

BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

KASEY YOST, MS, RDN

My name is Kasey Yost, and I am one of the new board members this year with WVAND. I am a registered dietitian who currently lives and works in Morgantown WV. I am also originally from Morgantown, so getting to serve the community I grew up in means a lot to me! I received my bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics from Radford University in 2020, and my master's degree in nutritional and food science from West Virginia University in 2022, along with completing my dietetic internship as part of the same program.



I recently accepted a position at Mon Health Medical Center as an inpatient clinical dietitian where I will work to provide clinical care and nutritional education to patients in an acute care setting. Prior to this I worked as a consulting dietitian with Keegan and Associates for over 2 years. That job provided me with a variety of experiences working in both long-term and acute care settings via nursing homes, skilled care facilities, and hospitals. As well as providing some outpatient nutrition education and even speaking at community classes on nutrition topics.

I am currently serving as Co-Chair for the Membership Committee with Sina King. Joining WVAND helps me feel more connected to my profession via the community it provides by bringing us together for things such as the yearly conference and smaller gatherings across the state. Seeing how all the different dietitians have grown within the organization and carved out their own unique corners within the state is really inspiring as someone starting in their career.



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In my free time I enjoy spending time with friends and family, especially when good food is involved, whether that means trying a new restaurant or recipe at home. I also love staying active through yoga and running.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

If you are interested in getting involved with WVAND, there are some open board positions including President-elect, PDC chair-elect, Secretary, Delegate, and Treasure-elect. Please inquire at eatrightwv.org.

AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

2022

Outstanding Dietetic intern: Isabel Judware (WVU)
Emerging Dietetic Leader: Rebecca Dattola
Rhododendron Award: Delegate Evan Hansen

2023

Outstanding Student DPD: Meagan Camden: (Marshall)
Outstanding Dietetic Intern: Makenna Ortiz (WVU)
Outstanding Dietitian of the Year: Heidi Church
Rhododendron Award: Melanie Pagliaro

2024

Outstanding Student DPD: Paige Blanton (Marshall)
Rhododendron Award: Dr. Elizabeth Taylor, PharmD

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY OUTSTANDING DPD STUDENT AWARDS

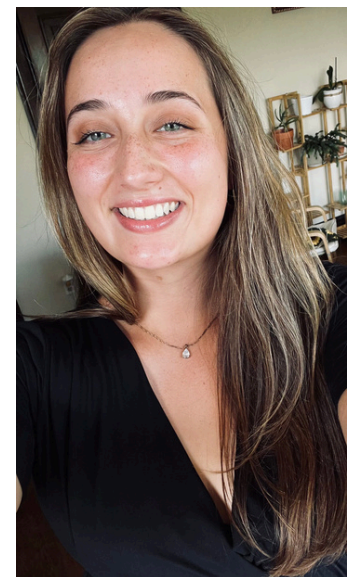
PAIGE BANTON 2024

I am originally from Ontario, Canada, and I am currently pursuing my internship and master's degree through Marshall University's Dietetic DI/MS program. My commitment to swimming has been a significant part of my academic journey, as I have represented Marshall throughout my undergraduate studies and continue as a student-athlete during my internship. I am honored to have received the Outstanding Student Award from the West Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (WVAND) for the 2023-2024 year, reflecting my dedication to the field of nutrition and dietetics.



EDEN ZACHARIA 2021

My name is Eden Zachariah. I am from Bunker Hill, WV. I attended Marshall for my undergraduate and graduate programs as well as my DI. I am currently working as the clinical dietitian in a residential eating disorder facility outside of Washington DC. I received the honor of the Outstanding Student in Dietetics award in 2021 as a senior in Marshall's Dietetics program. I am eternally grateful to have been able to complete all of my education to become a dietitian at Marshall. I had amazing resources, professors, classes and support that prepared me to be the professional that I am today.

