



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The Graduate School

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To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean
Melissa Austin, Associate Dean for Academic Programs
The Graduate School

RE: Review of the Interdisciplinary Nutritional Sciences Program

At its meeting of May 4, 2006, the Graduate School Council met with members of the committee that reviewed the Interdisciplinary Nutritional Sciences Program (Deborah H. Ward, Associate Professor, Psychosocial & Community Health; Daniel Bowen-Pope, Professor, Pathology), with Mike Rosenfeld (Professor of Pathobiology and Interim Director of the Nutritional Sciences Program while Adam Drewnowski is on sabbatical), and with Fred Connell (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Public Health and Community Medicine). The review committee was specifically charged with evaluating the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees offered by the Program.

The Nutritional Science Program is one of 17 interdisciplinary programs administered by the Graduate School, while the Program's daily operations are housed within the Department of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health & Community Medicine. The last comprehensive review of the Program was completed in the 1998 academic year, when the provisional status of the graduate degree programs was continued. The site visit for the present review was conducted on April 25-26, 2005, at which time the review committee met with Program faculty, students, and staff.

In their report, the review committee noted that one of the major strengths of the Program is an excellently trained, productive, and dedicated faculty with a charismatic director. The overall quality of the Program, including its degree programs and students, was found to be excellent. The Program displays and implements an interdisciplinary vision of nutrition at the UW, with emphasis on nutrition as a biological science and with attention to its health, social, and policy outcomes and implications. The Program represents a major focus of

nutrition at the UW, and relates to the other large group of nutrition scientists at the Medical School. It also encompasses numerous aspects of public health, fundamental sciences affecting nutrition, clinical medicine, and dietetics.

The Program is now nationally visible and well regarded by other universities and funding agencies. Intellectually it is well situated to engage high quality faculty and recruit top students. However, it does not have the funds to do this, nor do the administrative arrangements within the SPHCM and Graduate School provide sufficient support for the retention of high quality faculty in this multidisciplinary program. Further, the programs at other universities that compete with this Program have an advantage in that they are structured and governed with more autonomy, have more focused and greater resources, and are housed in more appropriate and effective infrastructures that provide a more efficient use of resources. To remain competitive in Nutritional Sciences, the UW must make an institutional commitment to a strategic vision for interdisciplinary programs such as these, responding to the budgetary and organizational constraints faced under the current University structure. The Council also recognized that the limited financial support currently available for graduate students hinders the recruitment and retention of the very best students.

The Review Committee recommendations included the following:

1. The Review Committee Report recommends continuing the degree programs, with re-review in five years. This recommendation for less than a 10 year review cycle is in response to the challenges faced by the Program's administrative structure, not in response to the academic quality of the Program, which was described as outstanding. After discussion and consultation, the Review Committee and Council agreed on the recommendation of continuing status with re-review in 10 years.
2. Choose or appoint a co-director of the Program responsible for academic issues (teaching, students). The Director should retain overall authority, but will focus on expanding research opportunities and external funding for the Program.
3. Create an effective student home. Maintain an active student email list, advising of opportunities and events. Create a physical space for students to sit and interact with others in Raitt Hall. In response to this last recommendation the School of Public Health has already initiated steps to create student space in Raitt Hall. However, the physical distance between Raitt Hall and the SPHCM remains a difficulty, and limits the use of Raitt Hall by students.
4. Modify the funding stream to the Program.
 - a. The Program should be allocated a defined portion of the indirect costs generated by research grants that are clearly identified with the Nutritional Sciences Program, irrespective of the PI's home department.
 - b. The University should decide whether an undergraduate nutrition course is an important educational goal. If so, additional support for undergraduate teaching should be made available from University sources.
5. The responsibility and effort of advising master's students should be more broadly distributed and better compensated.

For more detailed information on the review of this program, please see the Review Committee's written report, submitted in April, 2005, and the response from the Program Director, submitted in April, 2006.

As noted above, the Council recommends continuing status for the Interdisciplinary Nutritional Sciences Program degree programs, with the next review to be conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year. The Graduate School concurs with this recommendation.

- c: Patricia W. Wahl, Dean, School of Public Health and Community Medicine
Frederick A. Connell, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Public
Health and Community Medicine
Adam Drewnowski, Director, Nutritional Sciences Program
Michael Rosenfeld, Interim Director, Nutritional Sciences Program
Scott Davis, Chair, Epidemiology
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
Adam C. Grupp, President, GPSS
Members of the Nutritional Sciences Program Review Committee