholarship Fund, Marian Marshall Thompson Alumni Endowment in Nutritional Sciences

Laura Henson

MPH Practicum: Promoting Nutritious School Meals through Visual Menus and Nutrition Education Posters

Capstone: Recommendations to Improve Food Access for K-12 Students in the City of Seattle

Emma Johnsson

MPH Practicum: Equity Mapping of Lactation Resources in Washington State

Thesis: Affordable Nutrient Density of Aquatic Foods in the FAO uFISH Database Assessed Using Nutrient Rich Food Price Index

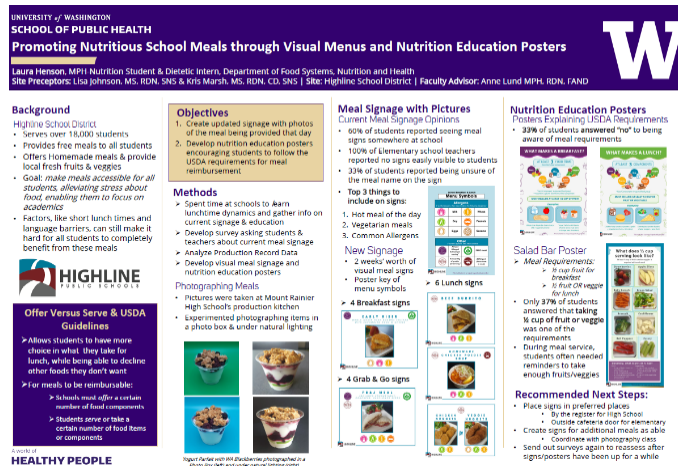
Awards and Scholarships: Western MCH Nutrition Partners Traineeship, Newton W. and Kathryn Adair Galley Scholarship Fund

Mariam Kayali

MPH Practicum: Developing a Family-Informed NG Tube Training Curriculum for the NICU

Capstone: Recommendations to Improve Food Access for K-12 Students in the City of Seattle

Awards and Scholarships: Pediatric Pulmonary Center (PPC) Traineeship, 2024 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation Dietitians in Medical Nutrition Therapy Scholarship, Ruth E. Ostrander Endowed Scholarship Fund

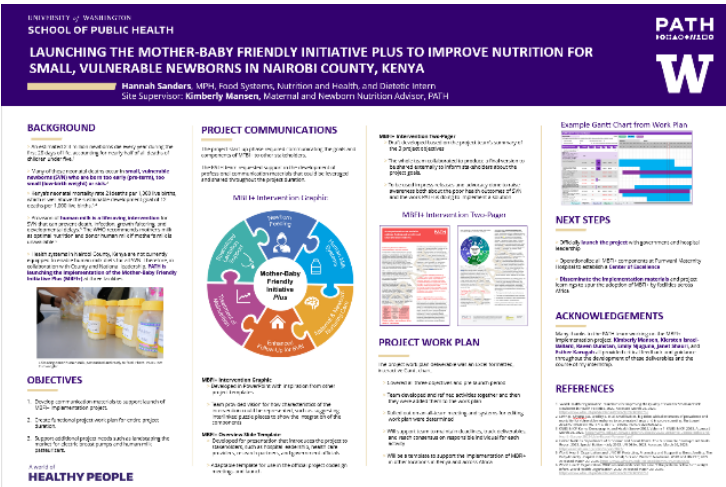
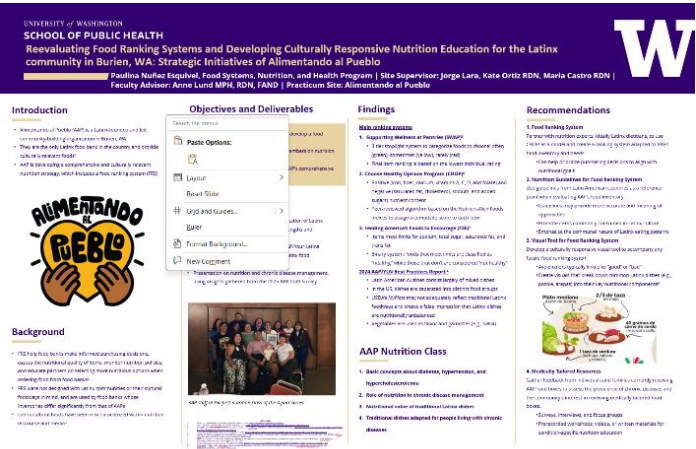


