



## **College of Arts and Sciences' response to the proposed BS in Pharmaceutical and Medical Sciences**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed BS in Pharmaceutical and Medical Sciences. We appreciate the need to expand WSU degree offerings to place-bound or otherwise “non-traditional” students, and in particular those students in Spokane who, having completed their AA, AS, or AS-T degree, seek to continue their education at the bachelor level (and beyond).

The particular expression of this commitment in the proposed degree, however, has raised concerns within the College of Arts & Sciences that we believe need to be explored. As detailed below, these concerns focus on clarifying the degree and its curriculum so that WSU can indeed serve such students and meet its goal of being a community engaged land-grant university.

### **Concerns regarding degree name**

The proposed name for this degree, “BS in Pharmaceutical and Medical Sciences,” directly conflicts with CAS’ already established degree option “BS in Biology – Basic Medical Sciences.” In doing so it presents a confusing overlap both institutionally and for students. This overlap is of particular concern since the School of Biological Sciences is already completing the necessary development of existing curricula for a requested Global Campus offering of the Basic Medical Sciences option. Global Campus, of course, is a key component of WSU’s strategy to reach the target demographic for the proposed degree, a fact which magnifies the potential for curricular confusion.

CAS raised this concern with the College of Pharmacy as early as September 2021. The College of Pharmacy subsequently (November 2021) suggested the alternative name of “Pharmaceutical Sciences and Molecular Medicine.” We indicated that this title was preferable, as it not only avoided duplication but also accurately expressed the more tailored curricular focus of the proposed degree. We would thus request a return to that title or another similarly specific alternative.

### **Incorrect Transfer Equivalencies**

The currently proposed course of study contains several expected transfer equivalencies that are inconsistent with established WSU practice. Specifically, WSU policy holds that the articulated transfer equivalency for WSU’s BIOL 106 is not just Spokane Falls/CC’s BIOL&223 course but their BIOL&221 course as well. In addition, contra to the proposed course of study, WSU does not offer any established transfer equivalency for BIOL 315 and 353 from any community college.

Under current policy, the proposed course of study would thus need to include these additional courses, presumably in the junior and/or senior year. We would expect that the College of

Pharmacy would desire to take the lead on any such revision, so we do not presume to offer specific alternatives here. We are certainly willing to assist as appropriate.

### **Completing WSU UCORE Requirements**

As the primary provider of WSU's undergraduate UCORE, CAS has a particular expertise in how those requirements are met by not only entering first-year students but also transfer students. That experience raises additional concerns with the pacing of the proposed course of study.

In particular, not all community college transfers are treated similarly under WSU Academic Regulations. While transfers who have completed an AA or an AS degree receive junior status and are credited with lower-division UCOREs,<sup>1</sup> students who earn an AS-T do not automatically receive full completion credit via their degree. Rather, they receive credit for only 7 of the 9 required UCORE courses, with the remaining credits—all of which are in the humanities or social sciences rather than in medicine or sciences—needing to be satisfied either via additional transfer credits outside AS-T degree requirements or additional courses while at WSU.<sup>2</sup> Ensuring space for the latter possibility is a challenge for the proposed course of study, which currently does not envision this potential need.

When combined with the need to accommodate the additional course equivalencies noted above, this challenge suggests that the pre-requisite work needed to successfully matriculate to WSU-Spokane will likely require more than 2 years, or the course of study will need additional flexibility in its design to meet the needs of both WSU policy and the students we hope to serve. We would defer the specifics of such a necessary revision to the College of Pharmacy, though again we're happy to assist as appropriate.

### **Potential for Expansion beyond Target Demographic**

CAS has also received concerns internally regarding the potential for future expansion of the degree's target market to more traditional, residential students. This change would likely have a more significant impact on enrollment distribution across the system, especially with a degree labeled more broadly as "medical science" (see point 1 above).

The College of Pharmacy's interest in concluding a revised MOU to facilitate the admission of Pullman-based Honors College students to the program (p. 12) suggests that this concern is more substantive than previously expected. Especially if so, the course of study also does not reflect CAS' experience with four-year students. For example, the plan assumes students will initially test

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<sup>1</sup> According to Academic Regulation 6e (Transfer Credit), students who have completed a direct transfer associate (DTA) degree typically receive "junior status, 60 semester credits, and completion of lower-division UCOREs".

<sup>2</sup> According to Academic Regulation 6g, "Completion of the AS-T degree satisfies UCORE WRTG, QUAN, BSCI, PSCI, and three of the following requirements: HUM, SSCI, ARTS, DIVR, ROOTS. Up to three additional lower-division UCORE may be satisfied via transfer credit, up to the 73-semester credit limit, or via in-residence credit prior to completion of a baccalaureate degree. An individual course completed within the AS-T degree may not satisfy more than one UCORE category."

into Math 140 and take Chem 105 in their first semester of their first year. Course enrollment trends in Pullman suggest this is unlikely for many students, with high percentages of students needing remedial math before advancing to Math 140 and similarly not always being successful in their first attempt at Chem 105.

As a possible resolution to these concerns, we might suggest that the proposed degree (if later approved) be limited for an initial period (4 years?) to students entering WSU with an AA, AS, AS-T. Doing so would limit concerns regarding expansion and allow the program to focus on how its curriculum and instruction could evolve to best match the lived experiences of their core demographic.

We certainly agree that there are students not well-served by a traditional four-year residential campus experience, and that there is a need for broader health-related education across the WSU system. As such, we would welcome the opportunity to meet and develop collaboratively a system-wide, multi-college strategy in this area. Such a discussion should include—but not be limited to—an expansion into degrees related to public health and/or behavioral and social components of health.

More immediately, we would be happy to continue dialogue with the College of Pharmacy to identify possible points of resolution for these matters.