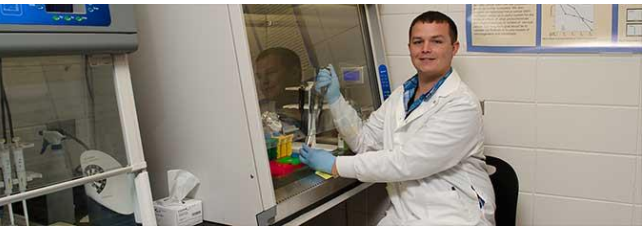




# Innovation and Collaboration: The Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention (TOP) Graduate Certificate Program



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Department of Health and Nutritional Sciences  
South Dakota State University



**Goal:** Create an innovative graduate certificate program in Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention (TOP) that prepares students to work in diverse teams to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

# TOP

Transdisciplinary Childhood Obesity Prevention  
Graduate Certificate Program



Offered through South Dakota State University  
and the University of Nebraska Lincoln

Funded by USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative grant, no 2011-67002-31002





- Thirty-one students have earned a TOP certificate
- Forty-one students currently in-route to earning the TOP certificate
- Student participation from many disciplines
  - Exercise Science
  - Nutrition and Dietetics
  - Counseling
  - Sport and Recreation Studies
  - Communication and Journalism
  - Nursing
  - Plant Science
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Family and Consumer Sciences

### TOP Student Spotlight



**MATRISHA ROBBEBAUER** | Matrish, who is both a mother and a Stronga Lakota, will do a focus group investigation on the nutritional behaviors, beliefs, traditions and habits of families on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. She is pursuing a master's degree in journalism and an undergraduate in degree in dietetics, with the goal of becoming a registered dietitian.

**KIRSTINE HANSEN** | Kirstine researches ways to support children affected by bullying through a program called Building Understanding, Love and Learning for Youth (BULLY). After earning her master's degree in counseling, she wants to work with elementary students in a small school district.

**MEGAN CHESTER** | Megan, a nutritional science graduate student, worked with graphic design students and the Adrenaljet mascot to explore how social marketing can promote health by eating and exercise habits among area fourth graders with a program she called "Super Kids."

**TARA PRATT** | Tara will develop a survey for school administrators, teachers and parents in South Dakota school districts to determine awareness of school wellness policies for nutrition in schools.

**COREY SELLARD** | As a doctoral candidate in exercise science, Corey is investigating any simple methods to make Progression Aerobic Cardiovascular Endurance Test more accurately predictive of fitness in children.



### What is TOP?

TOP is the **TRANSDISCIPLINARY CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION (TOP)** graduate certificate program offered through South Dakota State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Funded by a USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative grant, TOP offers a unique opportunity to engage in transdisciplinary study and approaches to childhood obesity prevention.

Since 2011, graduate students from a mix of disciplines, including nutrition, exercise science, nursing, counseling, plant science and journalism, have engaged in TOP graduate course offerings and experiential experiences while completing their individual plans of study for a master's degree or doctorate in their respective disciplines.

### Why get a TOP certificate?

Involvement in the TOP program enhances and complements a master's or doctoral degree through experiential experiences incorporated into the graduate level coursework. Graduate students from any discipline with an interest in childhood obesity prevention are encouraged to pursue the TOP certificate.

The cause of childhood obesity is multifaceted and strategies to prevent and treat it need to be transdisciplinary. TOP students collaborate and work closely with faculty experts in diverse fields of study including faculty in nutrition, exercise science, health promotion, early childhood education, nursing, counseling and statistics. A limited number of graduate assistantships are available and graduate students in TOP can internally apply for funding to support their research projects.

Earning a TOP certificate distinguishes an individual from others in the field and produces expertise in a competitive job market in need of qualified professionals. Experiences gained as a TOP student will prepare graduates for collaborations with individuals in other disciplines in a career aimed at reducing childhood obesity.





## Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Graduate Certificate Program | TOP

### EDUCATION

#### GRADUATE COURSEWORK

Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention I  
(3 credits, Fall)

Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention II  
(3 credits, Spring)

Practicum, Experiential Learning Experiences  
(1 credit, Fall)

Electives  
(2 credits)

### EXTENSION

#### EXTENSION PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Experiential Learning Experiences

Participation in Extension Based Outreach and Projects  
(Fall & Spring)

### RESEARCH

#### TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH FOCUSED ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Student-led Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Thesis Projects

