Follow-up Visit with Department of Public Health

Denise Lach, Grad Council Representative, met with Marie Harvey (Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies) and Anna Harding, Co-Director of the School of Biological and Population Health Sciences, both of whom were involved in the external review. The comments below include (a) recommendations from external review (May 16-18, 2010); (b) action plan proposed by Department of Public Health (January 28, 2011); and (c) specific issues raised in the action plan review on March 13, 2013.

Summary: Since the external review in May 2010, many things have changed in the Department of Public Health including a reorganization of the College and the graduate programs into Schools and programs that reflect the state of Public Health education in the 21st Century. Fifteen new hires have been made and two more are currently in the search process. Extensive work and resources have been devoted to creating opportunities for both faculty and graduate students to be successful in their efforts including a full time internship coordinator, a full time grants and contract support specialist, internal seed grant projects, and engagement processes for important tasks like the accreditation coming up next year. This College, all the related Schools and Programs, and especially the faculty should be commended for the amount of work they put into and subsequent success for their graduate programs since the external review was completed. There are many “best practices” in this program that should be shared with other graduate programs including the grant training workshop, a Health Sciences Division-wide information sharing retreat called “IGNITE,” and strategic planning for increasing diversity among faculty, staff, and students.

Students and Instructional Programs

1a. Work with students to create processes that include them in the life of the department including appropriate involvement in departmental governance, their own student organization and a clear process for communicating concerns.

1b. Action Plan: We are currently a member of the Oregon MPH Program in which each track has a student representative who serves on the Academic Program Committee and represents student ideas and student concerns to the overall governance of the OMPH. OSU has four track representatives and one of these track representatives also serves as the OSU representative to the Program. We have not created our own structure at OSU because it would be duplicative. As we move forward with the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, we will be a stand-alone college and we will continue having the MPH track representatives involved in program governance. We will also include PhD representatives from the three concentration areas. Related to student organizations, there is a very active International Health Club and Public Health Club in the department. Students from all tracks and also PhD students are invited and do participate in the club activities. Also, starting spring 2010, the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator meet each term with the OMPH track representatives to hear their concerns and ideas for changes, so we currently have a process in place and regular schedule for students to communicate concerns about the program.

1c. Action Plan Review: A Graduate School Council has been created at the Dean’s level that includes representatives of all Public Health programs. The Council meets once a term; in addition, the Public Health representatives to the Council meet with the School Co-Directors at least once a term.

2a. As curricular programs continue to expand, develop course work to support programs. Assess, in particular, the scope and depth of offerings for doctoral students.
2b. **Action Plan:** In spring of 2010, the faculty developed competencies and additional courses for the three PhD Concentrations in Public Health in order to strengthen the PhD degree program and to meet CEPH requirements. These are detailed in the current PhD handbook. Per this recommendation, new courses will be introduced as we increase our faculty in all three concentrations.

2c. **Action Plan Review:** Required new 600-level courses for the PhD concentrations have been developed and implemented for all three programs (four in Health Policy, six in Health Promotion and Health Behavior, and five in Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety). A new dual MPH degree with DVM has been developed such that a DVM student may enroll in any of the MPH tracks to complete the dual degree. To date, most students have chosen the Epidemiology track. A Graduate Certificate in Public Health with six online courses taught by PhD level instructors was started in the fall of 2012. Two new courses have been created that all graduate students in the college who are not in Public Health programs are required to take (Epidemiology and Foundations of Public Health).

3a. Complete creation of a departmental process for supporting development, implementation and evaluation of internships for MPH students.

3b. **Action Plan:** Beginning in fall 2011, one of the Public Health faculty members will assume the role of Internship Coordinator for the MPH program. She will oversee internships for students in all tracks, including the development, implementation, and evaluation of internships.

3c. **Action Plan Review:** Immediately after the review, a faculty member was given a 0.5 FTE appointment as an internship coordinator. In 2012, a full time internship coordinator with an MPH was hired who helps with paperwork, record-keeping, securing new internship locations, meeting with preceptors, etc. Faculty members are still involved with placements, working with students on learning outcomes for internships, and career advising.

4a. Increase research support for students, especially PhD students. Include student support on all proposals for external funds.

4b. **Action Plan:** As documented in the Self-Study, the faculty has dramatically increased our research productivity in the last few years. Due to the increase in external funding, this year, in particular, we have been able to offer more GRA positions than in the past. We will work to continue this trend in the future. In addition, a number of students have been supported on hourly wages when the grant will not fully support a GRA.

4c. **Action Plan Review:** This is an ongoing initiative for the program; currently they have set a goal of having 80% of all research grants include student support by 2014/2015. This is complemented by the grant writing training described below and the hiring of young talented new faculty members who are actively submitting proposals.

