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FNCE: Where Strategic Direction Meets Strategic Enthusiasm

As a member-driven organization, the Academy relies on volunteers for our success at every level and for every initiative and activity. The Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo represents the perfect combination of Academy members and our Headquarters Team working together to inform, intrigue and inspire us. And FNCE demonstrates vividly that the member volunteers on committees, task forces and other Academy groups who give generously of their time and expertise are our organization's "hidden heroes."

Our annual gathering holds a special place for the Academy, and not just because it is our largest annual event, dating back more than a century. FNCE is where the rubber meets the road as we progress toward the Academy's strategic direction with planning, forethought and a big dose of enthusiasm.

I know how enthused I am about FNCE! For the second year, in response to safety considerations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy's flagship 2021 conference again will be a virtual event, October 16 to 19. (And we will hold an in-person FNCE in Orlando, Fla., in October 2022.) One more year online – with enhancements.

FNCE 2021 will feature:

- The most requested addition: live, one-on-one, on-demand video chat within the platform for all attendees
- Group video chat breakouts for up to 30 people
- Continued deep discount on registration fees, including group rates
- The "Presidential Party with a Purpose" (see box)
- An expanded virtual Expo engagement experience with more than 100 booths and the Expo Theater
- And more.

Expert speakers at this year's FNCE sessions will examine the intersections of nutrition culture including diversity and inclusion; technology; mental and physical health and modern practice; and will offer specialized tracks with the latest developments on topics such as diabetes and private practice, and skills-focused sessions to aid in career advancement.

Registration for FNCE is still open. Visit eatrightFNCE.org for all the information you need.

My enormous thanks go to the Committee for Lifelong Learning, which plans FNCE (see box). I also want to recognize the year-round great work of the Academy's Lifelong Learning and Engagement, Corporate Relations, and Conference and Event Services teams that make possible every aspect of FNCE and our full range of professional development opportunities. Thank you for all you do!

Passionate About Professional Development

Did you know that professional development is the top reason why Academy members renew each year, and the second most-cited reason for joining. Continuing professional education is also the number-one reason why people attend FNCE.

The Academy's Committee for Lifelong Learning is where the review and selection of educational sessions and other programming at FNCE takes place. It is the committee that receives the most number of applications each year; its ten to 14 members each serve as experts in a particular practice area and are appointed based on diversity of experience and expertise.

"Members of the Committee on Lifelong Learning are passionate about using the best available science to create professional development opportunities that have the biggest impact on all practice areas of the profession," says the CLL's 2021-2022 chair Mindy Hermann, MBA, RDN.

"We evaluate the program using a comprehensive, holistic approach based on educational value and the extent to which the program presents new or significant information. For 2021, we have developed a superb program that will provoke discussion and audience engagement and provide solutions to current and future food and nutrition challenges," Hermann says.

"If it's going to happen at FNCE, it needs to be something you cannot get anywhere else."

October 17: President's "Party with a Purpose"

I'm happy to invite you to a special new FNCE virtual event that I will be hosting on Sunday, October 17: We're calling it the "President's Party with a Purpose," and all FNCE attendees are invited. Every dollar from ticket sales will go to the Academy's Foundation to support the general fund for scholarships.

The Party with a Purpose will pay tribute to the original 2021 FNCE location of New Orleans, featuring music, city tours, and a culinary experience with a chef and mixologist.

Tickets are available when you register for FNCE or by adding the ticket to your registration profile if you've already committed to attend. Ticket prices are \$10 (\$5 for students).

And an in-person FNCE will be held in New Orleans in 2029!

Earlier this year, during a meeting with the Committee on Lifelong Learning, I offered the committee my thoughts on what will make a great FNCE. I urged them to:

- Be transformational
- Be *the* example
- Inform, Intrigue, Inspire
- Keep U in FNCE (which is to say, "FUN") and....
- Boldly go where no conference has gone before.

I know FNCE will be all these things and more. See you there!

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