



SUBJECT	Tuition - Master of Science in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences and Doctor of Philosophy in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences
SUBMITTED TO	Finance Committee
MEETING DATE	June 8, 2021
SESSION CLASSIFICATION	Recommended session criteria from Board Meetings Policy: OPEN
REQUEST	<p>REQUESTED - Approval</p> <p>IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Finance Committee, in accordance with authority delegated by the Board of Governors, approves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. tuition for the Master of Science in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences of \$1,732.53 per instalment for domestic students and \$3,043.77 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of three (3) instalments, subject to increases as approved by the Board of Governors; and, ii. tuition for the Doctor of Philosophy in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences of \$1,732.53 per instalment for domestic students and \$3,043.77 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of six (6) instalments, subject to increases as approved by the Board of Governors.
LEAD EXECUTIVE	Andrew Szeri, Provost and Vice-President Academic, UBC Vancouver
SUPPORTED BY	Pam Ratner, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Faculty Planning Simon Bates, Associate Provost Teaching & Learning

PRIOR SUBMISSIONS

The subject matter of this submission has not previously been considered by the Finance Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UBC’s Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and of Pediatrics in the Faculty of Medicine are proposing to offer new Women+¹ and Children’s Health Sciences (WACH) MSc and PhD programs that are an expansion and reconfiguration of the existing Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS) graduate program offered by the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

For the MSc, proposed tuition is \$1,732.53 per instalment for domestic students and \$3,043.77 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of three instalments. For the PhD, program, the proposed tuition is \$1,732.53 per instalment for domestic students and \$3,043.77 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of six instalments. The programs were approved by the UBC Vancouver Senate in May 2021.

We anticipate enrolling eight MSc and four PhD students in the first year (30% international), with an expected 20 MSc and five PhD students (30% international) per year at steady state.

The WACH program will fulfill the following strategies in the UBC Strategic Plan:

[Strategy 6: Collaborative Clusters](#) – Enable interdisciplinary clusters of research excellence in women+ health and child health.

[Strategy 7: Research Support](#) – Strengthen shared infrastructure and resources between the Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and of Pediatrics, the BC Children’s Hospital Research Institute and the Women’s Health Research Institute to support research excellence.

¹ The Faculty engaged with UBC’s Equity and Inclusion Office and the University of Michigan Centre for the Education of Women+ (CEW+) and chose the program name ‘Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences’. Women+ embraces women, transgender, and non-binary individuals.

[Strategy 8: Student Research](#) – Broaden access to, and enhance, student research experiences, including to students in remote or rural areas.

[Strategy 9: Knowledge Exchange](#) – Improve the ecosystem that supports the translation of health research into diagnoses, treatments, policies, and clinical practice.

[Strategy 10: Research Culture](#) – Foster a strong and diverse research culture that embraces the highest standards of integrity, collegiality, and service.

The Office of the Vice-President Students, in partnership with the WACH program proponents, conducted a student consultation (Nov 5, 2020 – Dec 4, 2020) regarding the tuition proposal (as per Policy LR4). Both the Alma Mater Society (AMS) and Graduate Student Society (GSS) showed support for the proposal.

AMS requested clarity on: (1) why the program is titled “Women+” rather than “Womxn”; (2) justification behind the matching tuition costs of the MSc and PhD degrees; (3) where specific program elements will be held (i.e., courses, thesis research and dissertation, career development, and mentorship); and (4) whether there are additional fees for the optional career development program, the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program. In response, the administration clarified that: (1) “Women+” is a more gender-inclusive term than “Womxn” because it is intended to capture transgender men; (2) the decision on the same tuition amount for the MSc and PhD degrees has been established by the UBC Board of Governors; the tuition for all graduate research programs is the same, irrespective of discipline; (3) the majority of the mentioned student activities will be held on the Oak Street campus, although some will be held on other sites such as UBC Vancouver, distributed hospital sites, or online; and (4) there is no extra fee to participate in the career development program.

WACH will be principally based on the Oak Street campus, also known as the BC Children's and Women's Hospital campus. This campus is a major site for both of these Departments, and houses the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR), and the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI); its collective research focus is women+ and children's health.

