

## **Career Exploration of Culinary Nutrition: Motivations and Career Aspirations of Undergraduate Students**

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*Culinary nutrition is an emerging niche discipline that combines two traditionally-separated career paths of the registered dietitian nutritionist and professional chef. Family and consumer sciences' (FCS) coursework may be the ideal setting to introduce culinary nutrition as a career path given the three areas of study in the national standards related to this realm. This qualitative study utilized focus groups at two institutions that offer a degree in culinary nutrition, Saint Louis University and Johnson and Wales University, to investigate the motivations and career aspirations of undergraduate students. Five major themes emerged: past experiences; interests and desires; career aspirations; career and lifestyle expectations; decision-making. Each major theme was supported by subthemes at either or both study sites. These findings may be used in career exploration and preparation efforts to further the discipline of culinary nutrition by FCS educators.*

American consumers have demonstrated a clear interest in healthy, delicious food options. The National Restaurant Association identified *nutrition* and *natural ingredients* as two of the top ten concept trends of 2017 (National Restaurant Association, 2016). Artifacts of this movement have permeated American culture, from Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* and *Chefs Move to Schools* campaigns (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017) to a body of cookbooks, cooking shows, grocery stores and restaurants fully devoted to serving food that is equally nutritious and appetizing. Despite growing interest, there is still a marked disconnect between nutrition knowledge and culinary competence (Condrasky & Hegler, 2010).

In the professional realm, registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) and professional chefs are separate professions that might interact closely but are considered two distinct realms of expertise. In the educational realm, students typically pursue a degree in either dietetics or culinary arts and integration of the two has been limited (Kerrison, Condrasky, & Sharp, 2017). However, the emergence of culinary nutrition is gaining ground in both the professional and education sectors (Kerrison, Condrasky, & Sharp, 2017). Condrasky and Hegler (2010) defined culinary nutrition as the "application of nutrition principles combined with food science knowledge and displayed through a mastery of culinary skills" (p. 1). This emerging profession integrates two disparate career paths: that of the RDN and the professional chef.

### **Career Exploration for Family and Consumer Sciences Students**

Culinary nutrition as a career path for family and consumer sciences (FCS) students has yet to be asserted. However, three of the 16 current national areas of study in the FCS standards published by the National Association of State Administrators of FCS (NASAFACS) are specific to this realm, including: food production and services; food science, dietetics and nutrition; nutrition and wellness. Though culinary arts is not an explicit area of study, the traits of the

profession are relatively aligned with that of the food production and services area of study, such as menu planning, food preparation, and food service management. What's more, given that the national standards support career exploration (NASAFACS, 2018), students may be encouraged to investigate culinary nutrition as a possible career path within FCS.

### **Student Motivations and Career Aspirations**

Knowledge of student motivations and career aspirations may be used to assist career exploration efforts by FCS educators. Previous research has focused on factors that motivated traditional dietetics students to pursue the career path of an RDN and identified a range of factors, many of which occurred during students' secondary education. These included a personal interest in nutrition, a desire to help others and work with people, a personal struggle with weight management or diet-related condition, and having a friend or family member with a diet-related condition (Atkins & Gingras, 2009; Brady, Mahe, MacLellan, & Gingras, 2012; Chuang, Walker, & Caine-Bish, 2009; Holsipple, 1994; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005; Kobel, 1997; Lordly & MacLellan, 2012; Markley & Huyck, 1992; Rodenstein, 1990; Stone, Vaden, & Vaden, 1981). However, no studies have previously examined what motivates students to pursue a degree in the niche sector of culinary nutrition.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a basic qualitative research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to investigate subjects' perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of their own motivations to pursue a degree in culinary nutrition. The theoretical framework underpinning this study was characterized as a relativist, empirical approach wherein reality was based on participants' interpretations of their own lived experiences. Integral to the theoretical framework was the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986) and has been used by the research community to frame how students become interested in a career, make relevant decisions, and achieve academic and career success (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). The theory integrates cognitive variables of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals, with other aspects of one's self such as gender, ethnicity, social network, and barriers (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

### **Site and Participant Description**

Currently, only two institutions that are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics in the United States offer a degree in culinary nutrition (ACEND, 2017): Saint Louis University (SLU) in St. Louis, Missouri, and Johnson & Wales University (JWU) at their Denver, Colorado and Providence, Rhode Island campuses (JWU, 2017; SLU, 2017). SLU and JWU at their Denver, Colorado campus served as the sites for this study.

