

**Report of the Graduate School Committee Assigned to Review the Interdisciplinary  
Nutritional Sciences Program  
University of Washington, Seattle, Washington  
May 26, 2015**

**The Review Structure and Process**

The site visit for the Nutritional Sciences Program (NSP) in the School of Public Health was held on April 30-May 1, 2015, as a part of its regular academic program review. The purpose of this review was to assess the overall quality and strength of the program and to offer recommendations for further enhancing it. Academic program reviews focus on both the graduate and undergraduate program offerings and serve the University's academic assessment process, as required by the University's accrediting body. The program was last reviewed in 2005; since that time, the official home of the program has shifted from the Graduate School to the School of Public Health (SPH).

The review committee consists of two members internal to the University of Washington and two external members: Lucy Jarosz, Committee Chair and Professor and Chair, UW Department of Geography; David Kalman, Professor, UW Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences; Alice Ammerman, Professor, Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Allen S. Levine, Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Minnesota.

The internal members of the committee met on May 22, 2015, to receive their charge. The two internal members of the Review Committee (Jarosz and Kalman) conducted pre-site visit meetings on April 27, 2015 with Dr. Larry Kessler, Chair, Health Services via telephone and with Dr. Scott Davis, former Chair, Epidemiology. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, the internal members met with Dr. Victoria Holt, Interim Chair, Epidemiology; Dr. Glen Duncan, Associate Professor, Epidemiology; Dr. Donna Johnson, Professor Health Services; Dr. Jennifer Otten, Assistant Professor, Health Services and Dr. Michelle Averill, Acting Assistant Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences. These meetings were conducted with each individual, but Drs. Otten and Averill met with the internal members together in their roles as junior faculty. All subsequent interviews took place during the two-day site visit and included the external members of the committee.

The Committee drafted and revised the report collaboratively. The charge letter and graduate student perspectives on the first year of the Nutritional Science Program are included in the appendix. This report, its findings and recommendations represent the collective view of the committee.

## Summary

Faculty and administrators express strong support for the Nutritional Science Program and an appreciation of its excellent academic quality, its relevance to the School of Public Health and its important roles in undergraduate and graduate education. The excellent, well-respected faculty is committed, caring and completely dedicated to their teaching and their students. The program draws its faculty mainly from among the various Departments in the School of Public Health, has been housed under various Departments, and, is presently administered in the School of Public Health centrally.

The Program supports itself primarily through undergraduate teaching—particularly through its undergraduate nutrition studies minor, which features very large lecture classes--the largest in the School. According to the Dean of SPH, undergraduate enrollment has increased by over 400% over the past eight years. Faculty are appointed in several Departments, and their grants are generally run through their home Departments. There is currently no process for allowing NSP to share in indirect costs revenue from externally funded research, although SPH chairs have reportedly agreed with this option in principle. The graduate program is largely composed of students seeking their Masters in Public Health who also participate in the Coordinated Registered Dietitian Program. They receive limited support through teaching assistantships. The enrollment of doctoral students has dwindled over the years, with no or only one or two new admissions per year recently. Graduate students who met with the review committee expressed an interest in participating in conversations about curriculum revisions and changes. They note significant overlaps in course content that detract from their limited capacity to take elective courses. The students asked that cultural competency courses be offered during their first year, and that recruitment of faculty and students be aimed at increasing ethnic, gender and racial diversity in the program. Students wanted more interaction with students from other programs in SPH and wanted to move beyond the feeling that their program is ‘less than’ those of established Departments.

While the current offerings are of high quality and the various degree programs appear to be functioning well, there are indications that sustaining the NSP enterprise will require significant adaptation in the coming years. Due to faculty realignments and departures, there is an impending shortfall of teaching capacity. One junior faculty search in Health Services is underway and lecturer hires are also being considered. This problem may be exacerbated as faculty retires, because NSP is unable to hire faculty or lecturers independently. Searches are conducted and financed by departments and therefore must compete with other departmental priorities in terms of resources and faculty composition.

The next administrative home for NSP is uncertain while an impending move out of the School of Public Health Dean’s office seems likely. The majority of faculty are interested in forming a department, but that would be undertaken in small, incremental steps that might include being initially housed in another department such as Epidemiology.