The program will benefit students by:

1. leveraging existing expertise in both Departments to prepare students for a wider range of interdisciplinary research fields and job opportunities;
2. equipping graduates with the skills for careers in a range of sectors; and
3. filling the gap in graduate training in women+ and children's health sciences research in British Columbia.

The WACH program is not a professional program; it is a thesis-based research graduate program that is primarily designed for undergraduate students seeking a Master's or PhD degree aligned with one or more of the four CIHR pillars in women+ or children's health research. The WACH program intends to produce graduates with the competencies for successful careers in academia, industry, government, consulting, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Inclusion, and a specific focus on Indigeneity, are key components of the WACH program with the goal of achieving a faculty and student body that reflects the demographics of British Columbia and a learning environment that embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion.

APPENDICES

1. Tuition and Fee Assessment Details
2. Student Tuition Consultation Report

Tuition and Fee Assessment Details

Program Description: Master of Science in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences

Anticipated Start Date: September 2022

	Domestic	International
Tuition fees per Instalment – Note 1	\$1,732.53	\$3,043.77
Minimum No. of Instalments	3	3
Continuing Fees per Instalment (assessed after 6 instalments)	\$791.53	\$3,043.77
Application Fees (Graduate) – Note 2	\$110.00	\$168.25
Non-Refundable Acceptance Deposit	N/A	N/A
Other Faculty and Course Fees	N/A	N/A

Note 1 – Proposed tuition reflects approved 2021/22 tuition fees for standard master’s programs and is meant to be aligned with such. Proposed tuition will be subject to increases as approved by the Board. Tuition and student fees are charged in three equal instalments payable in January, May and September.

Note 2 – This is the current fee for the 2022W application cycle and is subject to increases as approved by the Board.

Program Description: PhD in Women+ and Children’s Health Sciences

Anticipated Start Date: September 2022

	Domestic	International
Tuition fees per Instalment – Note 1	\$1,732.53	\$3,043.77
Minimum No. of Instalments	6	6
Continuing Fees per Instalment (assessed after 9 instalments)	\$791.53	\$3,043.77
Application Fees (Graduate) – Note 2	\$110.00	\$168.25
Non-Refundable Acceptance Deposit	N/A	N/A
Other Faculty and Course Fees	N/A	N/A

Note 1 – Proposed tuition reflects approved 2021/22 tuition fees for standard doctoral degree programs and is meant to be aligned with such. Proposed tuition will be subject to increases as approved by the Board. Tuition and student fees are charged in three equal instalments payable in January, May and September.

Note 2 – This is the current fee for the 2022W application cycle and is subject to increases as approved by the Board.

WOMEN’S+ AND CHILDREN’S HEALTH SCIENCES (WACH) MSc AND PhD GRADUATE PROGRAM
STUDENT TUITION CONSULTATION REPORT

The Vice-President, Students Office, in partnership with the Faculty of Medicine, conducted a student consultation regarding the tuition proposal for the Women’s+ and Children’s Health Sciences (WACH) MSc and PhD Graduate Program. This report outlines the consultation process and summarizes student feedback including the student representatives' submission verbatim in Appendix 2.

Student Representative Bodies Invited to the Consultation

- Alma Mater Society (AMS)
- Graduate Student Society (GSS)

Mode of Consultation

The consultation consisted of an e-consultation and optional face-to-face meeting. Student representative groups were invited to the consultation through email, and asked to distribute the invitation to their constituents as they felt appropriate. Student representative groups were also offered a face-to-face meeting to discuss the tuition proposal. A meeting was not requested by student representatives.

Basis of Consultation: The consultation was based on a tuition proposal and rationale document created by the Faculty of Medicine. Please see Appendix 1 for the invitation and tuition rationale document.

Timelines: The e-consultation was conducted over the period of November 5th to December 4th, 2021.

Summary of Student Feedback: Submissions were received from the AMS and GSS. The verbatim submission is in Appendix 2. No individual student submissions were received.