Participants were recruited via email from SLU and JWU. Junior and senior-level undergraduate students were recruited to establish triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Participants were invited to participate regardless of age, gender, race, or socioeconomic status. Institutional review board approval was obtained at both institutions prior to the initiation of data collection.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This study was conducted in the Spring Semester of 2016. Data collection involved semi-structured focus groups of six to eight participants per group. Researchers used an

interview guide composed of 14 questions which aimed to capture both cognitive and physical variables influencing participants' decision to pursue culinary nutrition (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). The focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Emergent themes and subthemes were supported by illustrative quotes that were documented verbatim.

### **Findings**

Three focus groups were conducted in total: two at SLU and one at JWU. Each focus group lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. A total of 23 participants contributed to the focus groups. Of those, 34.5% were seniors and 65.5% were juniors; 39% were males and 61% were females.

### **Major Themes**

The major themes that emerged were past experiences, interests and desires, career aspirations, career and lifestyle expectations, and decision-making. Major themes, subthemes, and their identification from participants at either or both study sites are summarized in Table 1. For the sake of brevity, only those themes reported at both study sites are elaborated upon in this section.

**Past experiences.** The past experiences motivating students were those that took place prior to attending college, committing to the degree program, or returning to college to pursue culinary nutrition. Nine discrete experiences were identified and are listed in Table 1. Four past experiences were reported by participants at both study sites.

***Experience with a diet-related disease.*** Participants described how a diet-related disease impacted themselves, family members, or friends, and how they observed the role of nutrition (or lack of) in the management of the disease. For example, one participant reported, "It's amazing how, I just remember being jealous of my cousin counting carbs in middle school and I was always obsessed with food labels and it took me a long time before I realized it was an actual profession." In contrast, others commented on the perceived lack of attention to nutrition in disease management. One participant reflected on her father's struggle with kidney disease: "I noticed that there's not a lot of medical food—the food that patients receive is not really that good and doesn't have a lot of flavor and always has this bad rep that nutritious foods are terrible. It pushed me more to just be in this degree in that way." Thus, reflections were either related to the identification of the importance of nutrition, or the lack of concern for nutrition in disease management.

***Food-related work experience.*** Food-related work experiences were consistently reported in a positive manner. One participant recalled memories of working at a farmers' market as a teenager: "I remember there was like, a stand next to us that had like, fresh noodles and they were like, green, and I was like—why would noodles be green? And I went home and told my mom I was all excited and she was like—'maybe you should look into food 'cause you really seem to like nutrition.'"

**Table 1**

***Emergent themes and subthemes of perceptions regarding the motivations of undergraduate students to pursue a degree in culinary nutrition***

| <b>Theme</b>                             | <b>Subtheme</b>  | <b>SLU</b> | <b>JWU</b> |
|--|--|------------|------------|
| <b>Past Experiences</b>                  | Experience with a diet-related disease                         | X          | X          |
|  | Food-related work experience                                   | X          | X          |
|  | Participation in a sport                                       | X          | X          |
|  | Exposure to nutrition or culinary arts in a high school course | X          | X          |
|  | Experience with weight loss or gain                            | X          |            |
|  | Cooking with family during childhood                           | X          |            |
|  | Lack of cooking knowledge from childhood                       | X          |            |
|  | Gardening or farming during childhood                          | X          |            |
|  | Exposure to nutrition in a college course                      |            | X          |
| <b>Interests and Desires</b>             | Personal interest in food and nutrition                        | X          | X          |
|  | Potential to make a difference                                 | X          | X          |
|  | Desire for student to earn a bachelor’s degree                 | X          | X          |
|  | Lack of nutrition knowledge in the general public              | X          |            |
|  | Lack of culinary knowledge among nutrition professionals       | X          |            |
|  | Desire for culinary skills as a RDN                            | X          |            |
| <b>Career aspirations</b>                | Help others appreciate healthy food                            | X          | X          |
|  | Make a difference  | X          | X          |
|  | Work abroad  | X          | X          |
|  | Child nutrition  | X          | X          |
|  | Education setting  | X          | X          |
|  | Public health  | X          | X          |
|  | Entrepreneurial  | X          | X          |
|  | Not or “maybe” clinical  | X          | X          |
|  | Don’t know   | X          | X          |
| Policy                                   | X  |            |            |
| <b>Career and lifestyle expectations</b> | Happiness  | X          | X          |
|  | Constant change and learning opportunities                     | X          | X          |
|  | Stability  | X          | X          |
|  | Flexibility and part-time work opportunities                   | X          |            |
|  | Conservative pay   | X          |            |
|  | Stability  | X          |            |
|  | Benefits   | X          |            |
| <b>Decision-making</b>                   | First chose culinary arts, then added dietetics                | X          | X          |
|  | Returned to college to pursue a second career                  | X          | X          |
|  | Sought out culinary nutrition in high school                   | X          |            |
|  | First chose dietetics, then added culinary arts                | X          |            |
|  | Transferred from a different major                             | X          |            |