5a. Become more involved in interdisciplinary efforts on campus; encourage students to participate in seminars, courses, etc. in areas that are relevant to public health.

5b. **Action Plan:** This is something that is important to us, and perhaps we did not adequately address this in the Self-Study. Students are encouraged to take classes from all department and programs on campus. For example, they routinely take courses from, but not limited to, Anthropology, Nutrition & Exercise Sciences, Human Development & Family Sciences, Sociology, Statistics, Toxicology, Engineering, Business, Women’s Studies, and Water Resources. In addition, MPH and PhD students are on listservs and they receive numerous announcements about seminars, workshops, and other opportunities on campus and in the broader community. We will continue to encourage students to take advantage of these events.

5c. **Action Plan Review:** Students continue to take courses across campus and about 100 adjunct faculty have been recruited and now serve on committees, offer electives, etc. Dual degrees with Anthropology and Women Studies have been created, and a new college seminar series was instituted with 3-5 speakers each term. Speakers come from within the College, Division, and the community/profession. PhD students are required to attend a certain number of seminars for their program of study. The college has created seed
funding for interdisciplinary projects that must include a partner from outside the College. We have also
created a dual degree with Vet Med:VDM/MPH, as previously described.

6a. Continue efforts to recruit and support students from racial/ethnic minorities while exploring what diversity
means to the department beyond the usual definitions of gender, race and ethnicity.

6b. **Action Plan**: We participate in a number of diversity-recruitment efforts in order to attract a larger number
of diverse applicants to the Program. These efforts include but are not limited to: (1) corresponding with
students interested in graduate studies in Public Health who participated in the California Forum for Diversity in
Graduate Education and the Minority Recruiting Event with the Society for the Advancement for Chicano and
Native Americans in Science; (2) recruiting of minority students at the annual American Public Health
Association meetings; (3) corresponding with McNair Scholars interested in Public Health; (4) participating in
the Graduate School’s Minority Pipeline Scholarship Program; and, (5) working with our colleagues across
campus and particularly with the faculty and staff in OSU’s Educational Opportunities Program to attract and
retain minority graduate students. We will continue these efforts and will keep records of the contacts we
make to determine if any of the students contacted through these processes end up applying to our MPH
Program. We have secured $120,000 in Laurel Awards for MPH Student in AY 2009-2010 and $100,000 for
both AY 2010-2011 and 2012- 2013. One of the stated goals of this award is to attract diverse students.

6c. **Action Plan Review**: An equity and diversity committee was established to develop a plan for increasing
diversity through recruiting and program practices. Students, staff, and faculty all serve on the committee,
which is chaired by a Native American faculty member. They are focusing their targets on Hispanic and Native
American hiring but also using McNair to recruit first-generation grad students. The laurel awards are used
only for MPH students and are focused on quality and diversity.

**Faculty**

7a. Expand faculty, especially for current offerings in international health and for approved offerings in
epidemiology and biostatistics.

7b. **Action Plan**: The College is currently recruiting 11 additional faculty trained and experienced in the core
Public Health disciplines to complement the existing 75 tenured/tenure track faculty college-wide. Searches for
faculty in biostatistics, epidemiology, health policy and environmental and occupational health began in
October 2010. New hires will ensure that all areas are adequately staffed to support the academic, research,
and service programs we offer. Regarding international health, this year we hired full-time a PhD fixed term
faculty to teach courses and advise students in that track. In addition, one tenure-track faculty member will be
reassigned to the International Health track starting Fall 2011.

7c. **Action Plan Review**: During 2009 and 2011, 15 new hires were made, including four in biostatistics, five
in epidemiology, two in Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety and four in health policy. They are
currently hiring two additional faculty in Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety and one in Health
Policy. Several full time instructors have also been hired to cover both undergrad and grad level classes.

8a. Ensure that faculty are appropriately involved in the planning and implementation of major organizational
and curricular changes, especially those faculty who have significant experience in other schools or programs
of public health.

8b. **Action Plan**: In June 2010, to increase the circle of engagement, the dean augmented the original
Administrative Team (AT) with a Faculty Transition Team (FTT). Three faculty from Public Health are on the
FTT. Assisted by an organizational development consultant, the joint Faculty-Administrative Transition Team
(FTT/ATT) worked throughout the summer of 2010 to address faculty issues, develop options for
organizational design and plan its leadership for the transition process. At the all-College meeting in
September 2010, the FTT/ATT presented their planning and development work, and engaged faculty and staff
in undertaking further development of the new CPHHS. Faculty and staff were enlisted in the creation, design
and naming of the two new schools, their operations and governance.
8c: **Action Plan Review:** A College-wide steering committee was implemented fall 2012 that created several subcommittees on which Public Health faculty sit. The subcommittees are now deeply involved in the accreditation process, which will also include staff and student engagement. A mock site visit is planned for May with three outside reviewers. This process is complemented by information sessions for faculty and staff about status of planning and accreditation.

