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Intro to Dietetics

Dr. Dowdell

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Part 1: Interview with a RD

**Interview with Michele Wilbur RD, CDN – Licensed Nutritionist at Cornell Dining**

1. What is your title? What does a Food and Nutrition Management RD do?  
*I am a Cornell Dining Nutritionist. I work with students that have food allergies, work with all the chefs on campus and review their menus, improve menus, request food, help in making decisions of what is purchased, give nutritional advice to chefs and food workers, and promote nutritional values on campus by organizing events on nutrition.*
2. Why did you choose to be an RD or a Food and Nutrition Management RD?  
*I hated clinical dietetics. I always wanted to be a chef and was a chef since I was 14 years old. I changed my major to dietetics from food service administration, but knew I wanted to do something with food service.*
3. What kind of education and training do you need to become a Food and Nutrition Management RD?  
*I didn't have any special training besides the education needed to become an RD: a 4 year bachelor's degree in dietetics from an accredited program, completion of 1200 clock hours for an internship, and pass the registration exam. But I did have a lot of experience in food service. I've studied under top chefs and have worked in many professional kitchens and used to be a personal chef.*
4. What other kind of RD jobs have you done?  
*I was an assistant dietitian in a hospital. Then I owned a private practice business. I was a personal chef; I cooked meals for people in their homes and counseled people on nutrition.*
5. What advice do you have for me to become a successful RD?  
*My advice to you would be to find your interests. Figure out what you enjoy like kids, food, science, or other things. It's a great idea to get a good picture of the different areas you can work in.*
6. When and where was your internship? How many did you apply to? Was it challenging to get an internship?  
*I actually did my internship 5 years after I graduated with my bachelor's degree from SUNY Oneonta. I did my internship through Syracuse University at Cortland*

*Memorial Hospital. I applied to two internship programs at Cornell University and Syracuse University. It is much different now. It was not as challenging to get an internship as it is now.*

7. What did you do at your internship? Was it a valuable learning experience? Did it help you know what you wanted or didn't want to do in the field of dietetics?  
*I reviewed patient charts, gave recommendations for diets, fed patients through tubes, and reviewed labs and medications. I only did the internship because I wanted the licensure of an RD and I knew I didn't want to work in a hospital. But it could be helpful for someone who isn't sure what they want to do.*
8. Did you get your master's degree while you did your internship?  
*No, I don't have my master's degree. I believed that for what I wanted to do a master's degree was not necessary, but it is different today.*
9. Are you a member of ADA? What are the benefits of being a member?  
*Yes. I don't use many of the benefits, but I do like getting the publications (magazines and brochures) they send me. I leave them out where the food staff workers can look at them and learn more about nutrition.*
10. How do you continue your education and keep updated on new information in nutrition?  
*I look for classes that are free or interesting to me. Many classes are online which is easier than actually taking a class. I use the ADA website to find ways to get credit for continuing my education. I went to a national conference and earned 25 credits for going. Also, you can pay to take quizzes that are offered in the ADA journals for credit.*
11. Do you belong to one or more dietetic practice groups? If yes, what practice group (s) do you belong to?  
*No. I used to belong to a group, but it was too much of a commitment.*
12. What else do you do besides what you do on a typical day of work?  
*I give lectures on campus and publish articles in the Ithaca Journal.*
13. What were the strengths and weakness of owning a private practice business?  
*The hours are flexible which is great, but it is not a steady stream of income. Also, when sitting one on one with patients, you repeat yourself over and over again which can get monotonous.*
14. What would you recommend to someone who is thinking about or going to start a private business?  
*My advice would be to set goals and plan out everything.*

## Part 2: ADA website

### General Practice Groups:

ADA offers about 30 dietetic practice groups for networking in a specific area of interest. Each of these practice groups provides opportunities for registered dietitians to stay update on information and interact with other dietitians in their specific area of interest. Each group has a mission and a vision for their members. Someone who wants to be a part of one of these practice groups must join as a member and pay dues to the group. Members have many benefits if they join a group including receiving publications and networking with colleagues.

### Practice Group A:

*The Dietetics in Health Care Communities* is a dietetic practice group that focuses on the nutritional health of individuals in health care facilities. The association was established in 1975 and has 4,800 members. Members of DHCC are committed to the nutritional health of individuals in various health care settings such as long-term care facilities, hospitals, hospice, assisted living centers, retirement homes, education programs, group homes, etc. The mission of DHCC is to empower members to be the nutritional leaders in the nation. Their vision is to help people become healthier through food and nutrition.

