

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO TERMINATE THE Ph.D. PROGRAM IN STATISTICAL GENETICS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to terminate the Ph.D. Program in Statistical Genetics in the College of Public Health following completion of their program by current students.

Executive Summary: The request to terminate the Ph.D. program in Statistical Genetics is based on limited enrollment in the program during the past five years and loss of key faculty members in the program. Current students will be allowed to complete their program before the proposed termination becomes effective. This request was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to pursue “educational excellence and impact.”

Background:

- ◇ **History of program.** The graduate degree in Statistical Genetics was begun as a subtrack in the Biostatistics graduate program, but was approved as a separate graduate degree in the Program in Public Health Genetics in July 2003 (Agenda Item 3e). The mission of Statistical Genetics is to train the public health workforce in the area of public health genetics by incorporating modern advances in genetics and genomics into the curriculum and research efforts in the College of Public Health. The program was designed to be complimentary to the existing graduate programs in Biostatistics and Genetics.
- ◇ **Reason for proposed termination.** Several key faculty members left the University during 2003-2006 and the College of Public Health reallocated faculty lines to other programs. The remaining faculty returned to their original departmental affiliations, which left the program dormant. Students interested in Statistical Genetics were re-directed to other related programs. In 2006, the Graduate College together with the College of Public Health submitted a request to the Provost to seek approval from the Board of Regents to suspend admissions to the program. The request was put on hold as a result of administrative changes in the Provost’s office. The report of the 2009-10 Graduate Education Task Force confirmed the recommendation to terminate the program. The College decided to implement suspension of admissions to the program in 2006; consequently, there have been no applicants to the program since then. Furthermore, there is no information available about the program on the College’s website, although it is available in the 2010-2011 General Catalog.
- ◇ **Impact on resources.** The College does not anticipate any cost savings as a result of this program termination. Faculty and staff lines dedicated to the program have already been reallocated for other efforts. Financial support for graduate students is supported by individual faculty grants.
- ◇ **Availability of graduate programs elsewhere.** The program is not available elsewhere in Iowa. The following institutions offer graduate programs in Public Health Genetics: University of Michigan (graduate certificate); University of Pittsburgh (M.S. & Ph.D. in Human Genetics, MPH in Public Health Genetics); and the University of Washington-Seattle (graduate certificate, Ph.D. and MPH in Public Health Genetics).

- ◇ Alternate opportunities available to students. Students at the University of Iowa who are interested in this general research area will be able to focus their research in statistical genetics within the Department of Biostatistics in Biostatistics or Genetics.
- ◇ Impact on current students. Currently, there are four students in the program; one began in Fall 2003; two began in Fall 2004; and one began in Fall 2005. All four have passed their comprehensive exams and are expected to graduate within 2-3 years.
- ◇ Degree completion. The College of Public Health will continue to offer the necessary courses and services until all enrolled students have completed their program in Statistical Genetics.
- ◇ Date of termination. If the proposed program termination is approved by the Board, suspension of new admissions to the program will continue. This program will not be included in the 2012-2014 Catalog. However, the department will continue to offer the courses necessary for currently enrolled students to complete their program in Statistical Genetics.