

**Auburn University**

**Nutrition, Dietetics and Hospitality Management**

**Strategic Plan**

**Fall 2013 -2018**

## Background

Auburn University's Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Hospitality Management 2013-2018 Strategic Plan is built upon the outcomes of a four month (August – December) strategic planning exercise involving all three College Departments, faculty and staff and certain external constituent groups (advisory board members and students). The plan reflects debate and healthy discussion concerning all stakeholder interests on the future direction of the Department and the essential need for strategic direction. Simply put the plan identifies clearly where the Department wants to be by 2018 and how it is going to get there. Figure 1 presents a clear overview of the key steps undertaken during the planning process.

The plan is also informed by the broader strategic priorities of the College of Human Sciences where it is housed and Auburn University whose seal of approval it carries.

**Figure 1 – Overview of strategic planning process**



## **Academic Program description**

The Department offers a variety of graduate programs as follows:

- A Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Nutrition Science – pre-med option;
- A Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management;
- A Bachelor Science (BS) degree in Nutrition and Dietetics
- A Master of Science (MS) degree in Nutrition (thesis and non-thesis)
- A Master of Science (MS) degree in Nutrition specializing in Hotel and Restaurant Management (thesis and non-thesis);
- A distance Master of Science (MS) degree in Nutrition specializing in Hotel and Restaurant Management;
- A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Nutrition;
- A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Nutrition with a formal option in Hotel and Restaurant Management.

The Department currently has 458 students enrolled in its undergraduate programs of study and 52 students enrolled in its various graduate programs of study. The Department currently has 16 full time faculty, four adjunct faculty and one full-time administrative assistant serving the needs of its students.

## **Vision statement**

The Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Hospitality Management's vision is to be recognized nationally as a leader in the fields of nutrition and hospitality and as a program of choice by students, faculty and employers, and to strive to enhance the quality of people's lives.

## **Mission statement**

Through its curricula in nutrition, dietetics and hospitality management, the Department's mission is to provide high quality education, research, and outreach/extension programs that address contemporary health and social needs both locally and globally. Department faculty strive for excellence, innovation and relevance as they serve the University's tripartite mission.

## **Canon**

The NDHM canon is to graduate students of unparalleled quality for the nutrition, dietetics and hospitality and tourism industries by delivering a unique educational experience.

## Strategic Goals

Following a thorough examination of all aspects of the Department's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats the faculty planning team identified the following four strategic goals as being of paramount importance to its continued growth and long-term success:

1. **Teaching and Learning** – to promote academic excellence through self-empowered lifelong learning among all students seeking a world beating education.
2. **Research and Scholarship** – to promote and reward research and innovation among faculty and students and to encourage the sharing of the results of this research with the wider academic community.
3. **Outreach and Engagement** – to promote open and full discourse and engagement with all those communities interested in benefiting from, while adding value to the Department's learning and scholarship activities.

These goals are in keeping with the College of Human Sciences and Auburn University's current strategic vision.

## **Core College Values**

In pursuit of these strategic goals the Department subscribes to the following core values which serve to give direction to all faculty and staff within the College of Human Sciences:

1. Quality of life is a function of the relationship between people and their environments.
2. Global issues impact the well-being of individuals, families, and communities locally and worldwide.
3. Human diversity generates a dynamic force for progress.
4. Stewardship of the earth's human and natural resources is the responsibility of each generation.
5. Philanthropy is vital to solving social problems and improving quality of life.
6. A genuine commitment to service excellence and lifelong learning is the foundation for organizational and professional success.
7. World-class education is best defined by graduates who are professionally competent, globally aware, and socially engaged.
8. Professional integrity and ethical behavior are best promoted by an integrated set of personal and professional values.
9. Intellectual discovery and the application of knowledge are strengthened through innovative partnerships.
10. Contemporary issues are complex and most effectively addressed by multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches.
11. Next generation technologies are critical to the preparation of students for success in the global, knowledge-based economy.
12. Twenty-first century learning requires that students and faculty reach beyond the classroom to gain practical experiences, an awareness of emerging trends, and a realistic perspective of their place in a rapidly changing world.

## Strategic Goals, Objectives and Action Strategies

Color coded as follows:

- **Red – denotes immediate – 12 months**
- **Blue – denotes medium term – 2-3 years**
- **Black – denotes long term – 3-5 years**

### Strategic Goal 1

*To promote academic excellence among all students seeking a world class nutrition, dietetics and/or hospitality education.*

**Objective 1:** To maintain professional accreditation status and internal accreditation status across all academic programs.