Another participant described their experience of working in a restaurant: “That was my first job. I haven’t left the industry since... stuck with it and seems like a good deal.” Therefore, positive food-related work experiences motivated participants at both study sites to seek out a food-related career.

***Participation in a sport.*** Participation in sports during high school was also a motivation to pursue nutrition. One participant described the influence of her teammates: “I found nutrition because I played sports my first two years and it just seemed that everybody who played sports was going into fields associated with sports.” Another participant recalled the experience of working with an athletic trainer following a track injury and how nutrition was brought to her attention for the first time: “I was fascinated because I hadn’t thought about how nutrition was related to activity.” Participation in a sport, either due to peer influence or exposure to nutrition during recovery from an injury, was identified as a motivation among participants at both sites.

***Exposure to nutrition or culinary arts in a high school course.*** Lastly, exposure to nutrition or culinary arts in a high school course was also a motivation to pursue culinary nutrition at both study sites. One participant recalled:

I took cooking classes in high school and was like, “Yeah, I’ll go do that.” Then, I realized pretty quick that being a line cook kinda sucks and I did not want to do that. And then I kinda realized that I kinda liked the science part of food more.

Another participant reported exposure to nutrition for the first time during an advanced placement environmental science course: “It was the first time I had ever been introduced to that subject and I was like—wow, this is perfect for me.” Though students were not necessarily exposed to the discipline of culinary nutrition in high school, they did gain exposure to either nutrition or culinary arts through their coursework in cooking, FCS, or environmental science.

***Interests and desires.*** Students’ personal interests and desires also influenced their decision to pursue culinary nutrition. Six discrete interests and desires were identified and are listed in Table 1: Three interests and desires were reported by participants at both study sites.

***Personal interest in food and nutrition.*** A personal interest in food and nutrition was characterized by participants’ interest in food, the effects of various diets, or the science of food. One student reported, “I love food. I like to talk about food. I’m good at talking about it. I remember being like—how cool would it be to go to school for something you’re actually excited about?” Another student asked rhetorically, “I love food so why don’t I just pick this major?” A third commented on an “interest in science” and how “food works in the body.” Thus, a personal interest in food and nutrition motivated participants at both study sites to study culinary nutrition.

***Potential to make a difference.*** Next, participants described the potential to make a difference with their degree. Some reflected on how nutrition impacts consumers/individuals daily, while others identified the need for nutrition given the prevalence of certain health conditions. For instance, one student reflected, “I think it’s cool to talk to people about something they’re affected by every day and they’re thinking about every day.” Another

commented, “I just think it’s an awesome job...especially with everything that’s going on with obesity. I think with our job we can really makes a difference.” The potential to make a difference, either on an individualized basis or by influencing disease epidemics, motivated students at both study sites to pursue culinary nutrition.

