

**Council on Education for Public Health  
Adopted on October 15, 2011**

REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION  
OF THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM  
AT  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

SITE VISIT DATES:

March 28-29, 2011

SITE VISIT TEAM:

Kathleen R. Miner, PhD, MPH, CHES, Chair  
Sherman E. Kahn, MD, MHSA

SITE VISIT COORDINATOR:

Kristen Force, MPH, CHES

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Characteristics of a Public Health Program .....	2
1.0 THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM.....	3
1.1 Mission.....	3
1.2 Evaluation and Planning.....	4
1.3 Institutional Environment.....	5
1.4 Organization and Administration .....	6
1.5 Governance.....	9
1.6 Resources .....	10
2.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.....	13
2.1 Master of Public Health Degree .....	13
2.2 Program Length.....	14
2.3 Public Health Core Knowledge.....	14
2.4 Practical Skills .....	14
2.5 Culminating Experience .....	16
2.6 Required Competencies.....	17
2.7 Assessment Procedures.....	18
2.8 Academic Degrees.....	21
2.9 Doctoral Degrees.....	21
2.10 Joint Degrees.....	21
2.11 Distance Education or Executive Degree Programs.....	21
3.0 CREATION, APPLICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.....	21
3.1 Research.....	21
3.2 Service.....	23
3.3 Workforce Development.....	24
4.0 FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.....	25
4.1 Faculty Qualifications .....	25
4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures .....	26
4.3 Faculty and Staff Diversity.....	27
4.4 Student Recruitment and Admissions .....	29
4.5 Student Diversity .....	30
4.6 Advising and Career Counseling.....	30
Agenda.....	32

## Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the Public Health Program at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). 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 in March 2011 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.

CSUN is part of the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system and is one of the largest higher education institutions in California. The university community includes nearly 36,000 students and more than 4,000 faculty and staff, all situated on a 356-acre campus in Los Angeles' San Fernando Valley. The CSU system grants bachelors and masters degrees and places great emphasis on its commitment to teaching. Doctoral training is only offered in collaboration with other institutions. Most CSU campuses cater to commuter students and many programs target working professionals.

The CSUN MPH program is one of the oldest accredited community health education programs located outside a school of public health. Students have traditionally been working professionals who take classes in the late afternoon and evening. However, an increase in applications from international students seeking full-time graduate study may change the structure of the program in the future. Although teaching is the primary focus, faculty also conduct research and service. These activities have the potential to provide opportunities for revenue generation, which is particularly important during the current economic challenges.

First accredited in 1971, the program continues to focus on preparing community health educators to serve the needs of diverse communities. Since the last accreditation review, changes have occurred throughout the university and within the program. The college, department and program have new leadership and two long-standing program faculty members have retired. The program adopted a new mission statement and increased the minimum required credits for graduation from 41 to 42. The last accreditation review in 2005 resulted in a five-year accreditation term, with required interim reporting. The Council accepted the program's interim report in 2008.

## 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 mostly evident in the public health program at CSUN. The program is located in a regionally accredited university, and the program's faculty have rights, privileges and status that are equivalent to those of other professional preparation programs. The program functions as a collaboration of disciplines and fosters the development of public health values. Faculty have coordinated with other disciplines to create a more multidisciplinary environment through course content, research opportunities and field experiences.

A lack of financial and human resources is the most significant challenge to the program. The state allocates all funds and must prioritize many demands for limited resources. Given the number of students and demands on faculty, the core faculty complement is not sufficient to serve the student body and provide other functions necessary in an accredited program. With more faculty resources, the program may be able to pursue other sources of revenue that would make it less dependent on variable state funds.

The program offers the MPH degree in one concentration area: community health education. The program has recently reconvened its MPH Alumni Association and Advisory Council to better meet the needs of all constituents and to improve its program evaluation efforts.

## **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 with commentary. Since the last accreditation review in 2005, the MPH program adopted a new mission statement that focuses on the preparation of skilled and competent public health educators. This mission statement was developed through an inclusive process and is disseminated on the program's website and in program materials, brochures and the student catalog. The program's mission is as follows:

To prepare professional community health educators to enhance the general health and wellbeing of diverse human populations and communities.

The program has developed a set of program goals and objectives that address students, faculty, instruction, research and service. Following the last site visit, these goals and objectives were also updated, approved and implemented, with input from constituents of the program, including the MPH Advisory Council, MPH Student Association and MPH Alumni Association.

The MPH program has also articulated the following four values that guide the program:

- Respect – of individuals, groups, cultures and communities
- Collaboration – within the classroom through group projects, with the communities served and in the professional work with multidiscipline health professionals
- Communication – written and oral communication skills, the necessity of listening to others and communication technologies
- Professionalism and Ethics – in learning, community interactions and fieldwork experience

The commentary relates to the fact that many of the goals and objectives are actually processes developed to collect data or gather information, and appear to be more operational than strategic. The program has articulated measurable objectives against which to gauge progress, though many of the measures are binary (yes/no). The site team considered many of the objectives to have limited usefulness; while they provide a general sense of direction to the program, they do not provide a mechanism against which to truly measure the success of the program. A well-developed set of goals and objectives not only conveys the intent of a program, but also provides an excellent framework for

evaluating overall effectiveness. Goals and objectives should look to the future with specific suggestions for improvement that can be measured on a regular basis to assess progress.

### **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. Following the last site visit, the program initiated efforts to design and implement a plan focused on developing evaluation process methodologies. The self-study identifies the MPH Advisory Council as the monitoring and advisement group for the program. Its responsibility is to assist the program in collecting data on the effectiveness of the program, and to review, revise and recommend needed changes in all aspects of the MPH program. Membership is determined by the Council's bylaws and includes representatives from the health education practice community, lay community members, program faculty, alumni and students representing the MPH Student Association. MPH faculty meet regularly throughout the year to monitor progress toward program objectives. Year-end evaluation of the program occurs at the annual faculty retreat, at which time plans are developed for the upcoming year.

Evaluation activities include a midpoint Total Quality Education (TQE) interview, an exit TQE interview, student and alumni surveys, evaluations from preceptors and review of fieldwork and culminating experiences. Information obtained from these activities is used to address individual student achievement as well as assessment of the program objectives.

Planning for the self-study began in 2009 by meeting with all constituency groups, and informing them of the self-study process. Student and alumni surveys were also sent out online. A Self-Study Committee was created, and meetings were held with faculty, college administrators, MPH students, alumni and community members. Faculty members were given assignments to gather information and respond to specific sections of the self-study. A first draft was placed on the department website for review and comment. Based on interviews with constituents and examination of documents on-site, the site team concluded that the self-study document was available to constituents for review and comment, and that there were opportunities to provide input about the document.

The commentary relates to the program's challenge in making evaluation and planning fully functional, integrated and sustained. Upon review of the self-study, site visitors concluded that the program has not yet truly developed an integrated process to review, monitor and evaluate aspects of the program beyond student assessment in a regular and systematic way. Such a process can be an effective tool for assessing the program's effectiveness and translating this information into program improvements and enhancements. Although the MPH program has taken steps to increase its access to data that are useful

in making academic decisions, future efforts might focus on benchmarking the program's success. The reconstitution of the MPH Advisory Council after several years of inactivity is an opportunity for the program to improve its evaluation and planning efforts.