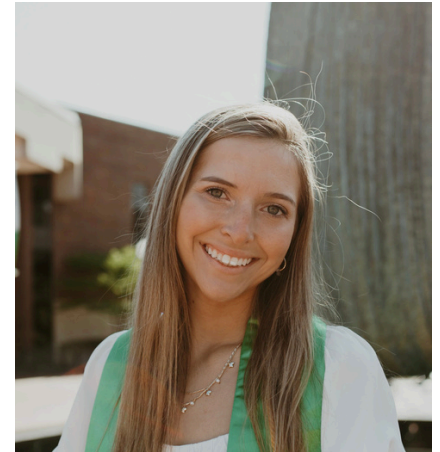


STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY OUTSTANDING DPD STUDENT AWARDS

MEAGAN CAMDEN 2023

My name is Meagan Camden, and I'm a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). I earned both my B.S. and M.S. in Dietetics from Marshall University, where I also completed my dietetic internship. During my undergraduate studies, I was proud to be a member of the Marshall University volleyball team. I also received the Outstanding DPD student award in 2023 from the WV Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Currently, I work as a clinical dietitian at Cabell Huntington Hospital, primarily working with pediatric patients.



PROBIOTIC SODAS: ARE THEY ACTUALLY GOOD FOR YOU?

by Breannah Groves, BS, Dietetic Intern

In the health-conscious beverage market, probiotic sodas have become very popular. They offer a nutrition driven substitute for traditional soft drinks. These sodas, which come in well-known flavors including cola, orange, grape, and lemon-lime, are marketed as having little sugar, added fiber, and probiotic benefits. Still, the question remains: do they actually provide health benefits?

Health-Conscious Ingredients: Probiotics and Fiber

A lot of probiotic sodas are made with less sugar, or sugar alternatives like stevia leaf, than typical sodas. Consumers may enjoy a fizzy beverage without suffering the usual sugar crash that comes with traditional soda because of its reduced sugar level (typically <5g added sugar). These sodas contain live probiotic/prebiotic bacteria that can support digestive health and improve the balance of gut microbiota. Consistent consumption may lead to better digestion and enhanced overall health over time. Certain brands add prebiotic fiber to their recipes, like agave inulin, cassava root, chicory root and more, which can support the probiotics and foster a healthy digestive environment. This extra fiber may also help increase satiety.

Nutritional Considerations: Components and Flavors

There are several things to keep in mind when assessing probiotic soda benefits. Supplementing your overall dietary intake, probiotic sodas come in a variety of forms and offer a range of nutrients, like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Consumers are better able to make healthier choices because of the wide variety of flavors available, which let them enjoy a refreshing drink without compromising flavor.

Potential Drawbacks: Personal Reactions and Cost Consideration

These sodas are not a “complete solution.” Although probiotic sodas can be a good addition to your diet, they should not replace whole foods that naturally contain probiotics, like yogurt or kimchi. Relying solely on these beverages will not provide the same health advantages. Some people might experience gastrointestinal upset, such as bloating or gas, especially if they are not used to frequent probiotic consumption. It is important to listen to your body and adjust your intake as needed. Probiotic sodas can be pricey compared to standard soft drinks, which may discourage some buyers. Weighing the cost against health benefits is a key factor for many consumers.

Probiotic sodas are an exciting development in the beverage industry, providing a tasty (and more nutritional) alternative to traditional sugary drinks. While they can offer advantages like lower sugar levels and additional probiotics, it is important to consider them as an addition to a well-rounded diet rather than a primary source of nutrition. Consuming these fizzy beverages in moderation, along with whole foods that are high in probiotics and fiber, may support a healthier lifestyle. If you are looking for a refreshing way to enhance your gut health or satisfy your soda craving, probiotic sodas may be a worthwhile option!

About the author:

My name is Brennah Groves and I am a second year MS/DI student at West Virginia University. I am doing my thesis on the physicochemical properties and sensory evaluations of a novel high protein bar. I am a Summersville, WV native and have an interest in food science but also am passionate about providing quality nutrition care and education to individuals in rural Appalachia. I want to give back to the communities who have helped shape me as a young woman.



MY TIME WITH EMILY SHREVE

by Breannah Groves, MS, Dietetic Intern

Emily Shreve is a Registered Dietitian working for United Hospital Center located in Bridgeport, West Virginia. She splits her time between the Weight Management Clinic and the Integrative Diabetes Program. She is a Certified Lactation Counselor and is currently pursuing her Obesity Medicine Certification (CSOWM) to further her expertise in weight management.



