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To: David Eaton, PhD
Vice Provost and Dean, Graduate School
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From: Adam Drewnowski, PhD
Director, Nutritional Sciences Program
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Shirley A.A. Beresford, PhD
Senior Associate Dean, School of Public Health
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Re: Nutritional Sciences Program Response to Review Committee Report

Dear Dean Eaton:

On behalf of the Nutritional Sciences Program and the Office of the Dean, we are submitting the Program faculty's comments and summarize the actions that are planned in response to the Review Committee Report. As you know, the Program was reviewed in May 2015 by a committee consisting of two members internal to the University of Washington and two external members. The internal members were Lucy Jarosz, Committee Chair and Professor and Chair, UW Department of Geography, and David Kalman, Professor, UW Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. The external members were Alice Ammerman, Professor, Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Allen S. Levine, Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Minnesota.

We were pleased to note the positive assessments, including "excellent, well-respected" faculty who are "committed, caring and completely dedicated to their teaching and their students," the program's excellent academic quality and relevance to the School of Public Health, and the program's important roles in both undergraduate and graduate education. We also noted, and take very seriously, the concerns raised and the recommendations offered. These centered on program leadership, on the need for program strategic planning, on the need for clear resolution of the program's administrative home and financial model, on the need to address faculty turnover, on the need for curriculum review, and on the need for student support.

Both the Office of the Dean and Program faculty and staff are fully committed to addressing the committee's recommendations. A number of review-related activities are already

underway, including forming a committee that will be charged with conducting the review of Program Director. Each of the committee's recommendations is listed and addressed in more detail below.

- 1. Program and SPH Faculty need a more inclusive and transparent process for resolving where to house the Program in the short term.** A Nutritional Sciences faculty retreat is scheduled for September 23, 2015 to launch a structured strategic planning process for the Program. This process will focus on several needs identified in the review, including the need to identify the Program's future home and ensure its long-term sustainability and continued success. Multi-stakeholder input from Program faculty, SPH and UW stakeholders, and students will be integral to this planning process and will be facilitated, in part, by the formation of a school-wide task force (see recommendation #9). Additionally, the Office of the Dean has requested that the NSP strategic plan include:
 - A vision for nutritional science training from undergraduate through doctoral level.
 - A proposal for a collaborative role of nutritional sciences within the university, paying particular attention to food studies on all its dimensions.
 - A vision for the future of food and nutrition and the health of the public.

These topics will be addressed in the course of the September retreat and by the ongoing strategic planning process.

- 2. Given the current dependence of the NSP 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.**

Several members of the NSP faculty teach multiple undergraduate and graduate courses, averaging more than one thousand student credit hours a year each. Additionally, members of our senior faculty who are nearing retirement teach several courses required for our graduate degree and dietetics programs. The Program has taken steps to ensure continued teaching capacity through succession planning. Faculty retirements and future growth needs were very much a part of the annual hiring plans and the Program business plan filed with the Office of the Dean for FY 2015 and FY 2016. Since faculty appointments in the Program are made through SPH departments, departmental consent for the proposed positions was obtained as well.

A search launched in 2015 for one or more positions at the Assistant or Associate Professor level through Department of Health Services was recently concluded successfully. The selected candidate, Dr. Scott Ickes, will be joining the Program and the Department this fall. That search also identified a potential opportunistic hire in the area of childhood obesity – a strategic priority for the School. The decision about whether to pursue the second candidate as a strategic plan hire will depend in large part on the costs the School incurs for the other strategic plan searches now underway.

A second open search for one or more Senior Lecturer positions was agreed on by the

Departments of Epidemiology and Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. We expect that search to be launched this fall.

In addition, we are pursuing a temporary appointment at the lecturer level to address immediate teaching needs resulting from the resignation of Dr. Glen Duncan, reduction in teaching activities by Dr. Donna Johnson, and need to redistribute courses previously taught by Dr. Michelle Averill as she takes on increased responsibility for SPH 381 for the Public Health Major. A strong candidate has been identified and will be well-positioned to contribute to the strategic-planning and curriculum development activities related to the interdisciplinary undergraduate major.