### **1.3 Institutional Environment.**

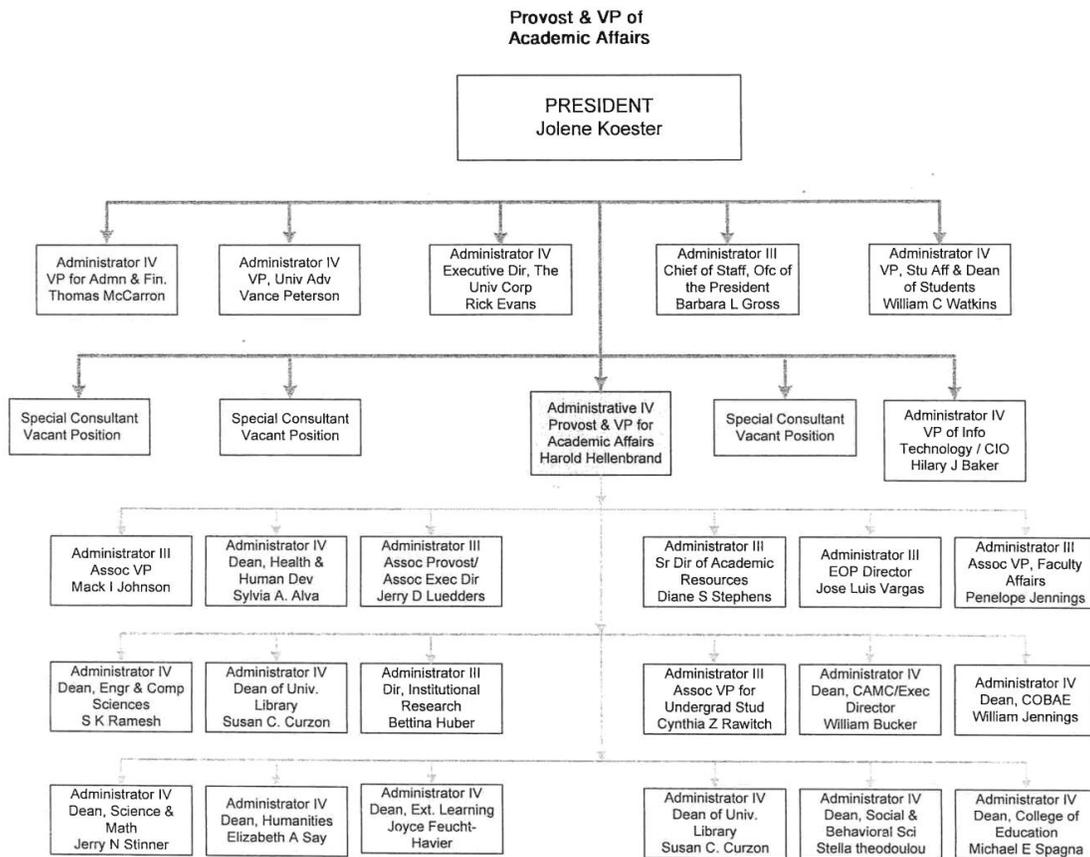
#### **The program shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education.**

This criterion is met. CSUN is part of the 23-campus CSU system and is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges as well as the California State Board of Education. As the only public university in the San Fernando Valley, CSUN has more than 35,000 enrolled students and is one of the largest higher education institutions in California. The university comprises eight colleges: arts, media and communication; business and economics; education; engineering and computer science; humanities; science and mathematics; social and behavioral sciences; and health and human development. The university has more than 25 professional degree programs accredited by specialized accrediting agencies.

The university president and provost/vice president for academic affairs have ultimate authority over decisions related to university policy and funding for each college. The vice president of administration and finance, the vice president of student affairs and the vice president of university advancement all support the president. The dean of each college reports to the provost/vice president for academic affairs. Figure 1 presents the university's organizational structure.

Budgeting and resource allocation are determined by the State of California, the CSU chancellor, the CSUN president and provost and college deans. Allocation is guided by the campus full-time equivalent student (FTES) target. Academic units have the prerogative to suggest and apply for name changes and necessary titles. Program director titles are decided at the department level and do not require university approval. Internal organization of the department and MPH program are governed by policies developed at the department level. Departments submit requests for new faculty lines to the dean who in turn negotiates with the provost for centrally funded positions. College-funded positions are also a possibility depending on available funds. To ensure direct access to top administration, the university president holds regular coffee hours with faculty all over campus.

**Figure 1. California State University, Northridge Organizational Structure**

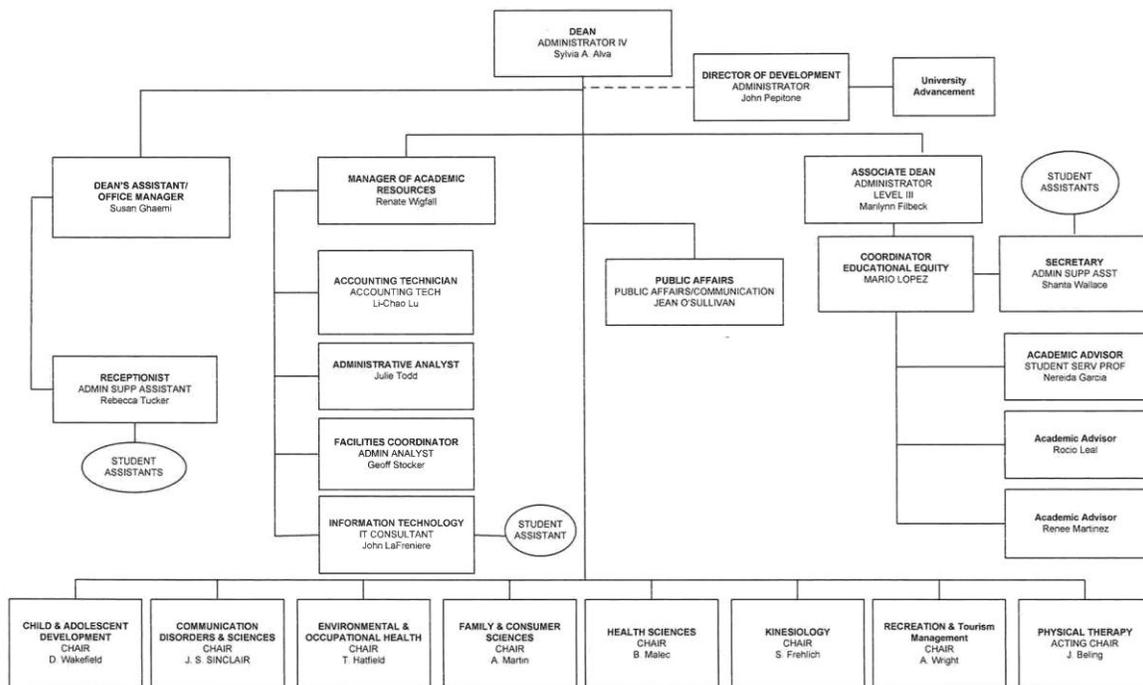


#### 1.4 Organization and Administration.

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.