There is a sense of confusion and lack of clarity about the NSP budget and biennium revenue flows, and significant diversion of SPH revenues based on NSP activities to support other School needs. This may be more a perception rather than a reality and suggests the need for more communication and transparency among departments, Nutritional Science and the School. The Program needs a five to ten year strategic plan for hiring, curriculum development, graduate student support and recruitment in order to develop and grow--possibly into a department within the School.

The Director of the Program is internationally respected as a researcher and field leader. He is also described as being detached from day-to-day issues in the Program because of his travel schedule. His leadership has not been subject to review over the last 12 years.

**Recommendations:**

1. Program and SPH 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 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.
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 Executive Associate Dean Beresford, who is a longstanding, core NSP 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 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.

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.

### **Mission and Overall Academic Quality**

The mission of the NSP is focused on nutrition as it impacts health, both prevention and treatment. It fits well with the mission of the School of Public Health and all aspects of the mission are being addressed by faculty and students. This includes teaching, research and outreach. We heard from leaders and faculty that the program is interested in expanding to address the growing campus interest in sustainable food systems. There seems to be an unmet need in this area amongst the students.

The core faculty of the nutrition program at the University of Washington are excellent researchers and dedicated teachers. The affiliated faculty are well funded, well published and highly respected scientists. The students, both undergraduate and graduate, are exposed to social, clinical and basic science teaching and research in the field of nutrition. The National Research Council (NRC) ranks this program in the highly rated doctoral programs, leaving room for improvement. Core nutrition faculty have primary appointments in various academic departments (e.g. epidemiology), which also offer *very* highly NRC-rated programs (top category). The lower ranking of the NSP may be due to the relatively small numbers of graduate students and core faculty. We were told that most students find positions shortly after graduating. This is likely due to both market needs and the high quality of the graduates from the program.

### **Curriculum**

The NSP supports 41 course titles; 12 didactic undergraduate offerings; 17.5 didactic graduate courses per year, plus topics, research credits, thesis credits, and practicum credits. The NSP course requirements are based on a set of core competencies including a basic knowledge of nutritional sciences and food composition; research; and applied nutrition skills. A graduate portfolio is used to assure that the competencies are met in the MS, MPH, and PhD programs, with requirements tailored to the specific training needs of the different degree programs.

The Program's undergraduate nutrition studies minor, which features very large lecture classes--the largest in the School (one course exceeding 700) -- has become exceptionally popular among undergraduates on campus. Over the past eight years undergraduate enrollment has increased substantially.

### **Faculty and Staff Workloads**

The program reports a robust faculty complement: 15 core and 19 interdisciplinary faculty serving the undergraduate courses and the undergraduate minor in nutrition, and the MS, MPH, and PhD degrees and related graduate coordinated program in dietetics (GCPD). Workloads are not uniform, with 8 core and 1 interdisciplinary faculty assuming the majority of the didactic course loads (1 teaching four courses/year, 5 teaching three courses/year, and 3 teaching two courses per year). In addition, the program is heavily reliant on one or two faculty for specific expertise or roles: one faculty member for molecular science aspects of nutrition, another faculty for community-based research training, and another for practicum and RD training are examples. NSP faculty also cover twelve course titles representing independent study, supervised research, topics, and other variable credit courses offered to individuals, student advising and mentoring outside of these course titles, etc. The NSP has now implemented an allocation system to allow for increments of faculty support to be provided for mentorship but several faculty expressed the viewpoint that mentorship remains largely uncompensated. All graduate students complete a research thesis or portfolio/project, which requires significant one-on-one faculty mentoring.

The standard level of faculty support is calculated based on UG didactic course credit hours (4 annual %FTE per credit hour) and graduate course credit hours (3 annual % FTE per credit hour). Faculty teaching 4 UG courses of 3 credit hours each would therefore receive 0.48 FTE and be responsible for generating another 0.52 FTE from research or other non-NSP supported effort. Concern over the sustainability of this level of effort and particularly for junior faculty who have very little or no protected time to invest in building their research programs was evident among many of the commenters during our review.

Administrative staff appeared to be comfortable regarding the reasonableness of program expectations and showed a high level of morale and general job satisfaction.

The program faculty as a whole appears to be of adequate size; however, there are a few faculty who play critical roles in the program and whose departure would be threatening to program operation. There is little redundancy in these areas and recruitment for succession is at an early stage and is potentially limited by the difficulties of recruiting faculty, lack of resources for transitional or startup costs, and uncertainties regarding the overall viability of faculty roles going forward.

