INTEGRATED NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES INITIATIVE

CASE STATEMENT
Among the greatest challenges we presently face in America is the exponential growth in U.S. health care expenditures coupled with the confusing process of national health care reform. For health practitioners, an uncertain and changing landscape likely requires substantial modifications to the current education practices. Greater emphasis on interdisciplinary inquiry, problem solving and leadership development must characterize the future of health care education for front line clinicians and for those in all related professions. Additionally, the importance of interdisciplinary teamwork in health care requires higher education to focus on inter-academic and applied learning in new and integrated ways.

This document describes an important effort underway to launch the Integrated Nursing & Health Studies Initiative – an innovative interdisciplinary approach to health studies curriculum in all five schools at Fairfield University in concert with exciting new opportunities for applied learning, discovery and student engagement.

**TOMORROW’S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM**

The health care system in America today is often hailed as having extraordinary professionals, the latest medical technologies and state-of-the-art clinical facilities. Working in concert these combined resources continually redefine what is possible in specialized ambulatory and acute care. Synergies between excellence in biomedical science and clinical care yield stunning medical breakthroughs that address many pressing human health concerns.

In contrast, primary care within the American health care system is often administered in a fragmented fashion or in inefficient settings of Emergency Departments or urgent care centers. Providing care to millions of patients with chronic conditions, many of which are preventable, places additional demands on already strained health care resources.

It is further predicted there will a shortage of professionals in many specialized fields of health care, which will make it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of our population. Primary health care will not be delivered by physicians, but increasingly by highly educated health care professionals including advance practice registered nurses (nurse practitioners) and physician assistants.

Tomorrow’s health care system relies on new innovations and approaches to primary care coupled with a national focus on nutrition, wellness and disease prevention. The use of emerging technologies, system management, new metrics and incentives will transform the current disease management system to one that focuses equally on prevention and wellness.
This transformation is critical to changing the current trajectory of American health care, which is unbalanced, inefficient and financially unsustainable.

These challenges require courageous health care leaders who are committed to working innovatively and collaboratively. *The Fairfield graduate is just that leader.*

**LEADING THE WAY**

"The 60-credit Core Curriculum, required by all Fairfield University students, ensures students have a broad liberal arts education as the best foundation for the development of disciplinary expertise and preparation for dynamic careers and unpredictable future challenges." (Campbell, Crabtree & Kelly, 2014)

Fairfield University has remarkable success in attracting, educating and preparing students who possess a deep calling to serve in professional health care settings. Our alumni are leaders in nursing, medicine, biomedical research, rehabilitation, medical technologies and device development, health care administration, national and local non-profit organizations, government health care agencies and numerous other areas related to health care.

Our School of Nursing is recognized nationally for excellence in health professional education at the baccalaureate, master’s and practice doctorate levels. The School is committed to innovation, creativity and engagement with students, faculty, and community partnerships. Fairfield’s natural science departments offer distinctive high impact learning environments featuring a focus on student-faculty directed research, experimental education, health-related internships and a vibrant pre-health professionals advising program producing excellent outcomes. Collaboration on curricula and research already characterizes many cross school synergies.

Fairfield plans to construct a new building dedicated to nursing and health studies next to the School of Nursing and adjacent to the Rudolph F. Bannow Science Center (BSC). With the migration of the School of Engineering from McAuliffe Hall to BSC during the fall of 2013, a cohesive center of scientific excellence is emerging on the Fairfield campus. This new facility will feature technologically advanced and interactive learning environments that will encourage a multi-disciplinary focus among undergraduate departments throughout the University. It will feature state-of-the-art simulation and clinical learning environments that offer innovative ways to promote interdisciplinary collaborative education, and laboratories to support interdisciplinary team-based student/faculty research.
Our continued excellence in educating tomorrow’s health professionals is grounded in Ignatian Pedagogy and a multidisciplinary core curriculum which is augmented by the classic majors chosen by our undergraduates. This unique combination provides the rare opportunity to enlighten, excite and challenge our students on any issue related to health care. By supplementing a major in any undergraduate program with a suite of core courses focused on health-related issues, students at Fairfield University will have the potential to emerge with a unique literacy in health studies, whether or not they go on to pursue careers in health-related professions.

Given the depth and diversity of the health care issues confronting America, if our nation is truly to become healthy, a cultural shift must occur among future health care providers and organizations, and with health care consumers. We must move from the current systems linked to disease management models to ones focused on wellness and quality of life.

