What kinds of students does the MA in Health Education attract?
Our students have a wide variety of professional and academic backgrounds. They are united by their current interest in a values-driven, service-based career. Many of our students have no formal health training prior to entering this program.

Our students value a multi-dimensional conceptualization of health and healing, and they want to learn more about how this holistic perspective can be shared with others. They are interested in facilitating health-promoting change in both individuals and communities.

Our students tend to be dissatisfied with the status quo in our health care system and, having developed an intuitive understanding that change needs to happen, are looking for a concrete way to “be the change they want to see in the world.” Some have had experiences as patients or as caretakers which convinced them of the importance of a health approach that promotes wellness versus simply treating disease.

How does this program compare with other MA programs in related areas?
Unlike other MA Health Education programs, this program has been grounded in a holistic perspective from its origins over 30 years ago. It is unique in preparing people to become professionals in health education from the thoroughly and consistently holistic perspective.

Conversely, there are many “holistic” programs that train individuals as practitioners in a specific health practice or modality. We are not training health practitioners, but rather health educators. This program offers both professional skills training in the art of health education and a thorough grounding in holistic methodologies.

With respect to our holistic nutrition courses and the Holistic Nutrition Specialization, our program is unique in that we teach nutrition from a functional medicine perspective, seeking to address health concerns at their root causes rather than simply treating symptoms. We approach nutrition from a “problem-solving” stance in which solutions are individualized and nuanced, rather than based on a single model or set of protocols.

What do people do with this degree?
Our graduates work as health educators in hospital and clinical settings, schools and universities, workplace wellness programs, and for health care corporations, including HMOs and insurance companies. They develop, deliver, and manage health education programs. Some graduates also have created their own educational platforms, consulting businesses, and health coaching practices.

How long does it take to complete the Health Education MA degree?
It can be completed on a full-time schedule in seven quarters (1¾ years), or if you choose to add the Holistic Nutrition Specialization, eight quarters (2 years).
Do I have to be a full-time student?
No, we do not require you to be a full-time student. In fact, many of our students are part-time students who are also working and/or raising a family. We also offer three-year and four-year pathways to obtaining the MA degree on a part-time basis.

Who are the faculty for the program?
Faculty members are practicing health educators, nutritional consultants, health coaches, and health advocates. The holistic perspective of the program resides in the faculty, who bring their experience in the field, their academic and professional achievements, and their ability to take a holistic view of health and health education to bear in the classroom. Students in this program can expect to get to know and interact with their instructors.

How does the Holistic Nutrition Specialization work? Is it part of the degree or an add-on component?
Most of the courses required for the Holistic Nutrition Specialization are embedded within the degree. By dedicating your practicum courses and taking one additional four-unit course, you can complete the Holistic Nutrition Specialization as you are completing the Health Education MA degree with a small additional investment of time and tuition. See the catalog for the complete listing of required courses for the nutrition specialization.

What are you looking for in an applicant to this program?
We are looking for mature, professionally oriented degree candidates with a dedication to scholarly studies, research and professional practice. No prior health care or health education experience is required. Applicants should possess and be committed to further development of excellent communication skills. Applicants should have the capacity for rigorous academic work and community participation. Applicants should also have an alignment with holistic and integrative frameworks for health and education, including a willingness to develop capacity for holding multiple perspectives and participate in holistic pedagogical models.

Can I speak with a faculty member or visit a class?
Yes! Program Chair Fall Ferguson, MA, JD can be reached at fferguson@jfku.edu or (925) 969-3516. She will be happy to speak with you about the program in person or via telephone. She can also arrange for you to visit a class on our Pleasant Hill campus.