

Office of the Dean
Faculty of Health & Behavioural Sciences
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MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Roche
University Secretary

From: Lori Livingston
Dean, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences

Date: February 17, 2011

Re: Proposal for a Department of Health Sciences

The Directors Committee in the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, following a period of further consultation, reviewed the attached proposal for a Department of Health Sciences. Today, the Committee voted favourably to support the proposal.

As a result, I am writing to request that the proposal (as per the motion passed at the January 28 Senate Meeting) be referred to the appropriate Senate Committees.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email (laliving@lakeheadu.ca) or telephone (766-7206).

Sincerely,



Lori A. Livingston, PhD

FACULTY OF HEALTH AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

MEMO

TO: Karen Roche, Secretary of Senate

FROM: Dr. Lori Livingston, Dean

RE: Proposal for a Department of Health Sciences

DATE: January 19, 2011

I am writing to request that Lakehead University grant academic unit status to a Department of Health Sciences, which will house the current Master of Public Health Program as well as specific future health-related programs. The request is both timely and necessary, as:

- The Master of Public Health Program (MPH), which has been so successful over the past 8 years, is now the academic home for over 100 graduate students. The MPH degree program is poised to increase annual admission by 25 students per year, which will increase overall enrollment to over 150 graduate students on an annual and ongoing basis.
- The MPH commenced without any dedicated faculty appointments. Thereafter, appointments to the program began with one position being added in 2005, two in 2007, one in 2010 and two on August 1, 2011. It will have 6 tenure-track positions and one limited term appointment position by August 2011.
- An academic unit will provide the structure to assure sustainability and support the growth of future academic programs, honouring Lakehead University's Strategic Plan.
- An academic unit will also provide a mechanism by which peer colleagues appointed within the current program are given the opportunity to review and ballot on promotion, tenure, renewal (PTR), and merit applications.
- It will fulfill the OCGS recommendation that the Master of Public Health program be housed in an academic unit as soon as possible.

- A proposal has been submitted to OCGS for a Master of Health Sciences Program. It is likely that OCGS approval of this new graduate degree will be contingent upon the MPH and MHS being housed in an academic unit. That recommendation was made in a letter dated November 5th, 2007.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Livingston', positioned above a horizontal line.

Lori Livingston, Dean

PROPOSAL FOR AN ACADEMIC UNIT IN HEALTH SCIENCES

Prepared by:

Glenna Knutson, Director, MPH Program
Peter Brink, Graduate Coordinator, MPH Program

BACKGROUND

The Lakehead University Master of Public Health (MPH) Program was developed in 2002 through a collaborative effort of faculty members from approximately 8 departments and schools. The program was immediately successful, enrolling 17 students in its first year; within two years, enrollment had increased to over 100 students. According to Lakehead University institutional statistics, enrollment has remained high, at approximately 110 to 150 students enrolled each year, making it the largest graduate program at Lakehead University; it also has the largest number of applicants each year (over 300 applications last year). The program now admits 47 students per year, divided between the Health Sciences and the Nursing Specialization fields.

Table 1 shows the growth in enrollment in the MPH since 2002-2003.

Table 1. Enrollment in MPH* (Including Health Sciences and Nursing Specialization)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Full-time Students	1	12	27	39	73	138	105	111
Part-time/Flex Students	16	48	75	79	44	15	9	21
Total	17	60	102	118	117	153	114	132

*Source: Lakehead University Institutional Statistics Book 2009/10

The MPH program had no full time faculty members from its inception in 2002 until 2005, when Dr. Michel Bédard, Canada Research Chair, became the first Director. The program's sustainability has required the recruitment of tenure-track faculty members whose focus is on the MPH program; to that end, two tenure-track faculty positions were secured in 2007. A further limited-term appointment was made available by one faculty member's Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Career Scientist Award. In 2010, another tenure-track position was secured, at a time when MPH applicant numbers exceeded 300. Because the MPH is a program without an academic unit, these faculty members are affiliated variously with Nursing, Social Work, and Psychology for the purpose of PTR, creating difficulty for the affected individuals.

With an agreement to increase MPH student numbers by 25 in September 2011, two more faculty positions will be filled in August 2011. This will result in a faculty complement of 6 tenure-track faculty members plus one term appointee, and a student body of over 150 graduate students.