9a. Provide opportunities for professional development in all aspects of faculty expectation (e.g., research, teaching and advisement, leadership development).

**9b. Action Plan:** In terms of support for faculty research, the College of HHS offers a grant-writing workshop annually in the summer. In addition, the College provides internal pilot funds to support new ideas from faculty that may lead to larger externally funded proposals. To provide professional development in teaching, the faculty are encouraged to enroll in courses and workshops offered by the Center for Teaching, Learning and Assessment. To improve faculty advising, we focused on student advising and mentoring at our fall 2010 retreat, and came up with a tangible suggestions for improvement. We are now in the process of creating online assessment tools for both PhD and MPH students that will improve the ability of faculty to track student progress and achievement. Finally, to enhance faculty leadership, the Dean of the College of HHS is launching a new faculty leadership development program during this academic year. The details of this program are being coordinated with the Associate Provost for Academic Affair’s leadership development program so there is no duplication. One faculty in Public Health attended the latter program.

**9c: Action Plan Review:** A grant writing workshop was held in 2011-2012; all faculty who attended the workshop subsequently submitted a proposal (not sure about success rate yet). The grant-writing workshop will be repeated this year. An internal seed grant has been created at the Divisional level (Public Health, DVM, Pharmacy) to encourage interdisciplinary research. College leadership training has been implemented with PH faculty participating each year, allowing mid-career faculty to explore leadership opportunities and obligations.

**Infrastructure and Resources**

10a. Hire sufficient faculty to support current programs before expanding into other areas. There are already significant faculty deficits in several key areas in the context of the graduate programs and research productivity. Not adequately considered in the current evaluation is the significant demand on departmental resources for the undergraduate programs.

**10b. Action Plan:** As mentioned above, the College is currently recruiting 11 additional faculty trained and experienced in the core Public Health disciplines. We are currently searching and plan to hire one faculty in biostatistics, two faculty in epidemiology, five faculty in health policy and three faculty in environmental and occupational health by fall 2011. New hires will ensure that all areas are adequately staffed to support the academic, research, and service aspects of our current graduate and undergraduate programs.

**10c: Grad Program Review:** see 7c above.

11a. Assure adequate staff support and infrastructure for all aspects of departmental productivity. An immediate need stated by the faculty is for research support. A second need is for student services, which may not require a major investment in personnel but rather development of more efficient processes and better communication with students (e.g., application, enrollment, and registration issues).

**11b. Action Plan:** To support faculty research, the College supports a full-time professional faculty to assist in the pre-award phase of grant application. She is available to all faculty in the college, and Public Health faculty seek her services. In addition, this year the Department hired a Research Assistant to work part-time with any Public Health faculty member who is preparing proposals and needs assistance. A number of faculty have already used her services. Regarding the second recommendation, we have a talented professional faculty who is dedicated to assisting students with admission questions, enrollment issues, and registration problems. She is very knowledgeable about university processes and responsive to student concerns. Perhaps delays discussed in the report reflect glitches in the overall university system for admissions and registration.

4
11c: Action Plan Review: A 1.0 FTE Grants/Contracts specialist has been hired by the College to work with faculty submitting grants. The new internship coordinator brings in alums and employers, and helps students with career decisions as well as helping with internships. A young alum/career readiness program developed for undergrads is beginning to include some MPH students as appropriate. 

12a. Any reorganization should be based on logical groupings of programs and should involve broad faculty input. The current proposed organization of the three current departments in the College of Health and Human Sciences into two schools is not likely to provide the professional and organizational focus that is needed. The review panel recognized that “School A” included disciplines oriented toward the natural and physical sciences and “School B” included those disciplines related to the social sciences. However, it is not clear that this division creates any efficiencies or facilitates any enhanced collaborations within the disciplines. It should also be considered whether nonstandard organizational structure and nomenclature may hinder the ability of the faculty to participate in the larger public health community and may be less attractive or confusing for students. In this context, the review panel would recommend either a non-departmentalized college or divisions that reflect well-defined disciplines or groupings but which could perhaps share staff and some non-personnel resources. There may be an intermediate grouping such as family sciences, health behavior and health promotion, and human development; health policy and international health; epidemiology and biostatistics; exercise science and nutrition; and environmental health and occupational safety. The exclusion of design and human environments is unfortunate but reasonable if that department is not willing or able to shift their focus more toward health-related issues.