***Desire for student to earn a bachelor’s degree.*** Lastly, students at both sites identified the desire to earn a bachelor’s degree or a “four-year college degree” as a motivating factor. One participant recalled, “I wanted to go into culinary and my parents wanted me to get a four-year college degree, so SLU had this program and it just worked.” A JWU student commented, “I came here just for my associate’s and when I got done I decided to keep going.” Therefore, the desire to earn a bachelor’s degree was either the student’s own desire or that of their parents; the four-year culinary nutrition degree was seen as a way to both study culinary arts and earn a bachelor’s degree.

**Career aspirations.** The theme of career aspirations emerged from discussions about what type of employment participants would like to pursue with a culinary nutrition degree. Three general aims and six specific aims were identified and are listed in Table 1. All but one of the subthemes were identified by participants at both study sites.

***General aims.*** General aims were broader career aspects that could be applied in a variety of employment settings. These included: help others appreciate healthy food, make a difference, and work abroad. All three were reported by participants at both study sites. The aim of helping others appreciate healthy food was described as helping others “realize the pleasure of food,” or encouraging “the same love and passion that I have.” Multiple participants mentioned their perception that many people are averse to healthy food, coupled with their desire to show how food can be both healthy and delicious. The theme of making a difference was described as a hope to “impact one person” or having a career that “means something.” One participant noted:

I want to feel like I’m making a difference doing something that means something to me, something that people appreciate that I can take pride in... regardless of the 25 paths I outlined earlier, I think that whatever I land in it’ll be a good one.

The third general theme of working abroad was characterized by hopes for “global travel” or “global spanning” work. One participant identified how witnessing malnutrition abroad not only prompted him to study nutrition, but also work abroad in his future career.

***Specific aims.*** In contrast, specific career aims were characterized by discrete employment settings. These included: child nutrition, education setting, public health, entrepreneurial, not or “maybe” clinical, don’t know, and policy. Participants at both study sites named all the specific aims except for policy, which was only named by participants at SLU.

**Career and lifestyle expectations.** In contrast to specific career aims, the theme of career and lifestyle expectations emerged from discussions of participants’ hopes for quality aspects of their future lives. Six discrete career and lifestyle expectations were identified and are listed in Table 1; three expectation were reported by participants at both study sites.

**Happiness.** The subtheme of happiness was characterized as a desire to “have fun” or “enjoy what I’m doing.” One participant commented, “I think just lifestyle is just going to be—this is really corny—just like, happy ‘cause I really like doing what we’re going to do and it’s just such a blessing to be doing this.” Another participant expressed her desire for a career to be “something I get to wake up in the morning and go do this and, and it’s not, ‘Ugh, I gotta go to work’. I’m enjoying what I’m doing even if I’m working.”

**Constant change and learning opportunities.** Next, participants at both study sites also expressed the expectation of constant change and learning opportunities throughout their careers. This was described as “hectic,” “ever-changing,” “always moving and on the go,” “continuously challenging,” or “continuously different.” One participant commented, “There’s always going to be like, a new trend on the market or a new fruit people haven’t thought about.” Other participants expressed how they tend to get bored easily and need constant change. One participant stated: “I get bored with jobs really easily. I leave after like, two years and continuously grow at different jobs.”

**Stability.** Lastly, the expectation of stability was expressed by participants at both study sites. This subtheme was characterized by both employment and financial stability. For instance, one participant noted: “I’d like to be at a place where I can be for a long time and kind of climb the ladder.” Another participant described the need for “something substantial to support myself” in order to pay off student loans. Thus, employment and financial stability was a career and lifestyle expectation of participants at both sites.

**Decision-making.** The final theme of decision-making emerged from participants’ accounts of how they decided to pursue a degree in culinary nutrition. Five discrete paths were identified. Participants at both sites reported first choosing culinary arts and then adding dietetics, or returning to college to pursue a second career. However, only SLU participants made their decision by seeking out culinary nutrition in high school, first choosing dietetics and then adding culinary arts, or transferring from a different major.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study may be compared to the existing corpus of knowledge on what motivates traditional nutrition and dietetics to pursue a career as an RDN. In turn, the nuances of what motivates culinary nutrition students may be used to inform career exploration and preparation efforts. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research will also be discussed.