Fairfield University has the unique opportunity to lead the way in sparking a cultural shift by changing its approaches to educating students whether or not they pursue a future career in health professions. Innovative and interactive new courses, seminars, workshops, public health campaigns, health risks, and health behaviors will distinguish Fairfield as a significant change agent in the future of health care culture, education, and behaviors covering all aspects of our population.

**INTEGRATED NURSING & HEALTH STUDIES INITIATIVE**

It is predicted that the health care industry will represent 20 percent or more of the future employment opportunities for college graduates in the United States. As such, we can fully expect Fairfield graduates to be employed as professionals in:

- direct service delivery of care
- biomedical research and medical device innovation
- health care marketing and finance
- communication for disease prevention and wellness
- health-related businesses and technology companies
- health care practices at insurance companies and law firms
- technological and infrastructure aspects of providing health care

In response, Fairfield seeks to prepare students for the professions of tomorrow in all fields of health care by building on our nationally recognized School of Nursing and long-standing strengths in the natural sciences.
Integrated Nursing & Health Studies is an interdisciplinary approach that combines a cutting-edge health studies curriculum in all five schools at Fairfield University in concert with exciting new opportunities for applied learning, discovery and student engagement.

The Initiative draws from key academic disciplines on campus. In the true Jesuit spirit that is Fairfield University, Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will not be constrained by academic silos. The synergy of nursing and the natural sciences will enlist students and faculty from all areas of campus, including business, communication, engineering, finance, marketing, and the pre-med and pre-law programs. Emerging technologies, entrepreneurship, ethics and nutritional sciences will be in the curricula and in programmatic elements of the initiative as well.

Fairfield University seeks to expose students to the challenges and opportunities related to health care. Using a team-based approach, students will work collaboratively with faculty, peers and University alumni with expertise in all areas of the industry and related professions. It is important to note that while the program will employ a full-time program director, the majority of the program staff will be students at the University who will work part-time in each of the key areas of the initiative. This apprenticeship-style training will be invaluable to students who seek to gain practical work experience of direct benefit to future employment in a chosen field.

The Integrated Nursing & Health Studies Initiative will have three interconnected programmatic elements:

- Curriculum
- Discovery & Applied Learning
- Community Outreach & Engagement

Curriculum

All academic disciplines at Fairfield have a significant role to play in further transforming health care education and in preparing tomorrow’s graduates to work directly in health care or one of the countless professional fields that connect to the industry. The specialized curriculum will be structured in a way to provide each student with the knowledge and skills that will allow them to explore current challenges in today’s health care system and the promise of health innovation.

Central to this philosophy is the creation of a new Minor in Integrated Health Studies, which is being developed by a panel of faculty from numerous disciplines. This new academic
concentration will feature a foundation course to provide a broad overview to all students enrolled. A host of already-existing health-related courses at Fairfield ranging from anatomy and physiology, health care ethics, health communication, drugs and behavior, chemistry for health sciences, health economics and health care delivery will be combined with new course offerings such as biostatistical modeling, children’s health, environmental triggers for disease, exercise science and nutrition, health promotion, health care entrepreneurship, spirituality in health and dying, public health and acute-care integration.

Students will be supported with independent study projects by a faculty and Stag Mentor (described below). All students will be required to have a capstone experience, which will be a group effort bringing together the expertise and training of a wide variety of students. The capstone experience will be a stand-alone course, populated with seniors. Students will be required to reflect upon a special area of integrated health studies relative to a key element of health care or critical health-related issues. Teams will be comprised of students from a suite of majors, and as such, students will be challenged to contribute their individual expertise in a team-based approach to working on and presenting their project.

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By its very nature, health care will always be a changing environment. Emerging technologies, breakthrough treatments and progressive improvements in approaches to care seek to keep pace with the diverse and complex health concerns of the population. Health care professionals must continually improve the ways in which they work and collaborate. Integrated Nursing & Health Studies features exciting new opportunities for students to receive hands-on individualized and team-based learning with direct application to the interests and career aspirations of each student.

The liberal arts core at Fairfield places our students at a distinct advantage to glean the full benefits of applied learning experiences. The core curriculum is designed to develop students’ integrative thinking with a balanced focus on ethics, culture, teamwork, systems thinking and shared responsibility for the Common Good. It helps provide them with critical problem-solving skills and service-based team leadership essential to leading in the increasingly interdisciplinary health fields and in the exponential growth of the health care and related industries.
Health Science Scholars Program

Collaborative research with faculty is a high impact learning experience for students. The Health Science Scholars Program teams up an interdisciplinary group of undergraduate students and paired faculty mentors from across the schools to work together for two years on a collaborative research project focused on a specific area of health. Possible topics could include research on aging or obesity, marketing a new health-related invention or how to develop new health prevention and wellness programs. Throughout the project, students from multiple departments in different schools work collaboratively with faculty on all aspects of the research, from reviewing the literature in the field, to collecting data, to participating in the analysis of the data. As the project moves forward, students will join faculty in presenting results at regional and national conferences.

