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February 21, 2016

To: Howard Frumkin, Dean, School of Public Health

From: David L. Eaton, Vice Provost and Dean
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

RE: Review of the Nutritional Sciences Program (2014-2015)

This memo outlines the recommendations from the review of the Nutritional Sciences Program in the School of Public Health Dean's Office. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee, program, and administrators (May 22, 2014)
- Nutritional Sciences self-study (February 10, 2015)
- Site visit (April 30 – May 1, 2015)
- Review committee report (May 29, 2015)
- Program response to the review committee report (August 2, 2015)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (January 21, 2015)

The review committee consisted of:

Lucy A. Jarosz, Professor, UW Geography (Review Committee Chair)

David A. Kalman, Professor and Chair, UW Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences

Alice S. Ammerman, Professor, Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Allen S. Levine, Professor, Department of Food Science & Nutrition, University of Minnesota

The Nutritional Sciences Program was last reviewed in 2004-2005. At that time, Nutritional Sciences was an interdisciplinary program in the Graduate School. The program moved to the School of Public Health Dean's Office in July 2012. The program offers the Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, and an undergraduate minor in Nutritional Sciences. It also offers the Master of Public Health in coordination with the Department of Epidemiology.

A subcommittee of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on January 21, 2016. After discussion, the Council recommended the program submit in three years (2018-2019) a report on its progress towards addressing key challenges identified by the review committee. Contingent on successfully addressing those issues, the program would remain on a 10-year cycle with subsequent academic program review in ten years (2024-2025).

Specific observations and recommendations regarding the program that were called out by the Council include the following.

Program Strengths

- An excellent, well-respected faculty group that is committed, caring, and completely dedicated to their teaching and their students.
- The interdisciplinary faculty group comprised of 15 core and 19 interdisciplinary faculty members, drawn from multiple schools, colleges, and departments.
- Highly engaged students who are committed to their programs.
- Healthy enrollment in the masters' programs and the Graduate Program in Coordinated Dietetics.
- Increasing interest from across the university in the many undergraduate courses offered by the program, as well as in the undergraduate minor.

Program Challenges & Risks

The review committee identified a number of challenges and concerns, several of which echoed those raised in the 2005 Graduate Program Review and remain unresolved.

- Ambiguity over the long-term administrative home of the program, including:
 - Challenges associated with the program's extra-departmental status, including inability to appoint and direct faculty resources;
 - Revenue for the program comes primarily from undergraduate teaching; indirect returns from faculty research remain in faculty members' home departments;
 - Perceived lack of transparency of decision-making with respect to how funds generated by the program may be used to support other programs and activities in the School of Public Health.
- Lack of a strategic plan and insufficient process for ongoing curriculum review.
- Concern about the support of junior faculty and mechanisms to prevent burnout among faculty members.
- Lack of regular review of the program director.
- Decline in the admission of PhD students in recent years.
- Student feedback that indicated:
 - the need for ongoing curriculum development;
 - possible deficiency in the diversity of the faculty and student body;
 - perception that program students are considered "less than" students in other School of Public Health programs.

Review Committee Recommendations

The review committee made the following recommendations:

- 1) Program and School of Public Health faculty need a more inclusive and transparent process for resolving where to house the program in the short term.
- 2) Given the current dependence of the program on extraordinary contributions from a handful of key faculty, immediate steps to address instructional and mentoring capacity in the wake of departures and retirements are crucial.
- 3) Address how to provide release time for junior faculty in order to help them achieve promotion and tenure without burnout.
- 4) Establish research scholarships for graduate students to enhance research performance and strengthen the recruitment of top-flight students.
- 5) The program director should attend the relevant department chairs meetings with the Dean in order to further align the program's activities with those of other units in the school. More effort to build clear communication and understanding between the program and the school via Senior Associate Dean Beresford, who is a longstanding, core Nutritional Sciences faculty member is desirable.
- 6) Perform a leadership review for the Director.
- 7) Articulate a shared vision and compose a strategic plan to identify priority areas of investment of discretionary budget based on more teaching revenues. Diversions should consider the impact on these developments and sustainability plans. Follow with a detailed five-year plan and possible longer-term issues.
- 8) Initiate a regular recurring internal curriculum review to identify opportunities to update, streamline, and reduce course content overlap
- 9) Convene a school-wide task force to advise the program and to identify the true costs and requirements to operate the program sustainably. Gauge School of Public Health support for an undergraduate major in nutrition, with broad cross-UW inclusiveness and participation. School and program level leadership is needed to develop these linkages and revenue sharing procedures to ensure multi-school ownership and participation.
- 10) The Graduate School should undertake an administrative review of program development relative to sustainability issues in three years. Specifically, this review would consist of progress and goals related to recommendations 1, 5 and 7 above. The program would remain on a 10-year review cycle contingent on the items for year three being addressed.

Areas of Concurrence and/or Disagreement

The program, in collaboration with the School of Public Health Dean's Office, responded to the review committee recommendations that they had taken the concerns raised by the review very seriously. Program and Dean's Office leadership reported that steps to address the review Committee's concerns and recommendations have been initiated.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council endorses the review committee recommendations. The program should submit to the Graduate School Council a report in three years (2018-2019) that addresses progress and goals towards the key points articulated by the review committee (points 1, 5, and 7 above). In addition, the Council calls specific attention to the following that should be included as part of the reporting process:

- 1) Assure the strategic planning process is transparent and that student voices are included in the process.
- 2) Provide information on decisions surrounding the program's administrative location.
- 3) Assure appropriate oversight and review of the program director position.

After reviewing the report, the Council will formally confirm a ten-year review cycle (2024-2025) or, if the Council has concerns about progress towards goals, may recommend a shorter review cycle.

We concur with the Graduate School Council's comments and recommendations.

cc: Gerald Baldasty, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost
Jason Johnson, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Shirley Beresford, Senior Associate Dean, School of Public Health
Adam Drewnowski, Director, Nutritional Sciences Program
Members of the Graduate School Council
David Canfield-Budde, Director, Academic Affairs & Interdisciplinary Programs, The Graduate School
GPSS President