

ASN Young Professional Interest Group

Quarterly Newsletter

January 2014

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Who We Are

ASN's Young Professional Interest Group (YPIG) serves as a source of information and support for career advancement of emerging young nutrition scientists.

We support our membership primarily through programming young professional-centered events at ASN's Scientific Sessions and Annual Meeting during Experimental Biology.

Additionally, we aim to foster networking and communication among our membership by increasing our presence on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

What's New

Happy New Year YPIG Members! We hope that you and yours had a fantastic holiday, and here's to hoping that 2014 is off to an amazing start!

Miss the YPIG session at last year's EB? You're in luck – a fantastic summary of this session has just been published in *Advances in Nutrition*! Be sure to check out "[Navigating the Current Job Market – Grab a Hold of Your Future Now!](#)" by past YPIG chair Dr. Holiday Durham and Dr. Ann McDermott of Johns Hopkins University. A great resource for any young professional in nutrition!

Thank You To Our Sponsors!

The YPIG would like to express our sincere appreciation to the following sponsors for their support:



YPIG is continually seeking and accepting opportunities for sponsorship. Sponsorship enables us to carry out our mission to provide networking and career advancement opportunities for the young professionals of ASN.

Contributing partners will also be recognized in the YPIG newsletter, as well as other ASN communications and the ASN website (www.nutrition.org).

There is great potential for your organization to develop lifelong relationships with emerging experts in the field of nutrition through collaborations with YPIG.

If you or your organization would like to assist in our fundraising efforts, please contact ASN staff member Katie Oster (koster@nutrition.org). All donation amounts are appreciated!

YPIG Executive Board

The YPIG Executive Board is hard at work developing programs and events for you at the ASN Sessions at Experimental Biology in San Diego. More details to come in the coming months, so keep your eyes peeled!

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Michael Kelley for his incredibly helpful contributions to this newsletter!

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*There are just 4 steps to
advancing your career.*

Making Plans To Improve your Career

We all have aspirations, it's the reason we pursued higher education. Perhaps you want to go into academia and discover the next great nutrition and health connection. Or maybe you want to go into private industry and help food companies make healthy products for consumers. Maybe you want to go into business for yourself. Or maybe you have no clue what you want!

No matter what your goal is, you need a plan in order to accomplish it. At YPIG, our goal is to try and help you navigate this exciting time in your career. So what's our plan to help you in 2014? In the newsletter this year, we are going to provide you with a series of tools to help you in your professional journey.

The YPIG 4-Step Plan On How to Accomplish Your Career Goal:

Step 1: *Identify Your Goal.* First things first – you need to decide what you want to accomplish. How do we do that? Doing a self-assessment is a good start. (See page 4). Once you decide what you want, the next step is to start trying to get it.

Step 2: *Learn About Your Goal.* What's the best way to do that? By talking with people who have accomplished your goal (or similar goals) is a good start. Where's a good place to discuss your career goals with other professionals in the field of nutrition science? National meetings such as the ASN Sessions at Experimental Biology of course, and fortunately this year's meeting is fast approaching! More on this to come in the spring.

Step 3: *Prepare for Your Goal.* If you want to make any kind of career transition, then you need to have the essentials prepared, namely your CV/resume. This fall, we will have some resume preparation tips to help you out.

Step 4: *Accomplish Your Goal.* Want to get that new job? Then you better ace that interview by preparing (using steps 1-3). At the end of the year, we'll finish out our roadmap to success with some interview tips and other advice for moving on to your next step.

That's our plan for the year – now it's time for you to make one too. Here's to a successful 2014!



*Career Plan Step 1:
Find out what you want to
be when you grow up!*

Self-Assessment to Find Your Career Path

You made the decision to head to graduate school to get a degree in nutrition, but have you really thought about what you'd like to do with that degree? If you're struggling with trying to find your next steps, now is the time to really think about yourself and where your strengths are so you can find the career that fits you best.

