

Notice of Intent to Plan

Degree: Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Equity

Major: Health Promotion and Equity

Department: Kinesiology

School/College: School of Education

Fit with Institutional Mission, Strategic Plan, and Existing Program Array

The proposed Health Promotion and Equity degree/major in the School of Education will offer undergraduates an opportunity for rigorous study of the biological, psychological, and social determinants of health and wellness. The program aims to help create the workforce required to address health promotion and education needs of Wisconsin communities in a variety of settings and capacities. The program will have a particular focus on serving socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups in the State—those individuals who can be at greatest risk for chronic disease, disability, and reduced productivity and quality of life.

It is believed that the Department of Kinesiology is the ideal primary home for the major given the department's history of research and instruction in health promotion, health and physical activity, occupational therapy, health education, and epidemiology. But while the major will be housed chiefly in Kinesiology, it will draw on crucial strengths in the School's Rehabilitation Psychology and Counseling Psychology programs, especially related to physical and mental health behavior, prevention and intervention, and health policy. The major's location in the School of Education is a particular strength, given that education itself is a primary determinant of health and well-being in later life. Finally, the major's multidisciplinary perspective helps ensure that "health" is broadly defined within this program—for instance, that it includes community components, civic engagement, and environmental factors, in addition to individual factors.

The Health Promotion and Equity major aligns with the UW-Madison campus commitment to the Wisconsin Idea by preparing professionals who will serve communities across the state, nation, and world. The program's particular focus on addressing health disparities and promoting health equity reflects a long commitment by School of Education faculty, staff, and students to serve socially and economically disadvantaged communities. It is believed that the proposed major's equity focus may be particularly attractive to under-represented students and will help recruit and prepare a more diverse student body for work in the health professions.

Despite enormous and still growing interest among students in majors related to health careers, there is at present no undergraduate health major at UW-Madison. The campus has seen substantial growth in instructional activity around STEM disciplines over the last decade and especially in the last five years. According to the June, 2014, APIR report, *Trends in Instructional Activity in STEM Disciplines*, undergraduate enrollment in STEM majors had increased from 32% to 41% of enrolled juniors and seniors since 2000, and STEM majors at that time accounted for 40% of all undergraduate degrees. Biology, which was established as a major in 1999, has been consistently among the largest campus majors, with 540 bachelor degrees granted to Biology majors in 2013. In 2014-15, 209 certificates in Global Health were awarded to undergraduates—the second largest number among all undergraduate certificates awarded that

year. Given the success of these offerings, there seems to be clear room at UW-Madison for an undergraduate health area offering at the degree/major level.

Program Need

The U.S. Department of Labor defines health educators as those who promote, maintain, and improve individual and community health by assisting individuals and communities to adopt healthy behaviors, and by collecting and analyzing data to identify community needs prior to planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating programs that encourage healthy lifestyles, policies, and environments. Fifty-one percent of health educators currently work in health systems and community organizations, while an additional 23% work in government programs.

Employment of health educators and health promotion specialists is growing faster than the national average compared to other occupations. Specifically, the employment of health educators is expected to grow by 18% by 2018. With the rising costs of healthcare in the United States, medical systems, insurance companies, employers, and governments are seeking ways to curb the financial and human costs of chronic disease and preventable injury. The Affordable Care Act passed in 2010 explicitly mandates health promotion programs.

The State of Wisconsin initiative, “Healthiest Wisconsin 2020,” is advancing health promotion activities to improve health across the life span and to eliminate health inequities and disparities in the state. Under this initiative, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services is mandated to develop and enforce policies and procedures to track social determinants of health and health outcomes by 2020. Local governments will further develop and implement educational policies and practices that support healthy outcomes, including integrating health literacy and decision-making skills about health into school districts. The proposed major will prepare professionals to conduct these activities and to positively influence health outcomes in Wisconsin.

In sum, the proposed program in Health Promotion and Equity responds to burgeoning student interest in health issues and health careers. Graduates will gain the skills needed to evaluate and implement evidence-based interventions designed to support health and well-being. They will be prepared to be future producers of new research, policies, and programs for the twenty-first century. Upon graduation, students may consider opportunities with non-profit community health organizations, health insurance companies, hospital-based systems, senior citizen centers, home visitation programs, governmental health offices, or professional graduate degree programs such as physical therapy or occupational therapy.

The new major is expected to be particularly attractive to under-represented students who are concerned about the social and cultural determinants of health, issues of equity in national and international access to health care, and the need to diversify the community of healthcare providers.

Currently, UW-Stevens Point and UW-La Crosse offer health education related degrees. UW-Stevens Point offers a major in Health Promotion/Wellness that includes a strand for Community Health Promotion/Wellness. UW-Madison’s program would differ by incorporating a specific focus on health equity and the health needs of socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups. UW-La Crosse offers a degree in Community Health Education that emphasizes preparation for the Certified Health Education Specialist examination upon

graduation. The proposed UW-Madison degree recognizes a wider variety in student goals and does not emphasize this specific career direction. The proposed degree is intended primarily to serve UW-Madison students—not to draw students away from other UW-System institutions.

Brief Program Description

The Health Promotion and Equity degree is designed to empower students to have an impact through health promotion and change mechanisms at the individual, local, state, and national/global levels. The program engages students regarding the health inequities and disparities found in society. Students will be able to focus their interests through additional coursework in related disciplines, informal tracks or concentrations within a School of Education department, or a related certificate program (e.g., the UW-Madison Global Health certificate). By the end of this program, students will be able to

1. Understand concepts and theories related to health promotion and equity.
2. Understand the role of social factors in facilitating or hindering health.
3. Understand the anatomical and physiological concepts related to the structure and function of the human body.
4. Demonstrate competence in evaluating the strengths and weakness of health behavior and health equity interventions.
5. Develop a community-based program that addresses one or more aspects of health promotion and/or equity.
6. Develop the skills to interpret and communicate the interaction between personal and environmental determinants of health and wellbeing.
7. Draw from their personal and professional identities to develop socially just practices and to lead effectively within their communities.

Students will learn about health promotion and equity and demonstrate competence in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in health promotion interventions. More importantly, students will explore health promotion and equity through different contexts, which will help guide a student to a particular career path, whether that is through community outreach programs or a variety of graduate programs. With this major, students will be able to contribute to the health policy and practice discussions in a variety of contexts.

Resource Requirements

The instructional and administrative resources for this new program will come from the existing resources of the three participating departments, but will also require X additional teaching positions and a full-time administrative staff person to advise majors and arrange internships. Advising for students before they are admitted formally to the program will be handled by the units in the undergraduate dean's office—Education Academic Services (EAS) and the Office for Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention (OURR), which currently provide this advising for all pre-professional students in the School. OURR also has the specific charge to recruit and provide support for under-represented students.

Program Faculty

Dorothy Farrar-Edwards, Professor, Kinesiology

Carmen Valdez, Associate Professor, Counseling Psychology
Brian Phillips, Assistant Professor, Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education
David Rosenthal, Professor, Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education
Corissa Lotta, Counseling Psychology
Lynet Uttal, Counseling Psychology
Stephen Quintana, Counseling Psychology
Janet Branchaw, Kinesiology
Beth Larson, Kinesiology
Bonnie Klassy, Kinesiology
Cindy Kuhrasch, Kinesiology

Letters of Support

Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education
Counseling Psychology
CALS
School of Medicine and Public Health
ICTER
Liz Petty, Health Professions Dean
Steph Roberts, Social Work
Jonathan Patts, Global Health