**Action strategies:**

1. To initiate a process of annual assessment review across all academic programs at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels with a view to continuous quality improvement.
  - a. Determine target audiences and methods.
2. To complete and submit all required annual accreditation/assessment reports by due dates.
3. To initiate a practice of utilizing common assessment rubrics for all student and program related learning outcomes.

**Objective 2:** To facilitate an environment of excellence for all graduate students to more fully engage in and benefit from the educational process.

**Action strategies:**

1. To initiate a practice of annual curriculum review based upon student, graduate and industry feedback.
  - o To follow each year's annual assessment round
2. To remain open to new program and or course developments based upon market change and demand.
3. To consider the move towards distance education for all masters level students – particularly non-thesis.
4. To initiate a practice of team interviewing all Masters and Doctoral students and acquiring group consensus on acceptance – coordinated by GPO's.
5. Conducting a formal graduate student orientation at the start of each new academic year – coordinated by GPOS.
6. To support graduate students' applications and nominations to departmental/college/university academic and professional recognitions, scholarships, and research awards – GPOs to initiate.
7. To cap the number of funded graduate students per faculty member and the number of total graduate students per faculty member.
  - o Faculty to determine the appropriate number of students.
8. To work towards a more even split in domestic and international recruitment of graduate students.

9. To encourage all graduate students to select a major professor by the end of their first semester.
10. To initiate a formal annual review of all funded graduate student work – assistantship support would be tied to performance. This review to be coordinated by GPOs in collaboration with faculty in the spring semester. All decisions to be communicated prior to new assistantship offers going out.
11. To provide competitive assistantship support for all doctoral students.
12. When available provide competitive assistantship support for all masters' level students – at a lesser level?
13. To provide excellent teaching, research and professional development opportunities to all graduate students – to ensure better placement upon graduation.
14. To invest additional resources in the recruitment of domestic graduate students – particularly at the PhD level.
15. To undertake a comprehensive review of all graduate curriculum content and standards once every five years – GPOs to initiate.
16. To investigate the development of international study exchange opportunities for all graduate students.
17. To investigate the introduction of more experiential learning opportunities for all graduate students.

**Objective 3:** To facilitate an environment of excellence for all undergraduate students to more fully engage in and benefit from the educational process.

**Action strategies:**

1. To tandem with the normal annual review process to continue to find new ways of adding value to the hands-on student learning experience – assessment and practical experience.
2. To form undergraduate student advisory boards for all programs for the purposes of more fully soliciting student feedback on program performance and issues pertaining to student wellbeing. To be handled by all undergraduate coordinators.
3. To investigate the possibility of introducing more industry relevant technology packages to the classroom – program and course specific.
4. To mandate an annual orientation process for all freshman and transfer students to update them on curriculum issues, plans of study and potential problems with progress – UGPOs.
5. Where relevant to introduce a more formal internship orientation for all interning students on a semester to semester basis – to be handled by the internship coordinators.
6. To encourage all students to engage in active and relevant employment with a view to improving their employment resumes and general employability upon graduating.
7. To seek out and aggressively promote employment and internship opportunities for all students.
8. To provide industry with a forum to engage with students through normal classroom delivery with a view to identifying employment prospects and enhancing curriculum delivery.



9. In the interests of timely graduation to initiate a mandatory system of advisory meetings – one per year per student and to systematically place a hold on each student's enrolment until these meetings have been completed.
10. To provide additional study abroad opportunities for all students – if possible to increase the number of students engaging in international educational experiences by 50% over the next five years.
11. To consider mandating an international experience for all HRMT students and to investigate the possibility of providing limited funding to offset the costs of doing so.
12. To continue to work the College of Human Sciences and University Central to invest in the development of state of the art teaching facilities relevant to each programmatic area.
  - Enhanced teaching technologies
  - Culinary labs
  - Wet labs
  - Large group teaching rooms
  - Small group teaching rooms.
13. To consider the move to complete or partial distance education for all undergraduate curriculum.
14. To investigate new course and program development over time – for example concentrations in tourism, culinary, brewing and wine business in the hospitality arena and sports and child nutrition in the nutrition area.
15. To attract the necessary external/internal funding to develop and rehouse the hospitality program in a state of the art facility permitting the development and delivery of each of the listed concentrations above.