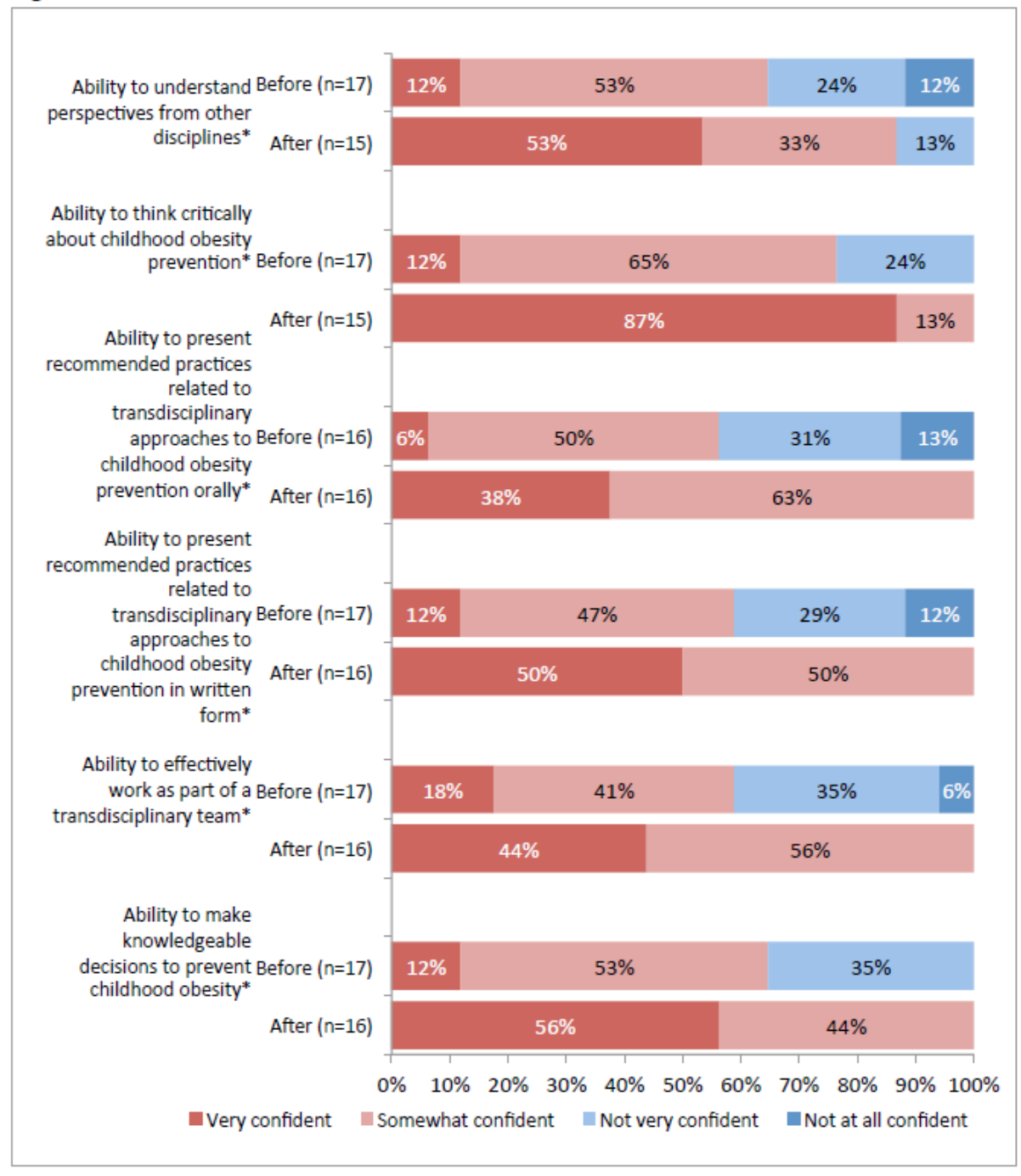
Student-led Grant Writing Projects

Faculty and Extension-led Transdisciplinary Obesity Prevention Projects

Students will graduate with a master's or doctoral degree in their respective field of study and will earn a TOP program certificate upon completion of their degree, TOP specific courses, and experiential learning projects. Thesis/dissertation projects focused on childhood obesity prevention are encouraged.

Annual course evaluation data show significant improvement in student's confidence in their ability to:

**Figure 1. Confidence Before and After Course One**





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Electives  
*(2 credits)*

### EXTENSION

#### EXTENSION PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Experiential Learning  
Experiences

Participation in Extension  
Based Outreach and Projects  
*(Fall & Spring)*

### RESEARCH

#### TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH FOCUSED ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Student-led  
Transdisciplinary Obesity  
Prevention Thesis Projects

Student-led Grant  
Writing Projects

Faculty and Extension-led  
Transdisciplinary Obesity  
Prevention Projects

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# Experiential Learning Experiences



SDSU  
Extension



Personal Interview data indicate that the hands on experiential learning experiences are a key strength that are valued by alumni.





