WELCOME TO VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY!

Congratulations on being matched with the Virginia State Dietetic Internship! We all know how hard you worked to get here; you earned it and you’re ready to take the next step in your dietetics path.

The VSU Dietetic Internship integrates rotations and classroom work to develop critical thinking skills that you will use throughout your career. Its research concentration allows you to practice your research skills in the lab and out in the field. Weekly homework assignments reinforce using research articles for evidence-based practice.

The Class 25 interns have put together an introduction to the internship to help give you an idea of what’s to come. Please, feel free to reach out to any of us if you have any questions. We promise you this will be a great year of learning and growth--get excited!

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My name is Andrea Delorito and I graduated from Virginia Tech in 2016 with a BS in Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise with a concentration in dietetics. I then worked for 1 year in hospital food service to gain a little more experience. Since starting the internship, I have learned so much related to dietetics, the workplace, and people. I am extremely confident that I’ll be able to enter the workforce as a competent dietitian. My advice to future interns is to jump in head first. This is the one time you’ll be able to work with so many different careers in such a short period of time. Learn as much as you can and ask all the questions that pop into your head! Your preceptors are here to teach you because you are the future of dietetics. You’ll do great!

Hi! My name is Kelly Chang and I’m from CA. I graduated from UC Davis in 2017 with a BS in Clinical Nutrition. Having jumped directly from college to a DI, I was quite apprehensive about how it’d go—after all, stuff in the classroom doesn’t directly translate to stuff in the field. If you’re worried about this too, rest assured; if you’re willing to learn and seek out what you want to know, the people around you will respond. Take advantage of the fact your preceptors and fellow interns know things you don’t. Take initiative! My last piece of advice is that if you’re not used to the snow, keep in mind that highways can turn into a battleground in VA because some people think it’s ok to drive 80 mph on ice. Drive safe. And have fun!!

My name is Danielle Ambrose and I am from Oregon. I graduated Oregon State University in 2017 with a BS in Nutrition with a concentration in dietetics. This internship has taught me so much in such a short period of time. It really does go by fast! My advice to new interns is to not to be afraid to ask questions, be present in every rotation, make the most of your time, and take advantage of every opportunity and experience that comes your way. Your internship experience is really what you make of it so take this time to explore all the different areas of nutrition and dietetics. Be willing to learn and take advice from your preceptors and director, they want you to succeed! And of course, have fun!

Congratulations future interns on getting accepted! My name is Jessica Whitney-Johnson and I am from Illinois. I completed my bachelors at Illinois State University with a degree in Food, Nutrition and Dietetics. Before starting my internship I had no previous experience in a clinical setting. My advice for you would be to try and get some clinical experience before your internship starts. That way when you are in your clinical rotations you are comfortable in a hospital setting and it will be a smooth transition. The internship goes by so quickly! In just 10 short months you will be able to see so many different types of job opportunities and work with some amazing people, take advantage of those opportunities and find your passion! Have fun and make some unforgettable memories!
MEET THE INTERNS

MEGHAN SKEEHAN

My name is Meghan. I'm from New Jersey. My undergraduate degree is a BPS in Baking and Pastry Arts Management. After working a few years in restaurants and bakeries, I decided I wanted to further my career. I love food and wanted to keep working with it so I started studying for my MS in Food and Nutrition. While I was working toward completing my DPD courses, I felt like a clinically focused program was not for me. I decided to transfer into an online program for a MPH-Nutrition degree. I am putting my graduate classes on hold while in the internship. I'm still unsure of what I would like to do as I have many interests (some of which I discovered as an intern—so much for using the internship to narrow down my options)! My advice to you is to go into your internship with an open mind. Like I said, I found new interests as an intern. I was terrified of my clinical rotations and felt like I knew nothing from my classroom education but, in fact, I enjoyed being in the hospital setting and see myself potentially working as a clinical dietitian post-internship. Lastly, enjoy everything that this program offers and take one day at a time.

SHIYAO LIU

My name is Shiyao Liu. I am originally from China. I came to the United States to study nutrition. I did my undergraduate at Kent State University. After that, I worked in the hospital for half year as a dietitian assistance. Then I went to Case Western Reserve University for my master's degree. I have enjoyed the internship program at VSU. I did enjoy every rotation I attended, each of them is special and makes me eager to learn more. My favorite rotation so far is the clinical rotation. I have learned so much during this rotation! Each day I met different patients with different conditions, it gave me a lot of challenges. The advice I would give you is to be passionate on things you are doing and always ask questions.

NASREEN REHMANI

First of all, congratulations on being accepted into the VSU dietetic internship program! My name is Nasreen Rehmani and I am from Mechanicsville, Virginia. I graduated with a BS in Dietetics from Virginia State University in May 2017. During my Junior and Senior year, I had the opportunity to assist in Department of Psychology and Agriculture Research Station at VSU. My job was to assist with various aspects of conducting research. This exposure made me realize my interest in Functional Food Research. I also have a passion for community work and have been involved in various capacities, helping individuals with the degree evaluation process, assisting in furthering education, or acquiring vocational skills to improve one's quality of life. My advice for you is to avail any opportunity that comes along the internship within or outside rotation hours to improve your knowledge. During clinical rotation, One thing that I did was to ask my preceptors to arrange for me to observe medical procedures if possible, which helped me understand more about diseases in depth. Besides that, take good notes and learn from all that the internship has to offer. You will be exposed to a variety of different areas within the Dietetic practice and will meet many inter disciplinary staff, which will help increase your network. Lastly, it is ok to be anxious but remember, preceptors are there to help you every step of the way to enhance your learning experience.

