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Revitalizing our Strategic Plan—and Ourselves

It is a pleasure and an honor to write my first message to Academy members as our organization's 96th President. My thanks to Linda Farr, RDN, CSOWM, LD, FAND, for her leadership of our Academy during an extraordinary and often difficult year. Together with the Board of Directors, and in the context of the Academy's recently revitalized Strategic Plan, I know we can overcome any obstacles and seize the numerous and exciting opportunities that face us. To do so, we must be openminded, agile, and responsive.

At our April meeting, the Board of Directors approved a revitalized Strategic Plan to prioritize programs and initiatives in areas where the Academy will focus efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving our vision and mission. (See the box for more information.)

Our plan includes impact goals that help focus, set priorities, and assign resources in well-being and prevention, nutrition care and health systems, nutrition security and food safety, and diversity and inclusion.

The Board's action is just the latest step in a strategic thinking and planning process that officially debuted in the late 1980s, when strategic planning became a central part of our philosophy and our operations. As noted in the *Journal* in 2012:¹

A point of momentous change in its history, the adoption of strategic planning upended the Academy's previous processes and self-perception and ushered in a new era in operations. In reframing the organizational view of strategic planning as ongoing, evolving process, the Academy shifted from being internally focused on members to being externally focused on advancing members outside of the organization, including promoting and positioning their expertise as an indispensable part of the health care professions and establishing innovative alliances to do just that.

That article includes an indispensable history of the evolution and execution of strategic planning at the Academy, and I highly encourage you to read it. It outlines the rationale for strategic planning, based on rapid and far-reaching changes that were happening throughout the health care

The Board has approved updated goals and strategies that will build on the Academy's core organizational strengths in food and nutrition research; advocacy and communications; professional development; and workforce capacity and opportunities.

Four new overarching, organization-wide goals that address inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA), have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan. The goals will form the foundation of an IDEA action plan. The Board empowered the Academy's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is dedicated to IDEA issues, to make recommendations to support this important work.

As the global leaders in improving and safeguarding the nutritional health of all people, we continue to be tireless advocates for universal access to the lifesaving benefits everyone can obtain by working with registered dietitian nutritionists, especially in the prevention and treatment of common and costly chronic diseases.

In revitalizing the Academy's Strategic Plan, the mission and vision remain timely and relevant:

Vision

A world where all people thrive through the transformative power of food and nutrition.

Mission

Accelerate improvements in global health and well-being through food and nutrition.

Much more information on the Academy's Strategic Plan can be found at www.eatright.org/strategicplan

system, and the Academy's determination to both respond to change and to lead in a changing environment.

As the article puts it: "With strategic planning that capitalized on the forethought of the leadership and an unprecedented adaptability across the membership, the Academy has kept pace with the contemporary reality of what it means to govern a profession."¹

At this point, you may be asking, "What's in this for me?" It's a legitimate question! My answer is: Each of us deals every day with personal and professional challenges. We look to the Academy (meaning, to ourselves collectively) to be here and support our needs, now and into the future. The best and most useful support—and everything the Academy

does—takes place in the context of a dynamic, forward-looking Strategic Plan.

In future articles, I plan to discuss specific issues and topic confronting members—individually and as an organization—and how the focus areas, goals, and principles of our Strategic Plan can guide us and revitalize us to achieve success. I look forward to working with you as President during the coming year!

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2021.05.011>

Reference

1. Stein K. The academy's governance and practice: restructuring for the challenges of the turn of the 21st century. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2012;112(11):1871-1896.e1-14.