Paulina Nuñez Esquivel

MPH Practicum: Reevaluating Food Ranking Systems and Developing Culturally Responsive Nutrition Education for the Latinx Community in Burien, WA: Strategic Initiatives of Alimentando al Pueblo

Capstone: Recommendations to Improve Food Access for K-12 Students in the City of Seattle

Awards and Scholarships: 2025 Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Outstanding Student in a Coordinated Program, 2024 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation (AND) Irene J. Jones Memorial Scholarship, 2023 AND Advancing Diversity in Dietetics Scholarship



Hannah Sanders

MPH Practicum: Launching the Mother-Baby Friendly Initiative Plus to Improve Nutrition for Small, Vulnerable Newborns in Nairobi County, Kenya

Thesis: Nutritional Adequacy of the Planetary Health Diet Improved by More Nutrient-Rich Foods: Analyses of the FAO Food Composition Tables for Western Africa

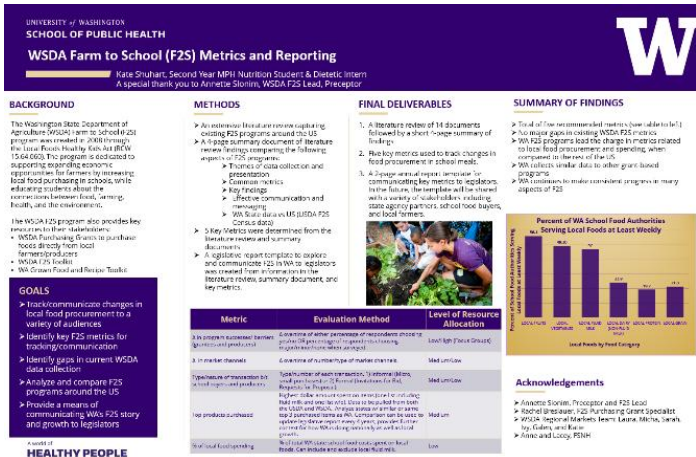
Awards and Scholarships: UW SPH Outstanding Master's Student Award, Carrie Cheney Student Leadership Award, 2024 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation Patsyjane O'Malley Memorial Scholarship, Dora Agee Waller Scholarship

Kate Shuhart

MPH Practicum: WSDA Farm to School (F2S) Metrics and Reporting

Capstone: Recommendations to Improve Food Access for K-12 Students in the City of Seattle

Awards and Scholarships: Beverly Winter-Eben Student Service Award, Western MCH Nutrition Partners Traineeship



Awards and Scholarships: ASPHN DNPAO Nutrition and Physical Activity Traineeship, Katherine F. Jensen Endowed Fellowship

Capstone: Recommendations to Improve Food Access for K-12 Students in the City of Seattle

Awards and Scholarships: Leadership Education for Neurodevelopmental Disorders (LEND) Traineeship, Katherine F. Jensen Endowed Fellowship

Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Expanding the Registered Dietitian's Role in Eating Disorder Relapse Prevention

Kara Plyler, UW Nutritional Sciences Program, MS Nutrition Student & Dietetic Intern
Supervisor: Casey McCoy, MPH, RDN, CD, Seattle Children's Adolescent Medicine

UW LEAH
LEADERSHIP EDUCATION in ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Background

- Eating disorders (EDs) are common among adolescents and highly recurrent (relapse rates 30-50%)
- Family-based treatment (FBT) is first-line, 3-phase approach; families empowered to help child overcome ED
- Historically, FBT exclusively led by therapists
- Outpatient Eating Disorders Program (OPED) at Seattle Children's Hospital includes medical, nutrition, social work support over 12 weeks
- OPED Registered Dietitians (RDs) play key role in FBT - set weight goals, make refeeding plans, provide dietary counseling
- As families transition to later phases of FBT and beyond, increased focus on relapse prevention by RDs toward the end of OPED may improve outcomes

