

**TOPIC: PROPOSAL TO OFFER A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN
NUTRITION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN
COLORADO.**

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I. SUMMARY

The Board of Trustees of the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) has submitted a proposal for a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Nutrition. The objective for offering the degree is to create a place for students wanting to study nutrition and food that is separate from dietetic majors who have a specific goal to become registered dietitians.¹

Department of Higher Education staff supports the proposed Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition.

II. BACKGROUND

The following is summarized from the UNC proposal for a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition degree:

There are several objectives of the new degree and for offering a B.S. in Nutrition. The main objective of the B.S. Nutrition degree is for students who would like to study nutritional sciences without the goal of becoming a registered dietitian. This degree would be a good match for those wanting to double major in counseling, sport and exercise science, athletic training, education, or nursing. There is flexibility in the degree to tailor it to meeting the needs of students wanting a pre-professional degree to continue their education for medical school, physician assistant school, dental hygiene, preparation for nursing, chiropractic school, graduate school in public health, and other health professions. The degree by itself can be used to obtain employment in public health clinics, food service, nutrition educator positions, dietary assistant positions and other dietetic related positions not requiring licensure or registration.

Having a B.S. in Nutrition would also allow the curriculum and standards for the B.S. Dietetics degree to be set to result in better outcomes of the Dietetics Program. Accreditation of the Dietetics Program is dependent upon outcomes measures that assume students are on a path leading to dietetic registration such as successful acceptance to dietetic internships, passing the dietetic registration exam upon the first attempt, completing the program

¹ New Degree Proposal: UNC B.S. in Nutrition

within a specified amount of time and being active in the profession. These outcomes require a GPA higher than what is needed for admission and successful completion of a degree at UNC. Further, since not all current dietetic students desire to become registered dietitians, they are not motivated to fulfill the program outcome measures. This should not be interpreted to mean they are poor students. Rather, the B.S. Dietetic degree is not a good fit for their goals. The B.S. Nutrition would better fit their post-graduate career plans.

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT:

The Bachelor of Science in Nutrition degree is congruent with the statutory role and mission for the University of Northern Colorado to be the primary institution for undergraduate and graduate degree programs for educational personnel preparation in the state of Colorado. The university shall offer masters and doctoral programs primarily in the field of education. C.R.S. 23-40-101.

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT DEMAND

The 2008-2009 Edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook of the Bureau of Labor Statistics states, "Employment of dietitians and nutritionists is expected to increase 9% during the 2006-2016 projection decade. Job growth will result from an increasing emphasis on disease prevention through improved dietary habits."

A growing and aging population will boost demand for nutritional counseling and treatment in hospitals, residential care facilities, schools, prisons, community health programs, and home health care agencies.

Public interest in nutrition and increased emphasis on health education and prudent lifestyles also will spur demand, especially in food service management.

With an increased public awareness of obesity and diabetes, Medicare coverage may be expanded to include medical nutrition therapy for renal and diabetic patients, creating job growth for dietitians and nutritionists specializing in those diseases.

Out of the current 137 on-campus majors, 38% or approximately 52 students have GPAs <2.7. This prevents them from becoming eligible to be successful applicants for dietetic internships and therefore, blocking them from pursuing dietetic registration. We anticipate that these students would transfer to the B.S. Nutrition major and they would be advised to do so.

Additionally, it is expected that 15% or more of the Nutrition minors would pursue a double major including the proposed degree. This would add approximately 9 more students. Given these numbers, $61 \times 5 \text{ years} = 305$ graduates would graduate over the next 5 years.

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

The Department staff have reviewed this proposed program to ensure that it meets the State's performance measures outlined in C.R.S. 23-1-107. The program meets all performance measures.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition degree to be offered by the University of Northern Colorado.

V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. 23-1-107

VI. ACCOMPANYING MATERIALS

The program proposal materials are attached.