

Department of Nutrition Science PPC Response – March 20, 2012

When the proposed realignment of colleges and programs within ECU was first announced, the Department of Nutrition Science believed this was an opportunity to evaluate where our department would best fit if colleges were realigned. While we have done well within the College of Human Ecology, the fact is that we collaborate more with faculty and programs outside our college than within it. Further, at the beginning of the process, there seemed to be strong indications that CHE would either be disbanded or perhaps combined with programs in other colleges. As a unit we wanted to be proactive as to where we might best fit if these things happened.

It is difficult to suggest where we should be located when the final college structures have not been announced. However, the latest "information" we have, admittedly "not official", is that among the changes there will be a College of Public Health and a STEM College created. Further, we know that CHE is requesting to add programs from other colleges; programs with which we would have little commonality.

We believe our department is similar in many ways to the Department of Kinesiology. We have basic, applied and community involved faculty and research as they do. Recognizing that they have more faculty, resources and a doctoral program, we believe our productivity is very similar on a per faculty basis. After program evaluations by the PPC, the Department of Nutrition Science was recognized as a department of excellence, with our productivity and quality both rated very high. At this time, all undergraduates in nutrition, whether they are going to become registered dietitians, or to pursue further graduate work in nutrition or health vocations, all take the same curriculum. As part of our department's strategic plan, we plan to expand our curriculum to create a second undergraduate track for students who will pursue graduate degrees in nutrition science or pursue professional careers (i.e., medicine, dentistry, physician assistants, occupational therapy, or physical therapy). In fall 2010, we were given 3 new positions (subsequently returned due to budget constraints) which would have allowed us to revise the curriculum. This expansion of our curriculum (now on hold) would align our curriculum with those of most major departments of nutrition across the country allowing us to significantly increase our undergraduate majors.

Given the information we have, we believe we would be best fit within the College of Public Health. We also believe we could fit within the STEM College.

In deciding the final location of our department we ask that the committee consider aligning our department with other health professions programs. Also, as we were recognized as a department of excellence we should remain intact as an independent department. Last, we request that ECU follow the PPC recommendation and "invest" in the Department of Nutrition Science, allowing us to expand both our undergraduate and graduate programs.