To start your self-assessment, think back to when you were a child (maybe 10 years old or less), and maybe even ask friends or family who knew you when you were young to share their thoughts with you. Some things to ask yourself and others: what did you spend time on, gravitate to, always seem to be doing when time was free? What did you seem to be good at, and what brought you joy?

In the present, spend some time thinking about what activities you are engaged in that give you a sense of energy, and which ones give you a feeling of dragging, or lack of accomplishment? You can often start these two lists from recall, but given our current stages in the profession, it is very valuable to make note of when your mind says "I wish I could keep doing this and didn't have to stop" and when it says "I would rather do almost anything than this", and make note of them. After just a few instances, you will find a pattern that speaks very much to activities which are within your strengths, and activities which are not.

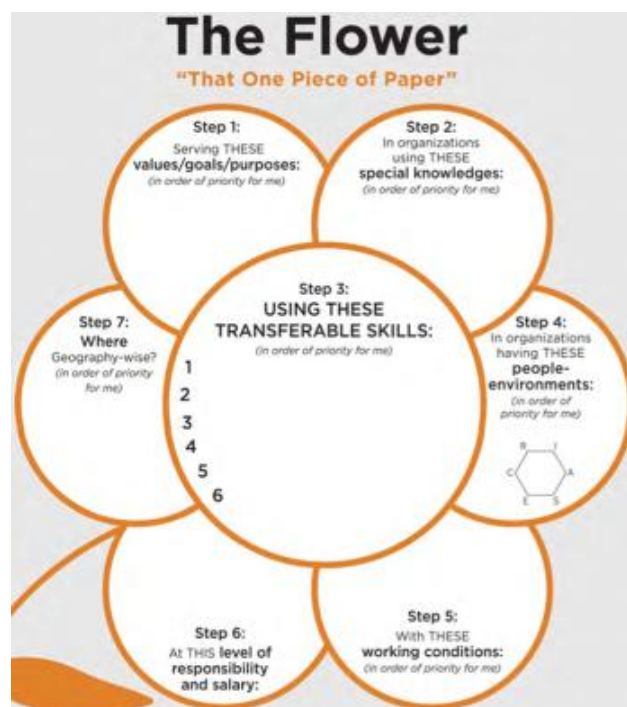
For young professionals, recollections about classes can also help. Ask yourself: which classes were really interesting or engaging, regardless of their topic? Here, one must include undergraduate and any other classes, not just graduate classes. The same can be said for classes or activities (almost any kind) outside of the normal work environment – think volunteer or leisure time. Again, there should be two lists – one list of favorites, and one list of "yuck." With a few of these lists, one will have much more insight into strengths and best possible work roles.

Self-Assessment Book – What Color Is Your Parachute?

Still coming up empty? Consider using some tools to help you with your assessment. ["What Color Is Your Parachute"](#) by Richard Bolles is a valuable resource for anybody looking to find the perfect job. Inside you will find a series of self-assessment tools designed to help you find the perfect career choice for you. One of the most notable is the [Flower Diagram](#), which is a self-assessment tool that walks you through identifying your goals and your transferable skills (i.e., what you can do, or perhaps what you are good at), with the ultimate goal of identifying the type of environment that would let you work at your best. This assessment, when sufficient time and reflection are put into it, can result in an "Aha!" moment, when one realizes why one is thriving or not thriving in a given situation.

Aside from the Flower Diagram, there are tools or forms in "What Color is Your Parachute" that can help one line up these various strengths with different opportunities. They provide a matrix in which the strengths are listed in one direction and the jobs are listed in the other. Then you go through the matrix and mark each intersection where a strength intersects with a given job. Of course, very few jobs are perfect fits, but the aim is to maximize fit between job roles and your strengths, and then try to find ways to minimize the time you spend in the non-strength items.

