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For immediate release

Holly (Burriss) Kyzer ('00) (Director of Dietetic Internship Program and Assistant Professor of Dietetics)

By Jon Merryman

November 18, 2022

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at comm-mark@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

Growing up around Ouachita's campus, Holly Kyzer knew Ouachita was going to be an integral part of her life, but she never guessed she would be a faculty member, much less an instrumental part of re-launching graduate programs at the university.

She earned her bachelor's degree from Ouachita in biology, with the goal of serving the community as a doctor. When she discovered the sight of blood was a problem for her, she recalibrated her career plans to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

After taking a few more prerequisite hours at Ouachita, she was admitted to the Dietetic Internship (DI) program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and later earned a Master of Science in Nutrition there, as well. Kyzer served for 17 years as the RDN for Baptist Health Medical Center in Arkadelphia and also taught as an adjunct and practicum instructor for Ouachita as well as Henderson State University.

She joined Ouachita full-time in 2019 to direct the university's new Dietetic Internship. Ouachita was the first faith-based university in the state to offer this graduate program, which is a requirement for students wishing to become RDNs.

"The nutrition and dietetics program here has always been innovative, offering practicum with career shadowing and experience at the undergrad level," Kyzer said. "We've had a full slate of 12 in our two

latest cohorts in our Dietetic Internship program, and our first students have started our Master of Science in Nutrition (MSN) program, which launched this year, as well. The new master's program allows students to complete both their internship and MSN degree in just 15 months."

In coming years, the field's accreditation body will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible for the RDN exam. Kyzer's experience in the field is a major benefit for Ouachita students. In fact, 100% of Ouachita's first cohort of Dietetic Internship grads passed the RDN exam, and results for the second cohort will come out soon.

"Holly is a wonderful addition to the nutrition and dietetics faculty," said Dr. Detri Brech, Ouachita's Charles S. and Elma Grey Goodwin Holt Professor of Dietetics and Pre-Medical Studies as well as the chair of the Department of Nutrition & Dietetics. "She leads the Dietetic Internship with expertise and passion to help the interns succeed in their goal of becoming Registered Dietitian Nutritionists."

Because the DI program is small—limited to 12 students by its accrediting agency—both the undergraduate and graduate students in the department, along with the faculty, form a tight community.

"My co-workers are absolutely wonderful. We pray together, check in throughout the day by text, calls or e-mail; it's truly my second family up here on the fourth floor of JSC," Kyzer said. "It's like that with my students as well. I have a candy bucket in my office. (I love sweets!) And I encourage students to stop by and say hi, grab a treat and catch up."

Those personal connections make a lasting impact not only in her student's lives and studies, but on hers, as well, Kyzer noted.

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Holly Kyzer

"Students in my classes pray together once a week as well and keep a prayer list," she explained. "My daughter had surgery recently, and my students were so sweet to keep checking in to see how she was doing. Ouachita is a special place, and it is a joy to work here!"

Kyzer and her husband, Jared, live in Donaldson, Ark., with their daughter, Emma, who will be a freshman at Ouachita this fall and teenage son, Reid. They are members of Donaldson Missionary Baptist Church. Holly will begin her Doctor of Clinical Nutrition program at Kansas University Medical Center this fall with plans to complete her degree in 2026, the same year Emma graduates from Ouachita and Reid graduates from high school.



By Jon Merryman, director of alumni relations