**Objective 5:** To facilitate an environment of excellence for all NDHM faculty to deliver high levels of productivity

**Action strategies:**

1. To continue to follow a merit based pay raise formulae based upon annual productivity.
2. To continue to conduct annual performance review meetings in light of current promotion and tenure standards.
3. To recognize excellent teaching and research through annual work assignment relief.
4. To promote an environment of flexibility with respect to faculty work assignment.
5. To continue to promote the idea of annual peer and external (BIGGIO Center) teaching reviews.
6. To continue to allocate available graduate student assistantships fairly amongst all faculty.
7. To attract the necessary external funding to provide support for faculty to attend educational and professional workshops and meetings.
8. To work closely with our respective advisory boards on identifying industry-related projects and opportunities for faculty internships.
9. To attract the necessary funding to support at least one faculty summer internship per year on a rotational basis.
10. To initiate an annual strategic retreat for all faculty to address teaching, learning, scholarship and service oriented matters.

**Objective 6:** To engage more fully in the active recruitment of students to all programs at all levels.

**Action strategies:**

1. To continue to work with the College of Human Sciences in hosting a professional career day for High School students and teachers interested in family and consumer sciences.
2. To establish a closer working relationship with in-state and out of state feeder high schools currently delivering family and consumer science curriculum - UGPOs.
  - When possible to visit these schools with a view to introducing our programs of study to interested students.
3. To aggressively promote international student growth at both the undergraduate and graduate program levels.
4. To consult regularly with the AU office of International Education to seek out additional opportunities for international recruitment.
5. To meet on a regular basis with members of international student organizations on the AU campus to promote our programs and employment opportunities pertaining to them.
6. To develop and fund a two day professional development workshop for high school educators and teachers in our respective fields.
7. To identify critical annual professional meetings and provide funding for GPOs to attend for recruitment purposes – based upon funding and available assistantships.
8. To promote the idea of student funded international education over time – competition based.
9. To encourage and lend support to the enrolment of students from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds through targeted school recruitment.

## **Strategic Goal 2 – Research and Scholarship**

*To promote and reward research and innovation among faculty and students and to encourage the sharing of the results of this research with the wider academic community.*

**Objective 1:** To develop a scholarly research culture among all graduate students within the department and its respective programs of study.

### **Action strategies:**

1. To develop a comprehensive orientation program detailing expectations, standards, key deadlines and the graduate research process for all graduate students which must be completed over the first five weeks of study at Auburn.
2. To encourage all graduate students to actively engage in faculty as well as their own research projects over the course of their time at Auburn.
3. To strongly encourage faculty attendance at all student seminar presentations semester to semester.
4. To continue to seek out and promote graduate assistantships to potential graduate students.
5. To attract and offer limited support for all graduate students attending research meetings for the purposes of sharing their research findings.
6. To increase the number of graduate student enrolments at all levels spanning masters through to PhD in line with faculty capacity to supervise. Aggressively seeking out potential Ph.D candidates from schools offering only Masters level courses of study.
7. To continuously investigate new ways of attracting external funding to support increased numbers of graduate assistantships and the amount offered in relation to these assistantships.
8. To investigate the potential of hosting one major national conference in both discipline areas (HRMT/NTRI) over the next five years.

**Objective 2:** To increase enrolment in all graduate programs to support increased research and scholarship activity.

### **Action strategies:**

1. To continue to investigate the feasibility of new graduate programs. For example:
  - a. Brewing science – Master Brewing
  - b. Sports nutrition
  - c. ISPP
  - d. Child Nutrition
2. To more fully promote all three graduate programs of study in the international marketplace.
3. To investigate the feasibility of a new suite of executive oriented graduate programs targeted at industry professionals.
4. To establish at least one international strategic partnership in graduate program delivery across both program emphases.

**Objective 3:** To develop a scholarly research culture among faculty within the department.

**Action strategies:**

1. To initiate a monthly faculty research forum in the respective discipline areas enabling colleagues to remain up to date with each other's areas of scholarly activity.
2. To encourage an appropriate supervisory match between graduate student interest and shared faculty interest in the students area of research interest.
3. To develop and seek support for an annual visiting "Research Scholar in Residence" program to help mentor faculty and provide publicity to the department's research efforts.
4. To encourage faculty to continue to engage in the publication and presentation of their research and when possible fund their attendance at academic meetings.
5. To encourage faculty to consider the current promotion and tenure publication guidelines as minimal standards when it comes to annual productivity in the research area.
6. To investigate the potential of hosting one major national research conference in both discipline areas (HRMT/NTRI) over the next five years.

**Objective 4:** Increase extramural research funding and research output.

**Action strategies:**

1. To encourage a culture of funded research amongst faculty and graduate students.
2. To facilitate a means of keeping active research faculty informed about external research opportunities.
3. To encourage faculty to apply to all appropriate internal funding mechanisms as and when announced by the Office of the Vice President for Research.
4. To have faculty link these efforts more fully to externally funded research activity and grants.
5. To increase existing extramural funding by 300% over the next three years.
6. To encourage faculty to engage in greater internal and external collaborative research efforts given the current competitive nature of all external grant bodies.

