

Council of Trustees' Summary of Mansfield University's Master of Science in Nutrition Online Program Proposal

Appropriateness to Mission

The Department of Health Sciences proposes a new, totally online Master of Science (MS) degree in Nutrition for working professionals. Students can complete the program in two years by taking two courses per semester or in four years by taking one course per semester, including summers. The program aligns well with PASSHE's desire to "ensure academic program excellence and relevance" and to "enable more students to obtain credentials that prepare them for life, career, and the responsibilities of citizenship." The program also aligns with Mansfield University's liberal arts focus.

Need

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job growth outlook for 2012-20 is faster than average. The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, (ACEND) has indicated that newly credentialed professionals will need to obtain a MS by 2024. Currently credentialed Registered Dietitians can use their MS in Nutrition coursework to meet their continuing education requirements. Results of student and alumni surveys also provided the data to support the need for this program.

This program complements, but does not duplicate programs at West Chester University (WCU) and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) because they serve different populations. WCU's on-campus Master of Public Health (MPH) Program includes a nutrition concentration as one of six options. IUP's Master of Food and Nutrition recently began offering online classes, but the program includes a regional internship component with limited enrollment. IUP reported 15 full-time student equivalents for this program in 2013; not nearly enough to accommodate PASSHE's 192 nutrition program graduates.

Coordination/Cooperation/Partnerships

Only WCU, IUP, and Mansfield University have undergraduate nutrition programs. These three programs had a combined FTE of 850 and graduated 192 students during 2012-2013, creating a pipeline of future students for Mansfield's MS in Nutrition. After this program commences, it has an opportunity to grow articulation agreements with other PASSHE schools. Nutrition Program faculty have already collaborated with other master's programs on campus for statistics, research, and elective courses.

Academic Integrity/Assessment

Program goals and student learning outcomes have been developed to meet the needs of prospective students and to complement the goals and objectives of Mansfield University's undergraduate Nutrition Program. The program has the following two overarching goals: to prepare competent nutrition professionals for advanced level careers in nutrition and to prepare students for leadership roles, professionalism, and a commitment to lifelong learning in nutrition-related fields. Program faculty will report annually to the Dean and Provost on assessment outcomes and improvement actions taken.

Resource Sufficiency

Since this program will take place online, it requires no additional facilities or equipment, but faculty will apply for a PASSHE/Highmark grant for technical resources. The Program's library liaison has determined that the online program will require an additional \$1000 in library resources. They will be shared with Mansfield's online MS in Nursing Program and will be funded through existing MU Foundation money. Three current faculty members and two newly hired part-time faculty members who are experts in their field will staff this program. Mansfield University maintains a pool of funds to support part-time faculty members. Funds from this pool will be used to hire part-time faculty members.