

Communiqué Regarding the 2023 Annual General Meeting

June 30, 2023

The College's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on June 20, 2023. The College thanks those that attended and participated in the AGM.

Motion for Special Meeting

During this meeting, a discussion arose regarding the recent decision of the College to have the accreditation of dietetics education programs completed by Equal, an established and national accreditation service provider. A motion was introduced requesting the College's Board of Directors to establish a joint task force to revisit and address the accreditation service provider selected by the College. However, accreditation was not on the AGM agenda as an item of official business. Further, registrants were not provided with advanced notice of this motion. A motion was then passed to defer discussion regarding the accreditation of dietetics education programs to a Special Meeting of the College.

Upon further review of the [College Bylaws](#) and consultation with the College's legal counsel, the Board has determined that the motion was out of order. The motion did not satisfy the requirements for the calling of a Special Meeting pursuant to the College's bylaws. Clause 18.8 of the College's bylaws establishes the criteria for a Special Meeting to be called:

18.8: Special Meetings of the College shall be called to deal with unusual or extraordinary circumstances of an immediate nature. These meetings must be called:

18.8.1 when requested by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the Board;
or

18.8.2 upon receipt of written requests from a minimum of 10% of the total College members holding an active practising or active practising with conditions or restrictions licence.

Setting aside the requirement for the request for a Special Meeting to be in writing, the motion was only approved by thirty-four (34) registrants, which is short of the 10% requirement prescribed by the College's bylaws (i.e., fifty-eight (58) registrants). The College's bylaws are essential to its statutory framework and critical to transparent and objective governance. The bylaws are established under the authority of section 9 of the *Dietitians Act*.

Registrants may call a Special Meeting to discuss dietetic education program accreditation by submitting to the College a written request approved by at least 10% of active registrants.

It is important to note that notwithstanding any motion passed at an AGM or Special Meetings of the College, the authority to approve dietetic education programs rests exclusively with the College's Board of Directors. This authority is stated in section 2(l) of the *Dietitians Act*. This means that the Nova Scotia Legislature has entrusted the Board of Directors, as fiduciaries of the College, to approve dietetic education programs to serve and protect the public interest. Motions approved by the College's registrants cannot override the Board's statutory obligation to approve dietetic education programs.

Dietetics education program accreditation

Previously, the Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP) was the accreditor of dietetic education programs in Canada. Dietitians of Canada (DC) held the contract with PDEP to be the service provider for accreditation. In the fall of 2021, DC provided notice to end their contract. This contract end date was March 31, 2022.

Following receipt of this notice, the Alliance of Canadian Dietetic Regulatory Bodies (the Alliance) and provincial regulators explored options over a 7-month period for a new accreditor. In the Spring of 2022, EQual was approved as the new accreditor by the Alliance and all provincial dietetic regulators in Canada, including the NSCDN's Board of Directors. EQual is a specialized accreditation program for professional health education programs administered by Accreditation Canada.

Over the past two years, the Alliance regularly communicated with all dietetic education programs in Canada through email, formal letters, and virtual meetings regarding this upcoming change. Further, the NSCDN (and its predecessor NSDA) consulted and met with education programs in Nova Scotia to listen to and discuss concerns. Meetings between NSCDN/NSDA and the dietetic education programs chairs were held in the winter of 2021, summer of 2022 and most recently in May 2023. Additionally, there were multiple formal and informal written communications exchanged over the past two years regarding this change.

In the course of exploring options for a new accreditor, the NSCDN Board considered alternatives to EQual – but no other available accreditors were deemed to have the same level of expertise and experience in the accreditation of health education programs. The Board's decision to rely on Accreditation Canada (EQual) was made considering all stakeholders' interests, including educators, practising dietitians, students, government, employers, and the public. In College decisions, the public interest is paramount to ensure dietitians are prepared to practice competently. The NSCDN Board's decision to approve EQual as the new accreditor is final.

During the 2022 AGM, a motion was approved regarding stakeholder collaboration. A response to the motion presented at the 2022 AGM was communicated in the [Winter 2023 Newsletter](#). Additional information regarding accreditation of dietetic education programs was presented in the [February 2023 Newsletter](#).

This change will not impact the registration and licensing status of current registrants with the College. Existing PDEP accreditation awards will be recognized, for the purpose of program approval and registration eligibility, until August 31, 2023. Dietetic education programs that have yet to transition to the new accreditation service provider beyond this date will be considered non-accredited. Graduates of non-accredited programs who apply for registration with the NSCDN will require assessment through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process. More information regarding this process can be found in policy #16 of the [NSCDN Registration Policies](#).