**Objective 5:** To facilitate an environment of excellence for faculty to deliver high levels of research productivity

**Action strategies:**

1. To encourage faculty and students to take full advantage of the wide variety of research training courses / seminars offered by the Office of the Vice President for Research.
2. To establish a research mentoring scheme to assist junior faculty in their research development.
3. To encourage faculty to play a full and active role in their respective professional research associations whether nationally or internationally focused.
4. To encourage faculty to engage in editorial review activities for both professional meetings and/or journals.
5. Encourage more collaboration among faculty on research projects (e.g., share research news and collaboration opportunities with faculty during routine departmental meetings).



### **Strategic Goal 3 – Outreach and Engagement**

*To promote open and full discourse and engagement with all those communities interested in benefiting from, while adding value to the Department's learning and scholarship activities.*

**Objective 1:** To encourage faculty and students to actively engage in community and state wide outreach.

#### **Action strategies:**

1. To identify local municipal and state wide boards of strategic relevance to the Department's strategic objectives and encourage faculty membership of these boards – which boards and how to fund attendance.
2. To encourage students to volunteer to relevant community groups and for charitable work within the local community – through clubs and associations!
3. To offer local industry professionals the opportunity to engage more fully in classroom based presentations and discussions – current teaching or research oriented projects.
4. To encourage faculty to work together to develop projects or real hands on benefit to local and/or regional communities in need.

**Objective 2:** To encourage faculty to engage and participate fully in service to Auburn University

#### **Action strategies:**

1. To encourage all faculty to apply for membership to the various university committees presenting membership and service opportunities - to what end, which and how many?
2. To encourage faculty to report back to the Program on a regular basis on the work of these committees and how they can be leveraged to the advantage of the department?
3. To encourage faculty to seek out any opportunity they are presented with to promote the Department in a positive light.

**Objective 3:** To help bring education to those previously disenfranchised due to poverty, location and/or time constraints imposed by working and/or family life.

#### **Action strategies:**

1. To establish stronger relationships with the two year college network to more fully investigate the idea of undergraduate program delivery on a state wide basis.
2. To develop and promote a range of executive type graduate programs (Certificate and Diploma oriented) that would prove appealing to working professionals interested in a graduated approach to non-research oriented graduate education.
3. To redevelop the delivery mechanism of the existing distance Masters program in HRMT to make it much more accessible to a wider graduate student audience.
4. To develop a distance education option for the Masters degree in Nutrition thereby making it acceptable to the public at large.
5. To investigate the development and delivery of a series of community oriented revenue generating programs in the areas of health and wellness, culinary, customer service, beverage appreciation etc.

**Objective 4:** To help develop and promote faculty and student skills having the potential to lead to extramural funding opportunities.

**Action strategies:**

1. To actively promote faculty and student talent wherever possible to the Department's direct and indirect constituent groups.
2. To develop and promote short educational courses that might prove market responsive in throughout the local and/or regional area – Healthy Tigers – see above!
3. To develop a series of summer academies targeted at both in- and out-of-state high school educators working in the consumer and family sciences arena.

**Objective 5:** To develop and initiate a more aggressive and targeted marketing effort of all academic programs and their activities locally, nationally and internationally.

**Actions Strategies:**

1. To work on the development of a more formal and effective marketing and promotion plan with both national and international reach – how and by whom?
2. To redesign and continuously update the Department's home page and program specific information – what and how often?
3. To investigate the hiring of a full or part-time web master to assist in this process of managing the homepage on a weekly basis.
4. To develop annual newsletters for all programs in conjunction with the student body that can be hot-linked to the Department's home page and readily accessible to Alum, current and prospective students.
5. To develop and host an in-state high school open day for students identified by their faculty as interested in pursuing a careers in consumer and family sciences.

**Objective 6:** To more fully engage Alumni in the Department's activities and continued development.

**Action strategies:**

1. To develop a more thorough Alumni database for the purposes of sharing news related information.
2. To invite Alumni to get more involved and visit with faculty and students on a regular basis to share about the career development, challenges and success stories.
3. To more aggressively encourage Alumni giving to the Program.
4. To work more closely with the Development Office to encourage giving to the Department based upon real need – what are they?
5. To more aggressively seek out employment opportunities with Alumni for current and graduating students.
6. To promote the concept of regional Alumni Association Chapters.