

An Overview of the RD Mentorship Program

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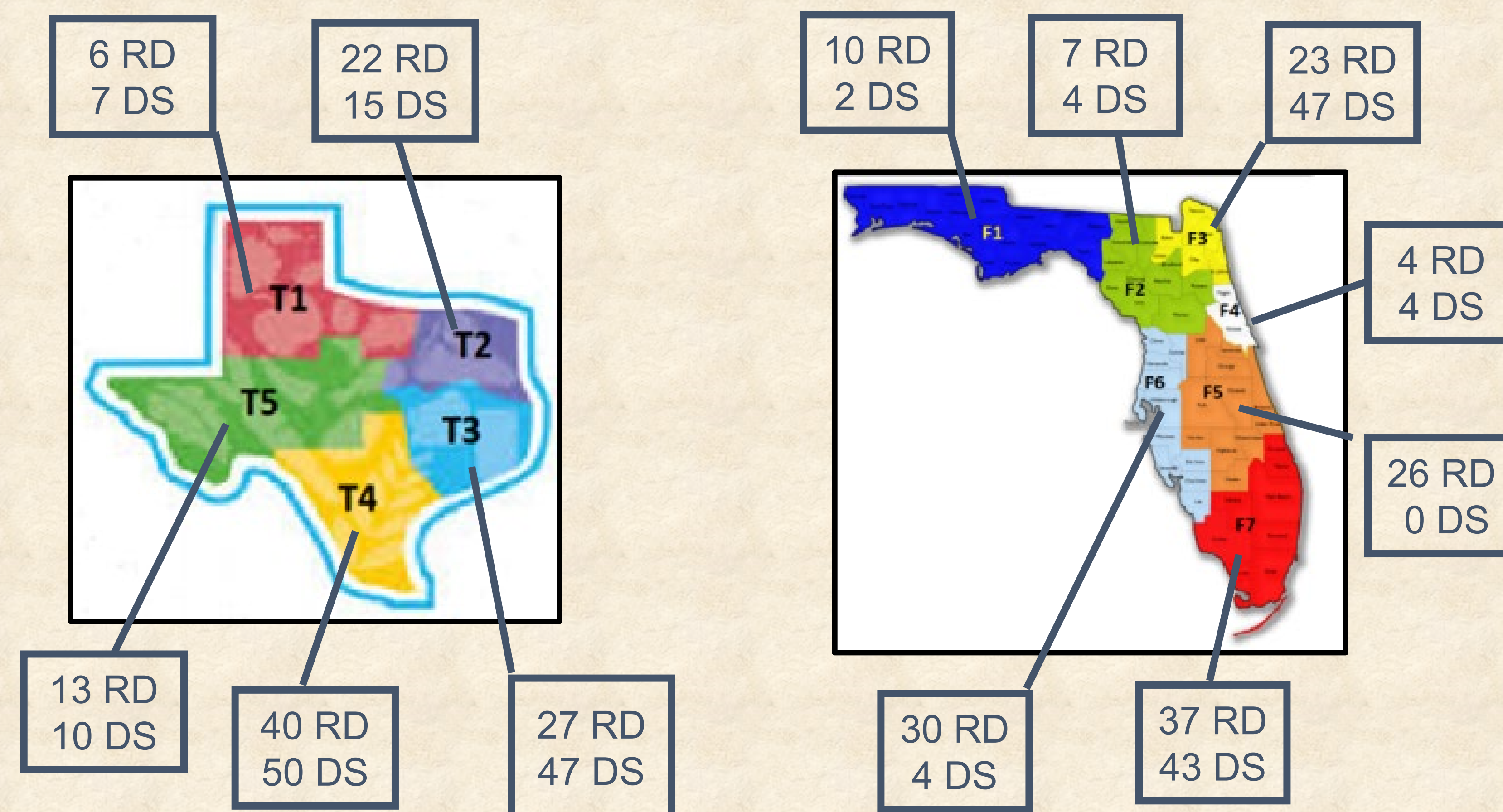
ABSTRACT

