July 7, 2009

Judy A. Bense, PhD
President
University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

Dear President Bense:

On behalf of the Council on Education for Public Health, I am pleased to advise you that the CEPH Board of Councilors acted at its June 17-20, 2009 meeting to accredit the MPH Program at University of West Florida for a five-year term, extending to July 1, 2014, with interim reports due in spring 2010 and spring 2011. The interim reports will address issues related to the following areas: faculty resources, required coursework, comprehensive exam, competencies and assessment procedures.

We are enclosing a copy of the Council’s final accreditation report. This is identical to the team’s report that you received prior to our meeting, except for two areas. The Council added language to Criterion 1.6, Resources, to clarify its concern about faculty resources. The Council also removed language from Criterion 2.7, Assessment Procedures, to reflect information on graduate tracking provided in the program’s response to the site visit team’s report.

We appreciated the many courtesies extended to the site visit team during its visit.

Sincerely,

James D. Yager, PhD
President

Enclosure

cc: ✓ George L. Stewart, PhD
CEPH Councilors
Council on Education for Public Health
Adopted on June 20, 2009

REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION
OF THE
PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

SITE VISIT DATES:
November 17-18, 2008

SITE VISIT TEAM:
Kathleen R. Miner, PhD, MPH, CHES, Chair
Adele R. Amodeo, MPH

SITE VISIT COORDINATOR:
Synim N. Rivers, MPH
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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the Public Health Program at the University of West Florida. The report assesses the program's compliance with the Accreditation Criteria for Public Health Programs, amended June 2005. This accreditation review included the conduct of a self-study process by program constituents, the preparation of a document describing the program and its features in relation to the criteria for accreditation, and a visit on November 17-18, 2008 by a team of external peer reviewers. During the visit, the team had an opportunity to interview program and university officials, administrators, teaching faculty, students, alumni and community representatives, and to verify information in the self-study document by reviewing materials provided on site in a resource file. The team was afforded full cooperation in its efforts to assess the program and verify the self-study document.

In 1955, the Florida Legislature authorized the State Board of Education to develop a state university in Escambia County. In the fall of 1967, the first students began classes at the University of West Florida (UWF) located in Pensacola. UWF became the sixth state university in the State University System of Florida, which today consists of 11 institutions of higher learning. UWF is the second largest main campus in the State University System and sits on 1,800 acres. University facilities include: 35 academic buildings, 21 student services facilities, 25 dormitories, two university village student apartment complexes and 20 plant support facilities. In addition to the main campus, UWF has Emerald Coast locations in Fort Walton Beach, Eglin Air Force Base, Hurlburt Field and shared facilities at regional community colleges that serve students east of Santa Rosa County. UWF currently enrolls approximately 10,500 students in its College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business and College of Professional Studies and offers more than 300 fully online course selections leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as credit-earning certificate programs through its Online Campus.

The MPH program at UWF is administratively located in the School of Allied Health and Life Sciences (SAHLS) within the College of Arts and Sciences. The MPH program is offered as a fully online degree program and was officially launched in this format in spring 2006. The theme of the online MPH program is: "High Quality, with Innovation to Build and Support an Engaged Online Learning Community." The program focuses on applying innovative approaches to learning in varied formats to engage individuals with varying learning styles and emphasizes the importance of "community" in interactions between students and instructors. The development and delivery of online instruction is guided by course development and implementation rubrics adapted from the Quality Matters™ project of MarylandOnline, Inc and the delivery vendor for the program is the Desire 2 Learn eLearning Course Management System. There were 63 students enrolled in the MPH program at the time of the site visit. The program has graduated three students, with the first graduating in spring 2008. The program has three core faculty, three joint faculty and 14 adjunct faculty supporting its educational programs. Core faculty have
received $28,000 in intramural funding and $25,000 in extramural funding since 2006 for evaluation and planning and workforce development activities for the MPH program. Additionally, core program faculty have secured $10,000 in extramural funding and $3,000 in intramural funding for public health related research since the 2005-2006 academic year. This is the program’s first review for accreditation.
Characteristics of a Public Health Program

To be considered eligible for accreditation review by CEPH, a public health program shall demonstrate the following characteristics:

a. The program shall be a part of an institution of higher education that is accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education.

b. The program and its faculty shall have the same rights, privileges and status as other professional preparation programs that are components of its parent institution.

c. The program shall function as a collaboration of disciplines, addressing the health of populations and the community through instruction, research, and service. Using an ecological perspective, the public health program should provide a special learning environment that supports interdisciplinary communication, promotes a broad intellectual framework for problem-solving, and fosters the development of professional public health concepts and values.

d. The public health program shall maintain an organizational culture that embraces the vision, goals and values common to public health. The program shall maintain this organizational culture through leadership, institutional rewards, and dedication of resources in order to infuse public health values and goals into all aspects of the program’s activities.

e. The program shall have faculty and other human, physical, financial and learning resources to provide both breadth and depth of educational opportunity in the areas of knowledge basic to public health. As a minimum, the program shall offer the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree.

f. The program shall plan, develop and evaluate its instructional, research and service activities in ways that assure sensitivity to the perceptions and needs of its students and that combines educational excellence with applicability to the world of public health practice.

These characteristics are evident, for the most part, in the public health program at the University of West Florida. The program is a part of the SAHLS and the faculty have the same rights and privileges as other programs within the institution. Core faculty are sufficiently trained and experienced in the field of public health and joint and adjunct faculty provide additional expertise to the program. Interdisciplinary collaboration is fostered through the practitioner-based focus of the program and through appointments of teaching personnel from other disciplines, including the departments of math, psychology and communication arts. Additionally, adjunct faculty from the College of Business address the business-side of public health and draw on their experience in policy, management, marketing and legal fundamentals in the courses they teach.

The MPH program director reports to the director of the SAHLS who is accountable to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. MPH program faculty report directly to the program director who has the authority to make and alter faculty and staff work assignments, execute the program budget, establish
community and inter-unit collaborations, plan course offerings and oversee the daily operations of the program.

The development of a sustainable research agenda may be a concern for the future of the program due to the increasing obligations of the program's three core faculty members. Faculty are required to be actively engaged in research as a part of the promotion and tenure process, and program administration stated that as additional resources become available, the program will seek to expand its research activities. The program provides incentives encouraging faculty to engage in research, such as seed money and funding for research travel, and is committed to developing innovative ways to increase research productivity. The program has also included a requirement in the promotion and tenure process for tenure and non-tenure faculty for sponsored research involving students.

The resource outlook for the program presents an area of concern with regard to the sustainability of the program due to increasing enrollment, which will subsequently increase the workload and administrative responsibilities of the program's three core faculty members. The MPH program at UWF is a fairly new program and has been manageable to date. Site visitors' conversations with program leaders, however, indicate that faculty growth may not be planned at a rate that corresponds to planned student growth.

The program has a generalist track for which it has not developed a defined curriculum beyond the required core courses. Competencies have been implemented by the program however, learning objectives for elective courses have not yet been linked to the established set of competencies.

1.0 THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM.

1.1 Mission.

The program shall have a clearly formulated and publicly stated mission with supporting goals and objectives. The program shall foster the development of professional public health values, concepts and ethical practice.

This criterion is met. The MPH program began developing its mission, goals, and objectives in 2002 and has refined them over the past six years with overarching guidance from the SAHLS Advisory Committee. To assist with online instructional design, the program also receives input from UWF's Academic Technology Center (ATC) and the Center for University Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CUTLA). The MPH program is community-oriented and, during its early years, it sought input from other committees, including the Emerald Coast Advisory Committee and the ad hoc MPH Working Group. These groups provided insight to the needs of the local practice community and expectations for the outcomes of the recent MPH program. Most of these groups or their representatives are now incorporated into the MPH Steering Committee.
The MPH faculty have developed a mission statement that provides an overarching framework for its academic, research, and service priorities: "to empower a generation of public health professionals with skills, knowledge and competencies to contribute creatively and ethically to education, research and service to promote public health and disease prevention."

The MPH Steering Committee approved the mission, goals, and objectives in November 2007, with CUTLA’s approval following in January 2008. From the mission the MPH program has derived five goals relating to education, research, service and students linked with specific objectives that are stated directional terms and are accompanied by benchmarks used in evaluation and planning. These indicators are then benchmarked in criterion 1.2.

Goal 1: Recruitment/Retention of Motivated and Committed Students

Objective 1A: Annually increase the number of students admitted to the program that exceed the current minimum admission requirements.

Objective 1B: Increase the percentage of students that graduate within the expected normal time for degree completion.

Objective 1C: Increase the number of students with full-time status in the program.

