

**Academic Programs Committee resolution on the proposal to create a
Master of Science (MS) and Doctoral Degree (PhD)
in Population Health Sciences
in the Duke University School of Medicine**

I. Introduction

Subcommittee A of the Academic Programs Committee reviewed the proposal to create a Master of Science (MS) and doctoral degree (PhD) in Population Health Sciences on March 7, 2018. Hayden Bosworth, Professor of Population Health Science, Lesley Curtis, Professor and Director, Center for Population Health Sciences, Mary Medlin, Assistant Director of Education, and Ashley Dunham, Managing Director, were in attendance as representatives for the proposal. The Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty (ECGF) reviewed the proposal twice. The APC was provided with the following documents for review: the proposal (as revised following the meetings with the ECGF), resolution from the ECGF, and the questions developed and discussed by the ECGF at their meetings and as well as responses from the proposal authors. The earlier versions of the proposal were provided as reference.

a. Summary of APC discussion

- i. The APC clearly recognized the value of creating a graduate program in Population Health Sciences and appreciated the unique role that Duke brings to the study of population health. The committee also recognized the expertise that Duke faculty members offer in the areas of epidemiology, measurement science, and implementation science, which will be the primary focus of the program.
- ii. The APC expressed concerns regarding whether there exists sufficient (1) faculty preparation and time to meet course teaching and mentoring demands, (2) administrative support and infrastructure (e.g. space), and (3) market demand for the program (particularly for the Master's program). Discussion focused on the advantages and disadvantages of various strategies for rolling out the program. The concern raised was to ensure that the strategy will provide sufficient time for faculty to gain experience in teaching, to fine-tune the curriculum and related internship opportunities, and to assess the adequacy of resources and market demand. Concerns were also voiced regarding a class size of 3 for the first year of the PhD program. It was felt that this would not be an adequate number of students to develop a strong sense of group identity and peer support, particularly if one student were to drop out.

II. Resolution

- a. The APC approves the creation of a graduate program in Population Health Sciences with the provision that the program begins by establishing a PhD program with a

minimal class size of 5 and delays the start of the MS program until after a 3-year review has taken place.

- b. The APC recommends ongoing monitoring of the PhD program via self-assessment and the external advisory board.
- c. The committee also recommends that a detailed market analysis to assess the demand for the MS program, both among prospective students and among employers in various sectors, be conducted before launching the MS program. The results of this analysis should be considered as part of the 3-year review. The APC also urges the department and advisory board to consider the need and desire for the Master's program, separate from the need and desire for the doctoral program, and to think carefully about its sustainability.
- d. The committee recommends that expanded resources be devoted to marketing the new program with a goal of highlighting the unique strengths of Duke that distinguish it from similar programs.

III. Vote

- a. 10 approved, one abstained, three did not respond

IV. Second visit to APC

On April 4th, H. Bosworth, L. Curtis, A. Dunham, M. Medlin, were joined by Ashley Skinner to visit APC for a second time, in order to present their response to the APC resolution and petition for consideration of a revised proposal. Additional documents presented to APC included a written response to the APC resolution, a time-line for the DPHS educational program, a layout of the Imperial Building describing space for the Master's students, an organizational chart of the DPHS administration, and a list of topics for a teaching seminar series.

a. Summary of APC discussion

APC started the discussion by asking for clarifications regarding the funding model for PhD programs in the School of Medicine and how the expected revenue from the proposed Master's program in Population Health would contribute to the funding of the PhD program in Population Health. Based on the discussion, it is the understanding of the APC that the stipends for the PhD students would be dominantly grant supported, but that expenses associated with teaching the courses of the PhD program as well as administrative and infrastructure costs would look to be covered by the revenue of the Master's program. Subsequently, APC discussed each of the items mentioned in the response document: roll-out strategy (including the proposed reduction in the number for the first cohorts of the Master's program), faculty preparedness (including proposed strategies for refining teaching skills of the faculty), market demand and career outlook (some

residual concerns mentioned in the original resolution remain), as well as administrative support and infrastructure.

APC notes very favorably Duke's participation in the National Clinical Scholars Program (NCSP). The proposed Master's degree will fill a strong educational need within that program. About half of the expected annual cohort of Master's students are anticipated to enter the program as NCSP fellows with full tuition being paid by that program, allowing for significant financial aid to the other half of the cohort. It is also our understanding that the NCSP provides a strong informal network that can be accessed for career information and support.

V. **Revised Resolution:**

APC recommends the creation of a Master of Science (MS) and Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Population Health Sciences in the Duke University School of Medicine. The program roll-out should follow the scale and timetable **outlined in the supplemental documents presented to APC on April 4, 2018** (initial cohort of 15 Master's students, start of PhD program two years later with an initial cohort of five students). As is the case with all new degree programs, an external review of the program will occur after three years. In addition, APC recommends the following provisions:

- a. APC recommends ongoing monitoring of the graduate program via self-assessment and the external advisory board.
- b. The committee recommends that a marketing plan for the Master's program be developed by an outside marketing company to help increase the reach of DPHS regarding a high quality and diverse applicant pool.
- c. In support of the Master's program, DPHS should provide and/or facilitate access to career guidance and development services that help Master's candidates in their job search for post-graduation employment.
- d. DPHS should create a website that contains a detailed description of the graduate program to inform prospective applicants, including information on typical employment after graduation (and expected salary levels).
- e. APC recommends that mentoring of Master's students by DPHS faculty should factor meaningfully in the promotion and tenure process for DPHS faculty.

VI. Vote: 10 voted in favor; one voted against; one abstained; two did not vote