## **Comparisons to Existing Research**

**Interests and desires.** Participants at both SLU and JWU reported a personal interest in food and nutrition and the potential to make a difference as motivating factors, both of which further validate prior research and indicate these as especially strong subthemes (Brady et al., 2012; Chuang et al., 2009; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005; Kobel, 1997; Markely & Huyck, 1992; Stone et al., 1981). One subtheme that was not identified in the prior literature, but that was identified by participants at both study sites, was a desire for the student to earn a bachelor’s

degree or a “four-year college degree.” Given that culinary professionals may secure employment with an associate’s degree or substantial work experience, this motivation is most relevant for potential students that are strongly interested in culinary arts, but still wish to earn a bachelor’s degree. Three interests and desires emerged at SLU, but not JWU. These included a lack of nutrition knowledge in the general public, a lack of culinary knowledge among nutrition professionals, and a desire for culinary skills as a RDN. These factors characterize the skills, or ideal skills, of RDNs. Thus, given that most participants at this study site were attracted first to nutrition and dietetics, it makes sense that these participants would vocalize desires specific to RDNs. Furthermore, these interests and desires did not emerge in the literature review, and thereby contribute new findings to the body of research.

**Past experiences.** Participants at both sites reported past experiences that prompted their interest in culinary nutrition, including experience with a diet-related disease, food-related work experience, participation in a sport, and exposure to nutrition or culinary arts in a high school course. These past experiences were consistent with prior research, and are therefore especially strong subthemes (Brady et al., 2012; Holsipple, 1994; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005, Lordly & MacLellan, 2012).

Past experiences of SLU students, but not JWU students, included personal weight loss or gain, cooking with family during childhood or a lack of cooking knowledge from childhood, and gardening or farming during childhood. Whereas the former experiences were documented in previous research (Brady et al., 2012; Holsipple, 1994; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005, Lordly & MacLellan, 2012), the latter experience of gardening or farming during childhood was not. Thus, this marks a new contribution to the understanding of what may motivate students to pursue culinary nutrition.

In contrast, exposure to nutrition through a college course was reported by JWU participants, but not SLU participants. This motivation to enter the field was previously established by Lordly and MacLellan (2012). Given the differences in decision-making paths of students at each institution, this distinction is consistent with the finding that many JWU students entered culinary nutrition by first choosing culinary arts, and then later adding dietetics upon exposure to the field in a college-level course; this finding is elaborated upon in the subsequent section on decision making.

**Career aspirations.** The career aspirations of participants were almost identical at SLU and JWU, indicating the strength of these subthemes. Participants at both sites discussed the general aspirations of helping others appreciate healthy food, making a difference, and working abroad. This finding indicates that culinary nutrition may be considered a helping profession, or may attract students that wish to improve the lives of others. In this case, culinary nutrition students were drawn to the field in order to help others appreciate and be able to prepare food that is both healthy and nutritious. This finding also validates prior research that identified a desire to help others and work with people as a motivation for entering the field of nutrition and dietetics (Holsipple, 1994; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005; Kobel, 1997; Lordly & MacLellan, 2012; Markley & Huyck, 1992).

In addition, participants at both study sites identified similar specific career aspirations. Participants expressed the desire to work in child nutrition, education, public health, or as an entrepreneur. Participants at both sites indicated they do not want to work in clinical dietetics, or that they only want to do so for a short time. This is a notable deviation from the present body of



research on traditional nutrition and dietetics students that indicates clinical dietetics as an expected work setting (Holsipple, 1994; Hughes & Desbrow, 2005). However, given that RDNs are qualified to work in a variety of settings (Hooker, Williams, Papneja, Sen, & Hogan, 2012), clearly culinary nutrition students are drawn to the field for its opportunities to work in sectors other than clinical dietetics.

***Decision-making.*** Between the two study sites, only one participant sought out the combined discipline of culinary nutrition in high school. This points to a clear need to heighten awareness of culinary nutrition as a career path among high school students. Given the multiple areas of study related to culinary nutrition within the FCS National Standards, FCS coursework may be the ideal place to explore this career path.