Given anticipated changes in faculty headcount and roles (One faculty member is leaving UW and another is relinquishing classroom teaching assignments), and the plans for expansion of the UG minor and elective course offerings generally, additional instructional capacity is clearly needed in the short term. This is also critical to allow junior faculty to have protected time to launch/maintain their research careers. The current program plans call for adding new Lecturer/Senior Lecturers during the current academic year. This will be helpful but will not address graduate mentorship and research supervision needs and may not address subject matter

coverage needs. More detailed planning to look at immediate, 5-year and possible longer-term issues is a program need.

Student course evaluations reflect high satisfaction with the vast majority of the courses. A CEI index (challenge and engagement) suggests that some of the basic sciences courses are quite challenging but ultimately felt to be strong contributors to the students' training. This feeling was reinforced in our discussions with faculty: one key faculty member who teaches most of these courses, is considered to be a demanding but highly responsive instructor. On a scale of 1-5 for the general rating (not CEI), most courses received ratings above a 4. Some of the courses receiving a lower score for both general and CEI ratings appeared to be those required for the RD which are at times tedious regarding cafeteria and hospital systems for food preparation and delivery. The NS/CPD program has achieved a very high rate of student success with RD exam.

We met with a very engaged group of students. They seem pleased with their programs in general. There were some comments about overlap in the courses related to biostatistics and research design, and the related observation that course requirements allow little scope for elective courses. Eliminating course content redundancy could help make space for more electives, it was suggested. Also, one student emphasized the need for more diversity and a more welcoming environment for persons of color. Program leaders in a later discussion indicated that there had not been a comprehensive review of curriculum with respect to overlap in some time (possibly not since the prior Academic Program Review in 2005), and that there was no regularly scheduled review of course content across the NSP curriculum (although less formal and less global reviews and improvements were common).

Enrollment in the doctoral program has always been small and has declined over the last few years. All of the doctoral graduates have completed their dissertation work in basic nutritional sciences research despite the strong and growing interest in food systems within the program and the university. It is assumed that coursework is tailored to the specific dissertation focus of the student including classes in other departments across campus. There is tremendous interest among students seeking doctoral training to focus their work on food systems and access. Currently the NSP has several talented faculty addressing this area with important connections to decision makers in Seattle and the Northwest who would benefit greatly from more research in this area. However, to date, nearly all of the nutrition doctoral students trained at UW have addressed dissertation topics in the area of biochemistry or epidemiology. If key faculty currently teaching food systems courses can have enough protected time to obtain funded research in this area (NIH, USDA, RWJF), they could in turn recruit doctoral students who can help share the teaching load and build overall food systems capacity.

### **Program Leadership**

The Program's Director is an internationally recognized scientist and leader in the field of nutrition. He is in demand as a public speaker and participates in many scientific venues. Our

limited basis for assessing program leadership suggests that it has been highly effective in some areas (extremely successful undergraduate minor and dietetic program, for example) and may be lacking in other areas (including participation in national meetings of nutrition department heads and in SPH leadership forums). To our knowledge he has not had a serious review as the director of the nutrition program. We highly recommend such a review by the faculty, both core and affiliate, as well as by students.

Relative to high ranking nutrition departments in the US, the NSP faculty is small in number and stretched thin to cover the necessary coursework. Currently the NSP must call on faculty in departments outside of the School of Public Health for some coursework and mentoring.

### **Prospects and Opportunities for growth**

While there are a number of promising opportunities for program expansion, resource constraints require that this must be balanced against immediate needs: addressing faculty departures, supporting junior faculty and research productivity. Hands-on leadership can address these opportunities and constraints.

The groundswell of interest in food systems among UW undergraduates offers many opportunities for the NSP. Discussion is already underway regarding a Nutritional Sciences major, building on the very successful minor. It will be important for NSP to communicate and collaborate effectively with other disciplines/departments that have begun coursework in this area as well. With the implementation of Activity-Based Budgeting, competition over the revenue associated with such elective courses could have a divisive effect if not handled carefully.

