

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

MEMO

To: Faculty Senate

From: Colby Kervick, Co-Chair Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

Date: 4/6/2023

Re: Approval of a proposal from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences for a new minor in Public Health, Equity and Advocacy

The CAC unanimously approved (18-0) a proposal for a new undergraduate minor in Public Health, Equity and Advocacy from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) at our April 6, 2023, meeting. No public comments were received during the 30-day circulation. The new minor will be administered by the Department of Biomedical and Health Sciences (BHSC) in CNHS and will be offered starting in Fall 2023.

Program Description and Rationale

Through an examination of health equity grounded in public health frameworks, this minor will prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in advocacy and work towards creating more just communities and societies and ensure that all people can thrive and reach their highest potential for level of health. Students will investigate the intersecting ways in which inequities contribute to poor health outcomes and provide opportunities to advocate for positive change.

The minor will allow students to dig more deeply into some of society's most pressing health issues. Students will be prepared to enter the workforce equipped with the knowledge and skills required to advocate for systems-level change spanning multiple disciplines and contribute to dismantling structures that lead to inequitable health outcomes across populations.

The minor will comprise 18 credits of coursework, including 4 core courses: Introduction to Public Health, Foundations for Health Equity, Racism and Health Disparities and Leadership and Advocacy for Health Equity (which includes an evidence-based, advocacy focused final project deliverable addressing a health-equity issue of relevance to the student) and an additional 6 credits of electives.

Additionally, through coursework and a culminating senior-level leadership and advocacy project, this minor will align directly with the Provost's Academic Success Goals *3.1: Use an evidenced-based engagement approach to addressing contemporary challenges; 3.2: Educate citizens to contribute to positive community impact; and 3.3: Prepare students to be engaged citizens.*

Justification and Evidence for Demand

Creating Health Equity is a guiding priority and core value of Public Health and of the American Public Health Association (APHA). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) have centered Health Equity as a cornerstone area for investigation, education, and investment. Also, other institutions such as Saint Michael's College have already established academic minors in Health Equity. UVM peer and aspirants range from having minors and majors to full centers around Health Equity.

In addition, interest in the core courses in this minor has already been established, with HSCI 021 (now HSCI 1100) having grown significantly, and HLTH/HSCI 155 (now HSCI 2600) being over capacity consistently for years.

Recent events such as the Flint (Michigan) water crisis; fatal violence against the Transgender community; and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color have brought social justice and health to the forefront. Longstanding inequities across various health determinants such as poverty, lack of access to healthcare, exposure to violence, inadequate housing and structural discrimination have made BIPOC communities broadly and Native American and Alaska Native (AIAN) populations specifically at an increased risk for adverse health outcomes from the COVID-19 virus. These events, and many others, have created an increased focus on the importance of Health Equity.

It is imperative that UVM students, regardless of major, be provided with the opportunity to learn about and understand the importance of health equity and be given the tools and knowledge needed to create systemic change through advocacy. The root causes of health disparities can be addressed and by engaging with students across multiple disciplines.

Relationship to Existing Programs

The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) offers a minor entitled Health and Society. From the current UVM catalog: “Health and Society (HSOC) is an interdisciplinary cross-college minor that brings together an array of social science approaches to address critical questions concerning health, healing, and health care in human populations. Program faculty and students examine the many ways in which human health, healing, and health care are defined, perceived, and enacted, and in which access to health and health care are distributed, within and across populations.”

The proposed PHEA minor differs significantly in its specific focus on the use of Public Health frameworks, Health Equity, and advocacy. While the HSOC minor focuses on a broad, social science/liberal arts overview of health, the proposed minor is specifically grounded in Public Health theoretical models and focuses on equity and advocacy: providing students with a scaffolded minor curriculum that culminates with an applied advocacy project. A letter from Prof. Jennifer Strickler, in the Department of Sociology, affirming Prof. Strickler’s agreement that the proposed minor will be distinguished from HSOC has been provided.