Goal 2: Development of a Learning Environment Emphasizing Diversity and Individual Potential

Objective 2A: Admit percentage of minorities in program equivalent to current State of Florida demographics (21% ethnic at UWF).

Objective 2B: Admit percentage of females and males in program equivalent to current State of Florida demographics (60% females, 40% male at UWF).

Objective 2C: Attract a diverse set of staff, as well as core, joint, and adjunct faculty from the public health, health care, and military communities.

Goal 3: Promotion of Service Aligned to Community Needs

Objective 3A: Establish and maintain partnerships with national, regional, and community-based organizations with public health missions, ensuring representation from public health, health care, and military communities.

Objective 3B: Design workforce development initiatives that address areas of critical need in public health in the Florida Panhandle and surrounding regions.

Objective 3C: Increase student involvement in community outreach and participation in public health events in the student’s respective community.

Goal 4: Incorporation of High-Quality Instruction Responsive to Continuous Quality Improvement

Objective 4A: Use student evaluations and feedback each semester to implement recommendations for improvement consistent with program competencies.

Objective 4B: Maintain a teaching team skilled in the use of the highest quality instructional methodologies, innovative delivery methods, and interactive approaches to engage students.
Goal 5: Promotion of Research and Integration of Best Practices

Objective 5A: Increase scholarly activities of core, joint, and adjunct faculty.
Objective 5B: Increase extramural funding associated with core, joint, and adjunct faculty scholarly activities.
Objective 5C: Increase student involvement in faculty research and participatory research.

In addition to the mission, goals, and objectives, MPH program at UWF has outlined a values framework. These value statements were adopted by SAHLS in 2002-2003 and are consistent with the university statements.

- Integrity and candor in the pursuit of knowledge through intellectual inquiry and discourse
- Dedication to and innovation in educating our students to excel
- Excellence in teaching, research and service
- Creativity in designing and implementing our programs to fit the needs of the region
- Cooperation and collaboration with community and UWF partners in providing quality education in the life and health sciences
- Diversity in thought, attitude, understanding, appreciation and practice
- Responsibility in managing, utilizing and protecting our resources and the environment
- Concern over the creation of a safe and dynamic learning environment that encourages development of individual potential

These values are made available to faculty, staff and students on the SAHLS website.

The effectiveness of the MPH program in fulfilling the mission, goals and objectives is monitored and assessed by the MPH Steering Committee through evaluation of the educational, research and service accomplishments of the program. This body is responsible for revising the mission, goals and objectives as the needs of the community change and as the breadth and depth of educational efforts grow and adjust to address the community's health needs and challenges. There is no indication of what body is responsible for revising the value statements or how they are incorporated into the mission, goals, and objectives.

The MPH program is also slated for a general UWF-mandated program review in 2009. The mission, goals, and objectives along with their associated benchmarks will provide a solid basis for the MPH program to define its needs with the university administration.

1.2 Evaluation and Planning.

The program shall have an explicit process for evaluating and monitoring its overall efforts against its mission, goals and objectives; for assessing the program's effectiveness in serving its various constituencies; and for planning to achieve its mission in the future.

This criterion is met with commentary. The five goals of the MPH program have been reviewed and approved by the MPH Steering Committee and each one has been assigned to a designated lead core faculty member(s), who will take the lead in tracking the data. The lead faculty member is responsible for keeping up to date with the indicators and the associated community initiatives. This responsibility
includes implementing or suggesting new initiatives that would be consistent with the goals and keeping the MPH faculty and MPH Steering Committee apprised of progress or problems. Each program goal has identified objectives with several benchmarked indicators that can serve as initial outcome measures. As the MPH program matures, these indicators will need to adjust accordingly.

This process appears to be in congruence with the UWF mandated program review scheduled for sometime in mid-2009. The university process will assess the MPH program's implementation of its mission, goals, values, the level of institutional support and other needs of the program.

For each of the objectives associated with the five goals, the MPH program has identified targeted/desired outcomes for years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, and 2007-2008. These measures have been tracked. The results of these outcomes serve the basis of a strategic plan for future program benchmarks. Thus far, the plan has focused on establishing baseline data, but it does identify strategic opportunities for the growth and assessment of the MPH program.

The development of the self-study document was initiated in January 2007 and was a process that continued for approximately 18 months under the direction of the MPH program director. The director was the lead throughout the process but all key MPH faculty, including the MPH core and adjunct faculty and the Steering Committee, were asked for input into the relevant criteria of the self-study. The program also designed an eLearning portal early in spring 2007 to post various items required for the self-study and on-site resource file. In addition, CULTA assisted the program in developing the outcome measures associated with academic graduate education planning. Other units within UWF participated in writing pieces or providing information for the self-study that were pertinent to their function, including the library, the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In spring 2008, the MPH Steering Committee and the Student Association for Public Health (SAPH) provided feedback and approved the MPH Honor Code, MPH Comprehensive Exam Guide and MPH Internship Guide. During the early phases of self-study development the MPH program received a consultation visit from CEPH staff. Based upon advice from staff, they made a number of revisions to the initial self-study document.

The commentary relates to the following observations regarding the self-study. There was a great deal of input provided to the development of the document, and it read as through it had many authors. Information was repetitive and not always pertinent to the section where it was located. The MPH faculty did review the criteria and provide their assessment as to the current status of the MPH program against each criterion with notes regarding planning issues. Their strategic planning notes reflected the nascent state of the program's strategic planning however the assessments were not well linked to documentation in the criteria.
1.3 Institutional Environment.

The program shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education and shall have the same level of independence and status accorded to professional schools in that institution.

This criterion is met. UWF is a member of the State University System of Florida and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) through 2015. The MPH program director reports to the director of the SAHLS who reports to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The MPH program faculty report directly to the program director. Figure 1 represents the organizational structure for the university.

The director of the SAHLS, within the university guidelines, has the authority to establish inter-department and committee collaboration, organize committees and the structure of the school, execute the school's budget as well as oversee the daily operations of the school. The MPH program director may name subdivisions and assign associated titles within the program, alter faculty and staff work assignments, plan course offerings and oversee the daily operations of the program. The program director also has authority over the MPH program budget.

The University Budget Council and the university president present Academic Affairs with an annual budget and subsequently, a budget is allocated to CAS. A predetermined operating budget is then distributed to the units under the CAS based on historical needs of each unit. The director of SAHLS determines the budget for the academic units – which in the SAHLS consists of two departments and three degree programs (including the MPH program), in the school with the exception of the MPH program, which was funded through a "profit-sharing" arrangement for totally online programs during its first two years. This arrangement is managed by Academic Affairs. The MPH program was offered an operating budget of $20,000 after the first two years.

Tuition dollars go to the university and comprise 30% of the institutional budget. Fees such as equipment and supply fees are deposited into special accounts and may be used by the department or program for the purpose for which they were collected. The State of Florida allows fully online students to be charged a distance learning fee if such fully online courses are placed in the Florida Distance Learning Consortium catalogue and the fees can be justified to offset the cost of operating distance learning on the campus. The University Development Office oversees and provides support for fund-raising efforts. All fund-raising efforts are coordinated through this office.
Figure 1. University of West Florida Organizational Chart

Academic Affairs and the dean of the college allocate faculty and staff lines to academic units. When a faculty line becomes available to the MPH program, a faculty search committee is formed in concordance with the MPH Faculty Bylaws and Standing Rules and the guidelines set by the UWF Office of Human Resources. As staff lines become available to the program, a staff search committee is formed made up of two staff appointed by the MPH program director, a student representative, a staff member selected by the director of SAHLS from an outside academic unit within the school and a member of the MPH Steering Committee elected by its members. Each search committee must include one racial/ethnic minority member.

Academic standards and policies for the university are set by Academic Affairs. Academic units determine discipline-specific standards with faculty input and vote on which procedures and policies to adopt. The MPH program Curriculum Committee oversees the program curriculum and addresses
oversights. The program director schedules courses and to establish a new course, a Curriculum Change Request (CCR) must be completed. The CCR includes rationale for the course, a course description, listing of other departments/programs that may be involved and a course syllabus containing grading information, course topics, student learning objectives/competencies and policies on ethical dealings within the course.

1.4 Organization and Administration.

The program shall provide an organizational setting conducive to teaching and learning, research and service. The organizational setting shall facilitate interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and collaboration. The organizational structure shall effectively support the work of the program’s constituents.

