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Virginia Stage, PhD, RND, LDN Receives the 2018 SNEB Early Professional Achievement Award

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) will honor Virginia Stage, PhD, RND, LDN with the Early Professional Achievement Award at the 2018 Annual Conference in Minn, MN July 21-24 for her notable contributions to the field of nutrition early in her career.

As an Assistant Professor, Stage founded and now directs the Food-Based Early Education (FEEEd) Lab at East Carolina University (ECU). The lab focuses on childhood overweight prevention and conducts a variety of studies, including examining the influence of teachers' backgrounds with food and nutrition, the influence of a teacher's learning strategy on young children, communication between teachers and parents about nutrition and feeding habits and many other critical factors in the weight and health of students. She also looks at factors on a more national scale, including the influence of government policy on food and nutrition education, as well as the activity and eating habits of low income and minority groups. Stage provides teachers with professional development opportunities and works with local, state and national partners to expand programming, in addition to developing evidence-based learning and teaching methods.

Stage teaches both undergraduate and graduate programs in pediatric nutrition education at ECU and prepares dietitians and nutrition students to find and use evidence in their nutrition education and studies. She has mentored her students through award-winning nutrition education research and has brought her students and research to present at previous SNEB conferences. Through her dedication and advocacy for the Society, many of Stage's former students have sustained membership within SNEB and have taken on leadership roles. Stage proves to be a great resource, not only to SNEB, but to her students at ECU as well. Stage has been selected for multiple mentoring and teaching awards, such as the East Carolina University Honor's College 2016 Mentor of the Year, East Carolina University's 2016 College of Allied Health Science Dean's Award for Outstanding Teaching, and the North Carolina Dietetic Association's 2017 Outstanding Dietetic Educator Award.

Throughout her six years of membership with SNEB, Stage has been a leader and contributor to the Society, and through it, has contributed to the advancement of the field of nutrition education. She served on the Child Nutrition Advisory Committee as the Public Policy Liaison and previously held the Higher Education Division Chair position. Currently, Stage is filling the role as the Chair Elect on the Nutrition Education for Children Division and is the 2018 Annual Conference Abstract Co-Chair. Stage has been critical in instrumenting new policy and education through the Society, as she has aided the partnership between SNEB's Higher Education Division and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Nutrition Education of Health Professionals dietetics practice group. Additionally, Stage co-organized the 2017 Higher Education Division Scholarship on the Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

SNEB conference session “Organic Food Debate: Fostering Critical Thinking in the Higher Education Classroom.”

“SNEB has made and will continue to make an impact on the nutrition education and health behaviors of our nation,” Stage said of the Society. “However, we can only be as strong as the people who make up our organization. SNEB offers a place for all of us to build on our own strengths, find our voice, and get the professional support needed to make a real difference in our home communities, nationally, and globally,” Stage said.

Stage has written over 20 journal articles and textbook chapters and has presented dozens of workshops promoting nutrition education. In addition to this year’s honor, Stage has earned several other awards including the North Carolina Dietetic Association Young Dietitian of the Year, two-time winner of an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics doctoral scholarship, and a series of other awards granted to her by ECU. Stage has shown her commitment to the field of nutrition education and to SNEB through her many accolades, education through seminars and workshops, and the promotion of the Society to her students, deeming her a worthy recipient of this award.

The Early Professional Achievement Award honors a member of SNEB that has shown outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the field of nutrition education. The recipient of the award should also be an active contributor to the advancement of SNEB. The winner is nominated by a current member of SNEB and must be in the early stages of their work; approximately one to nine years into their career. The award winner’s achievements can include curriculum development, policy change and advocacy, volunteer efforts for SNEB, among other accomplishments.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior is an international organization of nutrition education professionals who are dedicated to promoting effective nutrition education and healthy behavior through research, policy and practice with a vision of healthy communities, food systems and behaviors. To learn more, visit www.sneb.org.