Organization	Summary
AMS	<p>Women+ vs Womxn <i>“We would be curious to hear more about why the terminology chosen for the degree details “Women+”, rather than “Womxn” in ensuring gender identity inclusion within the framework of the degree. The AMS deems this distinction as significant as choosing “Women+” in the program title maintains cisgender privilege common in academic vernacular of post-secondary institutions, while “Womxn” supports the intersectional gender identities in which these academic degrees strive to support. If aiming to cater curricular support or attract applicants with connections to marginalized community members such as non-binary, transgender, or Two-Spirit individuals, the language chosen for the title should reflect the politically-appropriate terminology requested by queer justice advocates.”</i></p> <p>Matching Tuition for MSc and PhD <i>“Clarification regarding the justification behind the matching tuition costs of the MSc and PhD programs, despite the distinction between the two program types. Given that an MSc and PhD program differ...and are socially and professionally perceived differently...each respective degree will unfold different opportunities and different income brackets for WACH students upon completion...adequate justification regarding the tuition cost breakdown”</i></p> <p>Program Location and Access to Services</p>

	<p><i>“The AMS is interested to hear more details about where specific program elements will be held (i.e. courses, thesis research and dissertation, career development, and mentorship). Rooted at this concern is the recognition that WACH students’ access to services and resources is largely influenced by where program components will take place. Therefore, the AMS is keen to advocate that prospective WACH students are adequately informed of the subsidiary resources and services included in the proposed tuition fees, depending on which campus their student experience will largely occur”</i></p> <p>Career Development Supports Included in Tuition <i>“Additionally, an optional career development program is noted within the proposal called the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program. The program details having three parts – an individual development plan (IDP), a competency passport, and mentorship component. We wanted to get clarification on if this program would be included within the tuition. Are there additional fees that are not being disclosed that pertain to this program?”</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">GSS</p>	<p>Ongoing Program Consultation <i>“The GSS believes it is important for academia to continually assess and critique its actions, so students, teachers, and researchers can work in an equitable and just environment. We therefore recommend the WACH program schedule periodic program reviews with the EIO to ensure this program continues to grow successfully in an equitable and just framework. We also appreciate the consideration given for what degree options current RDS students have as this program transitions”</i></p> <p>Tuition and Fees <i>“The GSS supports the decision to keep the tuition at the same cost as the RDS program, and we are pleased to see the inclusion of the optional Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program under the tuition and fees. This program will provide important individualized mentorship for WACH students, in a way that is accessible and affordable to all students.”</i></p> <p>Scholarships for Marginalized Groups, especially for female-identifying and Indigenous Students <i>“The GSS believes that scholarships and bursaries have an important role to play in making programs such as this accessible, diverse, and equitable...and we further recommend this program provide specific scholarship or bursaries to female-identifying students...It is imperative to note that many women who enroll in the WACH program, especially Indigenous students, will have experienced inequalities or even violence in the healthcare system due to their gender and other social determinants...Students who identify as female, or are part of marginalized groups, are essential if we are to address systemic inequalities in healthcare. The provision of scholarships will help to remove barriers to these students and recognize the additional challenges (emotional, financial, and cultural) they face in accessing a course such as this.”</i></p>

APPENDIX 1: INVITATION TO CONSULTATION AND TUITION RATIONALE DOCUMENT

Hello Nicolas and Georgia,

There is a proposal by the Faculty of Medicine to create a new Master of Science and PhD program in Women's+ and Children's Health Sciences.

In order to inform the program leads and the Board of Governors with regards to the **tuition proposal** for this program, the University is undertaking a consultative process to get your comments as student representatives, and provide an opportunity for students to provide individual comments on the tuition proposal if they wish. **Please note: the scope of this consultation process is limited to the tuition proposal.**

The consultation will consist of:

1. e-consultation

Please find attached a document which outlines the details of the tuition proposal, including:

- an overview of the program,
- the student consultation that has happened to date,
- the tuition rationale for the program, and
- the proposed tuition.

Please share the document and this email as you see appropriate. Comments on the tuition proposal and student organization submissions can be provided confidentially to Tlell Elviss – Senior Program Strategist, Vice President Students Office (tlell.elviss@ubc.ca).

2. Face to Face meeting

If requested by student representatives, we can arrange a face-to-face meeting with the program leads regarding this tuition proposal. Please advise as soon as possible if you would like us to arrange a meeting.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS WILL END ON FRIDAY DECEMBER, 4TH 2020.

Confidentiality

Comments will be collected by the Vice-President Students Office, and only analysts within that office will know the identity of individual students submitting comments. At no time will anyone outside of the Vice President Students Office know the identity of individual students who submit comments to this consultation. Your comments will only be used for the purposes of the tuition consultation.