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics highlights the need for more mentorship opportunities for Registered Dietitian (RDs) in their 2017 Strategic Plan. There are a limited number of published structured programs that facilitate relationships between practicing dietitians and dietetics students (DS). The purpose of the RD Mentorship Program is to determine the impact of a project-based mentoring experience on self-perceptions of mentoring and professional advancement. The RD Mentorship Program partners RDs with DS to work on specific nutrition-related projects. Partnerships are required to meet at least once per month to work on their project. After piloting the program for several years, the program launched state-wide in Texas and Florida for 2019-2020. Currently, there are 178 RDs and 202 DS which includes a 15% attrition rate from the start. At baseline, 23% of RDs currently had a student working with them, and 62% of RDs reported being confident in their mentoring ability. As for DS, 44% had worked with an RD before at baseline and 57% reported confidence in their mentee abilities. In the mid-program evaluation survey (n=110), a majority of participants (53%) said they found the program very useful or extremely useful, and 86% of the participants said they would be interested in participating in the program in the future. It is hoped that the RD Mentorship Program will strengthen the working knowledge of students and be an innovative approach to building the bridge between student and practitioner, fulfilling part of the Academy's Strategic Plan.

MENTORING IN DIETETICS

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics listed mentoring and mentorship as a top priority in 2017 Visioning Report¹
- Mentorship is a required ACEND standard for dietetics students and interns²
- Lack of student support/mentorship/modeling was second-highest response in a survey of dietetics students on barriers in undergraduate training³
- CDR and ACEND acknowledge a preceptor shortage in dietetics⁴
- Only 50% of dietetic program preceptors perceived that they provided a supportive learning experience to their interns⁵
- Teaching ability ranked high in an evaluation of characteristics of effective preceptors, emphasizing the importance of learning pedagogy⁶
- Two previous studies that paired RDNs with dietetics students reported improved technical skills, increased job satisfaction, and increased career opportunities as a result of participation⁷⁻⁸