Integrated Nursing & Health Studies seeks to fund two teams of Health Science Scholars simultaneously. The first award in 2012 funded Dr. Linda Henkel, Associate Professor of Psychology and Dr. Alison Kris, Associate Professor of Nursing and undergraduate students majoring in nursing and psychology to develop interventions to help nursing home residents with mild to moderate cognitive impairment. The interventions being explored are based upon previous research that suggests the promotion of recall-related activity in the residents may improve cognitive function, ameliorate feelings of depression and help to improve the quality of nursing care.

Health Entrepreneurship

The Charles F. Dolan School of Business at Fairfield University offers undergraduate students the exciting opportunity to pursue their own unique ventures through the "DSB Annual Business Plan Competition." Students from across campus work in groups to develop and submit proposals for new business ventures, which are then judged by an expert panel of entrepreneurs and business executives. The Initiative is intended to draw on the innovation and energy of students and help them develop their creative ideas into viable plans for real entrepreneurial businesses. Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will sponsor a health track in the competition whereby student teams would compete for a $20,000 annual award to develop a new product that addresses a critical health-related issue.

Summer Research Opportunities for Students

Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will provide the necessary funding for some students to travel to academic and commercial laboratories across the country. Students who qualify will complete up to eight weeks of research in June, July or August to be coordinated with
participating host laboratories. Interns will be supervised by a lead investigator or post-doctoral fellow at the laboratory to which they are assigned in conjunction with oversight from a resident Fairfield faculty member.

The inaugural program is expected to be highly competitive. Students will receive a stipend and the funds to cover all travel and lodging expenses. Interns are required to present a synopsis of their research interest at a virtual roundtable or in class and will be encouraged to present their research at the annual Sigma Xi science symposium held every April on campus.

Dana and Marc ‘89 Guillet established the Guillet Summer Internships as the first award with the goal of exposing Fairfield students to biomedical and genetic research. It was equally their hope that through this unique exposure and experience many Guillet Interns will choose to pursue careers in science and medicine.

**Service Learning**

The Office of Service Learning at Fairfield seeks to provide students with opportunities for community-based education that combines academic learning, meaningful community service, critical reflection and civic education. Students bring new skills and perspectives to existing nonprofit organizations as they engage in collaborative research, address pressing social issues through direct service, or act as advocates for change. Community partners serve as co-educators, expanding the resources for teaching and learning beyond the confines of the University while promoting and nurturing critical partnerships in addressing pressing social challenges. *Integrated Nursing & Health Studies* seeks to partner with the Office of Service Learning to launch two new service learning courses each academic year dedicated to experiences in direct health care practices, health prevention and environmental health. In addition to providing the vital funds needed to develop these new courses, *Integrated Nursing & Health Studies* will secure additional support to provide financial assistance to underwrite the costs of students pursuing international service learning experiences as well.

**Health Professions Program**

Students at Fairfield who are interested in a career in the health professions are invited to become part of a careful mentoring and advising process beginning in their first year. Under the direction of our full-time Health Professions Advisor, Dr. Geoffrey Church, and members of the Health Professions committee, an interdisciplinary group of faculty within and outside of the sciences, Dr. Church works with students to offer guidance, inter-
professional exposure and the academic support required to successfully move on to graduate work and ultimately to the health professions.

More than 250 students in four undergraduate schools pursue a challenging, competitive, and highly supportive co-curriculum designed to support their field or major of personal interest while taking courses necessary for admission to medical, dental and other professional schools for careers in physical and occupational therapy, laboratory science, critical/respiratory care, social services, optometry and podiatry. In the last three academic years, 97% of students in the Program who received recommendations from the Health Professions Committee were accepted into the health profession pathway of their choice.

**Virtual Roundtables**

Central to discovery will be Virtual Roundtables where students and faculty meet by video teleconference to explore pressing health topics, issues and concerns. Fairfield alumni with expertise in different aspects of health care will be guest speakers/facilitators. The unique and accessible forum will inform the student community about critical health issues while providing individual students with targeted information to support their course work and capstone projects while offering creative new directions for applied learning opportunities within the program.