Comments from individual students will be stripped of any identifying information to ensure confidentiality, but otherwise will be provided to the responsible program leads and Board of Governors verbatim.

Comments received from student organizations will be reported as coming from those organizations, and provided to the responsible faculty and Board of Governors as received. There will also be a summary report of the consultation developed for the Faculty and Board of Governors.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the process.

Thank you

Tlell

Tlell Elviss BSc | MA (She, Her, Hers)
Senior Program Strategist
Vice President, Students Office

WOMEN+ AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH SCIENCES (WACH) MSC AND PHD GRADUATE PROGRAM STUDENT TUITION CONSULTATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Oak Street campus, also known as the BC Children's and Women's Hospital campus, is a major site for the UBC Faculty of Medicine Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Pediatrics, as well as being the home of the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR), and the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI). The focus of our collective research endeavours is women+ and children's health.

The Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Department of Pediatrics in the Faculty of Medicine are proposing a new Master of Science and PhD program in Women+¹ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH). This student tuition consultation covers both programs – the MSc and PhD.

The goal of WACH is to provide students with a broad knowledge of research in women+ and children's health sciences including biomedical, clinical, health services, and populations. Students will develop critical thinking skills to independently design, execute, and evaluate research experiments directly related to women+ and children's health sciences. Core concepts will include biomedical, patient- and public-oriented translational research with consideration of social determinants of health and cultural competence, including sex and gender and Indigenous health, and research methodologies. In addition, students will develop in depth expertise in at least one of the following areas of research that represent existing areas of faculty expertise within the Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Pediatrics:

- Acute or chronic diseases
- Brain development and function
- Implementation science
- Developmental origins of health and disease
- Placental, embryonic, foetal, perinatal, infant, child and/or youth: Development, physiology, and/or pathophysiology
- Reproductive biology
- Reproductive or childhood cancers
- Epidemiology specific to women+ or children
- Mental health specific to women+ or children
- Health services specific to women+ or children

WACH is an expansion and reconfiguration of the existing Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS) graduate program in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In recent years, the RDS program has expanded from a biomedical research program to include perinatal epidemiology. The WACH program is rebranding the current RDS program to encompass its current activities and will further expand it to include women+ health and child health streams. The WACH program will cover a broader range of topics. The current RDS program will be transitioned into the WACH program. At the time of the WACH program inception, current RDS students will be given the opportunity to transfer to the WACH program or continue to complete their degree as an RDS student. The RDS program will close after current students complete their program or transition to the WACH program.

The WACH program intends to produce graduates who will have the competencies for successful careers in academia, as well as in industry, government, consulting, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). From a market analysis conducted in 2019 in conjunction with UBC Extended Learning on BC labour market trends, the types of positions our graduates could pursue upon graduation include: NOC²

¹ We consulted the UBC Equity & Inclusion Office and the University of Michigan Centre for the Education of Women+ (CEW+) (<https://spg.umich.edu/policy/301.03>) and chose the program name "Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)." Women+ embraces women, transgender women, and non-binary individuals.

² NOC refers to the National Occupational Classification code.

2121 Biology and Related Scientists, NOC 3211 Medical Laboratory Technologists, and NOC 1254 Statistical Officers and Related Research Support Occupations.

STUDENT CONSULTATION DURING THE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Café Scientifiques

Student interest in women+ and children's health graduate training is notable. In November 2018, two Café Scientifiques were held on the UBC Oak Street campus. Seventy participants including students, faculty, and staff contributed ideas to the design of the new graduate program, specifically about the curriculum, teaching and learning styles, career development, and "reimagining the thesis" initiative. The two workshops yielded 10 themes to guide the direction of the program. Some of these key results are: the necessity for instruction in biostatistics and research methods, the need for training in research ethics, and the gap in career readiness training that will enhance leadership and communication skills. This information informed our curriculum.

Survey data

From November to December 2019, we conducted a survey online to gather feedback on the proposed program and curriculum. The survey was sent to over 850 members affiliated with the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHRI) and the Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI), including graduate and undergraduate students, and alumni. BCCHRI and WHRI are located on the UBC Oak Street campus, where the WACH program will be primarily located. There was huge support for the program based on the 192 responses collected. Highlights from respondents include:

- 87% supported developing the program;
- 65% supported the program name "Women's and Children's Health"³;
- 49% would very likely or likely enroll in the program⁴;
- The top three appeals of the program were i) "alignment with research interests," ii) "alignment with personal interests," and iii) "alignment with career interests";
- Respondents strongly supported the career development opportunities in the program, including the individual career development plan (95%), non-academic competencies/transferrable skills (87%), mentorship opportunities (95%), and internship opportunities (83%).