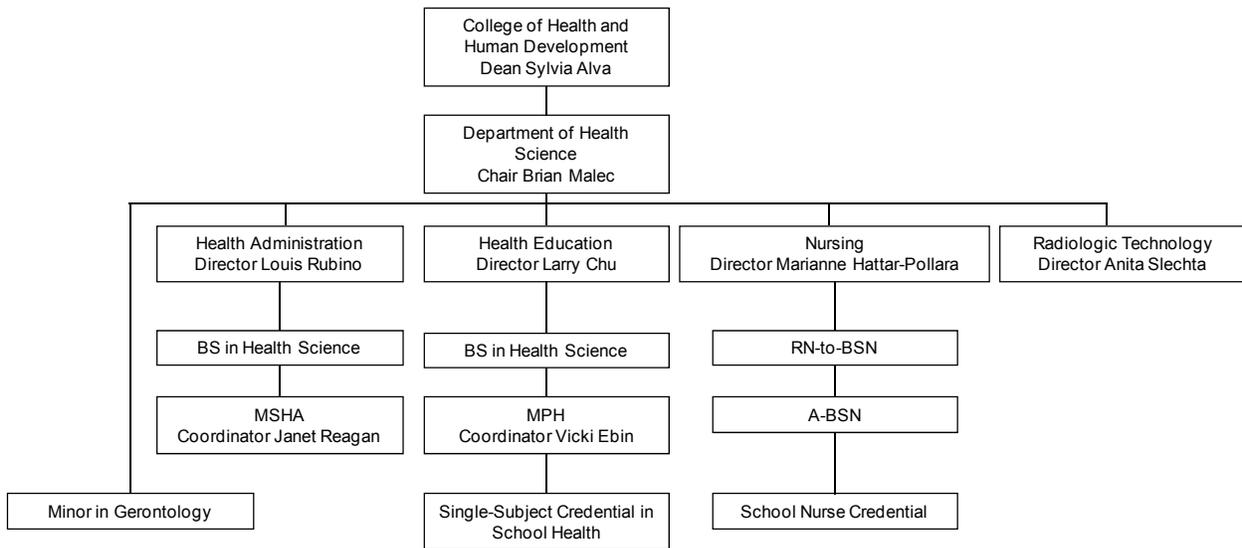
This criterion is met. The program's structure is supported by defined lines of authority as outlined by the organizational charts in Figures 2 and 3. These charts clearly identify the individuals who hold administrative positions. At CSUN, the MPH program is located in the Department of Health Sciences, which is in the College of Health and Human Development. The department has four programs: health administration, health education, nursing and radiologic technology. The health education and health administration programs offer graduate degrees (ie, MPH and MSHA, respectively). The health education program also offers a BS in health education and a single-subject credential in school health. In addition, the department also offers a minor in gerontology. At the end of this academic year, the nursing program will leave the Department of Health Sciences to become its own department within the college.

**Figure 2. CSUN College of Health and Human Development Organizational Structure**



The Department of Health Sciences provides oversight for the MPH program. Most of the responsibility for the operation of the MPH program is delegated to the department level. The department implemented its own protocol for governance that details the responsibilities of the department chair and roles for program directors and graduate coordinators. The department chair is the primary conduit between the program directors and the college dean. The chair is responsible for coordinating monthly meetings with the program directors as a group to discuss pressing concerns, policy issues, budgets and resource allocations. Within the health education program, the program director and MPH graduate program coordinator serve in leadership roles. The program director oversees the undergraduate health education program and seeks adequate resources for both undergraduate and graduate education in health education. The MPH graduate program coordinator provides overall management of the MPH program, including chairing the Admissions Committee, assessing student progress, managing the TQE process, supervising the culminating experience and responding to correspondence relating to academic issues of the graduate students. It is the general custom to provide one course of release time to the program director and graduate coordinator to cover management responsibilities.

**Figure 3. CSUN Department of Health Sciences Organizational Structure**



Interdepartmental collaboration is encouraged through the use of shared faculty in the required courses, notably the environmental health course (EOH 554), that is taught by the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. In addition to this longstanding interdepartmental relationship, faculty collaborate on extramural and internal funding research and community-based proposals and projects.

The MPH program provides all graduate students with the CSUN Graduate Handbook that outlines the principles of professional and academic ethics. All students are expected to abide by the outlined academic code of ethics. This document is available online. In addition, an MPH Graduate Student Handbook is being created and is expected to be distributed in 2011. Site visitors reviewed a draft copy on site and noted that it will be a beneficial resource to MPH students.

The Office of Student Affairs at the university level has set the guidelines for student grievances and complaints. The typical process includes first meeting with the professor, the department chair and then the associate dean of the college. If this does not rectify the issue, then the student can file a formal grievance to be reviewed by the College Committee on Academic Grievances. The committee determines whether the case has merit. The self-study states that only one official grievance has been filed in the last four years. A student failed the comprehensive examination twice and filed a grievance as well as a lawsuit. It was dismissed in both cases as unjustified and without warrant. In practice, MPH students who have concerns are encouraged to go to the graduate program coordinator, the health education program director and/or department chair before issues escalate into major problems. In the past three years, no students have submitted official complaints.

## 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 program evaluation procedures, policy-setting and decision-making.**

This criterion is met. The governance structure of the program is effective and allows the program to accomplish its stated mission, goals and objectives. Governance of the MPH program is embedded in the Department of Health Sciences. The Personnel Committee, the Post-Tenure Review Committee, the Sabbatical Committee, the Governance Committee and the Curriculum Committee serve all four departmental programs. MPH faculty currently serve on three of these five committees. The Governance Committee develops governance guidelines for the department, the department chair, program directors and graduate coordinators. The Curriculum Committee includes a representative from each of the four programs and oversees any new curricular proposals or modifications to existing courses. The college's Curriculum Committee must also review and approve any proposals or modifications. An MPH program faculty member sits on the college Curriculum Committee.

MPH program governance rests with the MPH graduate coordinator who works with program faculty and administrators on policy development. Faculty meetings are held at least monthly and recommendations made by faculty members must be approved by a majority of the program faculty. Program-specific committees include 1) the Total Quality Education Committee, which oversees the midpoint and exit assessment surveys and interviews; 2) the Admissions Committee, which reviews and makes recommendations for MPH program admission; and 3) the Comprehensive Examination Committee, which assigns faculty to serve as readers of the essay exams.

Programmatic budget requests are made by the program director and graduate coordinator on an as-needed basis. The Office of Graduate Studies approves degree requirements and grants degrees.

While program faculty do participate at the department level, only one faculty member serves on committees at the college and university levels. However, site visitors were told that faculty feel well represented at each level and have necessary channels to address needs and interests.

Student involvement in governance is achieved through the MPH Student Association (MPHSA). A student representative is invited to attend faculty meetings and is a member of the MPH Advisory Council. The MPHSA distributes surveys, holds meetings and facilitates focus groups to gain feedback from the student body about ideas for program improvement. Students report satisfaction with their level of involvement and say faculty are receptive to their ideas and feedback.

## 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. CSUN receives its budget from the state via the governor's office, the state legislature and the chancellor's office. The amount of the CSUN budget is determined based on the state's revenue and the expected full-time equivalent students (FTES) at the university. Table 1 presents the program's budget for the five-year period from academic year 2006-2007 to 2010-2011. The amount of the university budget allocated to the College of Health and Human Development is determined by estimated FTES targets. Within the college, the Department of Health Sciences budget is based on FTES targets and full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF). The MPH program budget is contained within the departmental budget. Faculty receive travel and development support in two ways: a base allocation to all faculty and supplemental funds based on departmental priorities. In addition, the Program Directors Council provides input to the department chair on the use of discretionary funds for the purchase of equipment.

<b>Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures</b>					
	2006-2007	2007-2008*	2008-2009**	2009-2010	2010-2011
<b>Source of Funds</b>					
University Funds	\$513,444	\$425,688	\$588,671	\$529,804	\$509,852
Other – Operating Exp.	\$12,500	\$10,400	\$10,400	\$13,400	\$13,400
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Faculty Salaries & Benefits	\$513,444	\$425,688	\$588,671	\$529,804	\$509,852
Operations	\$8,300	\$6,200	\$6,200	\$6,200	\$6,200
Travel/Prof Dev	\$4,200	\$4,200	\$4,200	\$7,200	\$10,250

\* Two full-time faculty entered half-time early retirement program.

\*\* Full-time faculty returned to the program from administrative assignment.

During the site visit, the provost told the site visit team that MPH program allocations can be defined more specifically, if requested. Site visitors note that it would be helpful for the program's budget to include, at a minimum, tuition, fees and student support.