The MS and MPH/RD programs are to some extent limited in size by the number of available clinical/community placements. There is considerable competition with other schools and organizations for these placements, so maintaining good external relationships is key. Given the faculty burden required to guide all Masters students through a research project, and the fact that many of these students may not wish to pursue a research career, it might behoove the NSP faculty to consider other capstone-type projects as research thesis alternatives. Alternatives could involve assisting community mentors with grant proposals, policy briefs, or program evaluation efforts. These projects would require similar critical thinking skills but perhaps be more directly useful to community preceptors and require somewhat less faculty supervision time. This might allow an increase in class size if that is deemed useful for departmental sustainability.

Depending on how distance learning fits with the ABB model, the NPS might be able to extend its reach and generate additional revenue through this mechanism. There is considerable interest in food systems among the public at large, which could tap additional revenue streams and also be seen as a service to the community.

## **Program Vulnerabilities and Sustainability Issues**

The NS program is currently delivering high quality instruction and has particularly strong potential (in terms of campus interest if not current faculty capacity) to expand in undergraduate offerings. The program continues to succeed in a very resource-limited situation, due to the extraordinary commitment and effort from some of its key senior faculty as well as very capable more junior staff. This positive assessment is qualified by several threats to sustainability, many of which would fall within the general heading of insufficient resources.

### *PhD student support/student support*

The program has not graduated PhD students since 2007 and enrolled no new PhD students in 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2014. The student headcount was reported in the self-study as being 2 in 2012 and none in 2013, 2014. A significant factor contributing to low PhD enrollment has been the program's policy of not offering PhD program admission without a commitment of financial support, which has been scarce due to less availability of extramural research funding. Continued opportunities for NSP PhD training will depend on maintaining relationships with the broader interdisciplinary faculty, many of whom relate to the NS program entirely through research mentorship. The current hiatus in PhD training is both a symptom of the current stress on research funding and a threat to the sustainability of this aspect of the NSP generally.

Support for MS and MPH students is mainly derived from teaching revenues and comes in the form of teaching assistantships. Some training grant funds exist as well, but most students self-support for a significant portion of their overall degree cost. Several faculty commenters identified the scarcity of funds for student support as among their top concerns for the program's future. Students we spoke with (nearly all MPH students in the GCPD program) were cheerful overall and did not focus on this issue. However, they did note the challenges they have faced in making connections with possible thesis research mentors as an area needing program improvement.

### *Institutional Home*

Physical space does not seem to be an issue. Faculty have sufficient facilities for their laboratory and public health programs. However, if one expands the basic science faculty, new space will be needed. Because there is no home for nutritional science, faculty are spread throughout the university-both on and off campus, resulting in daily interactions

Over the past 30 years, the NSP has moved from a departmental base to the status of an interdisciplinary program, administered variously in the Graduate School, the School of Public Health via a department-level organizational home, and the School of Public Health (SPH) centrally, with most program organization effort residing in the Dean's office. At present there are unimplemented plans to move the administrative functions out of the SPH Dean's office and back to a departmental home (Epidemiology being most often cited). These plans are on hold



pending further analysis and discussion, including the outcome of this academic program review. The committee does not see an obvious unqualified best choice for this issue: for the most part, program management is accomplished by the same mix of faculty and staff, whatever the reporting arrangements, and resolution of uncertainties regarding resource flows and planning (as discussed in the following section) will be needed no matter what organizational home is selected. What is clear is that the program is being adversely affected by both the prior administrative shuffles and by current uncertainty. What is more urgent than a resolution to the decision of where the administrative home resides, is a much more inclusive and transparent process for resolving the issue, that includes both NSP program and SPH departments and faculty generally. Transparent program resource allocation and a stable and predictable revenue model will be essential parts of this process and will allow departments to understand their role in sustaining NSP.

There were several attitudes and preferences expressed, regarding what arrangement would best serve the program in the future. The choices identified in the self study are:

- An extra-departmental program housed in the Dean's Office, School of Public Health.
- An autonomous unit housed within an existing department in the School of Public Health.
- Return as an interdisciplinary program to the Graduate School (status quo ante).
- An interdisciplinary department (or program) spanning multiple schools or colleges.

To these we add an idea expressed during the site visit: remain in the Dean's office for a period in order to establish a degree of financial stability. This period could be used to conduct strategic planning and other discussions prior to decision making. It is worth noting that department chairs who were asked indicated a preference for establishing NSP as an autonomous unit (with respect to instructional program and program budget) within their department, rather than simply adding it as another departmental program.

