

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?

Based on the model of success of The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy (OJOT), we would like to develop an Open Journal of Interdisciplinary Health Sciences (OJIHS) through the expansion, merger, and eventual transition from OJOT to OJIHS. Although OJOT has been tremendously successful, we recognize the need to reduce silo publications that inhibit communication among the interdisciplinary health professions and increase the opportunity to talk to each other through a shared resource. Interprofessional practice and education were featured in a 2017 special issue of OJOT by guest editors Dr. Ben J. Atchison and Dr. Michelle A. Suarez. This issue fostered a great amount of interest and initiated our intent to become more interdisciplinary in our focus. The plan would be for this transition from OJOT to OJIHS to occur over a two year period.

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?

OJIHS would be housed in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) where the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program is housed. Representatives from all of the programs in CHHS, as well as interested programs from other colleges at WMU, would be invited to serve on the Editorial Review Board. Collaborations with other universities who have established interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs would also be sought to build editorial boards of experts that extend beyond the university. In addition, researchers and educators from throughout WMU would benefit from the opportunity to submit their scholarly work for peer-review and potential publication to a journal that has already had over 500,000 full-text downloads in 204 countries around the globe.

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?

OJOT has consistently published Topics in Education articles that provide resources and evidence to enhance the education of post-secondary students in the health professions. This category of publication would be maintained in OJIHS with an emphasis on the value of interdisciplinary education.

WMU would also attract the attention of the best and brightest students and faculty who are interested in interdisciplinary health sciences by being the publisher of an open-access journal. Because the journal would be open-access, researchers, professors, clinicians, and students from the US and throughout the globe are afforded the opportunity to learn and exchange ideas without the burden of membership in a national organization or high subscription fees.

- 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?

Research and creative activity at WMU would be enhanced by the development of this journal. Not only does the journal promote the dissemination of research, but it also promotes the visual arts. Each issue of the journal features art from either clients or providers of health care services (see OJOT.org for examples).

External funding would be promoted in two ways. First, donors and sponsors of the journal would have an avenue to fund scholarly and creative work. The current, primary sponsors of OJOT are inspired by the idea of this expansion and other external funding sources also would be sought. Second, the publication by faculty in OJIHS would build their resumes and reputation as experts in interdisciplinary health sciences making them more marketable to procure external grants and funding.

- 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?

Instead of seeking funding for individual journals in which each profession talks to itself, the funding for interprofessional collaboration would be funneled into one journal through which the health professions could exchange ideas with each other. The editors, advisory board, and review board would not need to be duplicated for separate journals, but would collaborate on one shared journal. No new funds are requested in this proposal.

- 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?

Having one integrated, collaborative journal instead of separate professional journals would streamline the workload required. The Editorial Board, Copy Editors, and publishing company for OJOT are currently funded via donors, sponsors, and publication fees. The intent would be to continue this workload distribution using the same and expanded funding methods.

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

Additional funding may be available through an existing donor to help uplift this effort.

- 8. Contact**

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