This criterion is met. The organizational chart in Figure 2 illustrates the location of the MPH program within the CAS and SAHLS and accurately reflects the administrative relationships between the larger college and the MPH program and its faculty. The program director works with the core faculty, joint faculty and adjuncts/practitioners in collaboration with the MPH Steering Committee to make decisions regarding the MPH program. Also provided was an additional organization chart (Figure 3) reflecting the collaborative relationship between the faculty in the College of Business and faculty within two parts of the CAS – the SAHLS and three departments, Communication Arts, Math and Psychology, from which core and joint faculty are drawn.

Figure 2. UWF MPH Organizational Chart

Interviews with adjunct faculty drawn from other programs confirmed statements in the self-study about the successful collaborative relationships that exist among faculty who participate in the MPH program. They all stated that they were informed, involved in decision-making and supported by the MPH core faculty professional development, especially as related to on-line teaching. Similar involvement and
support of the program was in evidence during interviews with the higher levels of university administration, including the president, provost and CAS dean. In addition, the practitioner community representatives clearly saw themselves as partners in the program's development and were committed to its growth and success. This is demonstrated by their participation on various committees as well as offering their services as faculty and as internship preceptors.

Figure 3. UWF Organizational Chart Showing Interdisciplinary Appointments and Associated Reporting Lines Related to the MPH Program

There is an excellent system in place for accepting student complaints, responding quickly to acknowledge them, performing the appropriate follow-up investigations, and, if necessary, making programmatic changes in response. The MPH program director has an open-door policy for receiving feedback or complaints from students. Students may submit complaints through the program's website, may forward discussion points to the president of SAPH for consideration at the MPH Steering Committee and MPH Curriculum Committee meetings or may submit confidential comments in a dropbox in SAPH's eLearning portal for review by the program director.

Formal grievances must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Registrar to be considered by the Academic Appeals Committee and students are asked to obtain recommendations from their advisor, department chair and/or college dean upon submission. Discussions about who is the ultimate decision-maker and what appeals processes there were indicated satisfaction with the system, although it was not
completely clear how high up the administrative ladder different appeals could go. Extensive policies and procedures were available online that covered all areas under this criterion and were easily accessible.

1.5 Governance.

The program administration and faculty shall have clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning program governance and academic policies. Students shall, where appropriate, have participatory roles in conduct of school and program evaluation procedures, policy-setting and decision-making.

This criterion is met with commentary. The MPH program director is the executive officer of the program and acts on recommendations from standing committees, ad hoc committees and program faculty regarding changes to academic standards and policies and general program policy development. Community members and public health practitioners are members of all program committees. Because there are few (three) core MPH faculty members and a small cadre of adjunct faculty, all participants have multiple responsibilities and serve on multiple committees. This is also true of community and student representatives.

The MPH program has four standing committees which are as follows: 1) MPH Steering Committee composed of faculty, representatives from regional health departments, federal employees in public health positions, members of the U.S. Armed Forces in public health positions and the president of the SAPH; 2) MPH Admissions Committee whose membership consists of the three core MPH program faculty and a public health professional; 3) MPH Curriculum Committee composed of the three core MPH program faculty and two student members and 4) MPH Internship Coordination Committee chaired by a representative from the program’s pool of public health professionals and the three MPH program core faculty members. There is also one ad hoc committee, the Ad Hoc MPH CEPH Self-Study/On-Site Resource File Committee composed of the three core MPH program faculty and four support personnel.

In addition to serving on the MPH program committees, the MPH program director serves on the following university committees: Animal Care and Use Committee (Chair), Executive Committee for the Marine Service Center (Chair), President’s Advisory Committee, Search Committee for the Director of Continuing Education and the Dean's Executive Committee. One of the other two core faculty members serves on the University Personnel Committee, the Task Force for Best Practices in Online Teaching and the Task Force for Electronic Courseware. The third member of the MPH core faculty, who also serves as MPH Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator, is appointed to the program as a lecturer and therefore university-wide service is not expected.

Clear explanations of program policy development, budget authority, program planning as well as policies and procedures in place for recruitment, retention, promotion, and tenure decisions for faculty were provided in the self-study and in supplemental documentation. Planning for the MPH program takes
place during faculty meetings and MPH Steering Committee meetings. The program budget is provided by Academic Affairs and is administrated by the program director. Resource allocations are discussed with the faculty during faculty meetings and presented to the MPH Steering Committee for input as necessary.

Faculty promotion and tenure policies and procedures including academic standards and policies and research and service expectations and policies are set forth on-line for overall university work, and are conducted as described in the MPH Bylaws and Standing Rules for this program. There are no current faculty searches for full-time positions and there is a backlog file of people who have expressed interest in teaching in adjunct capacities. Mentoring of junior faculty has been an ongoing process, and non-core faculty members have also expressed gratitude at the support received from the core faculty in the program.

A fairly new Student Association for Public Health (SAPH), developed in December of 2007, serves as the principal organization for student input and representatives of that organization sit on other program committees. Minutes of its recent meetings were available to site visitors in the on-site resource file. Due to the program’s on-line format, meetings occur online via Elluminate with few students attending in person. Students have specific opportunities to participate in program governance, serving on the MPH Steering Committee and the MPH Curriculum Committee. SAPH nominates those student representatives. In addition to facilitating interaction with faculty, SAPH also leads and participates in community events. Materials showing faculty and student participation in various planning, oversight and ongoing operational committees accurately reflected what was discussed during interviews.

The commentary relates to the continued need to provide opportunities for student involvement in governance. While students are actively involved on standing and ad hoc program committees, the site visit team noted that the same few students were members of these committees. While this may be attributed to the fact that many students are working full-time jobs, the program should continue to pursue alternative opportunities to involve more students in program governance. Although the program self-assessed that it only partially met this criterion, the site visit team concluded that efforts in this area, in light of the recent creation of the program, were steps in the right direction.

1.6 Resources.

The program shall have resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives.

This criterion is partially met. UWF is “formula-funded” and awarded that portion of its budget by the Board of Governors based on full-time equivalent students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The MPH program operating budget comes from the president’s office to the CAS and SAHLS. The original agreement was based on $200 per student credit hour return. This was referred to as a “profit-
sharing" model. After two years, this budget model was changed to a fixed price approach. Presently, the MPH program now receives $20,000 annually in lieu of the per credit hour allocation. The net effect of this change reduced the operating resources of the program.

Chairs of departments and directors of programs determine allocation of funds within their units. Due to budget cuts by the State Legislature in 2007-2008, a 10% across-the-board budget reduction was implemented which affected every academic unit in Academic Affairs, except the MPH program. As the site team learned during the campus visit, the UWF experienced another cut in state funds that will require additional reduction in programmatic funding. The effects of these cuts on the MPH program were still unknown, however the site team did hear strong support for the MPH program from the university president, provost, and college dean. They assured the site visit team that the MPH program was one of the programs that would be considered a worthy investment, even in times of budget constraints.

Ten percent of indirect costs from grants awarded to MPH faculty are returned to the CAS, 10% is returned to the MPH program and 10% is returned to the principal investigator. Table 1 depicts the MPH program budget beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year when the program was launched on-line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures by Major Category, Fiscal Years 2005 to 2007 for the UWF MPH Program</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Source of Funds</strong></td>
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1Faculty Salaries & Benefits include core faculty only, based on % workload allocated to MPH program.
2Staff Salaries & Benefits are based on % workload allocated to MPH program.
3Operations include: copies, office supplies, IT needs, etc.
4Other* amounts reflected in this row based on allocation processes summarized in Table T1H include < $20,000 of profit-sharing income from 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Permanent recurring operating budget of $20,000 is included in this row for 2007-2008. These allocations are used to defray the cost of adjuncts.
In the academic year 2008, the student to faculty ratio was 11:1 based solely on the core MPH program faculty and 5.5:1 if the calculation included the joint and adjunct faculty. A full-time student is based upon six semester credit hours enrolled across the calendar year. This represents an increase in the enrollment of students in the MPH program from three in its first year (2006) to 48 in the fourth year (2008) and an increase in faculty from two full-time in its first year to three full-time in its fourth year. Of the three full-time faculty, two contribute 1.0 FTE to the program and one contributes .825 FTE. There are currently 63 students in the program. This indicates that the program is attracting a great deal of interest in its curriculum.