Many NSP faculty and several students stated that NSP should be incorporated as a department in its own right. While this was the vision of several commenters, most if not all agreed that this could only be accomplished incrementally given several key issues that would have to be solved or managed.

### *Program Morale*

The NSP is currently burdened with resource challenges that are delineated in the preceding paragraphs, and with uncertainties and frustrations regarding future resource allocation as well as program identity and status. Of these two burdens, the second is directly threatening to program morale and could undercut the ability of the faculty in particular to continue to perform at their traditionally high level. Given the current dependence of the NS program on extraordinary contributions from a handful of key faculty, immediate steps to address these concerns would be advisable.

### *Strategic Planning*

It appears to the reviewers that there is an overall need for mid- to long-range planning for this program, and that the School of Public Health's input in guiding this process would be important. In addition to addressing the issues of faculty head count and other program-level issues, we offer the following suggestions:

- The strategic plan should identify priority areas for investment of discretionary budget, based on strong teaching revenues. Revenue diversions may the negatively impact development and sustainability plans and should be considered.
- We recommend a School-wide task force to advise NSP and to identify the true costs/requirements to operate the program sustainably.

### *Recommendations for Leadership*

School leadership: Several external circumstances affect the current state of the NSP, and relate to the general situation within the School of Public Health and to specific practices and decisions regarding NSP that have been initiated at the School level. The School is undergoing major changes in its method of allocating resources to departments and programs, and despite an overall effort to approach within-school budgeting with transparency and equity there remains a lot of uncertainty due to both uncertainties regarding future revenue to the School, and process uncertainty within the School. This affects the NS program directly and indirectly through the effects on departments where its faculty must be appointed. For the direct effects, more clarity, predictability, and communication regarding the flow of revenues back to the program (ABB and any other support) are needed to allow for planning (particularly for longer-term needs beyond covering immediate instructional costs). There would be many benefits in treating this program just like a department, in terms of budgeting. If/when there were a need to use NSP-generated revenues to cross-subsidize other SPH activities, this would be less demoralizing if it were handled in the same manner as cross-departmental subsidization is handled.

The indirect effects of income uncertainty are equally important to NSP sustainability. The NSP program cannot replace or grow faculty without active partnership from multiple SPH departments. Not only does NSP need the departments to provide the appointments, but it needs investment from departments to recruit, provide start-up resources, and nurture the research development of new NSP faculty. Departments must consider these choices in the context of their own development needs, and finding common ground for partnering with NSP requires clarity regarding departmental (versus NSP program versus School-wide) obligations and liabilities associated with new hires. Clarifying these points and having School-wide commitment to backstop departments in supporting NSP was identified by some department chairs as an important factor in future joint efforts with NSP.

Given that the NSP program now reports to the School via Executive Associate Dean, who is a long-standing NSP core faculty member, improved communication and understanding between the Dean's office and the program would seem likely. Nevertheless, it appears to the review committee that more effort in this area is needed.

NSP Program Leadership: The program leadership has consisted mainly of the Director, except for a sabbatical leave in 2012-13 when another senior faculty member served as NSP director. The Director is widely respected within and beyond the NSP faculty for his leadership in research. During his tenure as director, the social science aspects of NSP teaching and research have assumed greater prominence and his work in obesity and social disparities in diets and health is nationally recognized. He has also been helpful to junior faculty in mentoring and collaborating in research, and has been engaged in the roll-out and expansion of undergraduate teaching initiatives. At the same time, he is frequently unavailable due to an extensive travel schedule and appears detached from the daily operations of the program. Some of the uncertainty and discomfort reported by program faculty and students suggest that communication within the program is insufficient. Communication between the Director and the SPH leadership may also be problematic – both sides report a lack of engagement. Arriving at firm conclusions regarding the Director's overall effectiveness as NSP leader is beyond the scope of this academic program review, but we observe that: (1) there has been no formal review of the Director as program leader since he assumed that role in 1998; (2) leadership needs for the program going forward are acute, as many issues of growth, management, and needed strategic planning are looming; (3) the prior academic program review in 2004-05 recommended that an associate program director be appointed, to provide more day-to-day program coordination and management: this appointment was implemented initially but lapsed after a few years and is currently not operative. Therefore, the committee recommends a formal review of the Program Director be undertaken forthwith. It would be good practice to review leaders of interdisciplinary programs on the same basis as department chairs are reviewed.

