



Students' Crystal Ball: Nutrition and Dietetics 2070

THIS MONTH I WOULD LIKE TO spotlight those who are just beginning their careers and will embody our organization and profession in decades to come: Student members. How do students envision their part in the future of our Academy and profession, and what will nutrition and dietetics look like in 2070?

TODAY'S ACTIONS BENEFIT TOMORROW

Isis Bello Hernandez graduated in December 2019 from Arizona State University, where she was a student liaison. "I want to eventually work in the public health sector so I can help reform education courses for children, teenagers, and young adults in hopes that earlier, more comprehensive nutrition education can help with body-image issues, later-in-life diseases, or food habits," she says. She sees a future where practitioners benefit from actions being taken today at the state and national levels on licensure, credentialing, and educational requirements to become registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs). "Although our field may not be as old as the MD community," Bello Hernandez says, "we are educated, we are experienced, and we know what we're talking about."

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

Trilanda Johns, senior in the Coordinated Program at Keiser University, is a student liaison and served as vice president and president of the campus's student dietetics association. "In 50 years," she says, "with the help of technology and enthusiastic researchers, I feel that the Academy will have so much more to offer professionals in the way of evidence-based interventions and treatments. I also think that we will finally have answers for the cause of presently unknown chronic illnesses and disease processes."

INNOVATIVE SPIRIT

An at-large student delegate to the House of Delegates and student committee chair of the Public Health/

Community Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group (DPG), among other volunteer positions within the Academy, Matthew Landry recently completed his PhD at the University of Texas. "My generation has been instrumental in contributing to and expanding our nation's technology and innovation in the nutrition field," Landry says. "I see the profession of 2070 being more diverse and inclusive to better serve the communities and individuals we work with. I foresee more leaders within the Academy being persons of colors, men, LGBTQ, or from diverse or untraditional backgrounds."

FOCUS ON PREVENTION AND SUSTAINABILITY

A graduate student at Colorado State University, Kiri Michell has served as chair and vice chair of the Academy's Student Advisory Committee and is a member of the Foundation's current Board of Directors. "I hope that in the next 50 years, there will be a huge emphasis on sustainability and more focus and awareness on preventive nutrition," Michell says. "I hope nutrition is integrated better into schools to instill healthy habits at younger ages. I would love to see people become more interested, self-aware, and self-invested in what they eat, and to see the importance of nutrition and food science as we age."

DIVERSE AND NONTRADITIONAL PRACTICE AREAS

Danielle Sanders, a dietetic intern and master's degree student at the UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston, TX, serves as a student liaison and a member of the public policy committee of the National Organization of Blacks in Dietetics and Nutrition. "I see the profession being more diverse as the Academy works to reflect the ever-changing population," Sanders says. "I also see there being an increase in nontraditional practice areas as more dietitians branch out and begin using their skill sets to influence change in areas related to and impacted by nutrition."



Terri J. Raymond

SUPPORT, EMPOWER, MENTOR

Dimitra Kristina Thomopoulos is a graduate of CUNY – Hunter College, earned a master's degree from Drexel University, and is a dietetic intern at the National Institutes of Health. She was a student liaison at Drexel and fills the same role now at the National Institutes of Health. By 2070, Thomopoulos predicts, the RDN "will be well-known as the clinician who is the most qualified to address nutrition-related health needs in various settings. Overall, [RDNs] will be a unified group of intellectually and culturally diverse professionals who support, empower, and mentor one another for the continued promotion and advancement of our profession."

MAKING THE JOURNEY SWEETER

I agree with our students' predictions and welcome their talents and passions as they create the future of our profession. I want to give Isis Bello Hernandez the last word, since she clearly speaks for thousands of her fellow students—past, present, and yet to come:

"I am writing this before I leave to walk at my graduation. It took sweat, tears, and loads of anxiety to get to this point, but I am ecstatic because it has made this journey so much sweeter. This is the end of one chapter and the beginning of another."

Congratulations, Isis; speaking on behalf of all Academy members, thank you and best wishes to all our students. With you at the helm, our future is in good hands.

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