Other personnel contributing to the MPH program include university staff from the SAHLS and the CAS. These individuals provide modest technical and administrative support to the MPH program. Table 2 illustrates the contributions of other university personnel to the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Member Title</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Workload Contribution to MPH Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator, SAHLS</td>
<td>• responsible for recruiting/marketing for all programs in SAHLS</td>
<td>• 5% per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Specialist, SAHLS</td>
<td>• responsible for all budget and travel matters for all programs in SAHLS</td>
<td>• 15% per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Specialist, SAHLS</td>
<td>• assists with workforce development marketing and workshop registration for all programs in SAHLS • coordinates ordering of course textbooks and workshop materials for all programs in the SAHLS</td>
<td>• 25% per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrument Maker/Designer, Biology/SAHLS</td>
<td>• facilitates management assistance for Sacred Heart Hospital space</td>
<td>• 2.5% per year to SAHLS, including MPH program • 5% to SAHLS, including MPH program in years involving computer lab updates/relocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support Manager, CAS Technology</td>
<td>• assists with IT purchasing, software installation and resolution of all IT problems with the computer lab at Sacred Heart Hospital</td>
<td>• 1% per year to SAHLS, including MPH program • 5% to SAHLS, including MPH program in years involving computer lab updates/relocations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director, CAS Technology</td>
<td>• coordinates IT purchases, software installation and resolution of all IT problems with the computer lab at Sacred Heart Hospital • oversees website audits and associated redesigns based on institutional policies and requirements • coordinates college allocations of ATC training slot</td>
<td>• 1% per year to SAHLS, including MPH program • 5% to SAHLS, including MPH program in years involving computer lab updates/relocations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MPH degree is an online professional degree program, with the following physical space available to the program in Sacred Heart Hospital, which is affiliate with UWF but not located on its central campus: 131 square feet shared office space, 525 square foot conference room, 625 square foot lecture room and
1200 square feet of computer lab. The on campus space includes 264 square feet of office space for the core faculty. Students have access to the conference room at Sacred Heart Hospital and a biology conference room on the main campus. While on campus, the team learned that there is an effort to find the resources for a new building that may house the MPH program.

The MPH program has a formal agreement with the Escambia County Health Department which includes sharing resources for instruction, research and service activities. In addition to the library resources that UWF provides for students, MPH students may utilize libraries at the following institutions within the community: Navy Hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital and Baptist Hospital. The MPH faculty and students have also been invited to participate in grand rounds at the Naval Aerospace Medical Institute in Pensacola. Additionally, community members who serve on the SAHLS Advisory Committees in Pensacola and the Emerald Coast and the MPH Steering Committee have offered to market the program and its associated workforce development efforts in their respective professional newsletters.

The concern relates to the faculty resources, relative to the number of students. The student-faculty-ratio (SFR) exceeds the level acceptable for delivering this graduate education program. For an MPH program to be sustainable, resources must be commensurate with expected program operations in order to maintain quality and viability in teaching, research and service. The MPH program’s distance education structure has developed a “pipeline effect” through which there are students filling up an instructional waiting list of services to be rendered. These services include courses to be developed or revised, internships to be arranged and mentored, capstones to be completed, and new students to be recruited, admitted and advised. This does not take into account the expectations of the military for the program’s pool of aerospace MPH students nor does it consider the additional demands placed on faculty for intensive experiences such as Directed Studies in Public Health or faculty’s increased expectations for research. The site visit team learned that there are currently 63 students in the MPH program and a new cohort entering in 2009. Thus, in five years the MPH program will have grown from managing three students’ needs to managing the needs of nearly 90 students. This will add measurably to the pressure on the pipeline. Furthermore, at the present time the MPH program has graduated only three students and has not yet had a chance to fully test all of the vagaries of a fully-operational curriculum. The existing culture of the core MPH faculty is responsiveness and innovation in terms of teaching programs. While operational at this time, it will rapidly reach a point where it will not be sustainable without significant resource allocation in the area of core faculty.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.

2.1 Master of Public Health Degree.

The program shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals, leading to the Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent professional masters degree. The program may offer a generalist MPH degree or an MPH with areas of specialization. The program, depending
upon how it defines the unit of accreditation, may offer other degrees, professional and academic, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is partially met. The program offers a professional MPH degree which it defines as a generalist program. There are no additional areas of specialization offered.

Students enrolled in the program are required to take core courses in the five core areas as well as an informatics-based course. Students may choose either PHC 5015 – Epidemiological Study Designs and Statistical Methods or PHC 5196 – Computer Applications in Public Health to fulfill the informatics requirement. The program also requires that students take six credits of Internship in Public Health and 18 credit hours of electives. Table 3 presents the program’s degree offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Degrees Offered</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degrees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>MPH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concern relates to the lack of a defined curriculum for the generalist track. The generalist track offered by the program is not sufficiently developed. The interpretive language associated with this criterion defines a degree program as “a series of planned and evaluated learning experience that constitute the total requirements for the award of a degree.” A curricular track in an MPH program, even one designated as generalist, must have distinguishing elements that direct students’ studies beyond the core courses. Students in the MPH program do not have any required courses beyond the public health core courses and one the informatics-based course. For the remainder of their education in public health, they are free to choose from a broad list of electives to fulfill the 18 credit requirement with the exception of those that are restricted for aerospace medicine residents. The program currently does not have any aerospace medicine residents enrolled. It is unclear what the current undefined curricular plan intends to produce beyond information acquired through the core courses and internship. When a program does not define a specific set of competencies or required coursework, it must work closely with students to assure that elective courses satisfy an individually-identified set of competencies. For this to be sufficient, the student and faculty advisor must work closely to design an individualized course of study that is cohesive and appropriate for the student’s stated career aspirations. There was no evidence that this process occurs within the MPH program.

2.2 Program Length.

An MPH degree program or equivalent professional masters degree must be at least 42 semester credit units in length.

This criterion is met. The MPH degree requires 42 credits for completion. All coursework is delivered in standard semester hours. The State of Florida definition for a three-credit hour course requires 48
contact hours a semester for didactic graduate courses. The definition is the same for traditional face-to-face and online courses.

The program was established in 2003 using the CEPH criteria that were in place at the time. The program began as a 36-credit hour degree program, however with the implementation of the 2005 CEPH criteria, the program increased its credit hour requirement to 42. This change was approved in the fall of 2006 by the program. In fall of 2007, the UWF Faculty Senate approved the 42 credit hour change for the MPH program for the 2008-2009 catalog. Student admitted in fall 2008 and after must complete the 42 credit hour requirement in order to receive the MPH degree. Those entering prior to fall 2008 are legally supported if they choose to graduate under the 36 credit hour program. In order to meet the 42 credit hour requirement, the program adjusted the core courses by increasing their credits and added a choice of two three credit hour courses: one on epidemiologic research methods or computer-based analysis in public health. This change increased the core course requirements from 21 to 24 credits. In addition, a course was added to the elective pool increasing the required elective credits from 15 to 18.

The program has graduated three students to date all of which were admitted prior to fall 2008 under the 36 credit hour degree program. These students graduated earning between 36-39 credit hours.

2.3 Public Health Core Knowledge.

All professional degree students must demonstrate an understanding of the public health core knowledge.

This criterion is met. All students are required to complete coursework in the five core areas of public health: epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, social and behavioral sciences and health systems management. The core curriculum for the MPH program is illustrated in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Core Area</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STA 5176 Biostatistics</td>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHC 6000 Epidemiology for Public Health Professionals</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHC 6300 Survey of Environmental Problems</td>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAS 5115 Health Care Policy and Administration</td>
<td>Health Services Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHC 5410 Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health</td>
<td>Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the site visit, the team thoroughly reviewed the sylli for each core course to determine if the appropriate breadth and depth related to each core area was covered. Upon reviewing these documents, it was determined that the core courses offered by the program are appropriate for graduate education in public health.
2.4 Practical Skills.

All professional degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to the students’ areas of specialization.

This criterion is met with commentary. All students enrolled in the MPH program must complete a formal, planned and supervised internship experience consisting of 160 contact hours. Students are eligible to begin their internship experience after completing the core courses. Students enroll in the Public Health Internship course (PHC 6946) and receive six semester hours of course credit upon successful completion of the internship. In the fall of 2008, the contact hour requirement was increased to 180 hours by the MPH Steering Committee due to input from health care and public health professionals serving on the DLHS Advisory Committee and a review of the practicum requirements of other accredited programs of public health across the country. Students entering the program in fall 2008 and beyond must complete 180 contact hours for the internship. Policies and procedures for the internship are presented in the Master of Public Health Internship Guide.