The MPH program at CSUN defines a full-time graduate student as one enrolled in 12 semester units. The program calculates core faculty effort as 0.25 for each three-unit course taught and calculates part-time faculty effort as 0.20 for each three-unit course. In 2010, the MPH program student-faculty ratio (SFR) was 18.69 when accounting for only the core faculty. The SFR drops to 14.77 when part-time faculty are included in the calculations. Table 2 presents the program's faculty and student counts as well as SFRs for the last three years.

<b>Table 2. Faculty, Students and Student/Faculty Ratios</b>										
	<b>HC Core Faculty</b>	<b>FTEF Core</b>	<b>HC Other Faculty</b>	<b>FTEF Other</b>	<b>Total Faculty HC</b>	<b>Total FTEF</b>	<b>HC Students</b>	<b>FTE Students</b>	<b>SFR by Core FTEF</b>	<b>SFR by Total FTEF</b>
<b>Fall 2008*</b>	4	2.04	3	0.74	7	2.78	75	47	23.04	16.91
<b>Fall 2009**</b>	4	1.69	4	0.85	8	2.54	84	51	30.18	20.08
<b>Fall 2010</b>	5	2.45	3	0.65	7	3.10	81	45.8	18.69	14.77

\* Two full-time faculty entered half-time early retirement program. Both are counted for fall 2008 and fall 2009; one is counted for fall 2010.

\*\* One full-time faculty was on sabbatical.

According to the program's calculations, the core faculty consist of five individuals whose effort equals 2.45 FTEs. This FTE faculty count underestimates the contribution of faculty effort provided to the MPH program according to CEPH guidelines. The program's calculation is based on teaching course load only. As the site team learned on campus, the core faculty are engaged in forms of scholarly work, student advisement and community engagement activities. The site team made every effort to determine a quantitative measure of percent time allocated to these other activities, but had limited success. The site team did determine through qualitative measures via conversations with students and alumni that the faculty are engaged, available and responsive to community requests for consultation.

Each core faculty member has a standard individual office of 110 square feet. The non-core, part-time faculty in the MPH program share offices of the same size. Each faculty office is equipped with a standard desktop (in most cases) computer setup and a standard configuration of office furniture. All offices are networked to the internet including access to shared printers. The department has seven classrooms within Jacaranda Hall that are used for MPH classes, based on assignments from the department chair. This allocation is based on the semester schedule, special needs of faculty and programs, demand and availability of the rooms on a particular day and time. On high-demand days and times, courses may be located in adjacent buildings. A conference room is available on a reservation basis for program meetings, student organization meetings, student study groups and other uses.

All classrooms are equipped with an LCD ceiling projector, screen, audio and DVD player. Instructors can access media in the library for direct broadcast into the classroom. Laptop computers can be checked out for in-class use, making technology more available to students.

A computer lab is located in the department and is used for biostatistics and other computer-based courses. The use of the computer lab is under the control of the college. In addition to this facility,

students have access to computer stations in the library. Students told site visitors that they are anxious for more computer access and are particularly interested in remote computing for biostatistics courses. They are aware of the cost implications but said remote access would be especially beneficial to graduate students who also work. In addition, students noted that the surrounding universities provide these capabilities and they feel it is more of a necessity than a luxury.

All library materials are housed in the Delmar T. Oviatt Library, a 234,712 square foot state-of-the-art facility. The Oviatt Library has a physical collection containing 1.4 million volumes, of which over 1.1 million are books, and over 250,000 bound periodical volumes. The library subscribes to 53,000 online journals, over 2,300 print journals, over 200 online databases and nearly 274,713 e-books. The microform collection contains 3.17 million pieces. More than 14,200 sound recordings, 12,700 film and video recordings and nearly 60,000 pictures and other graphic materials are available. The library's Collaboratory has 175 multipurpose computer workstations, three computer-equipped library instruction labs with a total of 100 computers and 150 computer workstations, in various locations, devoted to library information resources. In-house study is available to more than 1,600 students at any given time. During the fall and spring semesters, the building is open 85 hours a week. The library maintains and provides access to electronic information 24 hours a day.

The library is accessible via walk-in or the internet. The internet provides access to the complete library and its external resources. It is physically located directly south of Jacaranda Hall and has graduate student study rooms available to students on a first-come basis. It has a library staff person assigned to the Department of Health Sciences who handles faculty requests for the purchase of media and resources and provides training sessions for students on the use of resources, reference styles and the use of reference databases.

The MPH program has an array of community partnerships and a network of community resources to place students in field experiences. A number of formal agreements exist with these agencies to provide internships and other collaborative opportunities with the MPH program, such as guest lecturing and part-time teaching.

The concern results from the lack of sufficient faculty resources for the program. The current SFR is calculated at 14.40, which is higher than the accepted ratio for graduate education. The SFR is an important indicator of the quality of the academic institution and its instructional environment. Core faculty provide services in addition to teaching that are necessary to support a quality program. These services are especially necessary when trying to manage an MPH program with more than 80 students. Some of these additional functions that are a part of graduate professional education include student advisement, career services, alumni development, workforce development, research and scholarship and

professional enhancement. While on campus, the site team learned that a search for new MPH faculty is ongoing. This search could result in hiring up to three additional faculty members for the program. Increasing the size of the core faculty with qualified individuals before the start of the next academic year should be a top priority for the program.

## **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 met. The program offers a single MPH degree with a specialization in community health education. Table 3 presents the program’s degree offering.

<b>Table 3. Degree Offered</b>		
	Academic	Professional
<b>Masters Degrees</b>		
Community Health Education		MPH

The MPH is a professional degree that prepares students for careers in public health education. In addition to core courses, practice and culminating experiences, students also take concentration-specific courses and electives. Courses in community health education include a health education seminar, curriculum development in health education, a community health action seminar and a course in research design in health sciences. Students also take a minimum of nine semester credit units of electives. Approved electives cover topics such as health care ethics, cultural issues in health care, international health, gerontology and epidemiology of infectious and chronic diseases. When choosing electives, the student’s faculty advisor must give approval prior to enrollment. Independent study is also available for those students wishing to pursue unique research opportunities.

In addition to 500- and 600-level courses, the official catalog states that students may take 400-level courses as electives, which are open to upper-division undergraduate students. The two approved 400-level courses are HSCI 433: Counseling of Health Problems and HSCI 438: International Health. Site visitors confirmed that graduate students are held to a higher standard and must complete additional requirements than undergraduate students.

## **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. Since March 2008, 42 semester credit units have been required for the MPH degree. Prior to March 2008, some students completed the MPH degree with 41 credits due to a choice of culminating experience options with differing credit values. Students who completed a comprehensive examination earned three credits while students who completed a thesis project earned two credits. Now either option is equivalently valued at three semester credit units.

One semester credit unit is equal to 15 course contact hours. Most courses that are part of the curriculum for the MPH degree are three credits for a total of 45 course contact hours each.

Between 2005 and 2008, 10 students chose the thesis option and graduated with 41 semester credit units. All students currently enrolled in the program must graduate with 42 semester credit units. Although this requirement is clearly articulated to students, the program's website has not been updated to show equivalent credit values for the two culminating experience options.

## **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 in the MPH program are required to complete 15 units of coursework in the five core public health knowledge areas. Waivers of core courses are not permitted.

As described in the self-study document and verified by on-site review of syllabi, the instructional program presents students with the concepts and competencies necessary to develop a good understanding of the public health core knowledge. The core environmental health course is taught by the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. This collaboration has existed since this unit left the Department of Health Sciences and became its own department. The site team confirmed that there is consistent coordination about the content, timing of course offering and number of sections required by the MPH program. It is also noted that there is a qualifying prerequisite program of four units of biostatistics, required for students admitted to the program with no prior related statistics background.