JARON WOODS

Hello fellow Virginia State University (VSU) dietetic interns! Congratulations on being accepted into the VSU dietetic internship program! My name is Jaron Woods and I am from Hampton, Virginia. I did the two-year transfer program to acquire my bachelor’s degree. I completed my associate's degree at Thomas Nelson Community College in Hampton, VA, then transferred to VSU, where I completed my undergrad. Prior to the internship, I worked as a nutrition research assistant for the VSU food science lab and volunteered around the Richmond and Petersburg area. The advice that I would give you guys is to keep an open-mind. When I first entered the program, I wanted to work solely in clinical. After completing my clinical rotation, I realized that it wasn’t for me and that I had a passion for education patients on diabetes. As you guys go on your different rotations, keep an open-mind about it and gain as much experience as you can. In my opinion, I feel that that these experiences will help mold you into a more versatile registered dietitian in the future. Lastly, enjoy everything that this program offers and take one day at a time.
Clinical I - 5 weeks
During Clinical I you will develop a foundation for inpatient clinical dietetics. You will learn how to complete a nutrition assessment, assign nutrition risk, counsel, educate, and chart on uncomplicated patients under the supervision of your preceptor(s).

Clinical II - 5 weeks
Clinical II builds on Clinical I and most interns will complete it at the same location. You will now have a more independent role in working with patients and hospital staff. Interns will advance to assess more complicated patients while remaining under the guidance of their preceptor. You will also learn how to determine and recommend nutritional support including calculations for parenteral and enteral formulas.

Advanced Clinical - 7 weeks
Advanced clinical rotations are more specialized than Clinical I and II. These specialty areas are assigned by the Internship Director. This year our rotations were divided between Diabetes, Renal, and Geriatric Nutrition.

Foodservice Management I - 2 weeks
For this rotation, you will most likely be assigned to VSU’s foodservice department, which will familiarize you with the principles of foodservice. You will be introduced to topics like menu planning, recipe development, sanitation and food safety, and production.

Foodservice Management II - 4 weeks
For this rotation, you will spend four weeks in the foodservice department of a clinical site (long-term care, rehabilitation, or hospital). During this time, you will gain experience working in management roles and learn how to run the day-to-day operations of a foodservice organization. This rotation allows you to see the how the foodservice side relates to patient care, satisfaction, and food production for hospitalized patients and their families.

School Foodservice - 2 weeks
School foodservice allows you to learn the details of working within a school nutrition program. You will gain hands-on experience planning, promoting, preparing and serving menu items that fit within the healthy guidelines for school-age children. You will learn about federal regulations and programs such as the National School Lunch Program.
RESEARCH - 9 WEEKS

VSU has a unique concentration in research. Nutrition is constantly growing and evolving; research is the key to staying up-to-date in our practice so we can educate the public on credible information.

During this rotation you will be involved in a research study. This is one of the few rotations where you will be partnered with another intern. Each pair of interns will work on a different research study. This year, 4 interns worked in the Agriculture Department’s Microbiology lab and the other 4 worked in the Food Processing lab. For the study you are involved in, you will write a research paper and make a poster, which you will then present at the VAND conference or VSU graduate fair. Your work presents the possibility of publication in a research journal as a contributing author!

COMMUNITY

Farm to Table - 2 weeks

During this rotation you will get to work on VSU’s 419 acre farm and at local farmers’ markets. You will learn about the farm-to-table process including farming, food production, food distribution, marketing, and sales.

WIC - 2 weeks

You will learn the principles of WIC and provide nutrition counseling to clients, as well as develop and conduct a nutrition education class. This supplemental, federally funded program will allow you to provide nutrition education to pregnant and lactating women, infants, and children up to age 5.

Community Service

On your own time over the course of the internship, you must complete 32 hours of nutrition-related community service. The Internship Director will give notice of opportunities available. Examples include: volunteering at local food banks, food expos, teaching classes, etc.
**Summation - 2 weeks**

Summation is an opportunity to explore an area of dietetics that you are interested in. You can set up this rotation in the Richmond area, back in your hometown, or anywhere you feel comfortable. You may also go back to a rotation you enjoyed or want more practice in. Examples of summation site include: community nutrition, sports nutrition, eating disorders, pediatrics, private practice, etc.

**Make-up - 1 week**

You are given 1 week at the end of the internship to make up any rotation days that you missed.

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**ASSIGNMENTS**

- **Case Study (Clinical)**
  - In-depth study on a patient with a nutrition-related diagnosis and whom requires significant nutrition therapy
  - 30-minute presentation, 10-15 page report

- **Case Study (Foodservice)**
  - In-depth study of a foodservice issue in your long-term foodservice II rotation
  - 30-minute presentation, 8-10 page report

- **Seminars**
  - Nutrition topic of your interest
  - 30 minute presentation, 8-10 pages

- **Weekly Assignments**

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**GUEST LECTURES**

- Nutrition Support
- Diabetes
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Renal Disease
- Psych Nutrition
- Inborn Errors of Metabolism
- Resume Building
- Nutrition Focused Physical Exam
FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year you will go on a few field trips in place of class sessions. These trips are designed to teach you more about the field of dietetics and the role of RD’s in new and innovative occupations.

Field trips this year:

- Virginia State Fair
- Bon Secour Parsley’s Kitchen
- Legislative Day at the Virginia Capitol
- Reynold’s Packaging Group
- Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (VAND) annual meeting
ABOUT THE AREA

The Class 25 interns lived throughout the area, including Richmond, Petersburg, Hampton, and Virginia Beach. If you have any questions about living situations or things to do in your free time, please reach out! We all have our own unique recommendations to share and we remember what it was like starting the internship in a new place.

Richmond, Virginia

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Petersburg, Virginia

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