The program assists the students in selecting a placement site by establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), modeled after the original MOU between the MPH program and the Escambia Health Department, with local health departments within their region of residence. If students would like to complete their internships at other types of sites, such as community-based agencies, a Preceptor Approval Form followed by an Internship Approval Form must be submitted to the Internship Coordination Committee (ICC) and approved prior to the start of the internship. To date, all three of the students who have completed the internship experience have done so at the Escambia Health Department in Pensacola. Each student has a preceptor and a faculty advisor and must submit a monthly progress report to each of them using a Monthly Internship Review Form. At the end of the placement, the preceptor and the student complete an Internship Evaluation Form which is required before the student may receive credit for the course. Preceptors are required to possess an MPH or equivalent terminal degree that is appropriate for the proposed goals and competencies that will be addressed in the internship. The program has established five components, at least one of which, a relevant public health experience must include. They are as follows:

- Assessing, monitoring or conducting surveillance of health problems/services in a population,
- Establishing health objectives and priorities;
- Conducting research on population-based health problems including biological, environmental, and behavioral issues;
- Developing and/or implementing policies and intervention strategies to meet public health needs in a population; or
- Studying the natural history of disease or health-related effects in a population.
The program has granted one internship waiver to a student, a physician in Sri Lanka who completed a project related to disaster relief during the Tsunami of 2005. Waivers are granted on a case-by-case basis based on enrollment in a preventive, occupational, aerospace, public health and preventive medicine ACGME-accredited residency program or previous public health experience. In the case of a qualifying residency program, a Credit Request for Internship Experience Based on Accredited Practicum Year in Medical School Form must be submitted. CEPH allows only the aforementioned residency program to qualify for an automatic replacement of the required MPH practicum with the residency practicum year. Students who wish to waive the internship requirement based on prior public health experience, must submit a Credit Request for Internship Experience Based on Previous Public Health Experience Form during or prior to the first semester of enrollment.

Credit requests must be signed by the student and submitted to the program director for review and discussion with the student as deemed necessary. Requests for internship credits are approved by the ICC. In general, credits are awarded based on evidence of the completion of competency-related activities within the last five years. The site team reviewed the waiver forms in the on-site Resource File and concluded that the one experience for which a waiver was granted had been appropriately awarded and that the waiver policy is properly developed.

The commentary relates to the learning objectives associated with the internship experience. The learning objectives associated with the internship appear to be written in isolation of the stated competencies for the core courses, and their relationship to the electives is unclear, based on the documentation provided to the team. Students establish their own set of goals and objectives to be covered through the internship experience, however there was no documentation showing the link to any of the program’s stated competencies.

2.5 Culminating Experience.

All professional degree programs identified in the instructional matrix shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.

This criterion is partially met. The culminating experience for the program has two components: 1) a practicum report and associated oral defense and 2) a comprehensive exam. The practicum report is associated with the internship experience. The document should reflect the student's integration of the core principles and methods of public health in a practice setting. The report should include the practicum rationale, goals and objectives, review of literature, methods, results, discussion and lessons learned as well as recommendations. All students within the program, including those who were granted waivers, must submit a practicum report. Once the practicum report has been approved by the ICC, the student is allowed to schedule the oral defense. Since the program is completely online, students may conduct the defense of the internship report via web conferencing by using a webcam if they reside 50
miles or more from the program. Webcam fees are the responsibility of the student. Students within UWF’s geographical area defend their reports face-to-face before the committee. Students must present a UWF-issued Nautilus card as identification prior to the defense. The guidelines for the report and the oral defense are outlined in the MPH Internship Guide located on the program’s website.

The proctored comprehensive exam is administered to students following the completion of all core courses. Thus far, a total of four students have taken the exam. Students must receive a 70% in order to pass the exam. The comprehensive exam assesses the student’s level of mastery of the common set of competencies acquired through the core courses. Students are required to draw conclusions and make recommendations regarding hypothetical situations based on their knowledge of core theories learned throughout their coursework. The exam consists of questions developed by instructors for the core courses. Each instructor submits four questions from their respective teaching area, and the program director and core faculty select questions for the exam. There are a total of 10 questions on the exam – two from each of the public health core areas. The exams are blinded and the core faculty grades the questions for the teaching area for which they are responsible using a rubric. Results are given to the MPH academic advisor and program coordinator for summation and averaging after which, students are notified of the grade issued. The program has offered the exam a total of two times and the questions have not been changed in order for the appropriateness of each question to be assessed. To date, 100% of students taking the exam have passed.

The concern relates to the ability of the culminating experience, as it is structured, to accurately assess whether or not students apply skills gained across the curriculum and demonstrate synthesis and integration of knowledge. The electives students take within the program are not linked to any portion of the culminating experience. Competencies related to elective courses are not addressed in the practicum report or oral defense and the comprehensive exam only covers competencies covered in the core courses. Therefore, the current structure does not capture the fundamental nature of a culminating experience nor does it capture the completion of a graduate level professional degree in that it does not determine that students have mastered the body of knowledge acquired through program of study. It merely addresses 15 credits of coursework from a 42-credit graduate degree.

An additional area of concern relates to the manner of which the comprehensive exams are graded. As previously stated, the comprehensive exam has only been administered twice to a total of four students. Students must score a 70% in order to pass the exam. The five sections of the exam are scored and then averaged to comprise the student’s grade. In evaluating the three exams that were completed, the site team found that one student scored 50% on the health care policy and administration section and 66% on the environmental health section, both of which, according to the grade scale used throughout the program are failing grades. The student’s performance on the remaining portions of the exam was
high enough that the average for all sections was 77.14%. A passing score on an exam that is used as a culminating experience indicates that the student has demonstrated proficiency in the core areas however, such low scores in these areas indicate that full competence has not been attained and that the student may lack essential skills in the respective subjects.

2.6 Required Competencies.

For each degree program and area of specialization within each program identified in the instructional matrix, there shall be clearly stated competencies that guide the development of educational programs.

This criterion is partially met. The program subscribes to the competencies developed by the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), specifically those related to the five core areas of public health knowledge and the cross-cutting competencies in communication and informatics skills training that are addressed in the program's one additional required course. The self-study also states that the program has included coverage of the cross-cutting competencies for diversity and culture, leadership, public health biology, professionalism, program planning and systems thinking in a variety of instructional strategies used in core and elective courses.

In 2003, the Florida State Board of Governors and SACS mandated that all colleges and universities in the state of Florida implement Academic Learning Compacts (ALCs) that assess programmatic performance for all undergraduate programs with an equivalent metric for graduate programs. To comply with this mandate, the MPH program created an Academic Learning Plan (ALP) and all faculty members were trained on how to implement this assessment strategy. A faculty member attending the CEPH Accreditation Orientation Workshop learned that CEPH also promoted a competency-based programmatic assessment model around the same time the SACS mandate was issued. After discussions with community partners in public health and the military, it was concluded that the program should adopt the ASPH competencies. The program's new ALP, which takes into consideration the ASPH competencies, was approved in fall of 2007.

Program administrators decided that implementation of the full set of ASPH competencies would take longer than one academic year for both the core and elective courses and therefore determined that the adoption of the full set of competencies would occur in two phases. The first phase focused on the core courses, linking learning objectives to the competencies and implementing them into the planned activities for these courses. The second phase, beginning in the spring-summer semester of 2009, intends to consider all cross-cutting competencies for full implementation across the core courses with emphasis on the electives as appropriate. The MPH Steering Committee is charged with periodically assessing competencies and recommending any necessary changes based on workforce needs and feedback from alumni and employers of graduates.
MPH program faculty have begun a mapping process to determine which of the cross-cutting and core competencies correspond with content covered within elective courses, however learning objectives for electives have not yet been linked to the competencies, nor have structured activities associated with the electives been altered accordingly. This presents an area of concern. The interpretive language for this criterion states that "the agreement about competencies and the articulation of learning objectives through which competencies are achieved are central to the educational process." Without this link between the competencies and learning objectives for the program's list of electives, it cannot be determined that the competencies are guiding this portion of the curriculum and are the primary measure against which student achievement is measured.

2.7 Assessment Procedures.

There shall be procedures for assessing and documenting the extent to which each student has demonstrated competence in the required areas of performance.

This criterion is partially met. The program has identified five broad activities through which student progress in achieving the competencies is evaluated: 1) the core program curriculum, 2) the proctored comprehensive exam, 3) the internship experience, 4) the oral defense of the internship and 5) post-graduation feedback from employers. In addition, the program aims to use graduation rates, job placement rates and course grades and grade point averages as measures for monitoring and assessing student achievement throughout the program. Students are also expected to maintain a 3.0 grade point average in accordance with the policy mandated by the UWF School of Graduate Studies and MPH program guidelines. The self-study presented a table detailing which competencies were assessed using each of the previously mentioned activities. The table is depicted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasized Competencies</th>
<th>Core Courses</th>
<th>Comprehensive Exam</th>
<th>Internship Experience and Written Report</th>
<th>Oral Defense of Internship Experience</th>
<th>Employer Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Competencies</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Cutting Competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Thinking</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Informatics</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Culture</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Biology</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The program listed the maximum amount of time full-time and part-time students have to complete the program as three semesters and five semesters respectively. Thus far, the program has graduated three students and reports a graduation rate of 100%. Additionally, only one of these graduates has found a post-graduation placement and is currently enrolled in the dental school. As of October 2008, one of the remaining graduates had been out of the program five months and the other two months.

