Good afternoon and thanks for joining us I am Judy Simpson. What's for dinner? Now that's a question everybody asks and is the one question we all have to answer each and every day. Food dominates our culture and the choices of what to eat are often at odds with what we should be eating. Cooking may be considered an art but nutrition is science. Joining me today is Amy Nickerson the director of the Masters of Science and Dietetics Program at the University of Vermont’s Department of Nutrition and Food Science. Welcome to you. How has the role of the dietitian changed over the last 30 years?

Amy.: That's an interesting question. I think historically dietitians have been perceived to be the food police and back when I first started in my career to work with efficient her client you were given a list of foods to eat and a list of foods to avoid. You just basically preached that and the patient or the client went off and probably had a lot of questions about where to begin. And now there's been this healthy transition where dietitians are trained to understand theories of behavior change and are taking more of a coaching role rather than preaching the gospel of good eating habits.

Judy.: Also there seems to be a lot of leeway as far as don't eat this and don't eat that. Will start slowly make a slow change or if this is what you should eat here are some ways to prepare it which I think is a big thing. All the sudden if you're supposed to eat a certain thing and you never even before how you prepare it.

Amy.: Many people know the basic facts about food that they don't know how to take it from that knowledge to an actual behavior. Your point about taking a small step. Serve a small steps in the right direction is really how long term
behavior change happens. There are also many people who are impatient with that slow process too. Our job is to remind people that major change probably won't last very long and what can we do looking at your lifestyle and what your special needs are to help you move you along that continuum of where you are now to where you need to get to.

Judy.: Why's there so much emphasis on diet nutrition nowadays?

Amy.: The reason for that I think is because of the connection between the food we eat and our physical activity or lack thereof and the connection to chronic disease. The majority of chronic diseases that plague Americans right now are related to food and nutrition and physical inactivity for the most part. Heart disease cancer diabetes.

Judy.: How many students are in the UVM dietetics program and what do they study?

Amy.: We have 12 students in the program and it's a two year program so the first year students operate some work independently of the second year students. We are required by our parent organization the American dietetic association which is just undergone a name change. We're now the academy and nutrition and dietetics but we have to provide a certain array of content area so they get experience in the foodservice management realm. Community nutrition and clinical. Our program concentration is community health and nutrition because we feel like that's the biggest need in Vermont. Although they get a strong clinical experience in the hospital that's what I mean by clinical experience. They're working in the public health setting school nutrition programs long term care facilities.

Judy.: Once the students graduated become registered dietitians?

Amy.: First of all they have to graduate then they have to pass a national qualifying exam it's the RD exam exam to be a registered dietitian. Our program has a wonderful pass rate. Every student who's taking it on their first try it has passed.

Judy.: No kidding that's great.

Amy.: That's an indicator of the quality of the program from a national standpoint.
Judy.: That's fantastic. Over the past year on across the fence UVM dietetic students have been taking viewers around the farm stands food Co OP's farmers markets to promote buying and eating local food. Here is a highlight from Kelsey Giroux and Lindsay Laws visit the Mazza's Berry Farm in Colchester.

This one looks good nice blue and gorgeous. What are you going to do with your berries Kels? I'm going to use some to make a recipe later. Then I'm going to use the rest probably frees them and save them for later in the season. Yeah I like to stock up on berries while they're nice and ripe. And they really easy to freeze. Great for smoothies later on.

Did you know ½ C of blueberries is a serving? It can storage are goal of 9 to 11 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. That's good I could eat bluebirds all day. The other really good but it's also important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables so you're getting all the colors in. Fruits and vegetables that are deep in color and bright have more nutrients in them.

Lindsay what should we tell consumers when berry picking? You want to make sure to look for the darkest purple ones they offer the best flavor in the most nutrients. As you can see in all these berries are not quite ripe yet. There are the dark purple ones and the lighter green ones but as the season goes on these ones will turn bright too.

Judy.: I really into this and tasting that foods and recipes that they've prepared. How has this experience been for them?

Amy.: This has been a great real world experience for them. I think one of the biggest challenges they have found is not talking from a script so much. They've always commented about the questions that Judy will ask on the air. I think that's good for them because as students and their training they tend to be very much focused on the written word so they have to respond spontaneously and that's great its push them out of their comfort zone.

Judy.: In the video clip students talk about home economics like freezing fresh berries. Are today's dietitians home economics teachers of the future?
Amy.: That's a tough question to answer. I think part of the answer to that is that we are food and nutrition professionals so we can't get away from helping people to understand ways to maximize their food dollars so to speak. This whole series on sustainable Food Systems and whatnot has been very helpful in terms of people look at sustainable food and local food and they think it's a little bit out of reach for me from a cost standpoint but the example of picking dairy news has or going to the farmers market has been wonderful example have loved by it while it's fresh by a local and then put it by so to speak.

Judy.: Do you have students who become dietitians with the intent of going to work in public relations firms.

Amy.: That's a little bit all over the map. One student of the six who participated in the taping here this season is very much interested in public communications. I personally think anybody who is a dietitian needs to have really strong communication skills both written and oral communication skills because you're always in teaching mode.

Judy.: The other aspect of across the fence's work with the students was to challenge them to prepare a meal from local products. Here is a sample of what the students accomplished in the across the fence kitchen.

