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Foundation

Class of 2023

Commission on Dietetic Registration
Doctoral Scholarship Recipients





Lellieth Latchman, MS, RD, CDCES

University of Bridgeport

Lellieth Latchman, MS, RD, CDCES, is a native of Jamaica, West Indies, and migrated to the US over 27 years ago after being offered a volleyball scholarship to attend Southern Connecticut State University. She is a first-generation college graduate and the first doctoral candidate in her bloodline. Lellieth attended the University of New Haven, where she attained an undergraduate degree in nutrition and dietetics. She attained an Masters of Science degree in Diabetes Management and Education from Teachers College Columbia University. Lellieth is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, and certified through the CDC as a DPP Lifestyle Coach. Lellieth currently works as a Diabetes Program Coordinator at Nuvance Health Norwalk Hospital and has a Nutrition Consultation private practice in Norwalk, CT. Lellieth is passionate about helping people learn about healthy eating and improving quality of life. She also serves as the director of health and wellness at her church. Her professional aspiration is to continue serving her community. Her greatest goal is to obtain a doctoral degree in health and wellness so that she can assist those who are less fortunate and impart the knowledge and skills to those who have a passion for nutrition in the academic space.

Jamie Zeldman, MS, RD, CHES®

University of Florida

Jamie Zeldman, MS, RD, CHES®, is a current third-year graduate student and Graduate Research Assistant pursuing her doctoral degree in the College of Health and Human Performance, Department of Health Education and Behavior at the University of Florida (UF). Jamie completed her dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Food Science and Human Nutrition and Applied Physiology and Kinesiology and a Master of Science degree and Dietetic Internship from UF. Jamie is pursuing her Ph.D. in the Nutrition Education and Behavioral Science Lab at UF. She is passionate about educating and promoting a healthy lifestyle while maintaining a healthy relationship with food. Her current research focuses on nutrition education, early childhood, food security, and obesity prevention in the community. To complement her Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential, Jamie also became a Certified Health Education Specialist®. She is keeping an open mind as far as future career goals post-graduation, but aspires to pursue a career that she is passionate about that incorporates research, teaching, and mentoring of her own. In her spare time, Jamie enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, going to the beach, hiking, attending country music concerts, and cuddling with her cat named Clover.



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Cindy Kanarek Culver, MS, RDN, LD
Anderson University

Cindy Kanarek Culver, MS, RDN, LD, has been a registered and licensed dietitian for 25 years. Cindy is the current Director of School Nutrition for Marietta City Schools (GA) and has 23 years of experience in school nutrition. She is passionate about ensuring that all students have access to nutritious breakfasts and lunches at school. Cindy is an active member of the local, state, and national Academy associations, where she has held various elected positions at all levels. She is the current SNS DPG IDEA Chair and aspires to increase the awareness of equity and inclusion for students who are served by school nutrition programs throughout the nation. Cindy is also a member of the Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptors, who recently recognized as a Preceptor of the Year, and the Georgia School Nutrition Association, of which she is the immediate past Nutrition Education Chair. Cindy completed her Master of Science at the University of Alabama, her Bachelor of Family and Consumer Sciences in Dietetics and Institutional Management at the University of Georgia, and her dietetic internship at the University of Northern Colorado. She is a current Ph.D. Organizational Leadership candidate at Anderson University and plans to defend in Spring 2024.

Kate Killion, MPH, RDN
University of Connecticut

Kate Killion, MPH, RDN, is a passionate registered dietitian with a mission to make the world a healthier place. She graduated as valedictorian from Boston University in 2018 and earned a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Massachusetts Lowell in 2021. Kate now works for the University of Connecticut Healthy Family SNAP-Ed program while completing a PhD in Health Promotion Sciences. In her doctorate program, Kate studies multi-level drivers of diet quality among at-risk youth and families. In the future, she hopes to create individual and environmental changes that lead to improved diet quality and lower disease risk in future generations. Her hope is to inspire future dietitians to read and conduct research and fight for equitable public health policies.



