

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of a joint degree program leading to the Master of Arts with a major in Nutrition and Food Science (MA-NFS) and the Master of Public Health (MPH), effective Fall 2016. This joint degree program will be offered through the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine.

### **Background**

The joint program offers students in-depth training to be proficient not only in the nutrition and food science area, but also in the public health arena. Instead of two separate programs, the joint program will save students time and tuition while maintaining the rigorousness of each individual program. Although the development of a Master of Arts and Master of Public Health joint degree program is fairly unique, the Council on Education for Public Health has accredited 18 Masters of Public Health programs with concentrations in nutritional-related health.

Students are required in the Master of Public Health component to take courses in the applied aspects of epidemiology, program evaluation and research methods -- necessary for conducting both the practicum and an investigative project required by the Master of Public Health Program. Students graduating from this proposed joint degree would therefore be in an excellent position to not only develop and implement public health nutritional programs but also to evaluate them for their efficacy. The opportunity in the joint WSU Master of Arts and Master of Public Health program to take additional public health and food science electives will also prepare students for careers in many aspects of public health nutrition that include food safety, accessibility and security, areas that are not readily available in other Master of Public Health programs.

### **Program Description**

The Master of Arts and Master of Public Health degrees in Nutrition and Food Science and Public Health is a joint degree program offered by the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine. The intended audience is Public Health and Nutrition and Food Science graduate students interested in a graduate degree emphasizing both nutrition and public health. The joint program benefits students by reducing the number of credit hours needed to fulfill the requirement for each individual program by double-counting 5 courses (15 credits). Total credits for the two separate programs is 74 (32+42), but the joint program will allow students to attain both degrees by acquiring only 59 credits because of these five courses that will count toward both degrees. This should attract more students who are interested in both programs but in the past were forced to choose one program or the other due to time and/or financial constraints. The University will be able to capture the growing interests in public health nutrition and produce graduates who have the knowledge and ability to tackle health disparities, nutrition and health care policies, and food safety issues.

### **Admission Requirements**

Students must meet the admission and graduation requirements of both programs and enroll concurrently in the two programs during the period in which they are earning the degrees. Because the tuition rates for these two programs are different, students will be assessed tuition each semester based on their primary program. The admission requirements comply with the Graduate School requirements and meet the requirements of both Master of Arts and Master of Public Health degrees. A curriculum vita, personal statement, and three letters of recommendation are required. An interview may also be conducted.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

The Master of Arts degree requires 32 course credits consisting of 13 credits of core courses, 16 credits of elective graduate courses, and 3 credits for the master's essay. The MPH degree currently requires completion of 42 credit hours, 27 of which include courses in the core area of public health. There are fifteen credits (5 courses) that will double-count toward both degrees, bringing the total number of credits required to earn both degrees down to 59 hours from 74 hours.

The following courses will be double-counted toward both degrees:

NFS 6030	Microbiological Safety of Foods (3 credits)
FPH 7240	Epidemiology (3 credits)
NFS 6210	Nutrition Through the Life Cycle (3 credits)
NFS 7240	Nutritional Epidemiology (3 credits)
FPH 8990	MPH Research Project (3 credits)

### **Graduation Requirements**

All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students may enroll on a full-time or part-time basis but must complete requirements within six years of admission. Graduation requirements for this joint degree are consistent with the MA and MPH degrees. If a student completes requirements for only one degree, only that degree will be awarded.

### **Program Administration**

Ahmad R Heydari, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition and Food Science and Kimberly Campbell-Voytal, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Director, MPH Program, Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences.

### **Budget and Resource Requirements**

No new or additional resources are required.

Submitted by: Margaret E. Winters, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

### **Accreditation**

The Master of Public Health program is currently accredited. The joint degree program will not seek accreditation.

### **Approvals**

The proposal for the Master of Arts and Master of Public Health joint degree program was approved by the Faculty and Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine; the Faculty Council of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the faculty of the School of Medicine; the Office of the Dean of the School of Medicine and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; the Graduate Council; the Policy Committee of Academic Senate; and the Office of the Provost.