

**NUTRITION SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY Medical
Student Scholars Program (MSSP) University of Cincinnati
College of Medicine**

Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program Goal

The Nutrition Medical Students Scholars Program provides opportunities for medical students to explore the role and impact of nutrition on growth, development, and various disease processes. A preceptor-supervised experience allows students to pursue nutrition-related clinical and research experiences. Participation in various activities (e.g. rounds, journal clubs) encourages an interdisciplinary approach in research, clinical, and community settings.

Background

Nutrition is the exemplary integrative topic in medical education. It encompasses all areas of study including physiology, biochemistry, anatomy, psychology, and sociology. Nutrition also transcends all areas of medical practice such as surgery, pediatrics, psychology, family practice, internal medicine, and sports medicine.

Recent attention has been given to the importance of the role of nutrition in medical education. The integration of nutrition into the curricula of medical schools has increased nationwide in an effort to prepare practitioners who effectively incorporate nutrition assessment and medical nutrition therapy into comprehensive treatment plans.

The breadth of clinical and research experiences associated with the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine allows for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between nutrition and health. The Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program provides the opportunity for interested and motivated medical students to investigate the role and impact of nutrition in the prevention and treatment of disease.

Specific Elements of the Program

Faculty Mentoring

Realizing that one of the greatest resources of the University is its professionals, the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program uses this resource to facilitate a working relationship between the medical student scholar and a mentor. A physician is paired with each student based on a mutual interest in a specific area of nutrition practice or research. By cultivating a close working relationship between a medical student and a mentor, the student is able to explore a chosen area of nutrition in depth.

The student scholar is expected to meet on a regular basis with his or her mentor. In the first year, meetings focus on the development of a research topic and protocol to be conducted during the summer between the student's first and second year of medical school. Meetings in the second year focus on the presentation of that research in various ways such as journal club presentations, poster sessions or publications. In the second, third, and fourth year meetings, the role of nutrition in patient care is emphasized.

Faculty Coordinator

Dr. Nommsen-Rivers is the Nutrition Coordinator in the College of Medicine and serves as the faculty coordinator of the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program. A task force that included faculty in the College of Medicine and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center with expertise in nutrition were instrumental in establishing the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program. The committee's mission was to encourage the integration of nutrition throughout the medical school curriculum in congruence with objectives set forth by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in *The Nutrition Curriculum Guide for Training Physicians*.

Enrollment

Interested and motivated medical students may apply for consideration as a scholar in the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program early in their first year of medical school. Enrollment is limited to eight students per year to facilitate mentor-student cooperation and a successful program.

Candidates are selected for the program based on a resume and a personal statement reflecting their background and specific interest in nutrition. Students with diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply because their varied experiences enrich the activities of the program.

Program Content

The Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program builds on the principles of basic science and clinical medicine related to nutrition. Various activities, speakers, and journal clubs are offered to enhance nutrition-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is expected that student scholars will pursue additional educational and clinical activities related to nutrition.

Required Activities and Experiences

YEAR ONE:

- ✓ Monthly meetings with faculty mentor
- ✓ Monthly attendance at rounds/seminars/conferences or shadowing experience with faculty mentor or other health professional (e.g. physician or dietitian)
- ✓ Attendance at Nutrition Scholars journal clubs and required facilitation of at least one journal club meeting during Year 01 or 02 (i.e. present an article and facilitate discussion)

SUMMER:

- ✓ Participation in a nutrition-focused basic, clinical, or community research project
 - Students are encouraged to apply for the Medical Student Summer Research Program (MSSRP) for funding of summer research. Research funds also may be available in the context of the ongoing research of the mentor. No independent research funds are available from the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program for summer research.
- ✓ Presentation of the summer project at a meeting of the scholars and faculty mentors
 - Students are encouraged to present their research/projects at local, regional, and national meetings and to publish, as appropriate.

YEAR TWO:

- ✓ Monthly meetings with faculty mentor
- ✓ Monthly attendance at rounds/seminars/conferences or shadowing experience with faculty mentor or other health professional (e.g. physician or dietitian)
- ✓ Attendance at Nutrition Scholars journal clubs and facilitation of journal club

meetings

YEAR THREE:

- ✓ Quarterly meetings with faculty mentor
- ✓ Attendance at one nutrition-focused activity on each rotation
 - May include nutrition-related journal clubs, grand rounds, conferences, or visits to outpatient/ community clinics
- ✓ Attendance at Nutrition Scholars journal clubs

YEAR FOUR:

- ✓ Quarterly meetings with faculty mentor
- ✓ Quarterly attendance at nutrition-related journal clubs, grand rounds, conferences, or visits to outpatient/community clinics
- ✓ Attendance at Nutrition Scholars journal clubs
- ✓ Completion of the two-week *Clinical Nutrition* elective

EVALUATION/MONITORING:

- ✓ Students' active participation in journal clubs is assessed by the program coordinator.
- ✓ Students present their summer projects at a meeting of medical student scholars. Students are encouraged to present their research projects at local, regional, and national meetings and to publish, as appropriate.
- ✓ Students are responsible for documenting their experiences throughout the 4-year program. Documentation includes entries of interactions with the faculty mentor, as well as relevant nutrition-related activities. This documentation is reviewed periodically by the faculty mentor and/or MSSP coordinator.

GRADUATION:

- ✓ Students in the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program receive special recognition during the graduation ceremony.
- ✓ Participation in the Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program is noted and a detailed comment from the faculty mentor may be included in the Dean's letter as students apply for post-graduate training programs.

Evaluation and Feedback

The Nutrition Medical Student Scholars Program actively encourages student scholars to offer feedback and suggestions for the ongoing development and refinement of the program.

Dr. Nommsen-Rivers meets with the scholars at the beginning of the program and then on an as-needed basis. The faculty mentor meets with the scholar on a regular basis and an open dialogue is encouraged between the student, the mentor and Dr. Nommsen-Rivers regarding any program-related issues. Near the end of the fourth year, an exit interview is conducted to obtain feedback and suggestions related to the program.

Application Process

A CV and personal statement must be submitted.

To apply: click the following link to MedOneStop www.medonestop.uc.edu . Once logged in, the application can be found under the **Extracurricular** tab named Medical Student Scholars Program (MSSP).