Methods

- Literature Review
- Coordination with psychology team
- Review of SCRH nutrition education materials
- Creation of RD facilitation guide for ED support group

Step 1: Planning and Preparation

- Support group postponed indefinitely
- Advice seeking from I FAH faculty, input from social work team

Step 2: Drafting

- Update to OPED Nutrition Standard Work and creation of educational handout
- Feedback session with OPED RDs

Intervention

1 Nutrition Standard Work for OPED 5 (final visit)

2 Relapse Prevention Handout + Worksheet

Sample sections of handout from a patient interaction

What can Kara help you with today?

Eating & Nutrition Checklist: What do I want to work on?

Takeaways and Next Steps

RD Feedback on Handout

- Be mindful of words and reading level
- Add bulleting for sport as a topic

Learnings from trial with patient

- Helpful to involve both patient and parent in topic selection
- The more interactive the better
- Family may prefer to fill out worksheet at home and bring to final visit

Other Lessons Learned

- Plans change! Backup plan helps, but will not always be prepared and that is okay
- Value of continuous feedback gathering

Future Directions

- Standard Work: update per feedback from new OPED RDs
- Handout: additional topics, input from psychology, continuous updates per feedback from RDs and families (none used)

See QR codes below for full intervention documents

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For references, please contact Kara Plyler: kplyler@uw.edu

Kara Plyler

MNT Concentration: Expanding the Registered Dietitian's Role in Eating Disorder Relapse Prevention

Thesis: Associations Between Usual Plant & Animal Protein Intake and Select Serum Biomarkers of Chronic Disease Risk

Awards and Scholarships: Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH) Traineeship, Ruth E. Ostrander

Endowed Scholarship Fund, Marian Marshall Thompson Alumni Endowment in Nutritional Sciences

Concentration Posters

All MPH-Nutrition students' [Public Health Concentration Project posters](#) and MS students' [Medical Nutrition Therapy \(MNT\) Project posters](#) are posted on the program's website.

Student & Alumni Profiles

Interviews with many of our current and past students are featured on the Food Systems Nutrition & Health website, including four 2025 intern [student profiles](#). Read the full profiles to learn why they chose UW, their areas of interest, their future goals and what they like to do in their free time. Several of our amazing program graduates are featured in the [alumni profiles](#).

2025 OUTSTANDING PRECEPTOR AWARDS

Each year our graduating interns are invited to honor a preceptor who contributed to their development as a future professional. The 2025 Interns selected the following individuals:

Jorge Lara Alvarado

Alimentando al Pueblo

Ben Atkinson, MS, RDN, CD

Auburn School District

Annie Bradshaw, MPH, RDN

Northshore Farmers Markets

Anna Fogel, MPH, RDN, CD

Harborview Medical Center

Christina Grieve, MPH, RDN, CD

The Emily Project

Natalia Bailey Groat, MS, RDN, CD

Harborview Medical Center

Kelly Heshelman, MS, RDN, CD, CNSC

Harborview Medical Center

Amanda Li, RDN, CD, CNSC

UW Medical Center – Montlake

Kimberly Mansen, MSPH, RDN

PATH

Mari Mazon, MS, RDN, CD

UW Pediatric Pulmonary Center

Casey McCoy, MPH, RDN, CD

Seattle Children's – LEAH

Leo Morales, MD, PhD

UW Latinx Diabetes Clinic

Kaitlyn Wright, MS, RDN, CD

UW Medical Center – Montlake

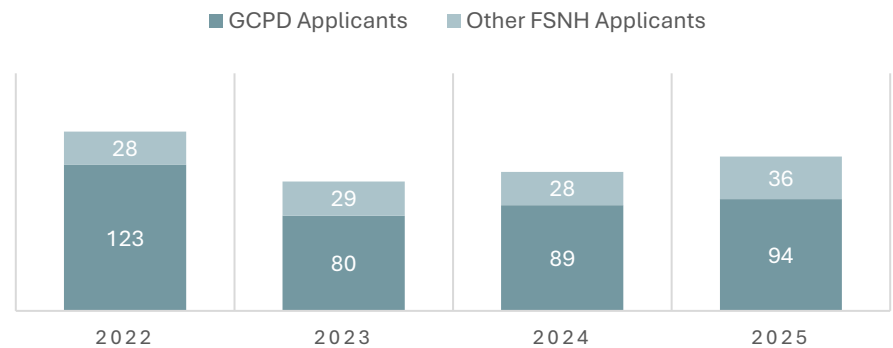
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND TRENDS IN APPLICATION NUMBERS

The Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics (GCPD) combines graduate studies (MS, MPH, or PhD) with an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (via ACEND) accredited internship that is required to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

During the 2024/25 admissions cycle, we received 94 applications for our 14 slots. This was the second year the SOPHAS application was required for our MPH applicants, and DICAS applications were not yet required for those applying to the GCPD. While application numbers remain steady for the GCPD, retaining applicants from the time of admission to matriculating in the fall has been trying for a variety of reasons. For two years we have started the academic year below our accredited 14 slots. With tuition increases, and more hurdles for our international students, retaining students from acceptance to the start of classes has been difficult.

Our admissions team starts reviewing applications in December for students who will matriculate the following autumn. In December 2025, we will be selecting our 2028 interns.

APPLICATION NUMBERS FOR INCOMING CLASS



FUTURE COHORTS' DEGREES AND INSTITUTIONS

The UW SPH dietetics program actively seeks students from varied fields ranging from more traditional science and nutrition backgrounds to public health, biochemistry, finance, and psychology. These multidisciplinary perspectives lead to rich classroom discussions and produce practitioners who can confidently approach complex individual and population health challenges. The previous degrees held by our next two cohorts are listed below.

2026 Interns (Enrolled Autumn 2024)

Art History, BA *Univ. of San Diego*
 Biology, BA *Univ. of Virginia*
 Nutrition, BS *Arizona State University*
 Behavioral Neuroscience BS *Uni. of British Columbia*
 Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, BS *Bangalore University*
 Biology, BS *Washington State University*
 Food, Nutrition, & Health, BS *Univ. of British Columbia*
 Health Sciences: Nutrition & Foods, BS *Northern Arizona University*
 Food Science & Human Nutrition, BS *Public Health University of Hawaii at Manoa*
 Cultural and Social Anthropology, BA *Stanford Univ.*
 Ethic Studies, BA *UC Berkeley*

2027 Interns (Enrolled Autumn 2025)

Public Health/Global Health, BS *Univ. of Washington*
 Public Health/Global Health, BS *Univ. of Washington*
 Nutrition & Food Sciences (Dietetics), BS *Univ. of Vermont*
 Biochemistry; PH-GH, BS *University of Washington*
 Health and Nutrition Sciences, BS *CUNY Brooklyn College*
 Public Health/Global Health, BS *Univ. of Washington*
 Nutritional Sciences & Toxicology and Psychology, BS *UC Berkeley*
 Nutritional Sciences (Dietetics), BS *University of Arizona*
 Psychology, BA *UC Irvine*
 Finance, BA *University of Washington*
 Psychology, BA *Temple University*
 Psychology, BA *University of Washington*

INTERNSHIP COURSE HIGHLIGHTS

This year we continued with **Hot Nutrition Topics**, where students paired up to present evidence for and against a popular nutrition trend. Students chose to lead the class through conversations about: Coffee & Health, Food Sovereignty and Equity in the Food System, RED-S, Traditional Chinese Medicine's Application in Modern Nutrition, Fact vs. Fiction - RFK's claims on Food dyes and seed oils, The History of Traditional Foods and Appropriation, and a deeper dive into alternative sweeteners and what the science says.