DEMOGRAPHICS



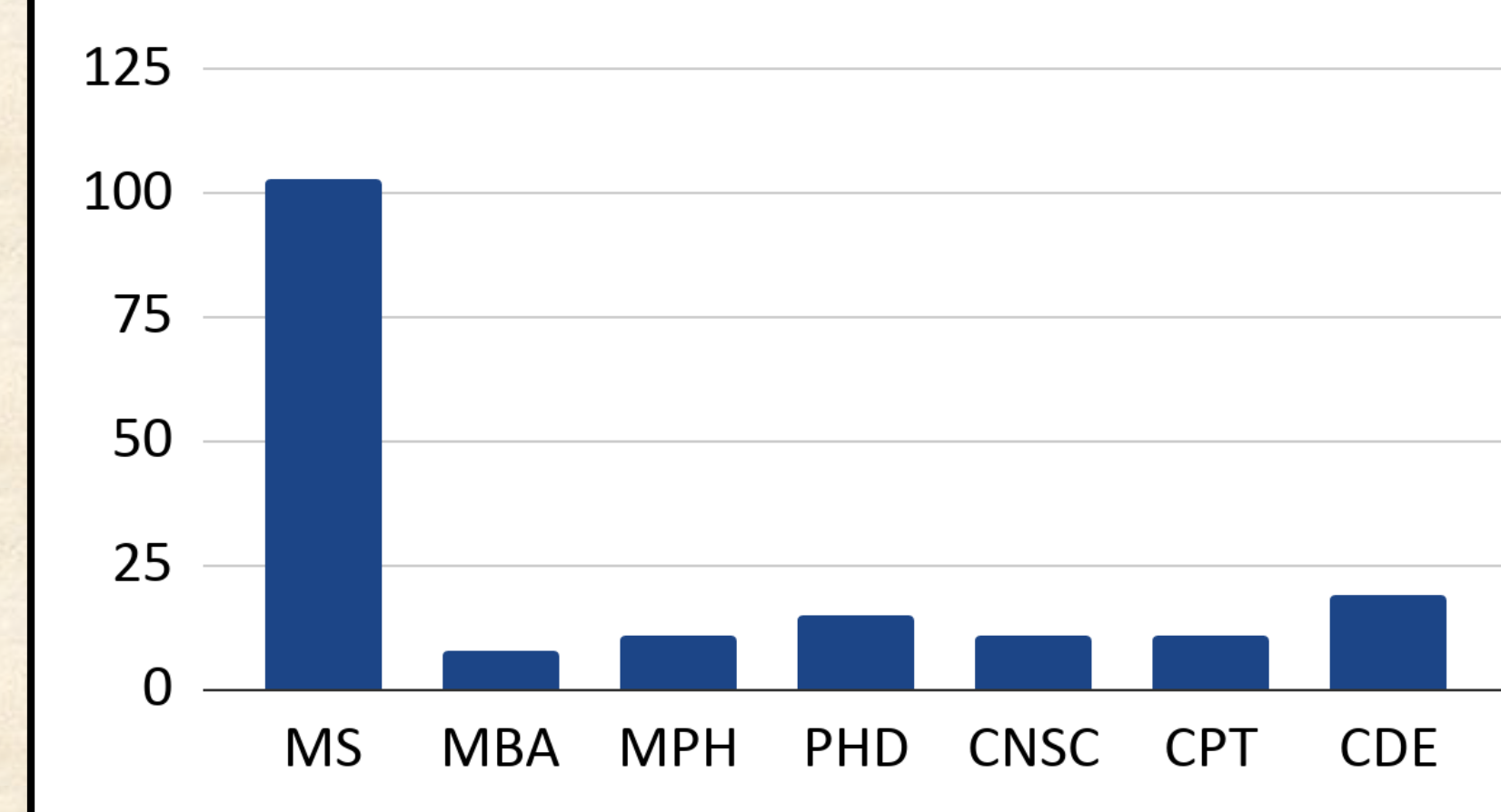
PROGRAM TIMELINE

- Jul 2019**
 - Recruitment of RDs
 - DS recruitment begins
- Aug 2019**
 - DS recruitment ends
 - Mentors and mentees matched
 - Informed consent collected
 - Pre-survey sent out
- Dec 2019**
 - Midterm evaluation sent out
- Mar 2020**
 - Program ends
 - Post-survey sent out

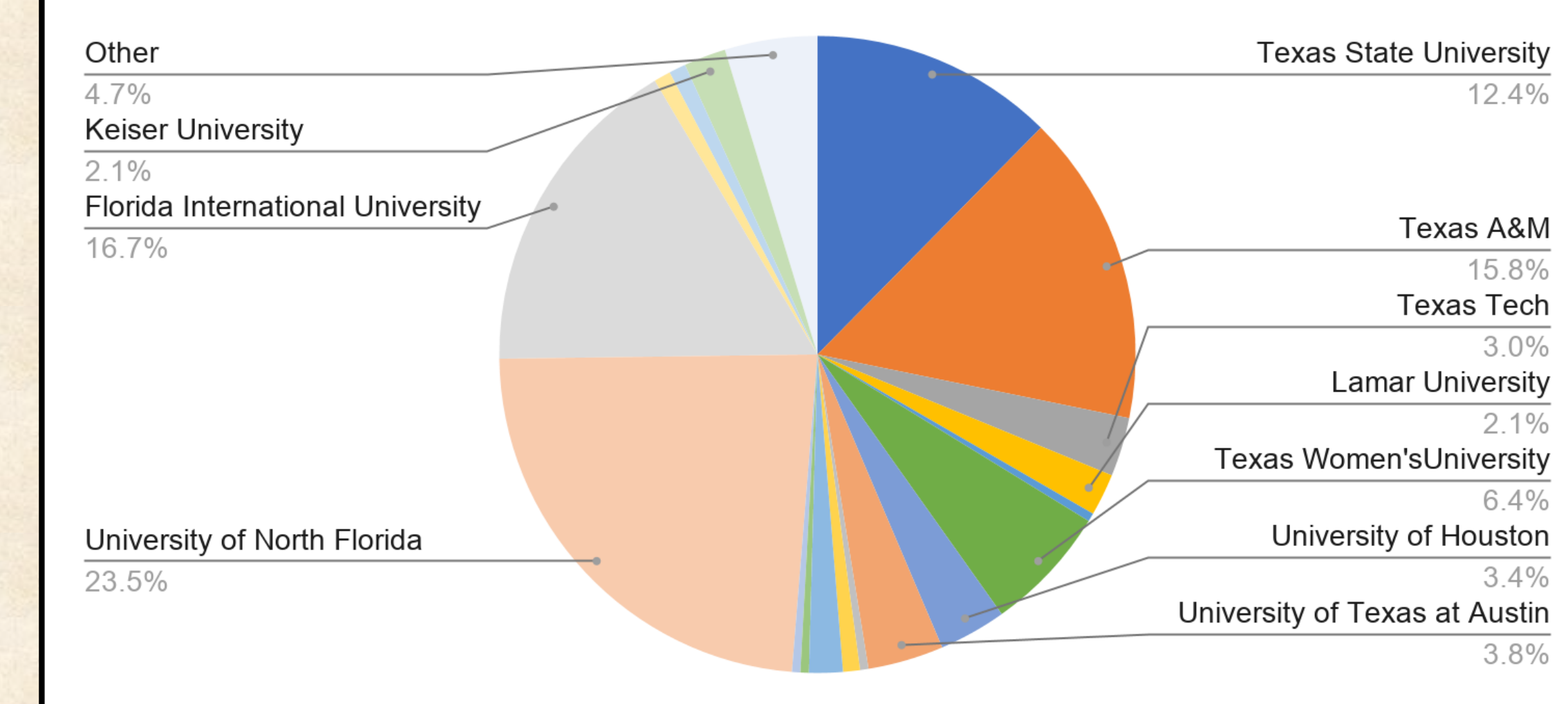
Examples of Projects

- Blog Posts
- Recipe Development & Modification
- Social Media Content
- Client Educational Materials
- Literature Reviews
- Health Fair Presentations
- Meal Plans
- Nutrient Analysis
- Monthly Newsletters
- Website Development
- Food Photography

