

**DATE:** July 24, 2008

**SUBJECT:** The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Ph.D. Nutritional Sciences

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The program proposed has existed for a number of years as first a free-standing degree and then AS subsumed as a concentration under the interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Health and Human Sciences. With its steady productivity as a concentration and deepening of the science base of the Nutrition field, the concentration has grown into its current “curricular independence” and now is proposed as a separate degree major.

**PROPOSED START-UP DATE:** Fall 2008

Commission staff reviewed this program proposal according to the academic standards adopted by the Commission on January 29, 1997. Each relevant standard is referenced below.

**1.1.20A MISSION:** The proposed program is in keeping with the mission of the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, which emphasizes health of populations. This program has a distinctive focus on preventing obesity and obesity-related illnesses. It integrates the discovery approach of cellular and behavioral sciences with clinical and public health outcomes.

**1.1.20B CURRICULUM:** The proposed program will have two major tracks: the first focuses on cellular and molecular nutrition. Students are engaged investigating the impact of nutrition on various chronic and acute diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and epilepsy. The second track is in public health and community. Students undertake research on how nutrition impacts health and well-being of individuals and communities. A total of 72 semester credit hours is required for degree completion.

**1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** Several measures are used to govern admission, including the standardized GRE. Retention is monitored by progression milestones. As retention tools, the department makes every effort to fund students throughout their program and match student interests to ongoing faculty research programs.

Projected Program Productivity:

Year	Full-time Headcount	Graduates
1	8	3

2	9		3
3	9		3
4	9		4
5	9		4

**1.1.20D FACULTY:** No additional faculty beyond the 8 FTE faculty currently in place. The program will retain the number of graduate student slots presently awarded.

**1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES:** Since the program has been offered for some time as a doctoral concentration, library resources are appropriate for research and doctoral study.

**1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION:** The program will be administered by the Department of Nutrition in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences. The Nutrition Sciences doctorate will be coordinated by a graduate program coordinator.

**1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES:** N/A

**1.1.20H FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT:** Based on the consultant's conclusions, laboratories for research and teaching in cellular nutrition are available and adequate. A new facility for community nutrition has recently been provided by the University in support of the program.

**1.1.20I STUDENT/EMPLOYER DEMANDS:** Demand for graduates is high nationally and is often tied to the recognition of programs that have the "nutrition" designation. The size of the student population in this program is expected to grow within strategic projections, given the resources of the program and its emphasis on competitive admission. The focus of the proposed program on obesity and its related effects would enhance the State's ability to address this critical health issue. The core expertise of the faculty in both cellular and community nutrition will attract and train the next generation of researchers in this area. With a number of human sciences/family and consumer sciences baccalaureate and master's programs at other institutions in Tennessee, there is a need for doctorally-prepared faculty to staff those programs now and in the future. The proposed separate degree addresses this continuing need.

**1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DULICATION:** If approved, the program will be the only Ph.D. in Nutrition Sciences in the state.

**1.1.20k COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS:** The program is not dependent on other institutions or sites.

**1.1.2L EVALUATION:** Program review of the Department on a 10-year cycle includes evaluation of the graduate programs by both internal and external reviewers. Benchmarks for successful program operation include: quality of students admitted, size of doctoral cohort, level of external support for doctoral students, placement of graduates in competitive post-doctoral positions, placement of graduates in competitive permanent positions five years following graduation, competitive awards

received by PhD candidates from national and international professional societies, number and impact of publications resulting from each Ph.D. degree. No accreditations exist for doctoral programs in this area, and other than indicating a new degree program, there should not be any implications for SACS accreditation.

**1.1.20M EXTERNAL JUDGMENT:** Dr. Billie J. Collier, Dean, College of Human Sciences and Professor, Textiles and Consumer Sciences, Florida State University, conducted a site visit and proposal evaluation. Dr. Collier concluded that doctoral study in nutrition at UTK has been of long standing and is nationally recognized. Dr. Collier maintained that a separate degree would enhance the position of the program nationally and enable better recruitment of high quality students.

**1.1.20N COST/BENEFIT/SOURCE:** The University has prepared a budget analysis documenting expenditures for program personnel and operating and anticipated revenues from tuition, fees, and external resources. Converting the concentration to an independent degree program will not create new recurring costs and revenue is expected to be sufficient for continued program operation. The only one-time expenditure associated with the proposed action is the nominal cost for consultant evaluation of the proposal and site visit.

**1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING:** An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance, and others set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. The Commission may choose to extend the period, if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.