Topics will connect to the integrated health studies curriculum and may include discussions on the role of nutrition and exercise in disease prevention, new frontiers of genetics, financing new biotechnology, novel ways to combat obesity by geo-region, ethnic and racial health disparities, end-of-life issues, role of special interests in health policy, and many more.

Virtual Roundtables will be organized and directed by Fairfield students employed by the Initiative. All students on campus will be invited to attend each of the sessions.

**Group Sessions for Risk Assessment/Evaluation**

Medication and medical errors occur every day in primary care practices, hospitals and health systems in the United States. The 1999 Institute of Medicine report *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System* shockingly revealed that mistakes by providers in U.S. hospitals killed upwards of 100,000 people per year. Since that time, providers in all health care settings and systems have made significant progress toward addressing the most pressing patient safety and quality issues.
In most professions it is perfectly acceptable for human beings to learn through a process of trial and error and to make mistakes, but members of the health care community are held to a very different standard. It is inherent to the declared oath of health care providers to “do no harm” that future leaders work together to improve systems and processes of care in an effort to further transform health care into a highly reliable industry with the least amount of errors.

The Initiative will host meetings where students and faculty discuss errors, and more importantly, what was done to avoid critical mistakes that could have resulted in harm. These mistakes can be related to issues of direct patient care practice, systematic or policy concerns, public and environmental health or the business of health care. The monthly forum will be directed by faculty in the Center for Applied Ethics at Fairfield.

**Stag Mentors**

Stag Mentors will provide students with invaluable insight and expertise related to a student’s course work, independent study project, summer internship and future professional development.

Juniors and seniors pursuing an integrated health studies minor may apply to be matched with Fairfield University alumni working in all types of health care professions and related fields. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of faculty. If accepted into this competitive program, the student will be paired with a Fairfield University alumna/us who is an expert in the student’s specific area of interest in health care, health prevention or bio-medical sciences.

Students and Stag Mentors will be required to participate in training conducted by staff in the Initiative. With virtual software available for students and mentors, the role and responsibilities of Stag Mentors will be convenient to their personal and professional schedules.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT**

Inherent to the Jesuit mission and identity of Fairfield University is a focus to prepare students to be women and men for others. An unfortunate truth is that many in America have fragmented or very limited access to health care resources and do not receive proper health communication or prevention services. Fairfield University is located one of the wealthiest counties per capita in the United States. Ironically, it is bordered by the City of
Bridgeport, which by all standards is one of the most disadvantaged and poorest urban communities in New England.

For more than 20 years, the School of Nursing has operated a Health Promotion Center in Bridgeport for outreach to the community and as a vital resource for student learning. The Center provides screening, education and referral services to people who otherwise might not receive such services. Working with community partners such as childcare centers, public schools, and senior housing, services are administered on-site, supplementing existing programs. The focus of the Center is on promoting cardiovascular and environmental health across the lifespan.

Many University departments are actively engaged in outreach and research activities focused on the surrounding Bridgeport community. This commitment provides a wonderful platform in which Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will launch new campus-wide and coordinated initiatives for health awareness, prevention and research. Simultaneously, the health of the Fairfield campus community as well as other communities throughout Fairfield County will be an equal priority and focus within the Initiative. While people of greater financial affluence or education may have better access to the health care system, they are no less susceptible to disease or chronic health conditions triggered by behavioral and environmental factors. Thus, the Initiative will serve people in Fairfield County as well as the students, faculty and staff of the University.

**BASE Camp**

BASE Camp (Broadening Access to Science Education) is an annual two-week residential summer science program designed to expose female high school students in Bridgeport to the wonders of science. Students entering junior or senior year of high school are invited to campus to assist faculty and current undergraduate science majors with a wide range of faculty-led research projects in the fields of biology, chemistry, biochemistry, engineering, mathematics, neuroscience and psychology. Exposing the traditionally underrepresented students to careers in science, technology and healthcare is an important focus. Students learn the processes for college admission and financial aid as well. Ongoing mentorship is offered through a resource website with contacts and information on organizations, programs and career paths.

BASE Camp is under the direction of Dr. Shelley Phelan, Professor of Biology, at Fairfield University. It was established with a five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health in 2011 and via the support of private foundations and companies. Funding is needed to ensure the continuation of the program in the summer of 2016.
Campus-Wide Health Awareness

The Initiative will sponsor an outreach effort designed to challenge and educate the Fairfield University community in its understanding of key health-related issues. The program will sponsor video kiosks at the Barone Campus Center and in the public corridors of other major buildings on campus. The kiosks will rotate visual displays with the latest critical health information addressing a myriad of topics.

Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will sponsor contests that offer prizes for students and faculty able to successfully answer questions related to in-depth knowledge of health issues and concerns. The contests will be conducted virtually as well as at the kiosks and on televisions in the public areas of the Barone Campus Center, the Student Dining Hall, Student Café and in main campus buildings.

Future Health Outreach & Research

In the first two years of program operations, Integrated Nursing & Health Studies will implement a health related service project in Fairfield County with a specific emphasis on health disparities. The Department of Biology recently recruited two new faculty members who each have expertise in nutrition science. Coupled with similar interests of faculty in the Schools of Nursing and Engineering, we feel confident that a nutrition outreach program will be central to this new outreach component. It will feature opportunities for faculty/student research projects and examine the critical role nutrition plays in health prevention, recovery and quality of life.

A Call to Action

Fairfield University is in the leadership phase of Fairfield Rising, a multi-year comprehensive campaign designed to help the University realize an aggressive vision to become the leader in the renewal of Jesuit education for the 21st century. In its heart, Fairfield Rising is a call to action for alumni and parents. As the largest strategic component of the campaign, the University seeks the majority of funds to build the corpus of Fairfield’s endowment.

Although it is one of the smaller Jesuit universities in America, Fairfield competes or surpasses peer institutions in many measures. However, the size and scope of the University’s endowment trails behind in comparison. Fairfield’s total endowment, currently being audited, closed in fiscal year 2013 at $293 million, which is one third the size of the endowments at Santa Clara University and Loyola Marymount University and half the size of the endowments at Fordham University and The College of the Holy Cross.
Endowment has never been more vital to strengthening Fairfield’s ability to meaningfully and directly impact the lives and educational experience of our students, many of whom will be tomorrow’s leaders in all professions and disciplines. Philanthropic investments from alumni who establish named endowments provide a critical and stable funding stream to the University.

Investment Opportunities

The following investment opportunities are designed to provide donors with very special ways to help Fairfield University develop a new integrated approach to educating tomorrow’s health professionals. Gift commitments to any fund are most welcome payable over multiple years.

Minor in Integrated Health Studies – Student Scholarships
Endowment Goal: $2.5 Million
Donors who contribute $50,000 and above are invited to name a scholarship and will receive annual reports summarizing the activity and expenditures.
Current Use Scholarships are welcome at $5,000 and above

Resource Fund for Course Development
Endowment Goal: $300,000
Donors who contribute $50,000 or more are invited to establish a named resource fund and will receive annual reports summarizing the activity and expenditures.
Current Use Course Development Goals: Faculty: $4,000, Student Capstone: $2,000,
Domestic Service Learning: $7,500 and International Service Learning: $8,000

Named Visiting Professor (Adjunct Faculty)
Naming Opportunity: $250,000
Current Use Goal: $10,000

Fund for General Purposes
Current Use Goal: $100,000

Health Science Scholars Program
Annual Current Use Goal: $100,000 (2 teams at $50,000 per year for 2 years)
Donors who make a two-year commitment are invited to name the specific award bestowed on one of the research teams.

Program Apprenticeship Fund (Student Employment)
Current Use Goal: $40,000

Health Track in Business Plan Competition at Dolan School of Business
Annual Current Use Goal: $20,000
Donors are invited to name a specific team award with commitment.

**Health Professions Student Preparation Fund** - supports course development for Fairfield graduate school placement preparation for students, resource materials and financial assistance for test fees for students.  
*Current Use Goal: $25,000*

**Graduate Scholarships** (3) – $5,000 awards made to promising seniors with clear financial need to support the costs of her/his attending a professional graduate program. Awards made directly to the institution where the student will attend.  
*Current Use Goal: $15,000*

**Groups Sessions for Risk Assessment/Evaluation**  
*Annual Current Use Goal: $5,000*

**Summer Research Opportunities for Students**  
*Named Internships: $5,000 each (current use)*

In addition to name recognition above, as appropriate, Fairfield University is pleased to recognize generosity of donors at all levels in:

- List of Benefactors at www.fairfield.edu/inhsi
- University publications or electronic communications, including Fairfield’s Annual Honor Roll of Donors

Exceptional needs are often met with the exceptional generosity of extraordinary people. Support for the **Integrated Nursing & Health Studies Initiative** is a pledge to help the University prepare the next generation of health care professionals.

We hope you will join with us to support this critical need and invaluable aspect of Fairfield’s cardinal responsibility to develop graduates whose lives reflect a deep understanding of how they impact their environment where being “women and men for others” is in evidence.