In addition to internal discussions about program development, directions and needs, strategic planning for NSP needs to consider UW-wide perspectives, given the cross cutting nature of nutrition and the food environment, and the numerous areas of overlap with other programs across UW. This might be part of the charge to a School wide NSP advisory task group: develop non-program informants and a process for bringing in new perspectives to the program.

**APPENDIX I**  
**THIS DOCUMENT WAS COMPILED BY A GROUP OF FIRST YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS AND PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE AT OUR MEETING WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS DURING THE SITE VISIT**

**Curriculum Feedback from a First Year Perspective**

*For NSP Review Committee 4/30/15*

Overall the Nutritional Sciences Program curriculum is sufficient for preparing students in the classroom for a career in nutrition science. The progression of classes throughout the first year is logical and classes build upon each other to present a cohesive introduction to the field. As students we appreciate the program's willingness to revise curriculum in an effort to provide the best class offerings. For example, starting Fall 2015 a new class will be offered that combines two previous classes, NUTR 527 Pediatric Nutrition and NUTR 526 Maternal & Infant Nutrition, into a more streamlined course. This makes it easier for students to access the material through less complicated scheduling and is a more efficient way of presenting these topics that may have overlapped in content areas in the past.

We have the following suggestions for additional ways to streamline curriculum to provide students with an excellent preparation for a career in nutrition science:

General Classes

- *BIOST 511* - In preparation for this class requiring or recommending a general statistics course as a prerequisite would be helpful to create a solid foundation for applying biostatistics to our future thesis projects.
  
- *EPI 511* - Because many important topics overlap between this class and BIOST 511 it would be more relevant to take NUTR 538 instead of the general EPI 511 course. This would adequately address the key topics of epidemiology but be more relevant to our careers because of the specific focus on a nutritional perspective. Then we would not have to miss out on this important and relevant course in fall our second year as it is currently an elective and difficult to include in our schedules.
  
- *NUTR 500* - The fall and winter sections of this class are repetitive in nature. It would be beneficial to master students to use this credit time in an alternative manner in the winter quarter. This would be an ideal time to include a one or two credit course on cultural competency or whole foods (see suggestions below). The same large seminar format can still be offered in winter for undergraduates only.
  
- *NUTR 520, 521, 522* - Students would benefit from having this class taught with an added clinical perspective in addition to the lecture/research lens that is its current focus. This would

provide a good foundation for applying knowledge in the subsequent courses NUTR 562 and NUTR 563.

- *NUTR 529A* - This class included overlap with content from the concurrent epi and biostats classes during fall quarter. It would be more efficient to have a single day scheduled in the quarter to cover only the necessary material. This can take a similar approach to the one day NUTR 500 seminar format in the spring. This single day seminar could condense the course information into a “toolkit” to act as a thesis guide accompanied by a workbook. This would encourage new students to become more comfortable with the thesis process and possibly get their projects underway by spring and summer of the first year instead of waiting until fall quarter of the second year. Additionally, this would help students reach the credits needed to qualify for financial aid over the summer.
- *NUTR 529B* - This class could be taught in the spring quarter of the first year in order to get the thesis process underway before the first summer when there is ample time to get projects started. Often students begin their thesis over the first summer so this would make the process smoother. We understand that the portfolio submission would have to be rearranged to accommodate this.

#### GCPD Classes

- *Molecular Gastronomy* - This class would be more effective taught in person as a hands-on group class during summer A term between first and second year since the material is not referenced in the first year curriculum. This would therefore not be a prerequisite requirement but a curriculum course and would not have to be completed prior to being accepted, making it more feasible for international students to access. This would also help students reach the credits needed to qualify for financial aid over the summer. Perhaps we can use the new classroom kitchen in the Lander Hall. It would be useful to tailor the class to meet knowledge needed for the RD exam.
- *NUTR 560* - This course is incredibly relevant to our future careers so it would be beneficial to give it greater weight in our curriculum. This can be accomplished by making it a three credit class and including more experiential learning and additional instructor time.