Spend some time reflecting on your strengths – this could be the key to finding the right path for you. Once you finish that step, the next step is to go out and try to accomplish your goals! In the next newsletter, we will outline a few tips to help you network with other professionals at Experimental Biology so you can start to identify ways to grab your ideal job.



The [Flower Diagram](#) provides a tool to help you in your self-assessment



Member Spotlight: Amy Griel Preston, PhD, RD

This member spotlight is on Amy Griel Preston, PhD, RD; Staff Scientist in Food Research & Discovery: Adjacencies Research at The Hershey Company. At Hershey's, Dr. Preston's responsibilities include leading the development and management of their clinical nutrition program, as well as identifying new product technologies and creating nutrition communication materials. Amy has an undergraduate degree in Kinesiology from Penn State University and an MEd in Exercise Physiology from the University of Virginia. She returned to Penn State University for her PhD in Nutrition Science, where her research was focused on dietary fats and cardiovascular health

Amy Griel Preston, PhD, RD

Current:

Staff Scientist,
Food Research & Discovery
Adjacencies Research
The Hershey Company

Education:

PhD – Penn State University
RD – Penn State University
MS – University of Virginia
BS – Penn State University

At the Hershey Company, Dr. Preston has stayed very active in the nutrition science community. She has regularly published on the effects of cocoa and chocolate consumption on vascular health, and on the effects of snacking on weight loss. Currently, Dr. Preston serves as a member of the Alumni Board for both the College of Health and Human Development as well as the Nutritional Sciences Department at Penn State University. Furthermore, Amy has been the recipient of multiple professional awards, including the Mary Lipscomb Hamrick Memorial Scholarship from the American Dietetic Association. She is also a member of several professional societies, including the American Society for Nutrition, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and the Collegiate and Professional Sports Dietitians Association.

YPIG: Give us some insight as to your professional experience so far, and what got you interested in nutrition.

Amy Preston: After completing my undergrad in Kinesiology at Penn State I decided to go to graduate school at The University of Virginia to get my Masters in Exercise Physiology. As part of that program I had a clinical assistantship within the Cardiac Rehab program; half of my time there was as an assistant to the Registered Dietitian. I knew that I wasn't done learning let and really appreciated the combination of exercise physiology and nutrition. As a result I returned to Penn State to pursue my PhD in Nutritional Sciences under the direction of Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton. While working in Dr. Kris-Etherton's lab a lot of the research that I was involved with was very clinically based and I knew I wanted to continue to work with people so I decided to complete the requirements for the Dietetic Internship while also completing my PhD. At the conclusion of my PhD work I enrolled in the Penn State Dietetic Internship Program; as part of this program there is an Enrichment Rotation at the end that allows you to choose an area of focus that you are interested in for a 4-week rotation. I had a very strong interest in the food industry and the last study that I ran in Dr. Kris-Etherton's lab was a Macadamia Nut Study funded by The Hershey Company. Based on the networking that I had done then I was able to complete my Enrichment Rotation at The Hershey Company. While I was there a position was posted; I interviewed for it on the last day of my Enrichment Rotation and started about a month later.

When I made the decision to switch from Exercise Physiology to pursue a PhD in Nutrition I had never taken a Biochemistry class and had really only taken one Nutrition class as an undergrad. Although it was a bit scary at the time to pursue a PhD in an academic area that I didn't have a lot of experience in it was also exciting at the same time. Although I had to take some undergraduate courses to get myself up to speed it really helped build a strong nutrition foundation for myself moving forward.

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Member Spotlight: Amy Preston, PhD, RD

Amy Preston: Networking is also extremely important. I had actually grown up going to the same church that Dr. Kris-Etherton attended and our families knew each other well. From there I was able to continue the connections that I had made with The Hershey Company from my PhD work to my Dietetic Internship and ultimately to a position in the food industry. I continue to mentor undergraduate students at Penn State and serve on the Penn State Nutrition Alumni Board to stay connected and in touch with fellow Nutrition Alumni. Finally, by combining my exercise physiology background with nutrition I was able to position myself as having a unique educational background that others didn't have. Whether it is a double major, dual degrees, an emphasis in a particular area or applying a completely new skill or technology, such as social media, to the nutrition field – finding a way to make yourself unique to a potential employer may allow you to stand out in the interview process as someone that they would be foolish not to hire!