## **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. Every student who graduates from the program is required to complete a 400-hour field training practicum in one of a variety of community settings. No waivers are granted and all students are required to participate in this field training experience. An MPH Field Training Manual guides the process. The field training experience usually begins after a student has completed a minimum of 18-20 units of core coursework. The choice of agency and supervisor is made jointly by the MPH program's field training coordinator, the student and the agency. Potential sites must meet specific guidelines in order to host a student. An approved site must have an MPH-trained health educator with at least five years of experience and sufficient resources and interest to support the student. Site preceptors must sign an affiliation agreement with the program, submit a curriculum vitae to verify the preceptor's qualifications to manage students and meet with the field training coordinator.

Prior to beginning the field placement, each student completes a health educator's self-assessment survey. This form is used as a pre- and post-evaluation of the student's progress over the course of the field placement. The pre-assessment also assists the student and preceptor in creating goals and objectives for the field placement experience. Additionally, the faculty member responsible for field placement oversight reviews the individual's self-assessment and determines the need to focus on specific competencies.

Students spend two semesters in field training for two-and-a-half days a week, or one semester for five days a week, eight hours per day. Students who begin their field training in the fall semester will usually complete their experience by the following spring semester (June). Those who begin in the spring semester usually complete by the end of the summer (August-September). The student, faculty member and preceptor meet at least once during the field placement and more frequently if warranted. Preceptors are also sent bi-annual surveys.

Students are required to attend a field training seminar course simultaneously with the placement. In the seminar course, students discuss their training experiences and problems with faculty and other students. During the seminar, students present oral progress reports concerning their field placements. In addition, students are required to submit written progress reports and time logs to the field training coordinator. Students also maintain a journal with activities and reflections of their experiences. At the conclusion of the field training experience, students are graded on the following criteria:

- Evaluation of the student's fieldwork and project by the preceptor
- Attendance at the field training seminar, and completion/submission of the project report
- A pre/post self-assessment of skills and competencies

The field training experience offers students an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in coursework, and to demonstrate public health competencies through real-world experiences in a variety of local public health agencies and community-based health organizations. According to the self-study,

the program has been successful in recruiting local field training sites. In addition to local sites, students have been placed at the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in other locations across the country.

## **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 met. The program has explicit requirements in place regarding the culminating experience. All students are required to complete a culminating experience, as the basis for assessing whether a student is able to integrate and synthesize knowledge learned in the classroom to the field of public health practice. This culminating experience may take the form of either a comprehensive examination or a thesis project.

A student opting for the comprehensive examination prepares for the exam by enrolling in a three-unit review course during the academic semester in which the student will be taking the examination. This review course may be formal or informal depending on the number of students preparing for the exam. A minimum of eight students is required by the university to offer a graduate-level course. Otherwise, students meet individually with the comprehensive examination coordinator and program faculty to prepare for the examination. The majority of students take the comprehensive examination during the spring semester. The exam covers the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing (NCHEC) public health education competency areas and assesses the same competencies required to become a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). A student has 48 hours to complete the take-home written exam.

Grading is accomplished by faculty teams who follow a prescribed protocol that guides their review and scoring of these exams. A grade of 80% or higher is required to achieve a passing score on the comprehensive exam. Students who fall short of the required 80% score, but have attained a score of 75% or higher, are asked to sit for a one-hour oral follow-up exam. The purpose of the follow-up exam is to provide the student with one additional opportunity to elaborate or clarify some aspect of their written response. In compliance with university policy, students who fall short of the 80% score on the written exam are afforded one additional opportunity to pass via a second administration of the written examination. Students who do not pass the exam on the second administration are dismissed from the program. Pass rates on the first administration have consistently been at the 75-80% level, and the pass rate reaches 99% after the second administration of the exam. Most students opt for the comprehensive examination rather than the thesis project to increase the likelihood of graduating within three years. Faculty encourage students to take the exam unless they have specific research interests or career goals that would make a thesis project more appropriate.

A well-established protocol has been developed for completion of the thesis project. Students electing the thesis option identify a faculty member to chair a three-member thesis committee, one of whom can be from outside the university. Prior to initiating a thesis project, a written proposal, with approval of the student's thesis committee, is submitted to the university's Office of Graduate Studies and to the Human Subjects Committee for review. The thesis committee provides guidance and mentoring to the student during the research and writing process. All committee members must provide approval of the work before it is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies as final documentation of completion of degree requirements. Only one student opted for the thesis in 2009-2010 and one student is currently completing her thesis in the 2010-2011 academic year.

As discussed in Criterion 2.6, the culminating experience should assess student attainment of more than health education-specific competencies alone. A useful set of core competencies, which could be incorporated into a comprehensive examination, in addition to the concentration-specific NCHCEC competencies, would make this a more robust and integrative experience.

## **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 MPH program has opted to use the 10 Essential Public Health Services as its core competencies. The self-study provides a matrix of the 10 essential services and the courses in which they are addressed, along with examples of learning objectives. However, the matrix does not include the core environmental health course (EOH 554). This information was provided to the site team during the on-campus visit as a supplemental document. A review of the course syllabi for the required courses in the MPH program indicated that they do not reference the competencies nor do they provide evidence that the 10 Essential Public Health Services are used as indicators of student achievement.

In addition to the core competencies, the MPH program identifies four goals for all graduates. These are linked to the goals and objectives of the program as outlined in Criterion 1.1:

1. Assess the individual and community health education needs.
2. Develop, plan, implement, and evaluate health education programs.
3. Administer, organize and coordinate health education programs.
4. Communicate health education needs, data and resources.

The faculty, MPH graduate coordinator, MPH Advisory Council and MPH Alumni Association had input into the development of the core competency matrix. NCHCEC competencies are used as a basis for determining the areas addressed in field placement experiences and comprehensive exams. The 10 Essential Public Health Services are made available to students during new-student orientation.

However, it was not clear to site visitors whether credit for the development of this service list is given to the National Public Health Performance Standards Program, NCHEC or the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice. Site visitors found references to all of these groups in program materials referencing the core competencies.

During conversations with faculty, the site team learned that NCHEC competencies are used as the core competencies rather than the competencies cited in the self-study document. Upon review of the learning objectives listed on syllabi, minimal evidence was found that NCHEC competencies are used in the development of the courses.

The concern relates to the lack of a clearly defined set of core competencies that are used in the development and delivery of the courses in the curriculum. Core faculty were unable to describe the use of the 10 program-identified core competencies (ie, the 10 Essential Public Health Services) in their courses. While the 10 Essential Public Health Services are a helpful guide to develop programmatic competencies, they are not useful, in and of themselves, as programmatic competencies. They are intended as a means to describe the public health activities that should take place in all communities, not to describe what public health graduates should be able to do. For example, “Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety” would be difficult for a student to demonstrate during an academic program. For the program’s core competencies to guide the development of the MPH program, the faculty must recognize them as integral to their own courses and to the larger curriculum. The self-study states that the 400-hour field placement is guided by NHCEC competencies. The competencies are used for a pre/post-assessment; however, the field placement documentation does not show any indication of competency integration.

NCHEC competencies appear to be useful to supervise the field experience for the individual student and to manage the MPH practicum efforts on a larger scale. However, NCHEC competencies alone are not sufficient to guide the comprehensive exam. As a culminating experience, competencies from beyond the health education domain should be used to assess students’ mastery of the entire MPH curriculum. In addition, there does not seem to be a systematic feedback loop among all of the competency sets for any integrative review of the entire curriculum, including the coursework, practicum and culminating experience.