#### New Course Suggestions

- *Cultural competency* - [The Center for Cultural Proficiency in Medical Education](#) This organization that exists on our campus is, “Committed to the integration of multicultural education into the training of **all** health care professionals, and sustaining institutional consciousness for equity, cultural proficiency and diversity.” Regardless of what area of nutrition graduates end up in, be it clinical, research, or public health, cultural competency is essential to how we approach our work. As it is clearly described in our courses, there are

enormous racial and ethnic health disparities we will encounter as professionals. Therefore, a cultural competency curricula is extremely important to our nutrition education in order to work to address these issues. Furthermore, the University of Washington School of Medicine has already paved the way by setting forth “Core Guiding Principles for Cultural Competence for Medical Education” (see link below for their detailed outline of learner objectives pertaining to awareness, knowledge, skills, and advocacy).

<http://depts.washington.edu/cedi/new/PDF/CoreGuidingPrinciples.pdf>

- *Whole foods and cooking education* - This course would prepare GCPD students to be effective patient educators on the practical skills needed to access quality nutrition.

### More Opportunities for Various Electives

There are many facets of food, nutrition, and dietetics that cannot all be addressed in a two-year program. However, many students have specific areas of interest that they would like to explore further. These interests will be different for everyone, so it is unrealistic to develop an entirely inclusive mandatory curriculum. A more manageable and effective way to address this would be through the opportunities for students to take nutrition-related electives, allowing them to focus on and gain more specialized insight into a particular area. Topics may include food systems, global nutrition, anthropology of food, and sports nutrition, among others. Most students feel there is room within the schedule for additional elective courses to be taken in winter or spring quarters first year, and potentially over the summer.

It would be helpful to compile a list with summaries of elective classes available in other departments each quarter. This can include feedback from Nutritional Sciences students who have taken them in the past.



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

*Undergraduate Academic Affairs*

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*The Graduate School*

May 27, 2014

Nutritional Sciences Program Review Committee

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RE: Charge to Review Committee for the 2014-2015 Nutritional Sciences Program Review

Dear Review Committee:

Thank you once again for agreeing to serve on the committee to review the degree programs offered by the Nutritional Sciences Program in the School of Public Health at the University of Washington (UW): the Master of Public Health, the Master of Science, and the Doctor of Philosophy. The Nutritional Sciences Program also offers an undergraduate minor in Nutritional Sciences. The review is conducted in accordance with state legislative mandate under the direction of the Graduate School. It is conducted in coordination with the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, School of Public Health Dean's Office, and the Office of the Provost. The Academic Affairs and Planning Office in the Graduate School will coordinate the review.

Committee Charge

In general, the committee's charge in this review is to assess the quality of the graduate degree programs and the undergraduate minor in the unit and to provide its faculty with constructive suggestions for strengthening those programs. These reviews provide the University with a clearer understanding of each program's quality, educational value, role within the University and community, role within the academic discipline, and resource requirements.

As background information, the Nutritional Sciences Program was last reviewed in 2004-2005. At that time, Nutritional Sciences was an interdisciplinary program housed in the Graduate School. The program moved to the School of Public Health Dean's Office in July, 2012. Documents related to the 2004-2005 review are available on the current program review website <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/gsacad/45172/>.

For the 2014-2015 review, the possible recommendations range from suspension of student entry into the existing degree programs to a recommendation for continuing status with a subsequent review in 10 years. Shorter terms can be recommended if the committee deems it appropriate. Equally important to this status recommendation, the review can offer the program and the administration an independent assessment of the overall "health" of the unit and advice on how it can be improved.

### Self-Study and Site Visit

Nutritional Sciences will submit a **draft of the site visit agenda and its self-study by February 2, 2015**. Both documents will be made available shortly after receipt by the Graduate School. After reviewing the program's self-study, the committee may wish to initiate its work before the site visit to ensure a thorough and rigorous review. Based on our experience, we suggest that the external reviewers be relied upon as content experts who can evaluate the quality of the unit from a national perspective. They are also likely to be able to comment on recent developments in the field and their incorporation into the program. We encourage the committee to communicate with the program director so that he knows your interests and expectations, particularly for the site visit, and to communicate with other key faculty, if time permits. UW committee members may conduct interviews prior to the site visit as they deem appropriate.

The two-day site visit on **April 30 – May 1, 2015**, will culminate with an exit discussion, divided into two portions. The Program Director, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, a Dean's Office representation from the School of Public Health, representatives from Undergraduate Academic Affairs and the Graduate School Council, and the Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs will participate in the exit discussion. The first portion of the discussion will include program representatives, while the second portion, the executive session, will include only the review committee and administrators. We will request your formal recommendation regarding the continuance of the degree programs early in the second portion of the exit interview. We will also ask you to describe your plan for completing the written report in a timely manner.