TUITION AND FEES RATIONALE

Master of Science in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences

The MSc in the WACH program will have tuition and fees that follow the standard UBC rules for graduate students in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. For 2020/21, the approved tuition fees for standard master's programs is \$1,698.56 per instalment for domestic students and \$2,984.09 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of 3 instalments. There will be no additional fees on top of the tuition and fees set for UBC standard graduate programs.

The total number of credits required for this program is 30. The proposed curriculum will address the program goal through the following curriculum elements:

- Two mandatory three-credit courses on Women+ and Children's Health:
 - WACH 501 (3) Advanced Topics in Women+ and Children's Health
 - WACH 502 (3) Seminars in Women+ and Children's Health;
- Two three-credit elective courses (6) chosen with recommendations from students' supervisors and/or supervisory committees;
- WACH 549 (18) MSc thesis research and dissertation;

³ Balancing the feedback from students, alumni, staff, faculty, and employers, we changed the program name to "Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)".

⁴ The top two reasons given by those who chose "unlikely/very unlikely to enroll" are i) "already have multiple degrees, not looking for another one," and ii) "already in a graduate program".

- An optional career development program called the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program. The program includes three parts – an individual development plan (IDP), a competency passport, and mentorship.

PhD in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences

The PhD in the WACH program will have tuition and fees that follow the standard UBC rules for graduate students in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. For 2020/21, the approved tuition fees for standard doctoral degree programs is \$1,698.56 per instalment for domestic students and \$2,984.09 per instalment for international students, with a minimum of 6 instalments. There will be no additional fees on top of the tuition and fees set for UBC standard graduate programs.

The total number of credits required for this program is 12. The proposed curriculum will address the program goal through the following curriculum elements:

- Two mandatory three-credit courses on Women+ and Children's Health:
 - WACH 501 (3) Advanced Topics in Women+'s and Children's Health
 - WACH 502 (3) Seminars in Women+'s and Children's Health
- Two three-credit elective courses (6) chosen with recommendations from students' supervisors and/or supervisory committees;
- WACH 649 (0) PhD thesis research and dissertation;
- An optional career development program called the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program, includes three parts – an individual development plan (IDP), a competency passport, and mentorship.

Benchmarking Information

UBC

Program	Domestic per-instalment rate	International per-instalment rate
Proposed master's program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Master's program in Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Master's program in Experimental Medicine	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Master's program in Medical Genetics	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Master's program in Bioinformatics	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Master's program in Cell and Developmental Biology	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09

Program	Domestic per-instalment rate	International per-instalment rate
Proposed PhD program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
PhD program in Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
PhD program in Experimental Medicine	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
PhD program in Medical Genetics	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
PhD program in Bioinformatics	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
PhD program in Cell and Developmental Biology	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09

SFU

Program	Domestic per-instalment rate	International per-instalment rate
Proposed master's program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
SFU Faculty of Health Sciences master's program	\$1,946.94	\$1,946.94

Program	Domestic per-instalment rate	International per-instalment rate
Proposed PhD program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH)	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
SFU Faculty of Health Sciences PhD program	\$1,946.94	\$1,946.94

Please note – Tuition rates in the tables above reflect approved 2020/21 tuition fees for standard doctoral degree programs and is meant to be aligned with such. Proposed tuition will be subject to increases as approved by the Board. Tuition and student fees are charged in three equal instalments payable in January, May and September.

PROPOSED TUITION AND FEES

Program Description: Master of Science in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences

Anticipated Start Date: September 2022

	Domestic	International
Tuition fees per Instalment – Note 1	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Minimum No. of Instalments	3	3
Continuing Fees per Instalment (assessed after 6 instalments)	\$776.01	\$2,984.09
Application Fees (Graduate) – Note 2	\$108.00	\$168.25
Non-Refundable Acceptance Deposit	N/A	N/A
Other Faculty and Course Fees	N/A	N/A

Note 1 – Proposed tuition reflects approved 2020/21 tuition fees for standard master's programs and is meant to be aligned with such. Proposed tuition will be subject to increases as approved by the Board. Tuition and student fees are charged in three equal instalments payable in January, May and September.