12b. Action Plan: Several developments have occurred since the Program Review. The proposed organizational structure of the College of Public Health and Human Sciences (CPHHS) includes two academic units: 1) the School of Biological and Population Health Sciences, and 2) the School of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences. The School of Biological and Population Health Sciences is the administrative home for the following academic programs: PhD in Public Health (with a concentration in Environment Safety & Health); MPH tracks in Environment, Safety & Health, Epidemiology, and Biostatistics; PhD, MS and BS in Nutrition; PhD, MS and BS in Exercise and Sport Science; BS in Nutrition and Exercise Sciences. The School of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences is the administrative home for the following academic programs: PhD in Public Health (Health Policy and Health Promotion/Health Behavior); MPH tracks in Health Promotion, Health Management & Policy; BS degree in Public Health; PhD, MS and BS degrees in Human Development and Family Sciences.

Despite the concerns raised by the reviewers, the proposed structure has been positively reviewed by the Executive Director of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). She believes that the proposed structure will support visibility for the five core Public Health programs and that the structure will allow for faculty trained in Public Health to be responsible for development and oversight of the curriculum.

12c: Action Plan Review. The reorganization and School names are not changeable at this point; they do expect to get feedback and/or recommendations from the accreditation process on this issue. The website was designed so students can find programs rather than having to know what School their major is associated with (one of the earliest consequences of the re-naming).

13a. As noted above, encourage and facilitate more involvement in interdisciplinary opportunities on campus. For example, the Environmental Safety and Health (ESH) program has evolved toward a relatively narrow focus rather than capitalizing on the broad expertise in environmental sciences across the campus. These activities will enrich experiences for both faculty and students.

13b. Action Plan: As mentioned earlier, students are encouraged to take courses from all department and programs on campus. For example, they routinely take courses from, but not limited to, Anthropology, Nutrition & Exercise Sciences, Human Development & Family Sciences, Sociology, Statistics, Toxicology, Engineering, Business, Women’s Studies, and Water Resources. This applies to students in the Environment, Safety and Health track as well as students in all the other tracks. Because the Public Health discipline is by
nature, interdisciplinary, the faculty collaborate with others in our college and across campus. In particular, related to the Environment, Safety, and Health track, faculty are co-investigators with faculty in Environmental & Molecular Toxicology, Linus Pauling Institute, Environmental Health Sciences Center, Superfund Research Center, and the College of Engineering. Students in this track are often co-mentored (and funded) by faculty from one of these programs or centers. In addition, faculty from other departments and programs very often serve on MPH or PhD student committees. We may not have made this clear to the reviewers, but there is considerable interdisciplinary collaboration by both faculty and students.

13c. **Action Plan Review:** see 5c above.

14a. The department presents an ambitious plan for faculty recruitment. However, the availability of financial resources to meet this plan is not clear. According to Dean Tammy Bray, resources for the ten positions projected by March 2011 are from internal reallocation; conservatively expenses could easily be over a million dollars in recurring salary and fringe benefits plus any necessary start-up commitments. Whether the resources are available from attrition or from explicit reductions, the department (or college) must be careful not to create critical deficits in other program areas. Also, any reductions in one area to enhance another could cause resentment, so open communication about the strategic planning is critical. Some of the proposed faculty growth is contingent on successful competition within the university’s strategic re-alignment process, suggesting that resources are not certain.

14b. **Action Plan:** The internal funds redirected to support the new faculty in the proposed CPHHS are adequate to support 10-17 new faculty members. This is an ongoing commitment by the university and is not contingent upon additional state investment. The CHHS faculty members, the College Dean, OSU President, and Provost have all endorsed the establishment of a CPHHS at OSU. Reorganization of the College to fulfill both the university’s restructuring and CEPH’s accreditation criteria has been approved by all necessary OSU administrators. The College currently offers all required PH programs (5 MPH and 3 PhD) necessary for accreditation as a CPHHS. Contingent upon approval of this application, OSU President Ray will announce the new CPHHS in summer 2011. Fiscal operation under the new organizational design will commence July 1, 2011 and the College will be renamed the OSU CPHHS. Current students will continue in, and new students will be admitted into the CPHHS in fall 2011. During the 2011 fiscal year, the University provided funding to hire 11 new core PH faculty members and up to 6 additional faculty members with PH expertise for our Human Sciences foci. The College is currently conducting searches for 1 new faculty member in biostatistics, 2 new faculty members in epidemiology, 5 new faculty members in health policy, and 3 new faculty members in environment, safety and health. In addition, we are offering Graduate Assistantships to high caliber students to help build student interest and enrollment in our newest MPH concentration areas. Financial support for the new faculty members and Graduate Assistantships has been provided by the Provost’s and Dean’s Offices, and funding for administrative staff will come from the College through enhanced efficiencies and ongoing reorganization efforts.

14c: **Action Plan Review:** All funds for growth in faculty and services have been from internal sources; the College made a commitment to growing the Public Health programs and dedicated resources to that growth. Right now, the program has the required number of faculty for accreditation; however, as noted above, increasing expectations for creating a School of Public Health with excellence in research, teaching, mentoring, and program support have put a heavy burden on existing and new faculty.