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Emily's interest for dietetics was ignited at age 13 when her father faced life-threatening heart issues, a 99% blockage in his left anterior descending artery. Because her father was so young when he faced these health problems (40 years old), he was often dismissed by doctors. Finally, they found a health professional that took his health concerns seriously and gave him the treatment he deserved. After a quadruple bypass and significant dietary changes, he made a full recovery. This pivotal experience influenced her decision to become a dietitian. Shadowing an outpatient dietitian throughout her formative years further solidified her decision to pursue a career in dietetics.

She started gaining experience as a new RD in inpatient despite knowing outpatient was her true passion. She started seeing any patients that needed her guidance at Mon Health, then moved to working in long term acute care.

This role consisted of weaning individuals off ventilators with hopes of them going to rehab, but most of these patients were not strong enough to recover. A lot of these patients did not have family and Emily found herself taking her computer, charting, and listening to music while they passed, just so they weren't alone. This was very emotionally taxing and she needed a change. Emily started her dream job in April 2024 working for Dr. Cecil at the Weight Management Clinic at UHC.

When asked about the most challenging aspect of working in weight management, she shares that the emotional aspects particularly are the most difficult. She loves talking to people and developing relationships with her clients, so creating an atmosphere where patients feel comfortable discussing trauma associated with their weight is crucial. I've been able to experience firsthand the welcoming, safe, and non-judgmental environment she's created. In addition to helping patients navigate trauma linked to their weight, she works to combat the stigma surrounding obesity, especially regarding equitable access to life-saving medications.



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I asked Emily if she would choose this path again... She shared that she finds great fulfillment in helping patients develop healthier relationships with food and their bodies, and gains satisfaction from seeing her patients grow more comfortable in their own skin. She emphasizes that obesity is a chronic disease, not a personal failure, and is committed to educating patients and young healthcare professionals to help dismantle stigma in future healthcare practices. Her ongoing commitment to learning and growth fuels her work, which helps foster a supportive environment for her patients.

For those entering the field, Emily advises, “Be willing to learn throughout your career; you don’t know everything, and things are always changing. Find your passion and pursue it relentlessly.”

POLICY UPDATES: LICENSURE MODERNIZATION ACT

The West Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics desires to seek amendments to West Virginia’s licensure bill to support the provision of competent medical nutrition therapy services and expand the scope of practice for dietitians in West Virginia consistent with current national standards. We believe these changes would allow dietitians to work at their highest level of competence supporting access to timely, qualified care. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics current stance on licensure includes a separate pathway for “licensed nutritionists.” This would allow individuals who have met certain requirements to obtain the credential of “Licensed Nutritionist” and provide care falling within a defined term of “nutrition.” The requirements for the “Licensed Nutritionist” pathway would be similar but different from the requirements of the “Licensed Dietitian,” noting dietitians would be licensed to practice dietetics and nutrition.

The requirements for both are as follows:



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Credential	Licensed Dietitian	Licensed Nutritionist
Education	A master's or doctoral degree from an accredited institution and a program of study accredited by ACEND OR a foreign degree that is deemed equivalent and a program of study accredited by ACEND	A master's or doctoral degree from an accredited institution in a specified nutrition/health related field with coursework including clinical and life sciences and nutrition and metabolism
Supervised Practice	1000 hours through an ACEND accredited program	1000 hours with a qualified supervisor that meets requirements specified by the examining board
Exam	Passage of the CDR exam	Passage of an accredited exam (current eligible exam would be the CNS or certified nutrition specialist exam)
Continuing education	75 hrs for every 5 years after exam passage	75 hours for every 5 years after exam passage

The Academy highlights 3 main goals of the Licensure Modernization framework:

1. License and regulate qualified nutrition professionals.
2. Allow practitioners to practice at their level of competence, thereby ensuring access to timely, qualified nutrition care; and
3. Unless otherwise exempt, require a license for the narrowly tailored provision of medical nutrition therapy, the practice of which presents a clear risk of harm to the public if not provided by qualified practitioners.

WVAND recognizes that this is a significant change and wishes to receive input from licensed dietitians in the state. WVAND plans to hold a Town-Hall style session soon for members to ask questions and to learn more about why the Academy supports a dual pathway to licensure. Be on the lookout for an announcement with the date.

WVAND ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPO

WHITE HALL EVENT CENTER

FAIRMONT, WV

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 3RD & 4TH 2025



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