Note 2 – This is the current fee for the 2021W application cycle and is subject to increases as approved by the Board.

Program Description: PhD in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences

Anticipated Start Date: September 2022

	Domestic	International
Tuition fees per Instalment – Note 1	\$1,698.56	\$2,984.09
Minimum No. of Instalments	6	6
Continuing Fees per Instalment (assessed after 9 instalments)	\$776.01	\$2,984.09
Application Fees (Graduate) – Note 2	\$108.00	\$168.25
Non-Refundable Acceptance Deposit	N/A	N/A
Other Faculty and Course Fees	N/A	N/A

Note 1 – Proposed tuition reflects approved 2020/21 tuition fees for standard doctoral degree programs and is meant to be aligned with such. Proposed tuition will be subject to increases as approved by the Board. Tuition and student fees are charged in three equal instalments payable in January, May and September.

Note 2 – This is the current fee for the 2021W application cycle and is subject to increases as approved by the Board.

APPENDIX 2: STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

There were verbatim comments from the AMS and the GSS.



**TUITION CONSULTATION FOR THE NEW WOMEN+ AND CHILDREN'S
HEALTH SCIENCES (WACH) MSC AND PHD GRADUATE PROGRAM**
**Submission to the Faculty of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and
Department of Pediatrics**

December 4th, 2020

Dear Program Leads and Board of Governors,

The AMS extends gratitude towards the University for including UBC students' voices in the tuition consultation process of the development of the new Graduate Program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH). We aim to ensure that our advocacy efforts in this feedback request are in close alignment with the University's goals of improving affordability, accessibility, and equity, while expanding creativity and diversity within the campus.

We would be curious to hear more about why the terminology chosen for the degree details "Women+", rather than "Womxn" in ensuring gender identity inclusion within the framework of the degree. The AMS deems this distinction as significant as choosing "Women+" in the program title maintains cisgender privilege common in academic vernacular of post-secondary institutions, while "Womxn" supports the intersectional gender identities in which these academic degrees strive to support.¹ If aiming to cater curricular support or attract applicants with connections to marginalized community members such as non-binary, transgender, or Two-Spirit individuals, the language chosen for the title should reflect the politically-appropriate terminology requested by queer justice advocates.

The AMS would appreciate further clarification regarding the justification behind the matching tuition costs of the MSc and PhD programs, despite the distinction between the two program types. The MSc and PhD programs seem to encompass the same curriculum elements, with the exception of the thesis research and dissertation aspect

¹ Lou, H. C. (2019). Addressing and dismantling cisgenderism in womxn's centers: Reframing womxn's centers work toward an intersectional critical trans politic 1. In B. Bethman, A. Cottledge & D. M. Bickford (Eds.), (1st ed., pp. 141-149) Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781351174701-17.

where MSc students must enroll in WACH 549 (which accounts for 18 credits), while PhD students must enroll in WACH 649 (which accounts for 0 credits). The AMS infers that the research cycles between the two programs will vary, where the PhD research cycle will predictably provide more opportunity to venture further and deeper into academic territories in a way that is not executed in an MSc degree. Given that an MSc and PhD program differ by this nature and are socially and professionally perceived differently (especially in the job market), it is worth noting that each respective degree will unfold different opportunities and different income brackets for WACH students upon completion.² Therefore, considering the ceiling which restricts the kind of work students are able to pursue with an MSc, compared to a PhD, prospective students of the WACH program should be made aware of these differences and given adequate justification regarding the tuition cost breakdown.

Although it is acknowledged that the WACH program will be primarily located on the UBC Oak Street campus, the AMS is interested to hear more details about where specific program elements will be held (i.e. courses, thesis research and dissertation, career development, and mentorship). Rooted at this concern is the recognition that WACH students' access to services and resources is largely influenced by where program components will take place. Therefore, the AMS is keen to advocate that prospective WACH students are adequately informed of the subsidiary resources and services included in the proposed tuition fees, depending on which campus their student experience will largely occur.