MENTOR CREDENTIALS

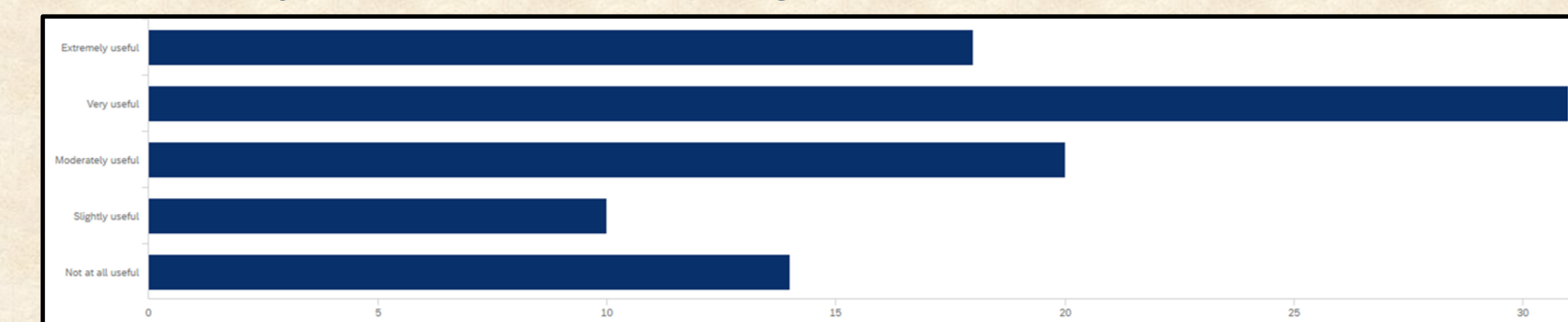


MENTEE SCHOOLS

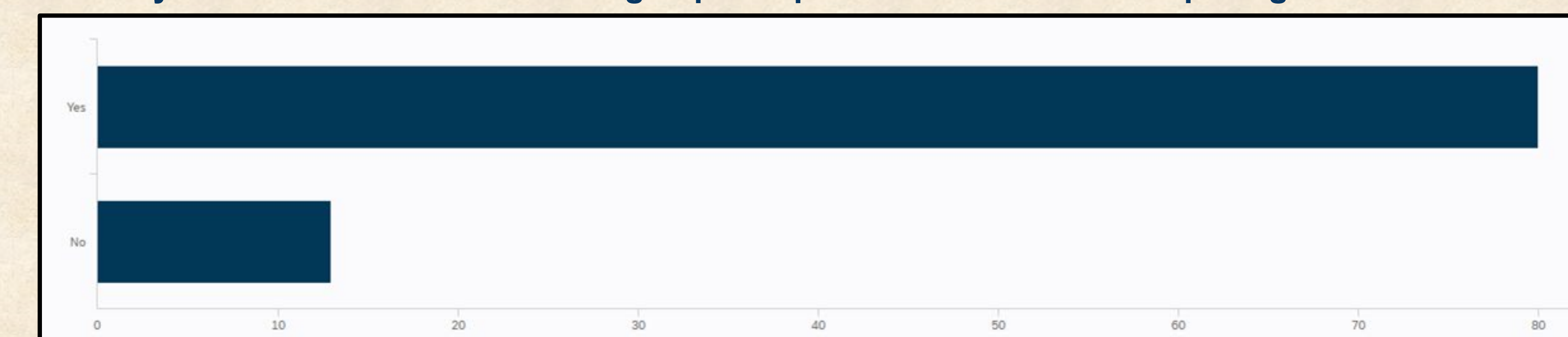


MIDTERM EVALUATION RESULTS

How useful do you feel the RD Mentorship Program has been thus far?



Would you be interested in continuing to participate in the RD Mentorship Program in the future?



Did you like the variety of dietitians and/or projects that you could choose from in the application?



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