



Visioning Report 2017: A Preferred Path Forward for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession



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THE COUNCIL ON FUTURE Practice (CFP) was created as a permanent organized body within the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (Academy) responsible for formalizing an ongoing visioning process to define future nutrition and dietetics practice at all levels, and to identify the educational and credentialing needs required for future practitioners and their development.

The CFP is an Academy committee that collaborates with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR), and the Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors to project future practice needs for the profession of nutrition and dietetics. Future practice, accreditation, credentialing, and education represent the four critical organizational units and segments necessary to produce new practitioners and assist

experienced practitioners in advancing their careers.

One of the functions of the CFP is to ensure the viability and relevance of the profession of nutrition and dietetics by engaging in a visioning process to identify the preferred future of the profession. The Council developed a standardized process and guidelines for visioning and futures thinking in 2014, based on a workshop conducted for members of the CFP by futurist Marsha Rhea from Signature i, LLC.¹ The current visioning process focuses on a 3-year program of work (2014-2017) and began with the use of a scanning framework comprising 16 categories reflective of the society's and the profession's future needs and changes.

METHODOLOGY

In July of 2014, the CFP utilized the scanning framework to identify and prioritize the following five categories for the 2014-2017 visioning cycle (see Figure 1):

- Translating Evidence-Based Research into Practice and Policy;
- Food and Nutrition Systems and Sustainability;
- Workforce Projections;
- Education/Professional Development; and
- Economics/Market Forces.

A Visioning Process Workgroup of the CFP was appointed in 2014 to lead the CFP's efforts in the Visioning Process. The seven-member Workgroup included both current and past members of the Council. The Workgroup identified a preliminary list of change drivers and trends related to the five

prioritized scanning framework categories, based on CDR's Workforce Demand Study, *Future Changes Driving Dietetics Workforce Supply and Demand: Future Scan 2012-2022*² and ACEND's *Expanded Standards Committee Background Report*.³ Other Academy units conducting their own visioning also shared their reference lists with the Workgroup, including the Foundation's Future of Food Initiative⁴ and ACEND's *Rationale for Future Education Preparation of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners*.³ These lists were reviewed for pertinent references. Also, a systematic review of resources published since 2010 was conducted by the Academy's Knowledge Center based on the five priority categories. Five databases, including Science Direct, Taylor, Cochrane, Ovid, and Web of Science, were searched using general key words and phrases (eg, *wellness* and *health promotion* and *registered dietitians*; *employment trends* and *registered dietitians*; *trends in population health and agriculture* and *registered dietitians*) to identify references pertaining to the five prioritized scanning framework categories. Additional references were identified by reviewing the reference lists of pertinent articles and resources resulting from the systematic review. Finally, the Workgroup reviewed resources available through the World Future Society and selected several references related to the priority categories for review. All of these combined search strategies resulted in a total of 357 references, both internal and external, to the profession of nutrition and dietetics. References identified as pertinent to the five prioritized scanning framework categories by the Visioning Process

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Workgroup were reviewed and analyzed by Workgroup members and analysts from the Academy's Evidence Analysis Library. Reviewers identified whether each reference supported any of the preliminary change drivers and trends and noted any new change drivers and trends related to the five priority categories not previously identified. Of the 357 references reviewed, 218 references were used in the development of the *Change Drivers and Trends Driving the Profession: A Prelude to the Visioning Report 2017*⁵ and the recommendations for the Visioning Report 2017.

SURVEY #1: PRIORITY SCANNING FRAMEWORK CATEGORIES AND TRENDS SURVEY OF CFP THINK TANK MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ACADEMY ALLIANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Based on the CFP's standardized process and guidelines for visioning and futures thinking, the Workgroup surveyed members of the CFP's think tank (n=49) and individuals representing external Academy alliance organizations (n=15) in February 2015 to seek their input on priority categories and trends. Individuals identified the top 5 categories from the 16 scanning framework categories and related trends they believed would have the most impact on the future of the nutrition and dietetics profession in 10 to 15 years. A total of 44 responses were received (69% response rate). The results from this survey provided support and helped validate the five categories previously identified as priorities by the CFP.