RATIONALE

The MPH is the largest graduate program at Lakehead University, and has the largest number of applicants of any of its graduate programs. It represents faculty and student groups larger than those of many academic units within the University. A 2007 OCGS periodic review recommended that the MPH be housed in an academic unit as soon as possible. While this was proposed in 2008, a request for an academic unit with 3 faculty members was not supported by the University administration; in 2011 the number of faculty members will have grown to six.

Lakehead University's Senate approved two further graduate programs with a focus on health: a PhD in Health Sciences in 2006; and a Master of Health Sciences (MHSc) in 2008. However, the University decided not to seek OCGS approval of these programs because OCGS had viewed the MPH program's non-academic unit status negatively. This represents a missed opportunity, and it is unfortunate that Lakehead University is not currently benefitting from these two programs in its efforts to increase graduate student enrolment.

With a view to increasing graduate student numbers for 2011-2012, discussion of the MHSc proposal re-commenced in the fall of 2010, and involved faculty members in the MPH program. There was agreement that the MHSc proposal supports the University's interest in increasing graduate student numbers, and also supports the Lakehead University Strategic Plan. In December 2010, a proposal was submitted to OCGS, requesting approval of a new MHSc program at Lakehead University. In that proposal, we indicated that we would be submitting a request to Senate to create a Department of Health Sciences.

A proposed PhD in Health Sciences was approved by the Lakehead University Senate in May 2006; like the MHSc, it was not sent to OCGS due to the lack of an academic unit in which to house it. Interest in this degree continues to be very high, indicating that development of this degree would be consistent with the Lakehead University Strategic Plan. The proposed Department of Health Sciences is the logical location for this degree. A proposal for approval of the PhD in Health Sciences will be prepared following Senate approval of the Department of Health Sciences.

In addition, faculty members in the MPH program have commenced discussions with Dean Livingston on a proposal for a Bachelor of Health Sciences degree. We believe that the development of the BHSc program would be consistent with the Lakehead University Strategic Plan. It would be possible to commence curriculum planning, including consultation with possible contributor disciplines in a number of Faculties at Lakehead University, following Senate approval of a Department of Health Sciences.

MPH faculty members are currently required to declare affiliation with an academic unit or units for the purpose of PTR as well as Merit. This creates a hardship for faculty members, as those voting on their application are not generally individuals with whom they work. For example, two MPH faculty members have proxy affiliation for PTR and Merit with the Schools of Nursing and Social Work, and yet do not participate in teaching or administration within either School. MPH faculty with different proxy affiliations with different academic units are unable to

complete a ballot for their MPH colleagues, even though these are the faculty members with whom they work closely. Creation of an academic unit would allow MPH faculty members the benefit of PTR and Merit evaluation by their peers.

Governance of the MPH program has been arranged to mirror governance in Lakehead University academic units, although this has not been without problems. The complexity of governance would become more problematic without an academic unit to house a larger faculty complement as well as support the proposed MHSc program and potential PhD program. Governance of two or three graduate programs without benefit of an academic unit will hamper the development and growth of these programs. The logical solution is to house these academic programs in a single academic unit.

BUDGET

Resource Requirements for a Department of Health Sciences

Within the current budget structure, the MPH program has: an Administrative Coordinator, two graduate program coordinators (Health Sciences and Nursing/Nurse Practitioner); and a director. The Administrative Coordinator's full-time position is paid from the MPH budget on a year-to-year contract basis; it would be necessary to convert this position to a regular continuing position although no financial resources are required. Beyond this, no additional financial or human resources are required at this time for the development of a Department of Health Sciences.

SUMMARY

The request to grant academic unit status to a Department of Health Sciences is both necessary and timely.

- The MPH program should be in an academic unit for its own sustainability. It now has a faculty complement similar to, or larger than, many academic units at Lakehead University.
- A Department of Health Sciences is essential for the development of further graduate and undergraduate programs focusing on health, including a MHSc, a PhD, and potentially a BHSc .
- The Department of Health Sciences will provide a necessary affiliation for faculty for the purpose of PTR and Merit considerations. (The current members are attached variously to Nursing, Psychology and Social Work).
- It is essential for the governance of the MPH program, the proposed MHSc, and the potential PhD, that an academic unit be created to house these various programs.