The concern relates to the program’s failure to fully use the fieldwork and culminating experience as a method to evaluate competency attainment. While each of these experiences is assessed by faculty, often rigorously so, the assessment is not linked explicitly or implicitly to competencies. This link between competencies and student assessment is critical if the program is to achieve success in this area. The program does not have established competencies for the internship and therefore, it is unclear how, if used as a means for assessment, the internship and component of the culminating experience which includes the oral defense of the internship and the internship report determine proficiency.

2.8 Academic Degrees.

If the program also offers curricula for academic degrees, students pursuing them shall obtain a broad introduction to public health, as well as an understanding about how their discipline-based specialization contributes to achieving the goals of public health.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.9 Doctoral Degrees.

The program may offer doctoral degree programs, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.10 Joint Degrees.

If the program offers joint degree programs, the required curriculum for the professional public health degree shall be equivalent to that required for a separate public health degree.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.11 Distance Education or Executive Degree Programs.

If the program offers degree programs using formats or methods other than students attending regular on-site course sessions spread over a standard term, these programs must a) be consistent with the mission of the program and within the program’s established areas of expertise; b) be guided by clearly articulated student learning outcomes that are rigorously evaluated; c) be subject to the same quality control processes that other degree programs in the school and university are; and d) provide planned and evaluated learning experiences that take into consideration and are responsive to the characteristics and needs of adult learners. If the school offers distance education or executive degree programs, it must provide needed support for these programs, including administrative, travel, communication, and student services. The program must have an ongoing program to evaluate the academic effectiveness of the format, to assess teaching and learning methodologies and to systematically use this information to stimulate program improvements.
This criterion is met. The online curriculum is based in an educational model that attempts to outline an instructional strategy that assures that the faculty and the students are on the same trajectory on the outcomes of the learning. This model expects the faculty to plan with the end in mind and continuously evaluate progress towards reaching instructional outcomes. In distance education this becomes an essential methodology because of the type of interactions between the instructor and the learners. Mid-course corrections may need to take place and, without continuous feedback between instructor and learners, this need could be missed. This is a strong approach to approaching e-learning, and the program’s philosophy is a strength. The program adopted a variant of the Plan-Design-Develop-Implement-Evaluate-Improve model, developed by the UWF ATC, which is illustrated below.

**PLAN for Efficiency and Effectiveness**
**DESIGN for Learning**
**DEVELOP a Quality Online Course**
**IMPLEMENT an Engaging Online Course**
**EVALUATE to Measure Success**
**IMPROVE for the Future**

The MPH curriculum at UWF is an online program that is offered through a well structured distance education course management system Desire to Learn (D2L). This system is a part of the larger eLearning efforts at the UWF and contains all of the instructional elements of contemporary asynchronous learning environment, including course tab, live chat rooms, drop boxes, discussion forums, exam/quizzes, web conferencing, group areas, blogs and 24/7 tech support. The extent to which each individual faculty member uses these features varies, however the program’s commitment to certify each of the core instructors as a distance educator is extremely valuable. The tutorial for the ArgoNet is user friendly and covers most of the needed steps for students to be able to navigate the course materials. New and returning faculty (both joint and adjunct) can participate “eJams” either through face to face experiences or through Ellunimate.com that provide them with new and engaging ways to teaching in the online environment.

One of UWF’s prime directives is to address the workforce needs of the region which extends from the Alabama border with Florida, to as far east as Panama City, Florida, a distance of nearly 300 miles. The geographic location of the university in the Florida panhandle limits the population base served and such geographic constraints prompted the university to offer the MPH program in an on-line format. Providing the program in this format would allow for the best utilization of resources and allow the program to reach
a sufficient audience to be able to sustain the program long-term as well as reach the most distant point in the region served by the program. Additionally, administrators believed that by offering the program in this format, the program would have the broadest impact within the health care and public health communities. UWF made a commitment five years ago to develop on-line educational programs.

In its short life the MPH faculty have already been acknowledged by the university and their professional organizations as being exceptional in their ability to translate public health content into asynchronous distance education curricula. This is documented by awards, peer reviewed publications and invited presentations. In addition, the MPH faculty are sought after to give guest lectures nationally in distance education seminars and to be mentors at UWF and other institutions.

3.0 CREATION, APPLICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

3.1 Research.

The program shall pursue an active research program, consistent with its mission, through which its faculty and students contribute to the knowledge base of the public health disciplines, including research directed at improving the practice of public health.

This criterion is met with commentary. The UWF self-study and MPH program goal number five states “promotion of research and integration of best practices.” This emphasizes the value that the MPH faculty place on research in academic public health. As stated in the self-study:

“All faculty in the MPH program are expected to engage themselves and their students in relevant basic or community-based, applied research related to the public’s health. This can be in the form of collaboration with public health partners, which is encouraged and is supported through establishment of the directors of the five county public health departments as key players in ‘steering’ the MPH program (through the MPH Steering Committee, which oversees all activities and policies within the MPH program) in a direction which instills in our students the core values and critical skills in public health, and which ‘invests’ regional public health in the program, its graduates and its faculty.’

This approach underscores the importance of research. Active engagement in research (applied or basic) is required as a part of the promotion and retention process for tenure-track faculty and for the retention of non-tenure track faculty. As documented in a table presented in the self-study, for a non-research intensive university, the research activity of the primary and secondary faculty of the MPH program has been steady. There were seven research projects listed; three were projects involving core faculty and the remaining four were projects led by secondary faculty members. The total amount for the current year for MPH program faculty research projects is $681,835. Four of the projects listed were active at the time of the site visit and of those, three were community-based in nature.

There has been a steady recognition that students need opportunities to be engaged in the research enterprise. Faculty have developed research related project-based activities in core and elective courses. The internship course required of all students is designed to immerse each student in a research project in public health that is relevant to the host organization and to the field of public health and generates
original data. Students also can take an elective course (three hours of directed study) that will partner them in a research experience. This course will be offered for the first time in spring 2009. The SAPH is organizing a Journal Club that would increase the interaction of the students and faculty around research issues.

The commentary relates to the numerous barriers that inhibit a sustainable research agenda within the UWF MPH program. The foremost barriers are the growing obligations of the three core faculty to operate the program infrastructure. As the site team learned on campus, there are numerous unmet applied research opportunities within the UWF public health and health care community. The MPH program has used much of this unmet need as the solid rationale for its location at UWF. Not surprisingly, this approach has fostered an expectation for the regional public health program to involve MPH students in research through quality internship experiences and mentor them with faculty oversight. Further, there is an expectation that, when accredited, the MPH program faculty will be conducting collaborative research with public health partners. As more students reach the stage of internships and culminating experiences, they will be tapping into these opportunities, which in turn will increase demands on faculty time. All of these opportunities can increase research productivity.

3.2 Service.

The program shall pursue active service activities, consistent with its mission, through which faculty and students contribute to the advancement of public health practice.

This criterion is met. The array of service to the university community and the larger community provided by this small core faculty is extensive. University policy sets expectations in this arena and the MPH faculty members are excellent examples of compliance. Examples include participation in the Regional Disaster Management Group, membership in the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce Health Task Force, service on the School of Allied Health Sciences Advisory Committee, membership on the UWF Department of Nursing Advisory Committee, collaboration with the Escambia County Healthy Start Coalition on the Black Infant Health Practice Initiative and participation in national informatics-based conferences. Interviews bore out the impact that faculty have and how well they are regarded in the larger community. There was also evidence that faculty take tracking this commitment seriously.

There is also a commitment to involving students in service. The creation of the SAPH in summer 2007 sparked the organizational structure to facilitate these activities. Its student-developed and led community activities have given opportunities for this on-line set of classmates to meet and work together in the real world. The Healthy Families project was a collaboration of activities led by the Escambia County Health Department in which UWF MPH program students participated in April 2008. Leaders in the SAPH received a donation of pedometers from a local McDonalds, which they distributed to encourage community participation in activities associated with the Healthy Families project. To
encourage non-local students to become more actively involved in service activities, the eLearning portal for SAPH was enhanced to increase student-to-student engagement.

3.3 Workforce Development.

The program shall engage in activities that support the professional development of the public health workforce.

This criterion is met. The MPH program grew out of long collaboration with the local community’s health, business, military, and educational sectors, paying a great deal of attention to the public health workforce needs of the community and those that would be supported by major players in the area. That ethos continues to be a significant component of the educational planning and offerings of the MPH program.

