

## Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

### MEMO

**To:** The UVM Faculty Senate  
**From:** Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair  
**Date:** November 7, 2019  
**Re:** Approval of a request by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences in conjunction with the Graduate College to change the name of the PhD in Human Functioning and Rehabilitation Science (HFRS) to the PhD in Interprofessional Health Sciences (IHS)

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On November 7, 2019, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

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The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a request from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) in conjunction with the Graduate College to change the name of the PhD in Human Functioning and Rehabilitation Science (HFRS) to Interprofessional Health Sciences (IHS). No changes to the curriculum are planned with this name change other than to change the prefix of courses associated with the program from HFRS to IHS. This new prefix is already approved by the Registrar. The name change proposal received support from the CNHS curriculum committee, the Graduate Executive Council as well as the Deans of CNHS, the Graduate College, and the Larner College of Medicine, which provides some of the core curriculum.

The PhD in HFRS is a unique interprofessional program involving faculty across CNHS with an overarching goal of promoting interprofessional, hypothesis-driven research across fields relevant to the health sciences. It provides an opportunity for health professionals who assess and treat motor dysfunction to build research expertise in the area of human motor performance. Most students entering the program already have a professional degree at the master's or doctoral level and are seeking to develop research skills that will contribute to their practice-based perspectives. The program answers a societal call to integrate across disciplines and professions in order to provide meaningful solutions in a real-world context.

The current name, HFRS, has created confusion for applicants, some of whom think it is a PhD in Physical Therapy and others of whom do not understand how the name reflects the focus of the program. The nature, goals and philosophy of the program are obscured by the name, which is a deterrent to recruitment. The HFRS Academic Committee feels that the requested new name, Interprofessional Health Sciences, accurately reflects the intent of the program and its curriculum. A question was raised by an individual during the public comment period regarding the chosen name's suitability to the program and faculty input. The Associate Dean of CNHS responded that faculty had been consulted at multiple points throughout the process, which extended over a period of months. The Dean of the Graduate College confirmed that discussions had taken place at multiple levels and while there was not unanimous support within the faculty of CNHS, a majority of those involved in the program support the new name. As noted above, the name was also approved by the CNHS curriculum committee. The abstract for the program proposal approved in 2016 is attached to this report.

**COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES****PROPOSAL FOR A DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

**Program Title:** Human Functioning and Rehabilitation Science  
**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy  
**Responsible Unit:** College of Nursing & Health Sciences, Graduate College

**ABSTRACT**

The proposed program is an academic, research-oriented PhD program that emphasizes interprofessional education in human functioning and rehabilitation related to posture, balance, mobility, hearing, speech, language, physical activity and exercise. This program is translational in nature as it focuses on understanding the spectrum of human function from the basic physiological function of cells and body systems to overall physical capability. These complex human functions and behaviors are unified by the common theme of human motor performance. The program is also based on the movement in health care toward the dynamic-systems approach of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (the ICF model). This model prioritizes inter-professional research that goes beyond interdisciplinary efforts as our students learn side by side across unique but related health disciplines and our faculty address the contextual nature of health conditions as they affect body functioning, activity performance, and societal participation. Specifically, this model, and ultimately the educational and research experience of the doctoral students, considers health at three levels: 1) status of body structures and functions (molecular, cellular, and organ systems levels); 2) ability of the individual to participate in human activities and assume societal roles; and, 3) physical and social aspects of the environment that support the health of individuals and populations. Study of abnormal functioning and the related activity impairments and participation restrictions can lead directly to improvements in the physical, psychological, and social health of people with disabling health conditions. In addition, changes in physiological function at the molecular, cell, organ and systems level; motor control; language production and understanding; social cognition; and, participation in physical activity often coincide in persons with disabling health conditions. Thus, this interprofessional program will facilitate the generation of new knowledge by providing an academic training platform for research collaboration across the professional health disciplines represented by the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS). The program will recruit students in cohorts, with a goal of 5 students per cohort within the first five years. Students with at least a master's degree or the equivalent in a health-related field (e.g., in kinesiology, exercise physiology, exercise science, movement sciences, communication sciences and disorders, rehabilitation science, nursing, biomedical science, laboratory science, etc.) will be recruited.