You just put that in their make sure you wash your vegetables before and then we also have some shredded beets.
These are local beets?
Yes. Shredded beets are really easy. Austin how did you sure these?
All I did was peel it and used a grater and grated it up.
Did you cook the beets first.
Nope those are raw.
Raw beets OK.
As you can see they add a really nice color to the salad.
What are some of the nutrients you find in beets?
I always associate dark colors with good stuff.
They I believe have lots of vitamins that's what they have and obviously we tell everyone to eat a rainbow. Like I said in the video and that's just to make sure you get a wide variety of colors. Eating something this red oranges purple greens things like that.
It's true we do eat with our eyes as well.
Yes so what's visually appealing is also going to be delicious.
In season vegetables are also more cost effective. When you buy something that's in season and you by a local lee you tend to pay a little bit less then when is out of season. Also when a fruit or vegetables in season you're going to have a better flavor and that relates to what Amy said because it's not going to have to travel as far.
You can always buy extra and freeze it too if you want to.
Absolutely.
The let's start with the menu Amy I know you'll get us started here.
Sure does going to take the pork that we baked out of the oven. As I mentioned before pork is high protein low-fat piece of meat. We're just going to play that here. Over the pork we have chunky apple cranberry chutney. How did you prepare that?
In a saucepan just add all the ingredients. There's a little bit of honey balsamic vinegar. In the saucepan for 10 or 15 minutes until the apples bit soft but not too mushy.
Tell me why apples are good for you?
They actually have that great antioxidant corsitan like I said it's an anti-oxidant.
How about cranberries?
Cray and berriess are full of vitamin C and fiber.
This is our fruit and yogurt parfait and we're just using some local Cabot yogurt it's very easy to do and it's delicious. These are actually blueberries. It's not blueberry season anymore but you can pick them when it is blueberry season and are so easy to freeze. Rinse them off and pop them into the freezer bag. Basically layer some berries and yogurt. And raspberries you can still get. There are fall raspberries available.
Though there are I assumed raspberry season was over that's good to know. Yup and again there really easy to freeze.
Tell me a little bit about nutritionally what we're getting in this dish?
The raspberries and blueberries provide anti-oxidants and they're high in fiber. Then the vanilla yogurt is high in calcium and there's a vitamin d.
Tell me a little bit about vitamin D and what that does for you.
It helps to absorb calcium.
Which is good obviously.

Judy.: Now I'm hungry. Amy how does the food preparation specially cooking fit into the UVM dietetics program?

Amy.: It's a small part unfortunately. We're working hard to find ways to incorporate more hands on food prep for the students. I think it's a part of their professional training that's going to little bit by the wayside. These food demos that they did on the show have been very good and I've tried to identify
ways to use some of our state of the art cooking facilities that are available on campus. Most students like to cook will come into the program. That's a good thing so they're cooking of their own. When they're out in acacia up certain locations such as the school nutrition program or if they're in a long-term care facility or even Sodexho on campus. To actually do hands on food crops up so they never lose touch with it but I don't think it's as much of an emphasis as it might be.

Judy.: Because you can save berries are great or kale is great but if you add butter, sour cream and all that other stuff that sort of Na gates the positive.

Amy.: It does but from a dietitian's standpoint we'd probably we probably say that's OK but have a small serving of it.

Judy.: When it comes to health do you think people have tougher time with choosing the right foods to eat or preparing them in a healthy way?

Amy.: I do for sure. You just walk into the supermarket and you see the array of food choices and it's interesting the number of food choices has expanded dramatically over the last 20 or 30 years in part to help working women particularly. There's been a nutritional tradeoff for that. In order for food that is shelf stable as we would call it to sit on the shelf for six months or year and then taste good when you the consumer eat it. There's more sugar there's more sodium and it's typically higher in fat.

Judy.: You have been involved with nutrition education for quite some time. How have the students changed?

Amy.: The students have changed in that we are having a greater number of students applied for our program who have had an entirely different career or had an undergraduate degree in different discipline. Those students had an epiphany of sorts and they have decided that they want to be a dietitian so they have to take a number of prerequisites of solid signs background and chemistry background because nutrition is a science and it's based on chemistry. So that we're seeing more and more of that kind of student but as well there still is the student who knows from early on that they want to be a dietitian.

Judy.: Once again if people are involved in this program what are some of the kinds of places where they will be working?
Amy.: I think most people figure that a dietitian will go to work in a hospital. There's this image of a dietitian who might be overweight and a white lab coat watching food from out of the oven. The job market is wide open for dietitians. The more entrepreneurial this spirit the greater the job opportunities. They might be in a publishing realm they could be writing. The Internet has opened up a number of opportunities. Many dietitians are now taking on the role of the health coach and again that goes back to what I said earlier that we understand now that the way to change behavior is small steps looking at your barriers how can you break through those barriers. There's a number of dietitian's who are going into a more coaching role. Then there's the public health realm working with a WIC Program and increasingly school nutrition programs as well. Which is a good fit because of the rising rate of obesity among young children.

Judy.: Exactly. How can people find out more about your program and other aspects of the UVM Food and nutrition department. We do have a web site and its www.UVM.edu/NFS. That is the nutrition and food science web site. You can scroll down and click on the Masters of Science in dietetics program.

Judy.: Terrific. A knee thanks so much for joining us today.

That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson we'll see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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