



May 2011

Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Prevention Science Washington State University

Introduction

Washington State University (WSU) proposes to begin offering a Ph.D. in Prevention Science in Fall 2011. Students would complete an M.A. as a stepping stone to the Ph.D. Eight FTE students would enroll initially, increasing to 34 FTE students during the fourth year. By the fourth year, eight students per year would graduate prepared to generate, evaluate, and disseminate research-based interventions that promote the well-being and healthy development of children and families. Graduates would work as faculty or researchers at universities or as evaluators, program coordinators, or researchers at private firms and government or social service agencies.

Sufficient courses would be available locally or through distance delivery to enable students at Pullman, Spokane, or Vancouver to complete the proposed program. It would initially be administered by the Department of Human Development, but it would be offered in partnership (and eventually administered jointly) with the College of Communication, College of Nursing, and WSU Extension. It would be funded by internal reallocation of resources, resulting in closure of the department's M.A. Human Development program in Pullman.¹

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington

The proposed program would increase research activity in support of WSU's mission goals of advancing and applying knowledge. Moreover, it would respond to a capacity issue raised in the Master Plan, which notes that universities "... struggle to sustain and expand their research capacity, and to provide opportunities for students to participate in research projects."²

Furthermore, it would generate research-based intervention programs, such as school dropout prevention programs, that support the Master Plan's K-12-related initiatives.

¹ Current M.A. Human Development students would be able to finish their degrees. If resources are available, WSU would like to re-start the M.A. Human Development at Vancouver in 2-3 years.

² Higher Education Coordinating Board, *2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Washington*, Page 28.

Program Need

Communities need to solve many complex problems related to children and families, such as childhood obesity, substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, school violence, and kids dropping out of school. The proposed program would respond to community need by providing graduates with interdisciplinary training in developing, disseminating, and evaluating research-based prevention programs to address such problems.

The state's employer needs assessment joint report indicates unmet demand in research/science/technical fields.³ The need for researchers in the prevention field is corroborated by one of the proposal's external reviewers, Dr. Catalano, who noted “. . . the growing demand by federal and state agencies that prevention funds be spent on tested, effective programs.”

Furthermore, the Society of Prevention Research lists at least 45 suitable positions, including research scientists, tenure-track faculty, postdoctoral fellowships, and grant project directors.

In September 2009, WSU conducted online surveys of 255 prevention professionals and about 50 Human Development students and alumni. Fifty-four of 59 responding professionals perceived significant or some need for doctoral-level prevention professionals in the state. Twenty-six of 33 responding students and alumni anticipated applying to a doctoral program in the future and indicated they would be very or somewhat likely to apply to the proposed program. Nine of ten respondents who had already enrolled in or completed a doctoral program said they would have applied to WSU had the proposed program been available.

Program planners indicate the M.A. Human Development program has 16 FTE students. Although 30 percent of its graduates enroll in doctoral programs, they currently must enroll at institutions other than WSU. The University of Washington's Ph.D. in Social Welfare (with nine students specializing in prevention research) is the region's only comparable program. The proposed program would serve a different geographical area and offer a different curricular structure and emphasis.

Diversity

To enhance diversity, the department plans to advertise in publications that target diverse audiences, recruit students of color identified through programs such as the McNair Scholars program, and recruit at Native American reservations. It also plans to emphasize its commitment to diversity on the program website. Although the proposed program does not require any new faculty hires, WSU would use multiple strategies to ensure a large and diverse applicant pool if relevant positions open up.

³ Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. *A Skilled and Educated Workforce: An assessment of the number and type of higher education and training credentials required to meet employer demand* (2009). Pages 13-14.

Program Description

The proposed 72 semester credit interdisciplinary program would integrate theory and methodology from several disciplines including human development, psychology, communication, and health sciences. It would prepare students to research risk and protective factors and develop, evaluate, and disseminate research-based intervention programs that promote healthy physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development.

It would cover not only the generation of research-based knowledge but also its translation into programs and policies. Students would be able (but not required) to specialize in advanced developmental science, social policy, quantitative methods, or a combination of these areas.

Students would be admitted based on transcripts (3.5 or higher grade point average in a relevant baccalaureate or master's degree program), Graduate Record Exam scores, resume, reference letters, and a statement of career goals and research interests. All students would be admitted as Ph.D. students but would receive an M.A. after completing core coursework and an M.A. thesis defense (typically by the end of the fifth semester).

Additional coursework, as well as success in preliminary doctoral exams and a completed dissertation, also are required. The entire program could be completed full-time in four to five years (including one to two years for dissertation work) and part-time in six to eight years.