## **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 met. CSUN MPH program faculty use three types of assessment for evaluating student progress and preparation for readiness for professional practice in health education. These assessments

include performance in academic coursework, completion of a 400-hour supervised field placement and passage of a comprehensive examination or completion of a thesis project.

In the coursework, students are assessed with grades based on examinations, class presentations, class participation, experiential- and/or research-based papers and reports. The criteria for awarding grades are required elements in all course syllabi. All MPH students are required to maintain a GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing. Should a student fall below the 3.0 level, the student is given a one-semester grace period to bring the GPA up to the required standard. If the student is unable to meet this standard, the student is placed in a status of academic disqualification and cannot continue in the MPH program without the approval of the MPH graduate coordinator and the university's Office of Graduate Studies. The Office of Graduate Studies has the final authority on the future status of the student.

The field training coordinator supervises the field placement experience and assures that students meet the objectives of their learning contracts and other internship commitments. As discussed in Criterion 2.5, MPH students have two options for their culminating experience: a comprehensive examination or a thesis project. Students are encouraged to meet with an academic advisor to discuss the best option, which is largely based on the strengths of the individual student.

The comprehensive examination is a 48-hour take-home experience with a follow-up oral portion, if needed. The examination covers the following content areas: community health education program planning and evaluation, health behavior concepts, theories and practice issues, curriculum design in health education, community organization theory and practice, administration, supervision and consultation in health education, communication in health education, epidemiology, biostatistics and research design. Other areas may be covered in the examination based on the case study within the test, including ethical issues, cultural competence and social marketing. The students who are known for their ability to perform under pressure and/or can complete the culminating experience in a defined amount of time are encouraged to take the comprehensive examination. A scoring template for assessing student responses is provided to faculty who grade the comprehensive examination. Each exam is scored in a blinded fashion by two faculty members and submitted to the graduate coordinator to compare the scores. The examination process is rigorous, comprehensive and fairly graded.

Faculty recognize that the thesis option is a more labor-intensive commitment than the comprehensive examination. They acknowledge that in order to provide the level of guidance required to produce a quality thesis, it is necessary to limit the number of projects to two per year per faculty member. As a result, these opportunities are limited to those few students who are interested in a more thoughtful piece of inquiry and writing-intensive experience.

The MPH program has implemented a two-step Total Quality Education (TQE) process for assessing student performance. A midpoint TQE interview occurs after the completion of 18-20 units, followed by an exit interview at the completion of the program. During the midpoint review, students are contacted by the TQE coordinator to meet with a faculty panel to discuss progress, issues and possible obstacles to successful completion of the MPH program. Students are required to develop a portfolio for presentation and discussion with the TQE Committee. This portfolio includes a listing of grades earned over the 18-20 units taken in the program, a selection of papers written during their MPH course of study, a program satisfaction survey and a completed health education self-assessment instrument. Students meet with the TQE Committee to discuss their academic progress, including strengths, weaknesses and needs for professional growth and development. The TQE Committee suggests ways to enhance the educational experience and to remediate any difficulties for students. At the second point of the TQE, the exit interview, the TQE coordinator meets with the student to discuss experiences during the MPH program. All graduating students are asked to complete a survey based on their experiences and asked for recommendations for improvements. Thus far, 57 students have completed the midpoint TQE and 20 students have completed the exit interview.

During the last administration of the TQE exit interview, 40% of respondents were employed full time and 25% were employed part time while attending graduate school. The majority of students – 87.5% - stated that they would change jobs after graduation to seek employment that would be more appropriate for the degree obtained. The 2010 MPH alumni survey found that graduates worked in the following settings: non-profit agencies, healthcare agencies, university or research institutions and local, state and federal government. All respondents were able to secure employment within six months of graduation.

The program tracks degree completion rates based on a three-year time-to-graduation period. In academic years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, 80% and 83%, respectively, of students graduated. Program administrators are aware that student attrition is often due to acceptance into a medical, dental or pharmacy program. One student also left to attend an online MPH program in 2009-2010.

The MPH program does a commendable job of internal assessment. It needs to reach out to determine its effects within the larger community, notably the employers of its graduates. Site visitors understand that employers are often surveyed as part of the field experience because they also serve as preceptors, but broader questions that go beyond the assessment of specific students would provide beneficial information to the program.

## **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 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 program 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 not applicable.

## **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. The university, the department and the MPH program operate with the expectation that faculty will be engaged in research and creative activities as a part of their professional responsibilities at CSUN. This is stated in the university's mission statement, and it is clear that these types of discovery can take many forms depending on the discipline, interests and resources available to faculty members. This expectation of faculty involvement in discovery is borne out in the university tenure

and promotion policies that expect evidence of scholarly productivity that arises from research, such as refereed publications, grant awards and active programs of research. These same types of measures are included in the post-tenure review process, as well.

The university encourages faculty to engage in research in a number of ways. The Office of Research and Sponsored Projects assists faculty in obtaining research and creative activity support from federal, state, corporate and foundation-sponsored programs. A tutorial is available via the university website to assist faculty with the basics of grantsmanship. In addition, the university supports several other annual initiatives that encourage faculty research activities:

- CSUN Competition for Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Awards – provide faculty support to conduct scholarly activity, demonstrate a need or develop a seed project that could lead to future funding.
- Judge Julian Beck Learning-Centered Instructional Projects ("Beck Grants") – support learning-centered instructional projects at CSUN each academic year through the Judge Julian Beck Endowment.
- Probationary Faculty Support Program – assists tenure-track faculty in meeting the qualifications for retention, tenure or promotion through three units of reassigned time.
- Discipline-Oriented Community Project & Research Grants – support faculty who are investigating the implementation of a single community engagement course project.
- Interdisciplinary Community Project & Research Grant – supports faculty who are collaborating across two or more disciplines who are investigating the implementation of a single community engagement course project.

In addition, CSUN supports research by providing full-time tenured faculty with the opportunity of sabbatical leave. Full-time faculty are eligible for a sabbatical leave if they have served full-time for six years at CSUN in the preceding seven-year period prior to the leave and at least six years after any previous sabbatical leave or difference in pay leave. If not a formal sabbatical, the university allows for paid leaves of absence. These leaves can be granted for the purpose of advancing an individual's career.

Faculty from throughout the College of Health and Human Development can collaborate within research institutes/centers and engage in research development and implementation activities. The college has six centers that serve as foci for research:

- Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing
- Center of Achievement for the Physically Disabled
- Center for the Study of Leisure and Play Behavior
- Child and Family Studies Center

- CSUN Aquatic Center
- Marilyn Magaram Center for Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics

Although research is a priority, the heavy teaching requirement is a limiting factor for faculty. CSUN emphasizes teaching as one of its major strengths as a university. The teaching load of a faculty member is four courses per semester. It is possible for faculty to receive release time from some of the teaching load based on extramural funding, but it is not a guarantee. This structure places a burden on the individual faculty member who is teaching a full load and trying to build a research portfolio. This burden is increased substantially if the type of research is community-based, which typically requires off-campus social interaction with collaborators, and/or if the faculty member is expected to be engaged in university, college, departmental and program governance.

Many of the MPH faculty have a persistent record of seeking and obtaining funds that support a body of scientific inquiry. Current research topics include chronic disease prevention and management, nutrition education, tobacco control and suicide prevention. All core faculty are involved in research and, in most cases, funded projects involve students. Those students who are selected for research activities are the ones who have demonstrated the acumen for this type of work and are available for employment.

### **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. Faculty members are actively engaged in service to the community. This takes the form of serving on community boards and committees, consulting with local public health organizations on projects, developing grants for community organizations and providing service to community organizations through evaluation and consultation. Part-time faculty also bring varied experiences and perspectives to the program, having come from government agencies or health education units within health departments. Several MPH program faculty members are actively involved with the university's Center for Innovative and Engaged Learning Opportunities (CIELO). This center endeavors to incorporate community service in every aspect of campus life, from the classroom to student initiatives, and is helping to bring community service-learning to the classroom and encouraging volunteerism by faculty and students.

