

Assessment Plan

The Nutrition Science Program within the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences (NDFS) uses the following self-assessment process and resulting decisions to improve the Nutrition Science program is based on data generated by the following methods.

Student Evaluations

The standardized USU IDEA course evaluation form is provided to all students in all courses taught by Nutrition faculty to allow the students an opportunity to evaluate both the course and the instructor. Nutrition faculty are encouraged to map course objectives to the IDEA survey. Nutrition Science courses have historically been highly rated for instructor effectiveness and contributed towards NDFS receiving the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences teaching award multiple times in the last 5 years.

Yearly Focus Group for Graduating Students

- Input from students to help make data based decisions for the program
- Student assessment of our program is vital and offers a unique perspective
- Student input has guided curriculum changes to increase the overall effectiveness of the program

The discussions with our outgoing undergraduates have been vital in making sure we are meeting the needs of students, shaping our curriculum, and giving our future alumni a stake in the program.

Assessment of Course Specific Learning Objectives

Students are asked questions about core concepts at the beginning and end of the semester. Results of the pre and post tests are then compared to get assess concepts learned or improved over the semester. This has now been implemented in some of our core courses and the data will be used to objectively assess student learning.

Nutrition Science Overall Learning Objectives and Course Map

- Creation of a master document that includes course objectives/maps for all classes included in the nutrition science degree.
- This document allows the faculty to identify deficiencies and redundancies in the curriculum.
- This information coupled with the graduating senior exit interviews, allows for data based decisions to improve the overall program.

Faculty Program Assessment

Assessment information from these various sources is discussed and reviewed by Nutrition Science faculty and used to improve and modernize program objectives, course content and degree requirements. The single most important department activity for reviewing assessment as well as all other aspects of the program is the yearly faculty retreat. This meeting provides a period of reflection on the past year; an opportunity to make changes and/or modifications to requirements, policies and procedures; and a forum for planning the coming academic year.

Recent Data Based Decisions

Initiative 1. Continuing Response to the Nutrition Science Program Assessment

Unlike food science and dietetics there is not an official sanctioning organization for nutrition science curriculum at US universities. Therefore, nutrition science programs rely primarily on traditions and anecdotal evidence from faculty members to inform program decisions. Moreover, there are currently no data based tools in place to assess program success. As a result of this deficiency, both outside and internal reviewers reviewed the Nutrition Science program. We are continuing to implement their recommendations to improve the program.

Courses and Curriculum:

The reviewers noted that the Nutrition Science curriculum might be improved by incorporating courses that have been exclusive to the Dietetics program. In response, we have added NDFS 3600: Medical Terminology for Health Care Professionals and NDFS 4550: Nutrition Assessment to the Nutrition Science curriculum. The addition of these classes also helps the Nutrition Science and Dietetics programs to become more integrated, which was another recommendation from the review. Moreover in response to the review and student feedback, we have continued to streamline the curriculum to increase NDFS coursework in the first three years of the program.