

University Senate

Proposed: April 2, 2015

Adopted: April 2, 2015

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN M.S. IN
POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH (MSPH)**

WHEREAS, for nearly four decades, the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health in the Mailman School of Public Health has been at the forefront of programs promoting reproductive health, family planning, maternal health, and child and adolescent health with special attention to human rights, underserved populations, effective programs and policy change; and

WHEREAS, the proposed master of science in population and family health will enable domestic and international professionals working in public health and related fields to develop and hone technical skills in the design, implementation and evaluation of high-quality public health programs in diverse settings; and

WHEREAS, the program is separate and distinct from the master's in public health program, which remains the flagship program of the School and the Department, although students from both programs may be in some of the same classes; and

WHEREAS, no other peer institution in the Northeast provides a program of similar depth for public health professionals; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate approve the M.S. in Population and Family Health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the resolution be forwarded to the President and the Trustees of Columbia University for their approval; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Education Committee review the program in five years.

Proponent:

Committee on Education

1) Purpose

Public health continues to be of critical importance both domestically and abroad. For nearly four decades, the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health has been at the forefront of programs promoting reproductive health, family planning, maternal health, and child and adolescent health with special attention to human rights, underserved populations, effective programs and policy change.

As the evidence-base for programming grows and it becomes increasingly important to take successful pilot projects to scale, this current generation of public health professionals must have the skills to successfully integrate research, implementation and policy advocacy. The Department has a multidisciplinary team of faculty and staff with a broad spectrum of national and international expertise in public health, health systems research, research design and implementation, maternal mortality and disability, disease transmission, early childhood development and social demography. Faculty work at the intersection between practice, theory and skills to develop, implement and evaluate effective interventions that improve health at a population level.

This program will leverage the Department's strength in integrated research and practice. It will enable domestic and international professionals working in public health and related fields to develop and hone focused technical skills in the design, implementation and evaluation of high-quality public health programs in diverse settings. The program is designed to be flexible and personalized to the needs of individual students so that learning complements and augments the skills they have developed over their working careers and through previous training. In addition to technical skills, students will deepen their knowledge in a key concentration area of Population and Family Health, such as: maternal child health; child, youth and family health; sexuality, sexual and reproductive health; and, public health and humanitarian assistance.

The Mailman School is committed to knowledge creation, the translation of science for impact, and the education of the next generation of public health leaders. Teaching is a critically important part of the School's mandate and that of the Department. Within the Mailman School, the Department addresses a wide range of challenges to population and family health including:

- child, adolescent and family health;
- reproductive and sexual health;
- forced migration and health;
- health systems strengthening; and,
- health and human rights.

The new Master of Science in Population and Family Health program enables the School and the Department to offer world-class learning to professionals and the next generation of public health leaders seeking to enhance and deepen their technical skills and focus on a specific content area of Population and Family Health.

There is currently no MS in Population and Family Health. As with MS programs in other departments of the School, the MS in Population and Family Health is designed to provide a focused experience for professionals looking for specific, high-level skills in our areas of focus. It offers experienced students the opportunity to learn from world-class faculty the practical skills and techniques on how to integrate research, service and advocacy to improve the health of populations, both locally and globally. The program is separate and distinct from the MPH program, which remains the flagship program of the School and the Department, although students from both programs may be in some of the same classes.

2) Need

The goal of this program is to increase the skills of public health professionals to design, implement and monitor population and family health programs locally and globally. In order to continue to improve the health of populations, public health practitioners need to be able to respond to the changing nature of public health problems by continuously applying theory and practice to adapt and develop new, evidence-based interventions. Skills in research, program design, implementation, evaluation and policy advocacy are critically important in this regard. However, many public health professionals find themselves in the position of managing programs without having all of these technical skills or needing to upgrade specific skills. By leveraging the strengths of our faculty and existing courses, the Department is uniquely well placed to provide just this kind of focused training.