Community service is a requirement for faculty tenure and promotion. Service efforts are assessed on the basis of the percent of faculty within a unit engaged in service per academic year. The standard for success is set at 50% participation of faculty members. For each of the past three years, the program reported that 75% of core faculty participated in community service. Activities include membership on the Westlake Village Community Emergency Response Team and the San Fernando Valley Minority Reentry

Initiative Workgroup, consultation to the Valley Trauma Center and Tarzana Treatment Center and performance of a needs assessment for the Valley Care Community Consortium.

Student involvement in service activities is highly valued by the program. Several MPH courses require community work and many research projects are based within communities. In addition, the MPH Student Association includes community service as a main activity of the organization. This student organization has strong ties with the community and continually participates in charity events. Students have participated in the AIDS Walk LA and have organized activities for Health Education Week on campus. Also, many alumni give back to the program by serving as preceptors for current MPH students.

Students and faculty are engaged in a variety of service activities that contribute to the advancement of public health practice. Service to the community is closely tied to the MPH program's mission, and is facilitated by collaborations and linkages already in place. Site visitors' review of faculty participation in service noted that this involvement is both varied and substantive.

### **3.3 Workforce Development.**

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

This criterion is met with commentary. The self-study states that continuing education activities are coordinated through the program's Advisory Council. Although the MPH Advisory Council met regularly until 2007, and established a sub-committee for continuing education, no further meetings were held until spring 2009. Only two continuing education programs were conducted in the past three years, one in February 2009 and one in May 2009. No continuing education programs were conducted during 2010, or in 2011 to date. A continuing education workshop on motivational interviewing is scheduled for May 3, 2011, in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente, Panorama City and the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. The MPH Alumni Association is assisting with this workshop.

The MPH program and its faculty have been involved in supporting the professional development of the public health workforce in the surrounding area. An informal review process, using e-mail and phone communications with program alumni, is conducted to assess needs for continuing education. Based on this input, new continuing education programs are planned and conducted in conjunction with their community collaborators/partners. During the 2009-2010 academic year, however, the university required all faculty to take furlough days, which resulted in limited time that might be devoted to such efforts. Looking forward, MPH program leaders told site visitors they are committed to meeting the goal of two continuing education events per academic year for health care and public health education professionals in the CSUN service area. Community constituents said they find webinar offerings to be convenient and a worthwhile strategy to continue.

The commentary relates to the need to give more program emphasis to professional development of the public health workforce. Site visitors met with program alumni, who expressed considerable interest in continuing education opportunities and workforce development. In addition to the informal review process currently being used, a periodic formal needs assessment would be useful to identify training needs in the region. Future surveys of students and alumni might include questions about continuing education needs and the role that the MPH program could play in directly addressing those needs. The MPH program is also encouraged to develop a more entrepreneurial spirit in partnering with other units on the CSUN campus, such as the Tseng College of Extended Learning. Program leaders, the college dean and the provost discussed opportunities for expanding the program's workforce development efforts, which could also provide new sources of funding. The Institute for Community Health and Wellbeing was cited as one potential opportunity for partnerships. Given the mission of the MPH program to enhance the general health and wellbeing of diverse populations and communities, collaborations with this institute and others would provide multiple benefits to the program and would further enhance its visibility.

#### **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 program's mission, goals and objectives.**

This criterion is met with commentary. All core faculty hold doctoral degrees in content areas related to their teaching and/or research interests. In addition, four out of the five have a public health degree. Their areas of preparation include biostatistics and epidemiology, community health education, education administration and school health. Their specific areas of interest include topics such as injury prevention, social networking, tobacco use prevention and nutrition.

The core faculty are augmented by six individuals who total 1.3 FTE. Four individuals come from within the CSUN faculty and two are community practice partners. All university faculty hold doctoral degrees and the two community-based faculty have degrees in public health. The courses that they teach match their preparation and experience.

The commentary relates to the ability of the MPH faculty to fully support the program's mission, goals and objectives. Each individual faculty member has appropriate qualifications, but in the context of this program, the faculty as a whole cannot fulfill all aspects of the program, including instruction, research, service, workforce development and student academic and career advisement. As the site team learned on campus, a search for additional faculty for the MPH program is currently underway. This search process could produce one, two or perhaps even three additional faculty members for the program

provided that the right individuals are within the applicant pool. The potential faculty hires not only provide an opportunity to expand the depth of expertise, but also the opportunity to advance the reputation of the CSUN MPH program as a leader in scholarship, community outreach, continuing education and career advancement. The type of new faculty can make a difference, as well. The program may wish to hire a mix of junior and more senior faculty to reduce the burden of mentorship of new academics.

#### **4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures.**

**The program 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. CSUN's Manual of Procedures for Search and Screen Committees for Full-Time Faculty Positions outlines all of the expected steps for a search for the recruitment of full-time faculty. University personnel positions of faculty, department chairs, department and college equity and diversity representatives and college deans are expected to operate under these procedures. CSUN is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, age, disability, disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status. CSUN prepares detailed manuals each year for permanent and temporary academic personnel regarding policies and procedures.

The policy in the Department of Health Sciences is to elect a three-person search committee for new hires. Two members are from the program that is hiring and one is an at-large member. One member of the search committee is the chair and the others are equity and diversity representatives. The search committee follows the procedures outlined in the university manuals and develops a recruitment plan to be approved by the CSUN Equity and Diversity Office. Following the search, the committee and the department chair provide a summary of the process and their recommendation to the dean who negotiates the hiring terms.

In addition to hiring procedures, university manuals outline performance expectations for faculty including definitions of academic units, teaching loads, faculty classifications and faculty duties. The manuals outline in detail the steps needed to advance in rank by each category of faculty. The procedures for evaluating faculty competence and performance are outline in Section 600 of the Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures manual. The manuals are also explicit about the procedures for applying for special benefits, such as sabbaticals or leaves, or seeking an appeal of a personnel decision.

The CSUN Office of Sponsored Research provides training opportunities for faculty on the art and science of grant writing. A number of faculty from the MPH program have taken advantage of this service.

As discussed in Criterion 3.2, the Center for Innovative and Engaged Learning Opportunities (CIELO) connects faculty and students with local not-for-profit community organizations with the intention of building students' sense of community pride. CIELO accomplishes this through assisting faculty via workshops, symposiums and small grant opportunities on topics related to issues of student learning and community engagement. The intent is to encourage faculty to develop community-based course assignments in collaboration with community-based organizations. The collaborative learning will enhance capacity of these organizations to better meet the needs of the residents in the San Fernando Valley. CIELO offers opportunities for the MPH program faculty to apply for stipend research grants or creative teaching support resources for course innovations.

Full-time faculty can apply for a sabbatical leave every seven years. Sabbatical leaves are competitive across the entire College of Health and Human Development. The provost designates the number available for each college and makes the final decision of sabbatical awards. Recipients receive either one semester at full pay or one year at half pay.

In addition, faculty are awarded travel stipends to attend conferences or national board meetings to present their work or represent the MPH program each year. The amount of the travel stipend varies based on departmental budgetary constraints.

The procedures for faculty performance reviews are detailed in the Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures manuals described earlier in this criterion. In general, these reviews include an annual assessment by the department chair, the college dean and the personnel committees. The information included in these assessments includes course evaluations from students using a standardized tool (Wilson Evaluation Instrument) that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Tenured faculty must include student evaluations from one course per year, while tenure-track faculty are required to have all courses evaluated until they are awarded tenure. The department places the evaluation instruments in faculty mailboxes to be taken to the class. A designated student handles the distribution, collection and return of the course evaluations to the department. It is the responsibility of the department chair to review the evaluation results and to take any remedial action as deemed necessary.