Curriculum

Required Courses

Number	Name	Credits
HSCI 1100	Introduction to Public Health	3
HSCI 1900*	Foundations of Health Equity	3
HSCI 2600	Racism and Health Disparities	3
HSCI 3450*	Applied Leadership in Health Equity	3

*new course

Elective Courses: 6 additional credits, including 3 at or above the 2xxx level

Number	Name	Credits
ANTH 1190 / HSOC 1700	Global Health Development & Diversity	3
ANTH 1400	Biological Anthropology	3

ANTH 2170	Culture, Health, and Healing	3
ANTH 2191 / HSCI 2100	Foundations of Global Health	3
BIOL 1200	Intro to Forensic Biology	3
CDAE 1050	US Food, Social Equity & Development	3
CSD 3200 / EDSP 3250	Culture of Disability	3
EDEC 1010	Intro to Early Care & Education	3
EDSP 1050	Issues Affecting Persons with Disabilities	3
GSWS 1500	Gender Sexuality Women's Study	3
HLTH 2050	Cultural Health Care	3
HLTH 2400	Issues in Women's Health	3
HSCI 1200	Anti-Racism and Health	3
HSOC 1600	Health Care in America	3
HST 2120	Topics in Gender & Sexuality History	3
NR 2810	Environmental Justice	3
POLS 2200	Economic Justice	3
SOC 2260	Racism and Health Disparities	3
SOC 2335	Gender, Sexualities and Medicine	3
SOC 3300	Applied Leadership in Health Equity	3
SWSS 1600	Racism & Contemporary Issues	3

There will be no prerequisites for the minor; however, some of the optional electives may have prerequisites.

There will be no restrictions related to majors that might overlap with this minor (any major is acceptable).

Admission Requirements and Process

While most minors will have no eligibility restrictions, some minors experience demands sufficient to require restricted access to that minor.

There will be no eligibility restrictions for this minor. There will be, however, an application process with an initial capacity of 30 students. This will allow for a controlled scale up if demand necessitates it. The intent is not to be restrictive, but rather to ensure the resources necessary for a high-quality experience are allocated. The proposers of the minor anticipate high demand, and so they have built the minor with capacity to scale up.

Anticipated Enrollment

The proposers anticipate an initial minor enrollment cap of 30 students. New courses are HSCI 1900 and HSCI 3450.

Advising

The CAC subcommittee asked for clarification about how academic advising for students in the new minor will be made available. The reply, from Prof. Eyal Amiel, the director of BSHC, is that advising will follow the structure for of the group-advising system of the Public Health undergraduate major within BSHC: "We do have a fairly robust group advising system for the Public Health undergraduate major, so we intend to leverage that current strength of the program's faculty. There will be clear guidance and 'curriculum

sheets' for each Minor available online for any advisors from outside the department who advise our minors.”

Staffing Plan, Resource Requirements, and Budget

Current departmental faculty can and will cover the coursework for this minor. The Minor will require 0.27 FTE to enroll (0.07 FTE for a Minor Director/Advisor, 0.1 FTE for HSCI 1900 instruction, 0.1 FTE for HSCI 3450 instruction).

Costs for this minor will be covered with current and upcoming faculty workloads, made available by three new hires into the program from the past academic year. Therefore, there will be no new or additional costs for this minor.

Library resources are presently available to support the minor (n.b. a letter of support from the Dean of Libraries was provided).

Evidence of Support

Letters of support for the new minor were provided by:

- William A. Falls, PhD, Dean of CAS
- Linda S. Schadler, PhD, Dean of CEMS
- Leslie V. Parise PhD, Dean of CALS
- Barbara Arel, PhD, Acting Dean of GSB
- Allan Strong, PhD, Interim Dean of RSENR
- Bryn Geffert, PhD, Dean of Libraries
- Pablo S. Bose, PhD, and Jonah Steinberg, PhD, Co-Directors of the Global and Regional Studies Program
- Jennifer Strickler, PhD, Dept. of Sociology

Summary

The CAC believes the proposers have clearly described the new Public Health, Equity and Advocacy minor and provided justification and evidence of its value to UVM students and of its consonance with UVM's strategic vision and with the Provost's academic success goals.

If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, this program will be implemented starting Fall 2023.