

January 27, 2021

Dr. Steven Dew  
Provost & VP, Provost & Vice-President Academic  
2-24D South Academic Building  
11328 – 89 Ave NW  
Edmonton AB, T6G 2J7  
Sent via email: [steven.dew@ualberta.ca](mailto:steven.dew@ualberta.ca)

Dear Dr. Dew and Members of the Academic Restructuring Working Group,

Dietitians of Canada (DC) is the national professional association for Canadian dietitians representing 5,000 members. Our diverse and skilled community of thought leaders are sought after for their expertise across all areas of food, nutrition and health. We also support current and prospective dietetic students across the country to enter and succeed within the profession.

I am writing today on behalf of DC, dietitians in Alberta and University of Alberta students studying to become dietitians, to express our deep disappointment and serious concern in the decision to place the Dietetics Specialization Program within the College of Natural and Applied Sciences as per the outlined University of Alberta academic restructuring plans <https://www.ualberta.ca/uofa-tomorrow/academic-restructuring/index.html>. While DC applauds the overall vision of this creative new academic model, we strongly recommend the Dietetics Specialization Program be placed within the College of Health Sciences rather than the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

Dietitians are the only regulated food and nutrition professional in Canada. The College of Dietitians of Alberta is the regulatory body for the profession in Alberta, governed by the Health Professions Act. As a regulated health profession, the Dietetics Specialization Program requires close affiliation with other health programs within the College of Health Sciences where all other regulated health professions are trained. The current decision of placing the Dietetics Specialization Program within the College of Natural and Applied Sciences results in Dietetics being the only health program not to be housed in the College of Health Sciences, and the only health program to be housed within the College of Natural and Applied Sciences.

Placing the Dietetics Specialization Program within the College of Health Sciences is critical to achieve the University of Alberta academic restructuring goal of improving the scope and structures to support interdisciplinary collaboration, programming and research. Dietitians are integral members of interdisciplinary health care teams across the health care system. Nutrition is fundamental to health and in the form of medical nutrition therapy, provides necessary treatment to clients, patients and residents across the continuum of care. Placing the Dietetics Specialization Program in the College of Health Sciences will ensure interdisciplinary collaboration, programming and research within both the academic and health care settings. Conversely, placing the program in the College of Natural and Applied Sciences poses a significant risk of isolating Dietetics from the other health disciplines, undermining the important contributions nutrition makes to health and health care in Alberta and undermining the value of dietitians to the health care workforce.

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Finally, placing the Dietetics Specialization Program within the College of Health Sciences aligns with the academic restructuring goal of being more student focused. It is DC's understanding that a recent student survey conducted by the Nutrition and Food Science Students Association showed that a strong majority of survey respondents supported the Dietetics Specialization Program be placed within the College of Health Sciences.

There are many feasible alternate solutions that can be explored to successfully place the Dietetics Specialization Program within the College of Health Sciences. DC urges the University of Alberta's Academic Restructuring Working Group and Board of Directors to swiftly and thoroughly revisit their decision on the Dietetics Specialization Program and work with key stakeholders to find a more optimal solution for University of Alberta students, faculty and staff, dietitians in Alberta and the dietetic profession as a whole.

I would be happy to speak with you and provide any additional information needed. I can be reached by telephone at (514) 238-9824 or by email at [Nathalie.Savoie@dietitians.ca](mailto:Nathalie.Savoie@dietitians.ca)

Sincerely,



Nathalie Savoie, MBA, RD/Dt.P.  
Chief Executive Officer