2007 Data on Students Applying for Dietetic Internship Sites

The chart, below, depicts the number of available internship positions relative to the number of applicants in 2007. 4570 students graduated from Didactic Programs in Dietetics (DPDs) in 2007. Of those students, 2893 applied for an internship. In addition to the 2007 graduates, 902 other individuals (e.g. students from previous years and dietitians educated abroad) also applied for internship positions.

If all possible internship positions were available (Maximum Capacity), there would be a shortage of 942 sites. But in reality, only 2520 internship positions were available to take students, resulting in a shortage of 1275 positions. Of the total number of applicants, only 2235 were accepted into internships, meaning that 1560 individuals who wanted to study in an internship in order to become Registered Dietitians were unable to do so.

The precise fate of students who do not go into internships is unknown, because no data are currently being gathered on them. Nevertheless, we do know that these individuals may apply for internships at a later date, study for other health-care degrees, obtain jobs in nutrition without becoming certified as Registered Dietitians, or they may simply drop out of the job market. When combined with internship applicants from previous years, the pool of individuals grows to 3237, a figure that is almost 45% larger than the 2235 students who were accepted into internships! The data for 2008 are now being compiled; however, the shortage of dietetic-internship sites is expected to continue.

Figure 1: Shortage of Supervised Practice Sites in 2007 based on D&D Digital’s results from computer matching and reported capacity from Dietetic Internship programs responding to the CADE Annual Report.