Additionally, an optional career development program is noted within the proposal called the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program. The program details having three parts – an individual development plan (IDP), a competency passport, and mentorship component. We wanted to get clarification on if this program would be included within the tuition. Are there additional fees that are not being disclosed that pertain to this program? This is noted in aim of highlighting fee transparency for continuing domestic and international graduate students interested in this program.

Thank you for giving the Alma Mater Society the opportunity to respond and share student-facing concerns that have emerged from the WACH program tuition consultation proposal. It is clear that this program can be a strong step towards providing holistic support towards a new generation of professionals in fields such as government,

² Wouterse, B., van der Wiel, K., & van der Steeg, M. (2017). Income differences between PhDs and masters: Evidence from the Netherlands. *De Economist*, 165(4), 439-461.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.1007/s10645-017-9304-9>.

non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, consulting, and the medical industry. However, current structural barriers must be minimized and addressed in order to provide the substantive and holistic education that UBC Faculty of Medicine can provide. If you have any further comments, questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Warmly,

Georgia Yee VP Academic and University Affairs AMS of UBC Vancouver	Morgan Lorenz AVP University Affairs AMS of UBC Vancouver	Chloei Andres Policy and Research Commissioner AMS of UBC Vancouver

Response to AMS Feedback from the Faculty of Medicine

Dear AMS,

Thank you for your feedback with regard to our proposed WACH graduate program, specifically on the tuition and fees. Please see below the original concerns extracted from your letter and our responses. If you need further clarification, please reach out to me anytime.

Respectfully,
Neville

1. *"We would be curious to hear more about why the terminology chosen for the degree details "Women+", rather than "Womxn", in ensuring gender identity inclusion."*

Response: During the curriculum consultation phase, we received 192 student/alumni survey responses, and 13 employer email responses. A key theme is that they would like to see a term more gender-inclusive than "women". Subsequently, we consulted the Equity & Inclusion Office (EIO) at UBC, the University of Michigan Centre for the Education of Women+ (CEW+), the literature, and researchers within our own networks who conduct related research. We considered different terminology and chose "women+" instead of "womxn" because we believe "womxn" is slightly less inclusive than "women+". "Womxn" does not capture transgender men. We opted to use "women+" and have updated it as "a term that embraces women, transgender and non-binary individuals".

2. *"The AMS would appreciate further clarification regarding the justification behind the matching tuition costs of the MSc and PhD programs, despite the distinction between the two program types."*

Response: The tuition rates proposed for the new WACH MSc and PhD are aligned with the existing RDS program for which the WACH will replace. The decision on tuition amount is set by the UBC Board of Governors and for many programs, including our WACH, which is aligned with standard graduate research programs, the tuition rates are the same for the Master's and PhD. More details on standard Master and PhD tuition amounts can be found [here](#).

3. *"The AMS is interested to hear more details about where specific program elements will be held (i.e. courses, thesis research and dissertation, career development, and mentorship). Rooted at this concern is the recognition that WACH students' access to services and resources is largely influenced by where program components will take place."*

Response: Most of the courses will be held at the BC Children's and Women's Hospitals on the Oak Street campus. Laboratory work will primarily be conducted at the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute (BCCHR), Women's Health Research Institute (WHRI), and BC Children's and Women's Hospitals. Depending on where the student's Supervisor is located, a small number of students may conduct lab work on other sites such as UBC Vancouver, St. Paul's Hospital and Vancouver General Hospital. In short, the majority of student activities, including courses, thesis/dissertation research, career development, and mentorship, will happen on the Oak Street campus, where there is currently a community of over 300 graduate students. Also to note is that to accommodate students who cannot attend in-person courses or seminars, we have remote learning options available.

4. *"Additionally, an optional career development program is noted within the proposal called the Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program. ... We wanted to get clarification on if this program would be included within the tuition. Are there additional fees that are not being disclosed that pertain to this program?"*

Response: No, there is no extra fee to participate in the career development program. Students are encouraged to take part in this optional program to build career skills and foster connections, to prepare for careers in academia, business, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government, upon graduation.



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Submission to the UBC Faculty of Medicine regarding the Tuition for the new Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH) Graduate Programs

December 4, 2020

Dear Faculty of Medicine and Members of the Board of Governors,

This submission is sent on behalf of the Graduate Student Society of UBC in response to the feedback request for tuition consultation on the creation of a new Master of Science and PhD program in Women+ and Children's Health Sciences (WACH).