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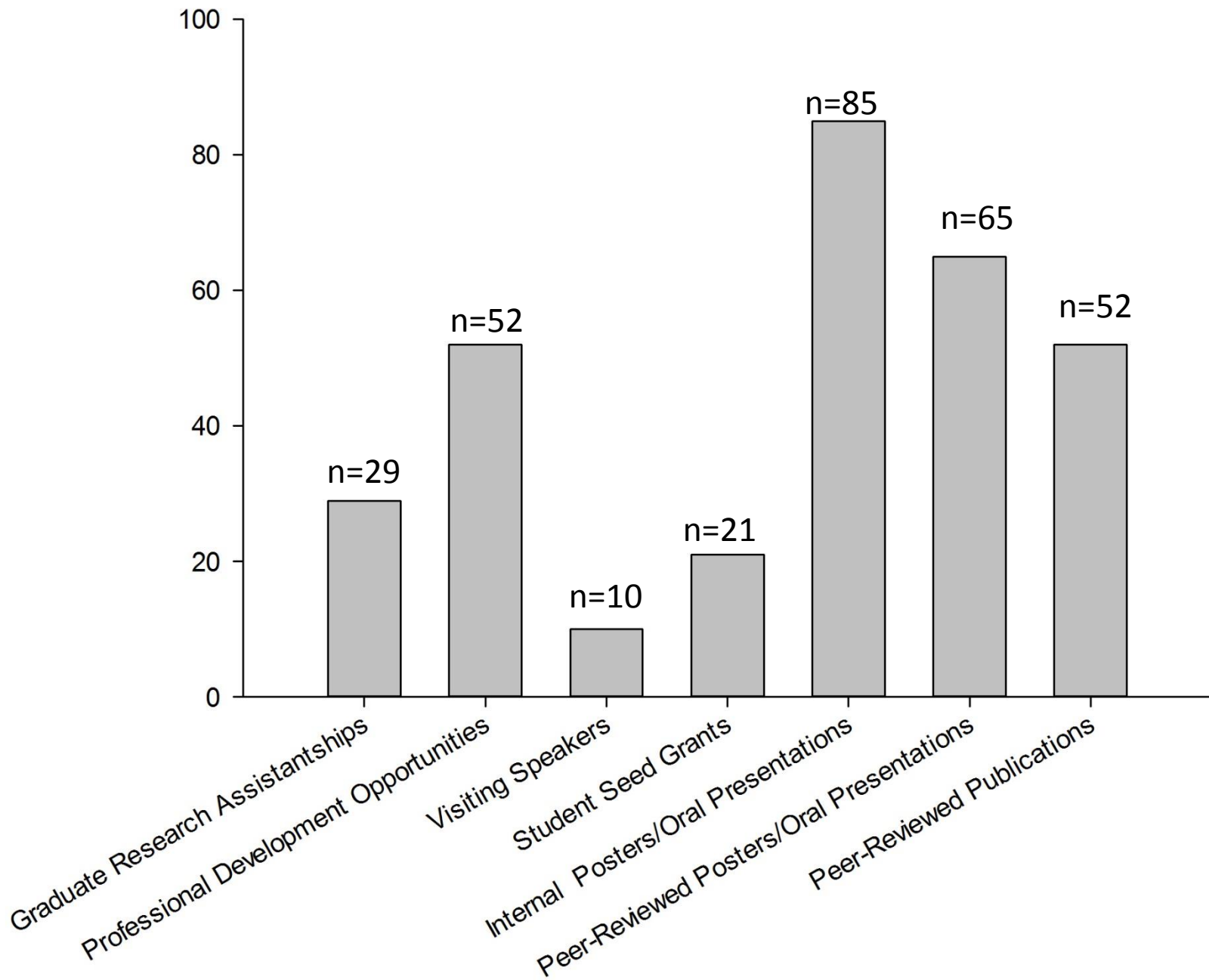
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- Evaluating Student Perceptions and Attitudes regarding teamwork, collaboration, and the value of interprofessional education & practice.
- National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education <https://nexusipe.org/> recognized TOP for innovative approach to IPE.
  - Fostered invitation to be part of the Nation Center’s Nexus



- TOP is a unique and innovative site partnering with the National Center:
  - Community public health focus rather than clinical focus
  - Create an IPE model for a land grant institution

# TOP

Transdisciplinary Childhood Obesity Prevention  
Graduate Certificate Program



## Many Thanks



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