

Interdisciplinarity@WMU- Phase One planning Template

1. **Brief Overview:** Provide a brief overview of the proposed interdisciplinary initiative. What types of questions would the initiative ask? What types of complex problems would it seek to solve?

The idea formulated in this proposal is to; a. identify areas where we as a higher educational institution, can do a better job at teaching our students across disciplines and to develop a content expert database of instructors. The proposal is to create a searchable database to identify resources within CHHS to understand what skills, knowledge, and abilities faculty and staff bring to the college. The group would also be asked to what extent are they willing to share their expertise, be it co-teach, guest lecturer, instructor, or campus resource. This approach will address duplication, facilitate the full utilization of resources across disciplines, and bring awareness of content experts and passionate individuals to provide a robust learning experience for our students.

2. **Impacted units:** What existing units, programs, and colleges would be involved in the proposed initiative? What other possibilities for collaboration across campus or in the broader community might exist now or in the future?

All departments, schools, and programs within the College of Health and Human Services would be included. Additionally, to include Inter-professional Educational (IPE) courses as well. The broader possibilities would include a database of cross-campus collaborators. Units could benefit from the utilization of content, from the expert without needing re-create in-house.

3. **Impact on teaching, learning, and curricula:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on teaching, learning, and curricula. How might this initiative help to grow enrollment, including by reaching new audiences of learners through continuing education, dual enrollment, or professional certification? How will the proposed initiative positively impact the training of undergraduate and graduate students? How does it enhance our institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

This initiative offers an innovative approach to teaching and learning in health and human services disciplines. This initiative may serve as a talking point for university recruiters and may serve as an incentive for students to attend WMU. This initiative would also serve to:

- Enhance student learning experiences.
- Strengthen faculty teaching experiences
- Maximize faculty/staff resources
- Utilize Content experts
- Gain Alignment with IPEC (Inter-professional education collaborative) competencies

- 4. Impact on research and creative activity:** Describe the anticipated impact of the proposed initiative on research and creative activity. How will this initiative promote discovery and creative scholarship? How might it result in increased external funding?

This proposal could potentially lead to cross-campus collaboration and connecting professionals across university disciplines. As a result of this initiative, it could potentially yield an increase in research collaborations. This could also be viewed favorably by grantors who are looking for inter-professional collaborations to improve client outcomes.

- 5. Efficiencies and/or cost savings:** How might the proposed initiative contribute to increased efficiencies and/or cost savings, for example by reducing administrative positions (e.g. chairs/directors), sharing staff support services and/or by sharing facilities?

Teaching effectiveness could be enhanced when faculty access content experts who can contribute to the course and content development. This would improve the depth and breadth of the content presented, thereby improving the learning experience for the student. As a result, this may improve student enrollment and retention. Our proposal could reduce the costs of paying or rewarding guest speakers to teach to provide content that can be resourced in-house.

- 6. Impact on course offerings and workload:** At present, proposed initiatives will only be feasible and sustainable if they can be supported by existing resources, including instructional capacity, faculty and staff time, and facilities. Will the proposed initiative streamline existing course or program offerings? Could the initiative help create more equitable and sustainable workload for faculty, for example, by reducing the need to offer under enrolled courses, reducing the frequency of course offerings or eliminating the need to teach some courses?

Our proposal could increase job satisfaction and improve time management for current faculty. For example, if instructor Xs', area of expertise is provider burnout. X knows and is passionate about this topic. X has already taken the time to create a lecture, presentation, PowerPoint, etc. If X could teach this to 3 or 4 other groups of students and in return, someone who (instructor Y) is an expert in diversity and inclusion can teach Xs' students. Both instructors would save time, energy, and resources invested in trying to build a lesson/module on a topic that's not within their knowledge base. This would increase job satisfaction in two ways- Y would save time learning, researching, creating another presentation, and X would enjoy teaching students about something, they are knowledgeable, passionate, and comfortable with. We are providing students with the best of the best in that content area. Furthermore, if faculty have more time, additional capacity, and job satisfaction, they would be more likely to serve in other places such as committees, advising, admissions, etc.

- 7. Additional Information:** What additional information would you like to provide in support of this proposal?

We are proposing to utilize student workers to maintain and update the faculty expertise database on behalf of the college departments. Additionally, If students have accessed this database, this could be valuable resource to use to work on CAPSTONE or dissertation research.

- 8. Contact**

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