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Zhijun Chen, EdM, RD
Columbia University



Zhijun Chen, EdM, RD, has nutrition and psychology expertise. She holds a master's degree in human development and psychology from Harvard Graduate School of Education and a dual major undergraduate degree in Clinical Nutrition and Psychology from the University of California, Davis. Chen completed her dietetic internship at Cornell University before becoming a registered dietitian. Her past research encompasses infant cognitive development, nutrition, and microbiome studies. Currently, Zhijun is pursuing a Ph.D. in Behavioral Nutrition at Columbia University, driven by the goal of translating research into actionable practices for promoting healthy lifestyles and environmentally friendly diets. Her future focus involves promoting nutrition education and research in China, leveraging her skills to make a positive impact in the field.

Erika R. Anna, MS, RDN, CD
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Erika R. Anna, MS, RDN, CD, is a Teaching Faculty member within the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her previous experience includes working as a Culinary Education Specialist with the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics. Erika's teaching and outreach responsibilities focus on the provision of culturally responsive food and nutrition care as a public health and community nutritionist with Family Health La Clinica's Mobile Migrant Health Services. Erika teaches classes within the Department of Nutritional Sciences and precepts supervised experiential learning opportunities for Dietetic Interns within the public health domain. Erika aims to earn a doctoral degree to build on her foundational knowledge in intermediary metabolism and nutrition-related diseases with the goal of strengthening her skills as a leader, researcher, policy advocate, educator, and public health/community nutritionist.



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**Michelle Brenseke, MS, RDN, CSOWM,
CDN, CDCES, BC-ADM, CLC**
Rutgers University

Michelle Brenseke, MS, RDN, CSOWM, CDN, CDCES, BC-ADM, CLC, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University and a Master of Science from Hunter College. She completed her Dietetic Internship through Brooklyn College. She has been working in outpatient dietetics for seven and a half years and is a certified specialist in obesity and weight management, a certified diabetes care and education specialist, a certified lactation counselor, and is board-certified in advanced diabetes management. Michelle gained extensive experience in providing nutrition education and counseling to patients of all ages, experiencing different stages of life and enduring various acute and chronic conditions. She is working as a certified diabetes educator at Northwell Health and is pursuing a Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition through Rutgers University. After completing the Doctor of Clinical Nutrition program, she plans to earn the advanced practitioner credential. Her primary career goal is to become the director of a nutrition department that includes an RDN preceptorship. Brenseke would also like to conduct applied research within a clinical setting and is considering pursuing college-level teaching at least part-time.

Kay Vavrina, MPA, RD, LD
Rutgers University

Kay Vavrina, MPA, RD, LD, has been a registered dietitian for over 23 years, working with children with cystic fibrosis for the past twelve years. Kay received her undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin, a Master of Public Administration from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, NY, and is currently working on a Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition at Rutgers University. In the past, Kay has been a lecturer at the University of Texas at San Antonio, as well as a Clinical Nutrition Manager at several facilities in New York, Florida, and Texas. Currently, she is actively involved in several boards and committees supporting cystic fibrosis clinicians, including roles on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Dietitian/Social Work Consortium Board North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference Planning Committee. Vavrina aspires to expand the role of dietitians in medicine, create pathways for registered dietitians to become advanced practice providers, and lead as primary investigators in clinical studies.



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Genny R. Komar, MS, RD, LD, CC
Concordia University of Chicago

Genny R. Komar, MS, RD, LD, CC, is a professional chef and Registered dietitian who sees how food has a direct connection to nutrition and health. Genny's focus is in Culinary Nutrition and she specializes in sports and performance nutrition. Komar is currently pursuing a PhD in Health & Human Performance, with a concentration on Sports Nutrition, at Concordia University of Chicago. With the aid of the Commission on Dietetic Registration Doctoral Scholarship, Komar states that she will be able to focus on delving deeper into sports and nutrition and how to create dynamic self-efficacy in athletes.

Trisha Sterringer, MS, RD
Virginia Tech

Trisha Sterringer, MS, RD, is a third-year doctoral student in the Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism Laboratory at Virginia Tech in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise. Her research is focused on energy availability and bone health in active individuals. Trisha completed her bachelor's in Sports Dietetics at the University of Cincinnati and her master's and dietetic internship in Public Health Nutrition at Case Western Reserve University. Before starting her doctorate, she was the Director of Nutrition Services for a worksite wellness company. Currently, Trisha is a faculty advisor for the Be Well Solutions dietetic internship program and the Regional Director for the Southwest Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. As a future research dietitian, she aims to help contribute to evidence-based practice and provide mentorship for the next generation of nutrition professionals.



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