



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION: School of Graduate Studies / Faculty of Medicine: Proposal for a new Master of Science in Community Health (M.Sc.C.H.) to be offered through the Department of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has authority to recommend to Academic Board approval changes which establish a new degree program.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

HIGHLIGHTS:

This is a proposal for a new Master of Science in Community Health (M.Sc.C.H.) program in the Graduate Department of Public Health Sciences (PHS). The program is intended for practising health professionals who already have, or plan to assume, teaching and public health/clinical leadership positions within their professional fields. It is a non-thesis, professional program, not intended as a lead in to a doctoral program.

The proposed program was included as a key initiative in the most recent (2004-10) PHS Departmental Academic Plan. It aligns within the Faculty of Medicines' Academic Plan 2004-2010, that articulated the need to "Advance our scientific and professional training platform for the 21st century" as a major objective. PHS currently offers a Master of Health Science program, providing research and applied public health training, and a doctoral program. The proposed MScCH differs substantially from these existing PHS programs in its emphasis and content (PH core with an education theme), intended audience (health professional practitioners) and delivery model.

The academic objective of the MScCH program is to produce health practitioners who combine enhanced health /professional leadership and teaching skills with a comprehensive understanding of public health, and of their specific fields or specialty areas. Equally important, participants in the program will refine their critical, analytic, interpretive and scholarly skills. The program will help develop professional models for improved interprofessional team practice and education spanning clinical, community and public health. The program's academic objectives will be achieved through course work which includes lectures, seminars, case studies, literature review, as well as, individual and group assignments. In some areas, specified current Continuing Education offerings at the

Faculty of Medicine will form the basis for partial credit towards the companion graduate course. Practica experiences will provide the students with opportunities to apply, critically evaluate and reflect upon their new skills.

Four fields are proposed for the MScCH:

- Family and Community Medicine (FCM)
- Health Practitioner Teacher Education (HPTE)
- Public Health Nutrition (PHN)
- Wound Prevention and Care (WPC)

The Health Practitioner Teacher Education field is seen to be broadly generic and applicable to all health professions. The other three represent specific professional practice disciplines.

Demand for this program arises from the existing Master of Health Sciences (M.H.Sc) in the Public Health Sciences program. The M.H.Sc. program does not meet the needs of some applicants/students to that field and program who are more interested in a health practitioner teacher-education type of program. One field (Family and Community Medicine) of the existing M.H.Sc. is being deliberately phased out in favour of the proposed program.

The degree name and designation have been proposed to convey the professional nature of the program. The M.Sc.C.H. degree program will have a distinctive focus; it is designed for people who already hold a professional credential and typically will have relevant professional experience. As such, the proposed format of program is not the same as the M.H.Sc. The program offers education and training for professionals in a modular-format through 5 FCE over a twelve month period for full-time students; there is a part-time option with a three-year time limit. The program includes a practicum. A number of the courses will be offered via e-learning, or will have an e-learning component. The program will not be offered as an e-learning program in itself, however.

A Graduate Diploma in Community Health (Dip.C.H.) (OCGS Type 1) may be awarded in exceptional circumstances to students in the M.Sc.C.H. program upon request; a student would only be eligible in limited circumstances after successfully completing at least 3.5 full course equivalents of the master's degree program requirements, including the required courses for the field, and with the approval of the Department. These students would not be eligible to re-enroll in the degree program in future.

The proposal has been reviewed extensively within the Faculty of Medicine and the Departments of Public Health Sciences, Family and Community Medicine and Nutritional Sciences. It has been approved by the Curriculum Committee of the Department of Public Health Sciences (August 18, 2006), the Faculty of Medicine, Graduate Curriculum Committee (November 9, 2006) and Graduate Education Standing Committee of Council (January 31, 2007) and by the Faculty Council (February 26, 2007). Support for the new program has also been received from the Chair of the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, OISE/UT, and from the Dean, Faculty of Nursing. The School of Graduate Studies Graduate Education Council approved the proposal on February 27, 2007.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The Department of Public Health Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine have committed to provide all the resources needed for this program. The size of the program has been determined in the context of financial implications and resources available to the program. The proposal will be presented to the Planning and Budget Committee on April 16, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs recommends to the Academic Board:

THAT the Master of Science in Community Health (M.Sc.C.H.) Program at the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health Sciences, be recommended to Governing Council for approval, effective September 2007.

and

THAT the Graduate Diploma in Community Health (Dip.C.H.) Program at the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Public Health Sciences, be recommended to Governing Council for approval, effective September 2007.