According to the World Future Society,⁶ the most common techniques used in futuring include historical analysis, scanning for trends, trend analysis, brainstorming, visioning, and consulting others. Furthermore, the World Future Society states that most futurist methods strive for objectivity but rely heavily on subjective human judgment. As a result of the Workgroup's literature review, input from CFP think tank members and individuals representing external Academy alliance organizations, and the Workgroup's analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of all sources of information, as well as its collective judgment, 10

priority change drivers and their associated trends were identified. Because there is considerable overlap among many of the categories in the scanning framework, several of the change drivers and trends also overlap and interact, for example, technology is a separate change driver, but it also impacts the genomics and simulations change drivers.

SURVEY #2: CHANGE DRIVERS AND TRENDS SURVEY

A document including the 10 priority change drivers, their associated trends, rationale, and implications, along with a glossary and references, was released to Academy members, CDR-credentialed dietetics practitioners, CFP think tank members, and Academy external organization liaisons on November 12, 2015. An electronic Change Drivers and Trends Survey asking participants to rate each priority change driver and trend on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) and to select their top five change drivers (ranking) was conducted through December 17, 2015. Participants were also given an opportunity to submit written comments related to the priority change drivers either individually or as a representative of an Academy organizational unit.

Data on the survey distribution and response rate and information on survey respondents are provided in [Tables 1](#) and [2](#), respectively; 3.7% of those who received and opened the e-mail communication completed the survey (n=1,786). Eighty-five percent of those who completed the survey were Academy members (n=1,524). Demographic characteristics of the respondents to the Change Drivers and Trends survey were similar to those in the Academy's 2015 Compensation and Benefits Survey,⁷ except there were more educators and doctoral degree respondents in the current survey.

Based on the scale from 1 to 4, mean±standard deviation scores for the 10 priority change drivers ranged from a high of 3.68 ± 0.53 (strongly agree) for Food Becomes Medicine in the Continuum of Health to 2.94 ± 0.77 (agree) for Population Health and Health Promotion Become Priorities. Triangulation between two separate data points, the ratings and rankings, was used to further examine the data.

Results are shown in [Table 3](#). Based on consistency among ratings and rankings, the top-tier change drivers that emerged included Food Becomes Medicine in the Continuum of Health, Aging Population Dramatically Impacts Society, and Accountability and Outcomes Documentation Become the Norm. However, change drivers in the middle and bottom tiers were also perceived as important by respondents. The lowest mean rating for any change driver approached 3 (agree) and 8 of the 10 change drivers were selected as one of the top 5 change drivers by at least 40% of the respondents. Data were also examined based on age and years in practice and there was only one major difference across these subgroups. Consumer Awareness of Food Choice Ramifications Increases was one of the most frequent change drivers ranked in the top 5 among those with <9 years of dietetics experience (64.7%) and significantly less frequent among those with 10 to 29 years and >30 years of experience (55.2% and 49.7%, respectively; $P<0.001$).

Twelve pages of typewritten comments were submitted in response to the Change Drivers and Trends Survey by individuals and Academy organizational groups; these comments were reviewed by the CFP Workgroup. The Workgroup determined that most of the comments submitted were addressed in the change driver document and utilized these comments when drafting the recommendations for the Visioning Report.

Based on results from the Change Drivers and Trends Survey, input from the CFP, and a thorough review of current Academy organizational unit initiatives, the CFP Visioning Process Workgroup considered implications of all 10 change drivers, and in early 2016 began drafting recommendations for the Visioning Report.

SURVEY #3: SURVEY OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The CFP Visioning Process Workgroup initially drafted 31 potential recommendations and five statements of support of Academy ongoing initiatives. The statements of support were developed to avoid duplication of current Academy initiatives. All Academy organizational units, CFP think tank members, and Academy external

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