We always appreciate **Seminar speakers** that shared their expertise in our weekly internship course. **Alysun Deckert** (UWMC) provided a session on fiscal management. Interns attended a coffee cupping session with Ryan Jongeward, the manager of the [Husky Grind Coffee Education Program](#). **Marie Spiker** (UW FSNH) led a session on Food Systems. For the **GCPD Book Club** we read & discussed ***Thick And Other Essays***, by [Dr McMillan Cottom](#). **Mary Jones Verbovski** (Seattle Children's) returned and presented on Nutrition Focused Physical Exams. **Charlotte Sanders** (UW School of Social Work) facilitated a session on trauma informed care. **Jamie Kowatch** (Salute Nutrition) taught point-of-care glucose monitoring. **Susan McBride** (Harborview) presented on dietetic management strategies. **Carolyn Baylor** (UW Rehabilitation Medicine) returned to share speech language pathologist's (SLP) scope of practice, how a swallow screen is conducted, and their overlap with RDNs in the inpatient setting. Our dietetic interns completed **Interprofessional Education (IPE)** sessions on ethics, outpatient care, and interprofessional partnerships to promote population health along with Medical, Dental, MedEx (Physician Assistant), Pharmacy, and Nursing students.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Like many organizations, budget short falls leading to a reduction of FTE has impacted our program. Food Systems, Nutrition and Health (FSNH) recently lost an administrative coordinator and an IT specialist. We have been told that further staffing changes are likely, and faculty hiring is frozen.

Every 10 years the UW Graduate School requires an academic program review. A self-study was compiled and submitted at the end of the summer and a site-visit by a review committee made up of UW and external faculty is scheduled for November 2025. While academic unit review is required by university policy and the university's accreditation by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the process also provides units an opportunity to reflect on strengths, challenges, aspirations, and strategic planning. The primary objective of the review is an assessment of the academic and educational quality of our program.

[Dr. Jessie Jones-Smith](#) accepted a faculty position at UC Irvine. While at UW, Jones-Smith notably contributed to research on the impact of Seattle's soda tax.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Listening Tour

Prompted by federal, state, and local challenges, the GCPD Program Director met with members of our advisory committee to share how federal changes are impacting our program, explain current struggles in dietetic education,

and to hear how their organizations have been affected. Anne participates in school leadership meetings and attended FNCE this fall. Here is a summary of those conversations:

- Continuously evolving situations, budget shortfalls, consolidation, uncertainty, and fear about what's next were the main themes shared.
- UW is navigating multiple external pressures, rapid changes in federal policy, and ongoing financial challenges for the state budget. UW receives more federal research dollars than any other public university. Changes in research funding and reductions in indirect rates have been acutely felt. We are modeling scenarios with various levels of budget reductions and outlining containment efforts. We are having conversations spanning financial, personnel, and academic planning.
- Public health infrastructure is being gutted on the local, state, and federal levels. Public health nutrition programs are being reduced and eliminated. Direct and indirect cuts to SNAP-Ed, WIC, and Farm-to-school have been devastating. Free School Meals that are tied to local participation in specific means-tested programs (via the Community Eligibility Provision) anticipate major budget shortfalls.
- Leaders forecast restructuring allocation distribution and staff duties. They aim to streamline process and reduce bureaucracy. From the CEO of the Academy to our own school leadership, I have heard about the silver lining of getting to eliminate overly complicated systems and then building back better.
- Health Care organizations are concerned about the upcoming cuts to Medicaid but have yet to see many operational changes.
- Dietetic programs nationwide and locally are struggling. Requiring a graduate degree to sit for the RDN exam has not gone smoothly. Enrollment is low and local programs are struggling. SPU announced the closure of one of their nutrition programs and a multi-year enrollment pause for another. Bastyr is facing budget issues and CWU reported low enrollment. It is too early to know how these changes will impact Washington State's clinical and public health nutrition workforce.

ACEND UPDATES

ACEND now requires our program to use the DICAS application. Our MPH/RDN applicants are required to submit application material to three separate application portals; two of which are owned by the same company. We were unsuccessful in our efforts to have two connected systems merge applicant information or reduce their fees. Students applying to our MPH/RDN program will pay \$280 in application fees plus the cost of multiple copies of official transcripts from every institution of high education attended.

A draft of the proposed new educational standards is expected to be released for review and comment in December 2025.

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

[Anne Lund, MPH, RDN, FAND](#)

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Dietetics

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