

## Personal Statement

My personal mission is to make the world a better place by improving individual lives. Nutrition, a practical application of decades of scientific research, is the perfect avenue to achieve this goal. I chose the field of dietetics because dietitians are an asset in every aspect of human medicine. Most importantly, they mitigate disease without the use of drugs. My passion is in preventative medicine that places the power in the hands of the patient, utilizing the practitioner as a catalyst for change. The foundation for this career was set very early in my life. A combination of my academics and my experience have shaped me into a well-qualified candidate to become a dietetics professional. Working at the Willow Clinic, as a teen group facilitator, and an undergraduate research assistant with the Foods for Health Institute have empowered my path in dietetics.

Immigration changed the trajectory of my life. My early history was fraught with medical procedures due to a congenital leg length discrepancy. After thirteen surgeries, a bone infection, and a broken leg, my family left Poland determined to improve my outcome. I'm so grateful for the excellent health care available to me in the United States. Many talented medical professionals are the reason I live a normal life today. As a child, I grew up fast and knew more about medicine than most adults. This is why I aspired towards a career in health care. My past medical history shaped my interest in holistic health, as the mind-body connection is often overlooked in allopathic medicine.

My interest in whole foods nutrition and natural medicine emerged from my Polish origins. My traditional diet was never dominated by processed or packaged foods. At lunch in grade school, I contrasted my apple to a classmate's fruit roll up and wondered "Why am I different?" Today, I thank my mother for encouraging healthy food. In Poland, a general knowledge of the utility of natural treatments is common, and herbs are often used for everyday ailments. I embrace unique nutrition emphasis that aligns with my upbringing, current values, and future goals.

It has taken me six years to complete my undergraduate education. Due to the impacted California Community College system, I was unable to take required courses on time. Additionally, I dropped one semester due to a car accident. I failed to withdraw from anthropology and the blemish remains on my record. From this, I learned the importance of honoring my commitments. The extra time spent in school allowed me to mature into a self-motivated, adult learner with clear goals, who works well in teams and independently. My investment in my academics has created a tendency towards perfectionism. I always strive to be the best, yet perfection is the enemy of good. My solution to improve this weakness has been to start projects early and invite constructive criticism.

My genuine curiosity and insatiable thirst for knowledge make me an academically adept student. My critical thinking skills have been honed by UC Davis' scientifically rigorous program. Though a limited number of hospital-based internships are available to students in the program, I took the initiative to intern at the Willow Clinic to gain clinical experience. I look forward to highlighting the impacts of the nutrition counseling program at several local, student-run clinics by presenting a poster at UC Davis Health System's Quality Improvement Symposium. One current project I am working on is creating a resource map for improving food access for the homeless. Accepting new opportunities resulting from this internship, I instructed several nutrition groups at Communities Against Sexual Harm. In the future, I will be a guest lecturer for a nutrition group at the Human Resource Center, a mental health clinic. I am driven to support many people in

implementing lifestyle changes, regardless of income. Working closely with patients who have hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and diabetes has given me a strong desire to work in wellness promotion and disease prevention. I believe successful primary intervention can have the greatest impact on health outcomes.

Facilitating a support group for teenagers with the help of a Marriage and Family Therapist, allowed me to appreciate the mind-body connection and develop counselling skills early in my career. Helping teens build self-efficacy was deeply fulfilling. My favorite topics included meditation for stress management, compassionate communication, and emotional expression through writing and art. I realized my life's mission of making the world a better place by improving individual lives through this experience.

Interning with The Foods For Health Institute (FFHI) enabled me to take part in many aspects of conducting human research trials. I excelled in a wide range of skill building experiences due to my patience, attention to detail, and commitment. A defining moment during this internship was assisting with The Phenotyping Metabolic Health Conference. The idea of personalizing nutrition, the overarching mission of FFHI and the cornerstone of the conference, sparked my interest for the future. Basing diet recommendations on genetics is an exciting field. I plan to incorporate nutrigenomics into my future practice.

Upon earning my RD credentials, my short term goal is to gain work experience as an entry-level, clinical dietitian. After real world exposure, I will obtain advanced degrees including a master's and eventually a doctorate. I look forward to contributing to scientific research, becoming a published author, and teaching while advancing my education. For many years, my long term goal has been to own integrative health care practice that embodies a whole-person approach to wellness. I am excited about working as part of a team of holistic health care professionals offering the best possible care that encompasses both mind and body. I think health disparities based on socioeconomic status is tragic. I am committed to bridging the gap by making wellness support services available to a wide population.

I am pursuing my goal in holistic health, which has been shaped by my past experiences with conventional medicine. I have earned experience in all aspects of dietetics including clinical, community, food service management, and research. I have worked with people from many demographics including children, seniors, homeless, healthy, and metabolically unwell patients. One of my greatest strengths is dedication. My desire to become the best dietetic professional possible is exemplified by seeking varied experiences including working at a free medical clinic, a teen support group, and in university research. My experiences have allowed me to integrate what I learn in class and apply it to reality. I have effectively solidified abstract ideas into concrete problem solving skills. With my strong understanding of medical nutrition therapy and multi-faceted skills, I bring a promise to contribute greatly to the field of nutrition and dietetics.