Members receive various benefits that make joining a practice group valuable and beneficial to the individual in their profession. Benefits of DHCC members include online resources, publications, professional development opportunities, and support materials such as study guides. Online resources include the website, an active electronic mailing list, and a video loan library. The group prints *The Connections Newsletter* and *UPDATE!* Opportunities include free CPEUs (continuing education credits), volunteer opportunities, network with colleagues,

and research opportunities. Many members believe joining this group is worthwhile because they receive more benefits than other groups that support their area of interest.

#### Practice Group B:

*The Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutrition (SCAN)* practice group contains members that are expertise dietitians in sports nutrition, cardiovascular health, wellness and weight management, and/or eating disorders. SCAN dietitians have completed the requirements to become a registered dietitian and have professional experience from working with Olympic athletes and professional sports teams. Dietitians have also gained unique skills such as completing specialized training as a Certified Diabetes Educator, a Certified Athletic trainer, and/or Board Certification as a Specialist in Sports Dietetics. To join SCAN, dietitians must meet these requirements as well as membership of the ADA.

Members receive various benefits as a member of SCAN. Membership benefits include up to date information on cardiovascular disease, wellness, sports nutrition, and eating disorders; networking opportunities with other members through a listserv and forums; free subscription of the quarterly newsletter, SCAN's Pulse; member only rates to activities and the annual SCAN symposium; free access to the Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database and to the full website; and awards/scholarships. Members can talk about their concerns and interests in their field of sports nutrition with other members through the listserv and/or forums. SCAN offers three listservs: Sports Nutrition, Disordered Eating Network, and Cardiovascular and Wellness listserv. Members also can promote themselves on the website, so when the public is searching for someone that is an expertise in a specific area of sports nutrition they can find them. Also,

members have the opportunity to become a Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics (CSSD) and have up to four free continuing education units.

The quarterly newsletter, the PULSE provides information focusing on Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Newsletter. The newsletter is printed four times a year in the winter, spring, summer, and fall. The majority of the PULSE editorial staff has a master's degree or PhD in a specific area of nutrition and/or is a Registered Dietitian. The newsletter publishes review articles and original research reports. Authors can submit case studies and other relevant information to SCAN members to be considered for publication too. Issues include original research studies, an article from the editor, a CPE article (an article approved for receiving continuing education credits), an article from the Chair, conference highlights, SCAN notables, research of further interest, and upcoming events.

Articles of the spring 2010 issue contained research on ginger as an alternative therapy for a medical problem, reductionism, night eating syndrome, and impact of vitamin D and calcium. One article talks about developing an effective statewide eating disorder coalition to offer more support to people with eating disorders. The article from the Chair talks about the three important things for life renewal that SCAN members strive to encourage clients to do. Members should encourage their clients to focus on physical, mental, social emotional and spiritual well being to renew themselves.

Part 3: State Dietetic Association: <http://www.eatrightny.org/>

The NYSDA is an organization of professionals in the field of nutrition which provides information for its members and networking opportunities that began in 1930. The organization also includes students who are studying dietetics. Members who are not students are Registered Dietitians or Dietetic Technicians, Registered in New York State. Since they all reside in New York, most of them have the licensure of a CDN which is a New York Certification for a nutritionist.

Professional membership benefits include various opportunities. These opportunities include networking, employment, and leadership opportunities. Networking can help because you can learn from other people who have already been through what you want to accomplish in your professional goals. The website lists job opportunities in New York. Members who want to be involved can gain leadership skills which are an important professional skill. Also, members receive e-mails of events, access to the online quarterly newsletter, stay informed of legislature issues, enhance their knowledge on nutrition, and can see what is going on their community. Members have the same benefits of ADA members and can join an ADA practice group. The NYSDA is a valuable source for networking and job opportunities in the state.

Students also have various benefits in joining NYSDA. If students join ADA then their membership fees will include NYSDA membership, so many of the benefits are the same. Student membership benefits include scholarships from ADA or a specific DPG, DPG opportunities, JADA, a monthly calendar, access to the member's only website, discounts, access to the ADA listserv, access to an online bookstore, daily news, and discussions via the web. These benefits of NYSDA help students to reach their professional goals.

Students and professionals may also join their state's district site. This is beneficial to students to join both their state and regional associations to network, learn about job and volunteer opportunities, hear about local events to go to, and advocate for one's future profession. My district site is Central New York (<http://www.cnyda.org>) which is the area's organization to promote health and nutrition. The organization has board members and annual meetings to discuss nutrition issues. Membership fees are lower for a student than a professional to advocate students to join. Student members have access to professional contacts and can receive a monthly e-mail with jobs in the area. Also, the board publishes a quarterly newsletter.