

A PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE ACADEMIC PREPARATION OF
THE DIETITIAN IN THE COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS,
KARACHI, PAKISTAN

by

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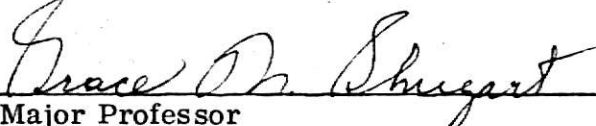
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INTRODUCTION

Dietetics as it is known today is a development of the twentieth century and has grown from the time of the visiting diet instructor to the present concept of the science of nutrition and art of management (Lipscomb, 1966). Over the years the emphasis on administrative abilities has increased as the complexities of management have continued to mount for the dietitian.

Responsibilities and qualifications of the dietitian have been defined and standards for academic preparation have been established in the United States and to varying degrees in other countries.

Colleges and universities through their educational programs for food service management are playing an important role in identifying and developing dietetic personnel. Studies done in the United States revealed that provision needs to be made for effective preparation in administration without minimizing general education or lessening competence in the other three areas of dietetic department responsibility: therapeutic, education and research. As a result, educators are continually revising and strengthening the institutional management curricula to prepare students to perform a complex of duties.

In Pakistan the field of dietetics has not grown to its full potential. The first two full-fledged colleges of home economics were started in 1955 and today there are four colleges in the country that offer courses leading to Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in home economics. As yet, there is no program directed toward the preparation of a hospital dietitian. Hospital food service still is in the hands of unqualified personnel. However, the rapid expansion of dietetics in other countries

and the growing awareness of food shortage, rising costs and malnutrition in Pakistan now pose a problem. Educators and medical practitioners of the country are realizing the need for a professional person expertly trained in the science of nutrition and dietetics.

A need exists for specialization to permit better service to patients and customers, improvement in techniques, material and personnel. It is the responsibility of the colleges of home economics to supply dietetic personnel in Pakistan. One approach to the preparation of the dietitian would be to introduce a well-balanced dietetics program at the college level.

Dietetics as a profession will be a new venture in Pakistan. Foremost among the many problems faced will be to prove the worth and place of dietetics as a professional field. It is, therefore, essential that high standards of dietetic education be set up and maintained. Demand for nutritionists and therapeutic dietitians seems to be more pronounced in Pakistan than that for the administrative dietitian, but their roles are overlapping; consequently, students need to be prepared not only for technical roles but for leadership and administrative roles as well.

The purpose of this report was to develop and integrate the existing courses at Karachi College of Home Economics, Pakistan, into an academic program for students of dietetics with major concentration on institution management courses required for the hospital dietitian. The study was designed to fit the needs of students and existing conditions at Karachi College of Home Economics, though it may have implications for similar programs in other colleges in Pakistan.