Beyond the faculty searches that are planned or in progress, team teaching by pairing junior and senior faculty on cores courses (such as the Nutrition and Metabolism course series) has been discussed to ensure continued coverage. We will also be drawing more on our interdisciplinary faculty for student mentoring and supervision since not all of the new positions will be eligible for Graduate Faculty Status.

3. Address how to provide release time for junior faculty in order to help them achieve promotion and tenure without burnout.

Generally, junior faculty obtain release time from teaching commitments by using research funds (both direct and indirect costs) to “buy-out” their time. However, unlike departments, the Program has no access to indirect costs from grants generated by Program faculty: those go directly to their home departments. Sharing of those indirect costs between the department and the program would provide a viable mechanism for obtaining release time for junior faculty. This issue will be taken up in the course of faculty retreat and will be discussed by the task force.

4. Establish research scholarships for graduate students to enhance research performance and strengthen the recruitment of top-flight students.

The Nutritional Sciences Program currently provides partial assistance to the majority of its graduate students through a combination of teaching assistant (TA) positions, Top Scholar research assistant funds, and endowed scholarship funds. In FY15, the Program provided 21 quarters of TA support. Program endowment funds are sufficient to provide modest scholarships (between \$1,000 and \$5,000) to 10–12 students each year. The Graduate School’s Top Scholar Recruitment Awards with matching Program funds have allowed us to provide full first year funding to two incoming students in recent years. This funding has contributed the Program’s success in recruiting top master’s students. However, it has not been feasible to provide the multi-year funding packages needed to recruit many of the top doctoral applicants. We recognize this as a significant barrier to doctoral student recruitment and will continue to explore opportunities to pair Program funding with faculty research funds.

- 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 NSP faculty member is desirable.**

At the School level, the Program is represented on the Undergraduate Major steering committee, the Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Council. The program is represented at the SPH Executive Committee (SPHEC) by the Senior Associate Dean, rather than by the Program Director. Dean Beresford recommended consideration of this aspect of Program representation during the strategic planning process. Dean Beresford and the Program Director plan to have regular monthly meetings to take advantage of Dean Beresford's long standing familiarity with the Program and its concerns.

- 6. Perform a leadership review for the Director.**

Dean Frumkin and Senior Associate Dean Beresford have initiated the process of forming a committee that will be charged with conducting the Director of the Program review (per 7/6/15 communication).

- 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.**

The Program depends completely on teaching revenues. Student credit hours for fiscal year 2015 are listed below. Included are undergraduate and graduate teaching hours by SPH department. The popular SPH-wide undergraduate major in public health is funded differently and is not a part of these data.

| FY15 SPH Student Credit Hours | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Responsible Department | Undergraduate | | Graduate | |
| | Credit Hours | % | Credit Hours | % |
| Biostatistics | 1,436 | 8.5% | 5,031 | 25.8% |
| DEOHS | 2,884 | 17.0% | 2,769 | 14.2% |
| Epidemiology | 1,898 | 11.2% | 4,672 | 23.9% |
| Global Health | 3,582 | 21.1% | 3,460 | 17.7% |
| Health Services | 1,282 | 7.5% | 2,687 | 13.8% |
| NUTR | 5,903 | 34.8% | 895 | 4.6% |
| Totals | 16,985 | 100% | 19,514 | 100% |

The current figures suggest that the Program is fiscally sustainable. The undergraduate program was nourished through development of multiple undergraduate courses (starting about 10 years ago), growing course enrollment and the creation of a popular

Minor in Nutrition Science. However, since other departments have also multiplied undergraduate courses, the Nutritional Sciences share remains at about 34% of total. Student credit hours for fiscal year 2014 are shown below.

| FY14 SPH Student Credit Hours | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Responsible Department | Undergraduate Credit Hours | % | Graduate Credit Hours | % |
| Biostatistics | 892 | 6.2% | 4,676 | 28.8% |
| DEOHS | 2,582 | 18.0% | 2,285 | 14.1% |
| Epidemiology | 790 | 5.5% | 3,333 | 20.5% |
| Global Health | 3,464 | 24.2% | 2,521 | 15.5% |
| Health Services | 1,742 | 12.2% | 2,525 | 15.6% |
| NUTR | 4,860 | 33.9% | 884 | 5.4% |
| Totals | 14,330 | 100% | 16,224 | 100% |

Teaching revenues should permit the Program to develop a discretionary budget to allow for better support of students and junior faculty and for the development of strategically important areas in both teaching and research. These issues will be discussed with the Task Force (see #9).