As a Society we try to provide feedback that reflects the dual desires of graduate students:

- That the University is able to meet its goal of providing outstanding and relevant programs for graduate students.
- That graduate education at UBC should be affordable and accessible.

The proposed WACH program appears to be an exceptional program, offering students an outstanding and highly relevant degree. As outlined in the proposal, the WACH program is an expansion and reconfiguration of the existing Reproductive and Developmental Sciences (RDS) graduate program in the UBC Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The new program is intended to encompass all current RDS program activities as well as expanding to cover broader topics, with specific streams in women+ and children's health.

Women's health has been historically under-researched, creating a healthcare system that neglects, misdiagnoses, and fails women+. Men and masculine bodies are still regarded as the "normal" in medicine; diseases and health issues are studied and identified according to male physiology, hormones, and behavior, and treatments are developed according to this standard – which are then also applied to non-masculine people¹. This gender-blindness – the ignorance that most medical practices are based on research performed in men – remains a huge issue in bringing gender equity to our healthcare system.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5845507/>



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Ensuring that women, trans, non-binary, and other non-masculine individuals are prioritized in health research is essential to building a healthy, equitable society. The GSS is therefore very excited to see healthcare programs like this being restructured to embrace growing research areas and responding to societal needs. We will be providing 2 recommendations in this tuition proposal.

Consultation process

Firstly, the GSS appreciates the student consultation process that has occurred during the WACH program development, with feedback integrated from the *Café Scientifiques*, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, and the Women's Health Research Institute.

The GSS also recognizes that developing a healthcare-oriented graduate program requires extensive planning and collaboration between different groups. We are pleased to see the WACH program consulting with UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office to develop a program that is gender-inclusive and promotes Indigenous content. The GSS believes it is important for academia to continually assess and critique its actions, so students, teachers, and researchers can work in an equitable and just environment. We therefore recommend the WACH program schedule periodic program reviews with the EIO to ensure this program continues to grow successfully in an equitable and just framework.

We also appreciate the consideration given for what degree options current RDS students have as this program transitions.

Tuition and Scholarships

The proposed tuition and fees for the MSc and PhD in the WACH program will follow the standard costs as laid out by the UBC Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. This is the same as the tuition and fees for the current RDS program. The GSS supports the decision to keep the tuition at the same cost as the RDS program, and we are pleased to see the inclusion of the optional Graduate Student Enhanced Scholar Program under the tuition and fees. This program will provide important individualized mentorship for WACH students, in a way that is accessible and affordable to all students.

The GSS believes that scholarships and bursaries have an important role to play in making programs such as this accessible, diverse, and equitable. We strongly applaud the addition of the mentorship Program,



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and we further recommend this program provide specific scholarship or bursaries to female-identifying students for the following reason: One of the core concepts for the program outlined in the WACH proposal is, *“patient- and public-oriented translational research with consideration of social determinants of health and cultural competence, including sex and gender and Indigenous health.”*

It is imperative to note that many women who enroll in the WACH program, **especially Indigenous students**, will have experienced inequalities or even violence in the healthcare system due to their gender and other social determinants. Indigenous people are subject to wide-ranging violence in Canada’s healthcare system, with Indigenous women having both higher disability rates yet also having higher unmet health care needs than non-Indigenous women². Indigenous people are also at increased risk of preterm birth, stillbirth, neonatal and infant death and **are two times more likely to die** from pregnancy complications than non-Indigenous people³. The core concept *“investigating research with consideration of social determinants”* is critically important to bring equity to academia and healthcare. Students who identify as female, or are part of marginalized groups, are essential if we are to address systemic inequalities in healthcare. The provision of scholarships will help to remove barriers to these students and recognize the additional challenges (emotional, financial, and cultural) they face in accessing a course such as this.

The GSS would like to thank the University for the opportunity to provide input in this process. We look forward to meeting the first students of the new WACH programs and to see them succeed at UBC.

Sincerely,



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² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/2015001/article/14313-eng.htm>

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-003-x/2017011/article/54886-eng.htm>

The GSS confirmed that they did not require a response from the Faculty to the issues raised, as they fell outside the bounds of what would be required for a BoG decision on tuition, but were hopeful the Faculty would consider them as the program developed.