Core courses would be taught primarily by full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty, who would also serve on doctoral committees. About half of the faculty effort would be provided by the Department of Human Development, with the remainder provided by WSU Extension and the colleges of Nursing, Communication, and Education. The curriculum would include a mix of face-to-face and online courses structured to allow human development, nursing, or communication students to enter and complete the proposed program.

Student learning assessment measures would include quantitative rubric-based faculty rating of theses, dissertations, and oral defenses; faculty ratings of student performance on preliminary exams and as teaching fellows; and a number of peer-reviewed student presentations and publications. These student learning assessments also would inform program assessment. In addition, program assessment would include teaching evaluations, student entry and exit interviews, end-of-program-surveys, and graduate placement statistics.

Program Costs

Funded through internal reallocation, the proposed program would enroll eight FTE students the first year, increasing to 34 FTE students during the fourth year. It would require 3.9 FTE instructional faculty, plus 33 percent effort from the department chairperson. It also would require 0.3 FTE administrative staff.

It would not require any new courses, new hires, or new infrastructure other than additional computers and student office space. By the fourth year, the total cost of instruction, including indirect cost, would be \$774,050, or \$22,766 per average annual FTE student. This lies within the graduate social sciences cost range reported in the HECB's 2005-06 *Education Cost Study* (July 2007).

External Review

Two reviewers evaluated the proposal: Dr. Richard Catalano, Bartley Dobb Endowed Professor for the Study and Prevention of Violence and Director of the Social Development Research Group, School of Social Work, University of Washington; and Dr. Mark Greenberg, Edna Peterson Endowed Chair in Prevention Research and Director of the Prevention Research Center, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Pennsylvania State University. Both reviewers supported the proposal but offered a few comments and suggestions.

Dr. Catalano strongly supported the proposal. His suggestions included making specialties mandatory, adding course content related to cost-benefit analysis and translational research, and shifting student support from teaching assistantships to research assistantships. Program planners responded that WSU graduate school policy discourages mandatory specialties and explained where the proposed curriculum covers cost-benefit analysis and translational topics. Multi-investigator grants should provide substantial funding for research assistantships.

Dr. Greenburg also supported the proposal, saying "I believe this proposed program is innovative and likely to attract substantial numbers of well-qualified graduate students over the next decade." However, he suggested hiring faculty with expertise in advanced quantitative methodology and school-based prevention as new positions become available. He also questioned program effectiveness for part-time students outside of Pullman. Program planners responded by noting current faculty expertise. They also explained that the advisors of branch campus students would be branch campus faculty, most courses would be available through distance technology, and most students would enroll full-time.

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would advance WSU's research mission because the opportunity to work with Ph.D. students would increase faculty research and grant productivity. The built-in collaboration between regular faculty and field-based WSU Extension faculty also would promote research.

Implementation of the proposed program would require suspension of the existing M.A. Human Development program, which normally serves 16 FTE students; however, the proposed Ph.D. program would serve more students while increasing the quality of their research experience. The *Strategic Master Plan* notes the benefits of students participating in research.

The proposed program would respond to employer, student, and community demand at a reasonable cost without duplicating other programs. Students and employers would benefit from the research experience the proposed program would provide, and the community would benefit from the “fruits” of the research.

Students would study a flexible curriculum under faculty who have had significant practice working together on interdisciplinary, collaborative research. Student and program assessment would both employ multiple measures. Both reviewers supported approval of the program, noting innovative aspects.

Staff Recommendation

After careful review of the proposal and supporting materials, staff recommends approval of the Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Prevention Science at Washington State University in Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver. The HECB’s Education Committee discussed the proposal during its April 26, 2011 meeting and recommended approval by the full Board.



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

917 Lakeridge Way SW • PO Box 43430 • Olympia, WA 98504-3430 • (360) 753-7800 • FAX (360) 753-7808 • www.hecb.wa.gov

RESOLUTION NO. 11-08

WHEREAS, Washington State University proposes to offer a Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Prevention Science; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the *Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education*, as well as the university's mission; and

WHEREAS, The program would respond to student, employer, and community demand without duplicating existing programs; and

WHEREAS, The existing Master of Arts in Human development would be suspended for up to three years to allow development and implementation of the proposed program; and

WHEREAS, The program has support from external reviewers; and

WHEREAS, The program would be offered at a reasonable cost; and

WHEREAS, The program would be offered in Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Master of Arts and Ph.D. in Prevention Science at Washington State University effective May 19, 2011.

Adopted:

May 19, 2011

Attest:

Earl Hale, Vice Chair

Sam Smith, Education Committee Chair