SDA Meets with RD Sue Zbornick

The SDA (Student Dietetics Association) is doing big things here on Viterbo’s campus! SDA serves as a common place for all dietetic students to help with fundraising, sharing information, and provide opportunities to support and mentor one another.

Chloe Richter, a junior dietetic student, is the SDA Vice President. Chloe was instrumental in inviting Sue Zbornick to come to Viterbo and speak to dietetic students. She summarized the presentation and meeting with Sue: “Sue Zbornick, a 1982 Viterbo Nutrition and Dietetics graduate, recently presented to students from dietetics, psychology, and the sciences. Sue is currently a practicing Accredited Nutritionist working and living in Sydney, Australia. She shared her experience treating eating disorders and obesity along with some insight from her book, Find Your Happetite. Sue talked about the journey that lead her into the treatment of eating disorders, information about hormonal regulation, and one of her favorite relaxation techniques. It was a great presentation and the Student Dietetics Association was thankful for her contribution to the program. If you would like to watch a video of her presentation, look for it on SDA’s Facebook page!”

Written by Chloe Richter

The photo on the right is from the SDA presentation. Pictured from Left to Right: Eliza Short, Chloe Richter, Sue Zbornick, Marla Mulchary, Laura Covelli.
The awareness that health is dependent upon habits that we control makes us the first generation in history that, to a large extent, determines its own destiny.

~Jimmy Carter

As part of Viterbo’s coordinated program, Dietetic students give multiple presentations to an array of audiences for different events. Last fall the juniors in the program went to Blessed Sacrament to present five different presentations as part of a health fair expo. Blessed Sacrament is a part of the Aquinas Catholic School System in La Crosse and includes about 175 3rd through 6th grade students. For three consecutive years, Viterbo has been honored to assist in the educational health fair for these young students. This last year’s presentations were focused on physical activity, sodium in the diet, healthy snacks and how to read food labels, fiber in the diet, and superhero remake. All students attended each presentation which lasted about 25-30 minutes.

This amazing opportunity provided not only experience in public speaking, but working with different age groups within the dietetics field. Being able to teach a younger generation coincides with disease prevention and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Education is one of the most powerful tools we can use in the field to elicit healthy changes and life choices.

Viterbo’s dietetic program will continue to seek out these goals in the spring by giving more educational presentations to people of all ages.

The photo above is the poster used to teach the superhero remake presentation.

The photo on the left includes (from left to right): Marla Mulcahy, Ali Burtraw, and Eliza Short.
New Supervised Practice Model for Internship Program

By Alida Herling

As the Viterbo Coordinated Dietetics Program has grown to capacity, so has the need for preceptors and supervised practice sites. In order to accommodate the increased need for quality supervised practice experiences for our students, the dietetic faculty explored the feasibility of interns going to facilities in locations outside of the La Crosse area, but within a 50-60 mile radius. After meeting with preceptors from these areas, we were encouraged by their enthusiasm to move forward with a new supervised practice model for the 2014 class of interns.

The new supervised practice model for the internship program merged two previous supervised practice courses, Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) and Food Service Management, into one semester long course. The intent was to provide a longer, more in-depth experience for the students. The students would spend ¾ of the time practicing MNT and ¼ of the time in Food Service Management. The format was designed to be flexible to assist work scheduling for the interns assigned to the smaller facilities, particularly when census may be lower than normal. Two interns were assigned to separate facilities in one of the following locations: Tomah, Viroqua, Whitehall, and Winona. In August when the interns began the program, they were invited to rate their site preferences and were given the site assignments considering their preferences. At mid-term the interns switched their facility assignment with the other intern at that location. The “switch” enabled the interns to have a broader supervised practice experience during the course.

The preceptors assigned, supervised and evaluated the students’ work. Interns were required to submit weekly progress reports to the course instructor. The report served as an individual reflection and record of their progress of expected course competencies. Each student was also required to complete six case studies of clients with which they worked which represented the following conditions: Cardiovascular disease, Diabetes, Gastrointestinal Disease, Renal Disease, Tube Feeding, and one other condition in which the student had an interest. These were submitted to the preceptor for discussion and evaluation, as well as to the course instructor.

At mid-term, the students evaluated the course and were generally satisfied, however, a few indicated they wanted pediatric nutrition experience, more tube feeding, and more diabetes experience. To address these issues, the interns came to the Viterbo Simulation Lab on two separate occasions, and worked in pairs conducting the Nutrition Care Process for a 3 year old “Sim” child on a tube feeding, and a college student “Sim” female with newly diagnosed Type I Diabetes. The Medical Nutrition Therapy course instructor observed the work, provided feedback, and facilitated group discussion on each scenario.

The summative course evaluation of this supervised practice model by both preceptors and students was favorable. Several of the preceptors mentioned that the longer service by the interns enabled them to get to know the facility better and to perform at a higher level, with more confidence during staff relief in both MNT and Food Service Management.

The interns of the 2014 class were trailblazers for this supervised practice model. They had quality learning experiences and did remarkable work. The Dietetic Program Director and Department faculty are pleased with the course outcomes and plan to continue the model for the 2015 intern class.
It is with great pleasure that I write to the students, staff and alumni of Viterbo University and the readers of Nutrition Notes. I am truly honored to be asked to write for the Alumni Update!

Following graduation, I returned to my hometown of Evansville, WI before making the move to my current home, Madison. I was fortunate to be hired by a company who acted as a preceptor for me, Nutrition and Health Associates, Inc. The primary role of NHA is to staff and function the WIC clinic of Rock County, WI. As a WIC dietitian, I have had the opportunity to impact the lives of women, infants, and children, and I continue to learn more about this population each day. My position at NHA also challenges me to utilize my knowledge and skills in another way. In addition to working with the WIC population, I am also contracted out to two nursing homes in southern Wisconsin and provide nutritional care and expertise for the elderly population. With both of these positions, I find myself providing MNT, counseling, and education in a variety of ways to various populations.

In addition to my work at NHA, I have been very fortunate to be able to forward my career in working with eating disorder patients. This has been a dream of mine since starting my education in dietetics, and I am ecstatic to see this dream become a reality. Last year, I was presented with the opportunity to assist in creating an Intensive Outpatient Program for the treatment of eating disorders in Madison. Edelweiss Behavioral Health officially opened in December 2014, and fortunately, we have hit the ground running! I provide group and individual nutrition education to both IOP patients as well as outpatients, and assist with developing and maintaining meal plans. I am looking forward to where this adventure will take me.

I truly feel that my education from Viterbo University prepared me for my career as a dietitian. The various positions I hold demand that I use a variety of knowledge and skills, and Viterbo did an exceptional job of preparing me to do so. To current and future students, embrace the ability to complete classroom work and gain real world experience all at the same time. I found that practicing what I was learning really helped me to grasp information, concepts and ideas. Learn from your professors, preceptors, and classmates, and keep in touch as you venture away from Viterbo. They will be valuable assets, even though they won’t be right by your side. I can confidently say that as I walked across the stage at graduation, I felt Viterbo University prepared me for my future as a registered dietitian.