The program offers continuing education opportunities in compliance with all university policies. These are developed with guidance from the target audiences and all programs are evaluated on the spot, with suggestions for future offerings being collected at that time. The team reviewed continuing education course descriptions and evaluations and found that public health offerings have been very well received. Community participation in the key MPH and SAHLS advisory committees continues to be emphasized and this is a primary means by which the program assesses the educational needs of the practice community.

The program offers certificate and non-degree programs, which are provided face-to-face, rather than online. The certificate program allows an emphasis in one of four areas: Emergency Management, Environmental Health, Infection Control and Occupational Safety and Health. Enrollment has been low, although it increased for academic year 2007-2008 and was as follows: Emergency Management – three participants; Environmental Health – two participants; Infection Control – three participants and Occupational Safety and Health – three participants.

Non-certificate continuing education programs, offered in a face-to-face format, have had higher levels of participation and include offerings in Mold Awareness for the American Board of Industrial Hygiene, Basic Electrical Safety and OSHA Construction for Business for the American Society of Safety Engineers and Indoor Air Quality for the Indoor Air Quality Training Institute. Also just beginning is a continuing education partnership with Sacred Heart Health System’s education arm to offer basic IT training for health care and public health professionals. Online formats are being considered for the future. Other partnerships include the Central Gulf Coast Federal Safety and Health Council through which the program co-sponsors a Bioreadiness for Safety Professionals workshop.

One member of the core teaching faculty won an Appreciation Award from the American Society of Safety Engineers for helping to promote safety and health by bringing quality occupational safety and health educational activities to Pensacola.
The program is also considering options to allow MPH students to attend some workshops at a significant discount, on a space-available basis, to enhance professional contacts.

4.0 FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.

4.1 Faculty Qualifications.

The program shall have a clearly defined faculty which, by virtue of its distribution, multidisciplinary nature, educational preparation, research and teaching competence, and practice experience, is able to fully support the school's mission, goals and objectives.

This criterion is met. The MPH program has three full-time UWF faculty who are considered to be core faculty. Faculty include one tenured full professor at 0.825 FTE (who serves as program director), one tenured full professor at 1.0 FTE and one non-tenure track lecturer at 1.0 FTE. In addition, the MPH program has three tenured UWF joint faculty who provide teaching and advising support at 0.175 FTE, 0.125 FTE and 0.175 FTE respectively. All of the MPH core faculty members completed the university training and are Certified Online Instructors. Four of the six faculty members are Certified Online Instructors and the remaining two have received one-on-one trainings to prepare them to teach in the online format and have committed to the training program in 2008-2009.

Beyond the UWF faculty complement, the MPH program has 14 adjunct faculty who provide instructional, advisory, and mentoring support. In combination, these faculty provide the breadth and the depth of public health expertise to support the instruction and public health research of the MPH program. All core faculty members within the MPH program hold terminal degrees as do most of the joint and adjunct faculty. All faculty members who support the program are prepared at least at the masters level. Faculty members are appropriately trained in the discipline in which they teach. During the on-site visit, the team was able to meet with most of the joint faculty and many of the adjunct all of whom expressed support for the program and demonstrated that they have been engaged in MPH programmatic activities.

4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures.

The school shall have well-defined policies and procedures to recruit, appoint and promote qualified faculty, to evaluate competence and performance of faculty, and to support the professional development and advancement of faculty.

This criterion is met. The UWF has a faculty handbook that details the rules and regulations outlining faculty employment, appointment, promotion and tenure procedures for the state and the university. In addition, this document details the procedures for grievances, arbitration, intellectual property, conduct in research, nepotism and the use of technology. The MPH program has adopted this documentation. The MPH Bylaws and Standing Rules outline the procedures specific to MPH program operations. These define the MPH unit's governance, the span of control of its director, the committee structure, and the membership of the committees. A section on personnel policies and procedures addresses issues
associated with recruitment of new faculty, annual work assignments, evaluation criteria, promotion and tenure criteria and other issues, such as summer teaching.

The promotion and tenure procedures within the MPH program are consistent with those of the university. Upon arrival at UWF, untenured, tenure-track faculty are assigned a mentor from among the tenured faculty who, in collaboration with the MPH director, evaluate the individual's performance in teaching, research and service. A written evaluation is provided to the faculty member and discussed with the candidate to inform them of their progress. This process is consistent with the expectations of the annual evaluation required by the university.

After a period of five years, but no later than the sixth year, the untenured, tenure-track faculty member needs to follow the university guidelines for initiating the promotion and tenure process. After a minimum period of five years in-rank, a tenured associate professor can submit his or her credentials for consideration for promotion to professor.

The MPH program acknowledges that community service or community-based participatory research is an important element of any graduate-level public health program, especially one that is founded on a practice philosophy. In order for this to happen, the faculty must develop a working relationship with different segments of the community. The MPH program recognizes that this relationship has to be cultivated based on a sense of mutual respect and benefit. To this end, the MPH program has adopted the following definitions for excellence and distinguished in service for annual evaluation, tenure and promotion:

- Excellence: synergy between the faculty member's area of expertise and the community service functions.
- Distinguished: service activities that have a significant and measurable impact.

Due the vagaries of the on-line environment, it is often difficult to attract new instructors to teach in this format. This will help encourage both well constructed courses and innovation in the MPH curriculum.

As stated in the self-study:

"The MPH program is committed to providing resources, including financial support, for lined faculty and adjunct development. A notable resource for the MPH program is the $3,000 award for course development. Faculty and adjuncts developing a new on-line course are able to apply for development money of $3,000 per course to support their time commitments to building a high quality course and attending associated trainings before, during, and following the launching of their course as part of ongoing quality assurance."

Sabbaticals are available for tenure-earning faculty with proper program and university approval. Support for travel to professional meetings and other types of academic development opportunities are made available to faculty through various grant funds and some cost sharing opportunities throughout the
university. One of note is a special fund, the University Faculty Scholarly and Creative Activity Awards. These awards can provide seed funds up $1000 for a specific research project or didactic project. Under collective bargaining agreements, non-tenure earning faculty who meet employment term requirements are eligible for professional development programs, such as leave with pay.

All annual faculty performance evaluations are the responsibility of the MPH director. Each year the director and the faculty member agree on the annual work assignment in a written letter that addresses expectations for teaching, research, and service. At the time of the annual review, the director and faculty member review and discuss the material submitted by the faculty member in the form of an updated CV, a statement of accomplishments, and student evaluations from all courses taught during the academic year under consideration. The director writes a letter of evaluation with a rating of poor, fair, good, excellent or distinguished in each area based on assessment of the submitted materials. The letter of evaluation, signed by the faculty member, is forwarded to the dean for further evaluation.

Students complete their course evaluation (SUSSAI) in an online format. The form is a part of the eLearning environment. The availability of the form for each course is announced via a banner message in the learning management system. In addition the directions for how to complete the form are included in the syllabi of the courses. Despite these efforts, the response rate is very low. Creative strategies are needed in order to obtain a better assessment of the quality of the on-line learning environment.

Adjunct faculty are examined at the end of each semester by the MPH director. The primary bases for this review are the results of the student evaluation of courses and entries into the Student Complaint Log. The faculty member will be invited to discuss the results of the student evaluations and any entries in the log. Following this meeting, the director will complete the form in the presence of the instructor, and inform the instructor of the results. The form permits the director to use the following ratings:

- Performed in a satisfactory manner and is eligible for rehire
- Performed in a satisfactory manner but needs improvement
- Performed in an unsatisfactory manner and will not be rehired

Whenever possible the director tries to provide assistance to the adjunct faculty member to help improve the course or rectify whatever extenuating circumstance may have been a problem in the course.

4.3 Faculty and Staff Diversity.

The school shall recruit, retain and promote a diverse faculty and staff, and shall offer equitable opportunities to qualified individuals regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or national origin.

This criterion is met. The MPH program has three core faculty: two are Caucasian (male and female) and one is an international male of African heritage. Of three joint faculty, one is an Arab male and two are Caucasian females. The program has 14 adjuncts comprised of the following: nine males and five
females of which, two are Hispanic males and one is an African-American female. Given the small size of the core faculty, the MPH program has managed to achieve a balance of ethnic and gender diversity.

There is a commitment to invest time and resources in mentoring faculty, and the program has been successful in attracting a substantial number of candidates from the region who are interested in teaching positions. The program enlists the surrounding military, health care and public health communities as a resource for identifying individuals from diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds who may be interested in teaching in the MPH program. In addition, the MPH program, has set a strategic goal and objective to continue to attract a diverse core, joint and adjunct faculty.

