NON-CREDIT ELECTIVE TITLE
Healthy Living Task Force

COURSE NUMBER
MDC-0923

LOCATION
RWJMS, PISCATAWAY

ELECTIVE DIRECTOR(S)
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BLOCKS AVAILABLE
Fall and Spring Semesters

DURATION/WEEKS
Meets 8 Times During The Academic Year

HOURS PER WEEK
1

STUDENTS
Unlimited

LECTURES/SEMINARS
8

OUTPATIENT
No

INPATIENT
No

HOUSESTAFF
No

NIGHT CALL
No

WEEKENDS
No

LAB
No

EXAM REQUIRED
No

OVERALL EDUCATIONAL GOAL:
To educate medical students on local and global food issues as related to health and disease; to emphasize the importance of primary prevention to future physicians.

OBJECTIVES

I. Patient Care
Students must be prepared to provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate and effective.
- Communicate effectively and demonstrate caring and respectful behaviors when interacting with patients and their families.
- Work with patients in preventing health problems or maintaining health.
- Counsel and educate patients and their families.

II. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement
Students must be able to engage in self-evaluation regarding their academic & clinical performance, develop plans for personal improvement, and recognize how the application of new learning can be used to improve patient care.
- Locate, appraise, and assimilate evidence from scientific & clinical studies related to patients’ health problems.

Students can evaluate current scientific evidence within the field of nutrition by participating in large group discussions that focus on literature review (i.e. journal club session).
- Facilitate the learning of other students and health care professionals.
  o Students will work collaboratively in small groups.
  o Students will participate in teaching activities at the medical school and in the community.

III. Interpersonal and Communication Skills
Students must be able to demonstrate interpersonal & communication skills, both verbal and written, that result in effective information exchange with patients, patients’ families, peers, and other health professions colleagues.
- Utilize appropriate and effective communication strategies, including nonverbal, explanatory, questioning and writing skills, to both elicit and provide health care information to patients and their families.

Students will learn to effectively communicate important information related to diet and nutrition.
IV. Professionalism
Students must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to a diverse patient population.
- Demonstrate accountability to patients, society, and the profession, and a commitment to excellence and on-going professional development.
- Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to patient individuality including the role of culture, ethnicity, gender, age, disabilities, and other aspects of health practices and decisions.

Students will learn how cultural differences in diet affect individual and public health. With sensitivity to patient individuality, students will explore creative strategies to optimize the health of heterogeneous populations.
- Recognize and address personal limitations, attributes or behaviors that might influence their effectiveness as a physician.
  o Students will maintain responsibility for the physical and mental health of themselves and their peers

VI. Systems-Based Practice
Students will be able to function effectively in teams and within a larger organizational structure. They must demonstrate an awareness of the larger context and system of health care and of the resources available within the system to provide optimal care to individual patients and groups. Finally, students must demonstrate an awareness of current barriers to health care and of the various strategies designed to assist patients in gaining access to care.
- Demonstrate effective involvement in a health care team and be able to recognize how their involvement in patient care may affect other members of the health care profession.

Brief Description of Activities

(1) Large Group Activities: Students will have opportunities to learn about the fields of nutrition, including nutritional counseling, agriculture, food sciences, etc. Group activities will vary in format to include discussions, journal clubs, and panel discussions.

(2) Small Group Discussions: Students will discuss current sociopolitical issues and scientific controversies surrounding food systems, as well as possible solutions. Small group discussions will be limited to 10-15 students (who sign up in advance), and will be arranged by elective student leaders. These sessions will allow students opportunities to discuss topics more thoroughly, to share personal food experiences, and to ask questions. Small group discussions will take place at least once per semester, in the form of potlucks, themed dinners, cultural food sampling, etc.

(3) Community Activities: Student will have opportunities to participate in volunteer activities, cooking lessons, field trips to local farms and community gardens, or other off-site activities to understand the role of food in our community. By emphasizing outreach, students will be encouraged to take an active role in community and health-related aspects of local food systems. Outreach activities will vary depending on community needs, and will be coordinated by elective student leaders.

Method of Evaluation

Students will successfully complete the elective by attending a minimum of 6 activities over two years (M1 and M2). Participation must include at least one event in each of the following three categories: (1) large group activities, (2) small group discussions, and (3) community activities.