Additionally, the decision-making path of first choosing dietetics, then adding culinary arts emerged solely from the participants at SLU, whereas the path of first choosing culinary arts, then adding dietetics emerged almost entirely from participants at JWU. This was likely due to differences in program offerings at the two institutions. SLU offers both a traditional bachelor's of science in nutrition and dietetics and a bachelor's of science in nutrition and dietetics with a culinary option (SLU, 2017). Most of SLU's students, therefore, were drawn to the university for its traditional nutrition program and then later decided to enter the culinary nutrition degree program. In contrast, JWU offers both a bachelor of science in culinary arts and a bachelor of science in dietetics and applied nutrition (JWU, 2017). This finding further supports the importance of introducing students to culinary nutrition as a career path in high school, rather than discovering the career path serendipitously once enrolled in college.

Lastly, participants at both SLU and JWU reported returning to college to pursue culinary nutrition as a second career. This finding further validates prior research indicating a notable percentage of students that return to study dietetics as a second career (Hughes & Desbrow, 2005, Markley & Huyck, 1992). This finding is also relevant to recruitment efforts when targeting various pools of potential applicants.

## **Applications to Practice**

***Recruitment to university programs.*** The findings of this study may be used to inform phase-appropriate recruitment efforts, which is especially relevant given that students are likely to become interested in the field at different phases. Given the distinct decision-making paths that emerged from the results of this study, institutions may target five different applicant pools: high school students; traditional nutrition and dietetics students; traditional culinary arts students; students enrolled in a different major; students returning to college to pursue a second career.

Recruitment efforts should emphasize the interests and desires identified in this study. For instance, the desire for a bachelor's degree was identified as a motivation in this study that did not emerge in the existing research. In recruitment efforts, this opportunity should be emphasized at institutions where students have the option to earn either an associate's degree in culinary arts or a bachelor's degree in culinary nutrition, such as JWU (2017), or at an institution that is the only school in a geographical region to offer a culinary nutrition degree, such as SLU (2017).

Recruitment efforts should also capitalize on past experiences that led current culinary nutrition students to the field. Each subtheme related to past experiences in this study represents a unique recruitment opportunity. For instance, given that some participants became interested

in the field through a high school or college course, the classroom setting may be an effective place to educate students on the field of culinary nutrition. This may be achieved by providing relevant information to the instructors of those courses, including a section on culinary nutrition in new versions of textbooks or inviting culinary nutrition professionals serve as guest lecturers.

***Preparation for future careers.*** Lastly, the findings of this study may be used to frame the career possibilities for culinary nutrition professionals. Three broad career aspirations emerged, including the desire to help others appreciate healthy food, make a difference, and work abroad. The desire to make a difference was reported in previous research (Holsipple, 1994), though the desire to help others appreciate healthy food and work abroad emerged as new findings. Notably, the desire to help others appreciate healthy food seemed to be unique to culinary nutrition students given that it was supported by comments about making food that is both healthy and delicious. Some participants even compared themselves to traditional nutrition and dietetics students and touted their knowledge of both disciplines as superior to mere nutrition knowledge. Thus, this is a career aspiration that culinary nutrition students take pride in and see as unique.

When evaluating potential careers, culinary nutrition students will likely seek out those that allow them to use their knowledge of both nutrition and culinary arts. From an employer's perspective, they may hire an individual who is proficient in both avenues, potentially decreasing overall labor costs. Future employers may also emphasize culinary nutrition professionals that participants described as most important to their careers and lifestyles, such as constant change and learning opportunities.

### **Limitations**

The generalizability of these findings are limited by the fact that there are only two institutions that offer a degree program in culinary nutrition; therefore, the usefulness of the results may be limited to those programs at this point in time. However, if additional colleges or universities are interested in starting a degree program in this area, the results may inform the development of certain aspects of the program such as the curriculum and recruitment activities.

### **Future Research**

Given the qualitative nature of this study, a survey-based or mixed-methods follow-up study may serve to provide quantitative information regarding the prevalence and strength of various motivations. Further research may also include additional education and employment rates of culinary nutrition graduates.

### **Conclusion**

Culinary nutrition is an emerging niche discipline at the intersection of nutrition and dietetics and culinary arts. Given the NASAFCS support of career exploration, as well as the three areas of study tangentially related to culinary nutrition in the national standards, FCS coursework may be the ideal setting to introduce this career path. Ongoing research on the distinctive traits of culinary nutrition students and young professionals is needed to further this discipline.

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