MEMORANDUM

TO: Kitty Lagareta  
Chairperson, Board of Regents

VIA: David McClain  
President

FROM: Denise Eby Konan  
Interim Chancellor

SUBJECT: Request to Establish a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Nutrition, administered by the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai‘i, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Regents approve the establishment of a Doctor of Philosophy in Nutrition to be administered by the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai‘i, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

ADDITIONAL COST:

None. The proposed degree program will not require additional funds for staffing or operations. All courses are currently taught by existing Mānoa faculty.

RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE:

Fall 2007

PURPOSE:

The objective of a Doctor of Philosophy in Nutrition is to produce future leaders in the field of nutrition who can identify, research and solve problems related to food, nutrition, and human health, especially in Hawai‘i and in the Asia-Pacific region. The
program will integrate resources from the instructional and research programs housed in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the John A. Burns School of Medicine, and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai‘i to create a program that will produce highly marketable, interdisciplinary graduates that can assume leadership roles in research, academic, government, medical and health-related enterprises.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Board of Regents' Policy 5-1 grants the Board the authority to establish degree programs upon the recommendation of the President.

Nutrition-related health problems are increasing in epidemic proportions in Hawai‘i, the Pacific Islands, and in developing regions of Asia. Obesity, heart disease, diabetes and the metabolic syndrome are common examples. While nutrition is a significant factor in all of the major chronic diseases, there has never been a PhD in Nutrition at the University of Hawai‘i. These diet-related health problems require the in-depth study and research afforded by a PhD program.

The proposed PhD in Nutrition will address these issues through the integration of research and instructional resources housed across the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR), the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai‘i (CRCH).

This collaborative PhD program will admit highly-qualified students with a background in the biomedical sciences and a strong desire to be at the forefront of nutrition and biomedical research. Prospective students include:

1) Medical students from JABSOM seeking joint Doctor of Medicine/Doctor of Philosophy degrees, and advanced biomedical or clinical research related to nutrition;
2) Students seeking a PhD focused on nutritional epidemiology in coordination with JABSOM’s Public Health Sciences program;
3) Students focusing on aspects of diet and cancer (including obesity) in coordination with CRCH; and
4) Doctoral students focusing on basic and applied aspects in the nutritional sciences within CTAHR’s Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences (nutritional biochemistry and metabolism, international nutrition, clinical nutrition and diet therapy, nutrition education, food and culture, etc.).
The program will also provide courses and enhanced research opportunities for post-doctoral students in CRCH’s R25 Postdoctoral Training Program.

The proposed PhD program will prepare graduates for leadership and innovation in the biomedical sciences by fostering their development as critical thinkers, team players, self-directed interdisciplinary scholars, communicators, educators and researchers in the field of nutrition. These program goals will be accomplished through the collective expertise of the graduate faculty in CTAHR, JABSOM and CRCH. Qualified graduate faculty from these units will be organized into a Nutrition Graduate Faculty led by a graduate program chair nominated by the Chairman of the Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences (in CTAHR), and approved by the Dean of the Graduate Division. The graduate faculty will be responsible for maintaining the quality of admission requirements, curricular and program requirements, candidacy and comprehensive exams, and dissertation research that is original, independent and a significant contribution to the field.

To assess the need for a PhD in Nutrition at UHM, several types of information were obtained: the prevalence of PhD programs in nutrition at major U.S. universities; the number of medical schools that offer a MD/PhD in nutrition; the number of doctoral degrees in nutrition awarded annually; solicited comments from prospective students; letters of support from administrators within JABSOM, CRCH, and CTAHR; and comments from prospective employers in the community on the need for a PhD in Nutrition program at the University of Hawai‘i.

Data from the latest published National Science Foundation survey indicate that over the period 2000–2004, an average of 138 doctoral degrees in nutrition were awarded annually. These numbers attest to the demand for training in this discipline and an academic gap in graduate program offerings at UH. At least fifty of America’s leading universities offer a PhD in nutrition, including many on the west coast that typically compete with Hawai‘i for students, such as Oregon State, University of Washington, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, Colorado State, and Utah State. Indeed most major land-grant universities across the country offer a doctoral degree in nutrition.

The CTAHR Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences currently offers and administers a master’s degree in Nutritional Sciences and has many graduate faculty capable of teaching, mentoring, and supporting PhD students and their research, therefore no additional resources are needed to begin the program. No additional support staff or administrative resources are required. Existing support staff, the
graduate chair, and the admissions and graduate program committees will handle correspondence, admissions and administration of the PhD program.

The proposal to offer a PhD in Nutrition has been reviewed and endorsed by the Graduate Council and the Mānoa Faculty Senate.

Board of Regents Policy 5-1(a) provides that all new academic programs, once approved, shall have provisional status until a review is conducted. Reviews are initiated once a full cycle of graduates has been completed. As this proposed program is a doctoral degree, the required review would be conducted in academic year 2011-2012.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:**

It is recommended that the Board of Regents approve the establishment of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nutrition to be administered by the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, in collaboration with the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai‘i, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, effective Fall 2007.

WP:am

Attachments

c: Interim Executive Administrator and BOR Secretary Pang  
Vice President Johnsrud  
Vice Chancellor and Interim Dean Ostrander  
Dean and Director Hashimoto  
Director Vogel  
Dean Garrod