YPIG: Can you tell us a little about your current position? What are some major goals you hope to accomplish through this position?

Amy Preston: In my current position I work as a Nutrition Scientist and Registered Dietitian within Research & Development at The Hershey Company. As part of this position I currently lead the development and management of our clinical nutrition program, identify and develop new product technologies, work on product development teams, develop nutrition communication materials, and serve as a nutrition resource for policy and marketing projects within The Hershey Company. My primary goals for my current position are to continue to explore and learn more about the health benefits of natural cocoa and dark chocolate and to identify ways that we can bring those benefits to consumers.

I am also currently an Adjunct Instructor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at Penn State University. As part of this position I developed and lead a Research Rotation for the Penn State Dietetic Internship Program. This has been a great way for me to stay connected to the academic world and to help teach dietetic interns about nutrition research and the role of a nutrition scientist in the food industry setting.

YPIG: What have been some challenges/opportunities you have encountered transitioning into an industry career?

Amy Preston: As I transitioned to a career in the food industry I quickly realized how naive I was when it came to the “business world”. Within the scientific and nutrition community we have our list of acronyms and big words that no one else can understand. I quickly learned that the marketing and business community has their own list of acronyms and terms that I had never heard of. While this was daunting at first I quickly learned to ask questions and to pay more attention at meetings when business decisions were being discussed. I also reached out to my cross-functional business partners and would ask them additional questions so that I could have a better understanding of the interaction between the science and business functions within the company. My curiosity and desire to learn more enabled me to be a part of projects where I had the opportunity to become even closer to business decisions. I was also recently selected to be part of a Global Management Competition that the company participated in, allowing me to learn even more about business, management and operations – areas that I never thought I would have been interested in before entering the food industry.

YPIG: What is the best part of your job?

Amy Preston: The best part about my job is the opportunity to apply science to products, tools and information that millions of consumers can use on a daily basis. This is truly an application of translational nutrition that is so important to the health of consumers. I also really enjoy the diversity in my job; no two days are the same and I get the opportunity to learn about and apply a broad range of nutrition topics to the work that I do.

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Member Spotlight: Amy Preston, PhD, RD

YPIG: Tell us something about what do you enjoy outside of work?

Amy Preston: Outside of work I enjoy volunteering in the local community. As a nutrition geek at heart I enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes that incorporate more healthful ingredients. I also enjoy running and training for half marathons...with a full marathon still on my bucket list!

YPIG: What key piece(s) of advice would you give to young professionals looking to advance your career?

Amy Preston: My three pieces of advice from my story are: 1) Be open to new possibilities that may be outside your comfort zone, 2) Network, network, network, and 3) Find a way to make you stand out as an individual by creating a unique niche that you can provide for a potential employer.

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Get The Word Out!

Spread the word and the contents of this newsletter to your young professional colleagues with an invitation to join YPIG. Membership is our future and provides the resources to maintain the group's activities and technical programming. Please visit our website: <http://www.nutrition.org/join>

Near the end of your postdoc and looking for a new job? Make sure to check out the ASN job board (<http://jobs.nutrition.org/jobs>).

You can help us extend and improve opportunities: contribute to the Postdoc/Young Professional Fund, which is dedicated to support early-career activities. No gift is too small to have an impact! Submitting your contribution is easy and convenient online at www.nutrition.org/contribute.

Interested in writing an article for the newsletter? Send an email to Eric Ciappio (eric.ciappio@dsm.com) to let us know! We are happy to publish on any topic that might be of interest to our young professional readers. Plus, getting involved with ASN by participating in activities such as the newsletter is a great way to increase your visibility within the field of nutrition!



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