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) participates actively in the program review process. The GPSS may send a survey to current graduate students in the academic program and distribute the survey results in advance of the site visit to the review committee and the unit under review. In addition, a GPSS representative may join the graduate student meeting during the site visit or hold an additional feedback session with students. After conclusion of the site visit, the GPSS may issue an independent report to the Graduate School based on its findings. This report then becomes part of the formal review record. Since sufficient student participation is required to gather meaningful feedback, the unit under review must work to assure broad participation during the site visit and must emphasize to students the importance of timely response to the survey.

### Review Committee Report

We request that your committee submit its written report within 4 weeks of the site visit. Specifically, the **written report is due May 30, 2015**. A written response will then be provided by the unit and is due on **June 30, 2015**. When the response is available, the report and response will be considered by the Graduate School Council. The Dean of the Graduate School will then write a letter outlining the review and recommendations to the Dean of the School of Public Health for his consideration and action.

Please note that upon completion of program reviews, the primary review documents become public documents and are placed on the UW Office of the Provost's web site. These documents include the self-study, the review committee report, the unit's response to the report, and the Graduate School Dean's letter to the Dean.



Specific Considerations for the Self-Study

The most important objective of the review is an assessment of the academic and educational quality of the unit. Important questions include:

- 1) Are they doing what they should be doing?
- 2) Are they doing it well?
- 3) How can they do things better?
- 4) How should the University assist them?

In addition to the standard (Part A) questions from the academic program review guidelines, the program should address the issues it has outlined in the unit-defined questions for Part B, attached on page four of this letter. The program should also consider the following items as it writes the self-study, as discussed in the charge meeting. The program may contact the review committee chair if it has questions about what written documentation would be most useful to the committee as it does its work.

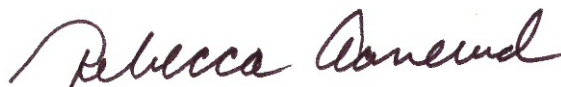
- The primary scope of the review committee with regard to the administrative location and structure of the program (unit-defined questions 1.a. and 1.d. below) is to provide feedback on the opportunities and challenges the program faces in its current location. Secondary consideration may be given to whether program faculty should, in the future, actively explore alternate administrative locations or administrative structure.
- The self-study should include detailed information about the faculty involved in the program, specifically what role faculty play as members of the interdisciplinary program as well as in their home departments.
- Provide the committee with access to the School of Public Health strategic plan, referenced in the unit-defined questions.

Thank you for your time and effort. Please contact David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, at [dacan@u.washington.edu](mailto:dacan@u.washington.edu) with any questions you may have about the review.

Sincerely,



David Eaton  
Vice Provost and Dean



Rebecca Aanerud  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

cc: 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  
Graduate School Council Representatives  
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
GPSS President

### **Unit-Defined Self Study Questions – Nutritional Sciences Program**

1. How do we see the future of the Nutritional Sciences Program over the next 10 years?
  - a. What is the best location for the program to serve the needs of the University and the state?
  - b. What should be the balance of undergrad and graduate education?
  - c. Do we need an undergraduate major?
  - d. Is there a possibility of becoming a department? What issues would need to be considered and how could they be addressed?
  
2. How do we grow our undergraduate and graduate curriculum?
  - a. What are potential collaborations that can expand both undergraduate education and graduate training? For example, are there options for collaboration with/related to:
    - Business?
    - Global Health?
    - Environment, agriculture, climate change?
    - Sustainable nutrition, food security?
  - a. Are there opportunities to better align with pre-health majors/and health professions training needs?
  
3. Taking a hard look at career options, what are employment opportunities for MS, MPH, PhD graduates with and without Registered Dietitian training?
  
4. How should our graduate programs change in order to weather these tight times of declining federal and state funding?
  - b. Should we consider a one year master's program without a thesis requirement?
  - c. Are there opportunities to expand the Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics? How can the program build preceptor support to provide the necessary internship opportunities?
  
5. How can the program best support faculty in balancing excellent teaching, mentoring, research, and other requirements for promotion?
  
6. How can future faculty hires be directed to meet the needs of the Program, University, and state?
  
7. How does the Program serve the School of Public Health Strategic Plan?