4.4 Student Recruitment and Admissions.

The school shall have student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures designed to locate and select qualified individuals capable of taking advantage of the school’s various learning activities, which will enable each of them to develop competence for a career in public health.

This criterion is met with commentary. The university and the program follow good outreach policies in trying to attract qualified students. The website is well designed and user-friendly, very important in attracting students interested in an online educational experience. Ongoing participation by local health officials and military representatives in the program’s and the SAHLS’s advisory committees also provides entree, as those persons encourage others in their employee and other spheres of influence to consider the UWF MPH program as a logical choice for furthering their public health education.

Admission requirements are set by the University Office of Graduate Studies and Research, with additional requirements set by the MPH program. These are all readily available online. The program has a rolling admissions system, with students admitted for either the fall, spring or summer semester. The MPH Admission Committee reviews the application and a decision is made to admit unconditionally, to admit provisionally (remedial, non-credit coursework required) or to reject. Applicants are notified within 72 hours of the Committee’s decision by e-mail, followed by regular mail. The site visit team reviewed recruitment materials, included in the on-site resource file, and found them to be quite suitable and to accurately reflect the program. This was true both of on-line materials and hard copy versions.

The number of applicants has been steady over the last several years, and the expectation is that once the program is accredited, there will be an increase, especially from the military. In response to some problems noted in student performance, beginning in academic year 2009-2010, writing samples and documented preparedness for statistics-based skills will be required of applicants.
The program is trying to evaluate its success using various measures, including number of student-led activities per year, percentage of admits versus applicants and number of students involved in research with faculty. The numbers are still too small to make any judgments.

The commentary relates to the program's current recruitment efforts. There is a concern as to whether the recruitment efforts are focused appropriately. The university is a regional university, with a primary obligation to serve its local area. Engaging local professionals makes it easier to place students in their internships locally. If the program continues to accept very distant students, finding appropriate placements for them may be more difficult, requiring more of the very limited amount of faculty time to oversee this entire process.

More significantly, the popularity of the program is likely to increase with accreditation but without a concomitant push to encourage enrollees to complete the program as quickly as possible, the matriculated student load will balloon. The current model of advising and responsiveness to student issues by faculty (very prompt and very often) is not likely to be sustainable.

4.5 Student Diversity.

Stated application, admission, and degree-granting requirements and regulations shall be applied equitably to individual applicants and students regardless of age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or national origin.

This criterion is met with commentary. The program follows university policy with regard to non-discrimination in its recruitment and its admission criteria. The program also tracks demographic characteristics of its applicants, those accepted into the program and enrollees by program year. As is the case with many other public health masters degree programs, women outnumber men. Caucasian students represent the largest proportion of the student cohort. Underrepresented minority student percentages (30%) mirrored well the US Census data for 2006 Florida population estimates (21%).

The program noted that the number of minorities applying has increased but this is not yet reflected in enrollment statistics. The reasons given for denial of admission across the entire pool of applicants were incomplete applications and low GPAs and GRE scores. The team was given access to files of pending and past applicants, rejected and accepted, and verified this observation.

The commentary relates to the program's stated population of students it intends to recruit. The program describes plans to recruit and admit graduate students who are disadvantaged or otherwise underrepresented in the health professions. It was not clear how the economic status of the student applicants was tracked, so that the question of promoting recruitment of "disadvantaged" students was also not well-defined. There was also insufficient information shown about the diversity of professional
backgrounds of students, although one student specifically mentioned that the different professional perspectives offered enhanced his learning experience.

While the program prides itself on showing the geographic diversity of its students, it appears that there might be a disconnect between UWF's role as a regional university and the more distant of its students. This constitutes the first area of commentary. This may generate additional problems in finding and supporting internships, as noted earlier. The program submitted a grant application to the university's PACE Foundation to support collaborations with local minority organizations and to fund minority MPH scholarships. While this was not funded, there are plans to resubmit this application.

The program is also considering differential weighing of GRE scores for students with high GPAs; differential weighing of GPA scores for students with public health work experience; and options of remedial (non-credit) course work to better prepare students.

An additional area of commentary relates to the focus of the program's recruitment plan. Targeting minority high school students is another tactic being used by the program, in collaboration with local minority organizations, such as 100 Black Men. While laudable, this strategy is very far down the pipeline and may not be reinforced with immediate results. If the target student is a working adult, more efforts might be concentrated at places of employment. Interviews with university administrators provided information about Florida's creating new roles for some former community (two-year) colleges, transforming them into four-year, bachelor-degree-granting institutions in workforce areas of need. Because health is such an important sector and the need for graduate-prepared public health workers is expanding, this may be an additional avenue for collaboration and student recruitment.

4.6 Advising and Career Counseling.

There shall be available a clearly explained and accessible academic advising system for students, as well as readily available career and placement advice.

This criterion is met. The MPH program uses its full-time lecturer as the primary student advisor. In addition, the Internship Coordinating Committee coordinates the selection of the internship and theoretically follows the student through the process, although the data presented to the team indicated that for the two internships completed, it was done by the same faculty member, cited above. The model of having one faculty member with the total responsibility of career and internship advising is questionably sustainable with an increasing size of a student body but functions well at present.

Students have access to university-wide resources to help in the internship and job searches, including the Career Services website through a unique account. Appointments with the Career Services unit by phone or face to face are encouraged. The SAHLS is also partnered with AfterCollege, a student internship/employment resource which can be accessed via the web.
Students are "strongly encouraged" to set up appointments early in their course of study for resume preparation and cover letter development assistance. Students also are encouraged to access the Career Services website to develop lists of prospective employers and/or internship sites. Additionally, students are encouraged to join the local Medical Reserve Corps to help stimulate social and professional networking that could assist in obtaining future internships and employments.

Students do have access to a number of discussion boards through the e-learning portal to communicate their concerns to each other and to all MPH program instructors via the Dropbox. These are monitored by the program and as yet, no complaints regarding advising and career counseling have been received.

Because the program is so new, and only three graduates have been produced, there are sparse data regarding student satisfaction with advising and career counseling services. Follow-up interviews with these graduates are scheduled to provide feedback.

The program is planning several innovative approaches to advise students regarding their academic and career plans. There are several pilot studies underway, including the following:

- An undergraduate program advising students remotely through web conferencing, using Elluminate Live! Software, which, if successful, will be introduced to the MPH students this academic year.
- One faculty member is conducting a preliminary study on students researching careers in informatics, and public health informatics for MPH students.
Agenda
COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

University of West Florida
Public Health Program

November 17-18, 2008

Monday, November 17, 2008

8:15 am  Tour of eLearning
George Stewart, MPH Program Director
Melanie Sutton, Core Faculty
Justice Mbizo, MPH Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator

9:00 am  Meeting with Program Administration
George Stewart, MPH Program Director
Justice Mbizo, MPH Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator

9:45 am  Break

10:15 am  Transportation to UWF Campus

10:45 am  Meeting with MPH Faculty Teaching Core Courses
Enid Sisskin
Susan Walch
Amanda Gilmore
John J. Lanza
Justice Mbizo

12:30 pm  Lunch with Students
Steve Celestial
Jeremy Bosco
Lisa Lavoie
Mary M. Beverly
Pam Perrich

1:15 pm  Break

1:30 pm  Meeting with Teaching Faculty - Electives
Angela Hahn
Rod Johnson
Amanda Gilmore
John J. Lanza
Enid Sisskin

3:00 pm  Meeting with University Officials
Judith A. Bense, President
Chula King, Provost
Richard Podemski, Dean of Graduate Studies /Associate VP for Research and Sponsored Programs
Claudia Stanny, Director, Center for University Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CUTLA)
Helen Wiggersma, Director of University Libraries

3:45 pm  Break

4:00 pm  Meeting with Community Representatives, Employers of Graduates and Preceptors
Harriet Simmons
Samantha D. Rivers
John J. Lanza
John P. Albano
R. Jason Newsom

5:00 pm  Resource File Review

5:45 pm  Adjourn to Executive Session and Dinner
Tuesday, November 18, 2008

9:00 am  Meeting with Alumni via Eluminate
         Sugath Jayamaha

9:30 am  Meeting with University Officials Overseeing Technical Support
         Melanie Sutton, MPH Core Faculty
         Michael Diekmann, Senior Associate VP for Information Technology Services
         Michael White, Director of Academic and Instructional Technology
         Andi Sortino, IT Help Desk Manager
         Vance Burgess, Academic Technology Center
         Robert Hoyt, Associate Director of Medical Informatics Program, UWF
         Robert Shaw, Executive Director, Academic Innovation and Continuing Education

10:30 am Executive Session

11:30 am Executive Session/Lunch

1:00 pm Exit interview

2:00 pm Adjourn