8. Initiate a regular recurring internal curriculum review to identify opportunities to update, streamline, and reduce course content overlap.

The NSP is committed to excellence in undergraduate and graduate education in nutrition and food systems to prepare outstanding, innovative and diverse public health leaders and scientists. At this time, the Program curriculum is subject to review by multiple accrediting bodies. First, the Association for Graduate Degree Programs in Public Health Nutrition has a list of competencies that recognized programs must meet. Second, the Accreditation Council of the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) has requirements for those students who are also pursuing professional training in dietetics, i.e. the vast majority of our students. Third, the School of Public Health, accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health, has specific degree competencies and requirements that need to be coordinated, where possible, with the Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics competencies. As a result, the internal curriculum review is rarely a simple process, given that so many external requirements also need to be met.

We have taken steps to minimize course overlap at the undergraduate level. We will take steps to become even more effective in our graduate teaching by establishing a formal process to assure that our courses and programs maintain their high quality and are responsive to the educational needs of today's students. There will be two primary mechanisms for this approach:

Annual Teaching Faculty Retreat: Once a year all faculty who teach undergraduate and graduate courses will come together for a half-day session to (1) review the evaluations

of NSP courses, and (2) participate in training on important aspects of teaching. Before this meeting, we will review all NSP student and peer faculty course evaluations, and we will select some courses to talk about at the retreat. If a plan of action for improvement is indicated, it will be well documented and the course instructor will report back at the next annual retreat about actions taken and their impact. Before the meeting we will also select one particular aspect of teaching (for example grading, providing useful student feedback, including content and approaches related to diversity/cultural competence in the curriculum, active learning approaches, etc.) and invite an expert to come and provide training on the topic. Each teaching faculty member will then try out some ways to implement what they have learned at the training, in a brief Plan-Study-Do-Act cycle and will report back to the NSP faculty during dedicated agenda times at the monthly NSP faculty meetings.

Quarterly Curriculum Committee Meetings: Each quarter the NSP curriculum committee will convene a meeting both to (1) talk about routine curriculum matters and (2) focus on specific topics. Once a year, the committee will review the NSP core undergraduate and graduate competencies and determine if each competency continues to be needed and if new competencies should be developed; in concert with instructors, the committee will also determine if courses continue to address the competencies they were originally designed to provide. In the fall of 2015 we will dedicate at least two meetings to fully mapping the competencies, learning objectives, and syllabus topics of all graduate and undergraduate courses to assure a comprehensive and coordinated curriculum.

- 9. Convene a school-wide task force to advise the NSP and to identify the true costs and requirements to operate the program sustainably. Gauge SPH 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.**

The Senior Associate Dean will hold discussions with faculty concerning the process for the appointing a school wide task force, its scope of activity and potential membership. We expect to have this information shortly after the September retreat.

The potential development of an undergraduate major in nutrition and food systems will definitely require broad cross-UW inclusiveness and collaboration. The Program first initiated such a university-wide meeting in 2011. Student interest has only grown with the development of the Nutrition Minor, and the potential for further development in the area of food studies. One potential partner for the undergraduate major in nutrition may be the College of Arts and Sciences: the home of most students in the existing Minor.

- 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.

The sustainability of the Program is directly related to revenue flow. At this time, the Program is generating substantial revenues through undergraduate tuition. However, this situation may not last and a long term fiscal strategic plan is required, as correctly noted by the review committee.

The Program and the Office of the Dean have initiated processes to address the main points in the Review and we look forward to advancing these efforts. We would like to express our gratitude to the Graduate School and the four members of the review committee for the time and resources that were expended on behalf of the Nutritional Sciences Program and our students.