#### **4.3 Faculty and Staff Diversity.**

**The program 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 with commentary. Although the core faculty is almost exclusively Caucasian, the secondary faculty bring greater racial and ethnic diversity to the program. The department also employs one Caucasian and two Hispanic female staff members who contribute some effort to the MPH program.

A Hispanic female faculty member was hired in 2009; however, she received a National Institutes of Health grant for new researchers that could not be transferred to CSUN. Consequently, she chose to leave her faculty appointment, which was a significant loss to the program. She continues to teach on a part-time basis and the program has been given permission to conduct a faculty search for academic year 2011-2012. According to the dean, this search could result in up to three new hires.

Open faculty positions are advertised at professional public health meetings and in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Announcements are also sent to professional listservs and career placement offices at doctoral-granting universities in the region. Diverse members of the local community with appropriate training and experience are encouraged to apply to be part-time instructors and field placement preceptors for the program. Given the limited faculty lines available to the program, part-time faculty are essential to support the program.

The MPH program participates in the California Pre-Doctoral Program, which is designed to increase the diversity of the pool from which CSU draws its faculty. The program supports the doctoral aspirations of CSU students who have experienced economic and educational disadvantages. Emphasis is placed on increasing the number of CSU students who enter graduate programs at one of the University of California campuses. Five MPH students have received this scholarship in the last 10 years, resulting in two students being currently enrolled in doctoral programs.

The program has made a conscious effort to maintain an environment that supports diversity. Students and other program constituents are regularly notified of community events and symposiums that address issues of diversity, social justice and health disparities. Examples include the MPHSA-sponsored Brown Bag Speakers Forum, which often addresses issues of diversity, and "movie night," at which students watched the film "Unnatural Causes" and then discussed it. Faculty members invite guest speakers to their classes to help students better understand the role of the health educator related to diversity. Coursework also provides opportunities for students to discuss health disparities and social justice. In addition, the program has collaborated with San Jose State University's MPH program to conduct a continuing education webinar about health disparities.

The commentary relates to the lack of diversity among the core faculty. The current open faculty positions provide an excellent opportunity for the program to better reflect its students and the community in which it is located. Program administrators cited the cost of living in Southern California as a barrier to recruitment; however, the use of national job boards could expand the pool of qualified candidates.

#### 4.4 Student Recruitment and Admissions.

**The program shall have student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures designed to locate and select qualified individuals capable of taking advantage of the program'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. Students learn about the program through referrals from alumni, the program's website, faculty connections at nearby universities and attendance at campus events. MPH faculty teach undergraduate courses in the department, which provide recruitment opportunities for the program. The student association has also made a concerted effort to meet with other campus organizations to raise awareness about the program. The university's location in the greater Los Angeles area, near an extensive freeway system, makes it possible for students to travel from as far away as 75 miles to attend.

Applications have increased each year between academic years 2007-2008 and 2009-2010. Given the university's current financial state and resource limitations, program administrators have had to consider how to keep the program to a manageable size. While still in the discussion stage, possible actions may include accepting students only once a year, limiting international admissions and increasing the minimum GPA required. In addition to higher numbers of applicants, the program has also seen a trend toward more students enrolled full time. In 2005, about 50% of students were classified as full time and that percentage increased to about 60% by 2009. The program promotes itself as a good option for working professionals and only schedules classes during afternoon and evening hours (4-7 pm and 7-10 pm) four days per week and on Saturday mornings. As more full-time students enroll in the program, class size and scheduling will be affected.

Admissions policies and procedures are included in the university catalog, the MPH program brochure and on the program's website. Applicants are first reviewed at the university level to verify they meet or surpass the university's minimum requirements of a 2.5 GPA. If prospective students meet this threshold, their application is forwarded to the department where additional review is carried out by the MPH Admissions Committee. Upon receiving an application, the graduate coordinator completes an application review form and forwards the package to a three-person review committee. Each committee member independently reviews the applicant's transcripts, undergraduate GPA, work experience, letters of recommendation and statement of purpose. Applicants can either be admitted (ie, fully classified), admitted conditionally or rejected. Students who are admitted under conditional status typically must complete one or more of the following requirements:

- University Upper Division Writing Proficiency Examination
- Graduate Record Examination (if overall GPA is under 3.0 or under 3.2 for last 60 credits)
- Introductory biostatistics course (HSCI 390/390L)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for international students

The commentary relates to the lack of targeted recruitment done by the program. Although applications continue to increase, the program should take a more active role to connect with prospective students. Given the extraordinary diversity and needs of the service area, many current and future health educators could benefit from the opportunities provided by the MPH program. As more faculty lines are filled, the program should be able to focus more effort on targeted recruitment of qualified students.

#### **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. The program has a diverse student body that compares favorably to the diversity of the city and state in a number of areas. In 2009, the MPH program was 20% White, 17% Latino or Mexican American, 17% Asian or Pacific Islander, 6% African American and 40% International or Other. From academic year 2007-2008 to 2009-2010, 76%, 75% and 81%, respectively, of enrolled students have been female.

The program receives many applications from residents of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, China and other countries. Program alumni and practicum preceptors recruit prospective students from their workplaces and undergraduate students at CSUN are encouraged to apply during campus events such as Gradfest. In fall 2010, the program sent recruiting materials to the Northern California Forum on Diversity, which draws more than 1,000 students seeking information about graduate programs.

A diverse student body is an important part of the program's efforts to prepare students to work with and in diverse groups in a variety of settings. California's heterogeneous population makes these skills crucial and site visitors confirmed that students in the CSUN MPH program are getting exposure to peers with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Students told site visitors that the diversity of their classmates was a benefit of the program. Furthermore, alumni said the program gave them the skills to readily adapt to many settings.

#### **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 partially met. New students first meet with the MPH graduate coordinator to design a preliminary advisement plan that takes into account each student's professional goals, work schedule and previous coursework. Upon completion of the preliminary advisement plan, students are assigned alphabetically to a faculty advisor. Students must meet with their faculty advisor at least once during each fall semester to release a hold on course registration for the spring semester. Advisement hours are

offered in the late afternoon, in the evenings and on Saturdays to accommodate students with other personal and professional commitments.

A spring 2010 survey completed by 22 students found that 85% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their academic advisor was knowledgeable about program requirements and 60% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their academic advisor was accessible. The self-study reported that program leaders are trying to determine whether advisement times are inconvenient for students or students are going to a group of select advisors rather than their assigned advisor. Students who met with site visitors said faculty are readily available to them although formal office hours fill with student appointments quickly. Faculty must hold one office hour for each course taught and office hours must be held on multiple days. Faculty who met with site visitors acknowledged that they spend much more than the required office hour time advising students due to the number of students in the program. Students recognize that the faculty have many responsibilities and competing demands within the program, but do everything they can to make students a priority.

Career advising is primarily offered at the university level where students have access to the Student Counseling Office and Career Center for more professional assistance. The MPHSA has hosted speakers from local organizations to discuss career opportunities. Students also told site visitors they regularly get e-mail updates from the program about internship, job and research opportunities.

The concern relates to the lack of career counseling available within the program. Although faculty provide guidance and suggestions, a more formal process is needed. The student association has tried to fill the gap, but the program must recognize this service as a priority. Site visitors understand that the program may lack the necessary resources to develop a comprehensive career advising system immediately, but it is essential to an MPH program that serves students seeking workforce opportunities within the public health profession.

## Agenda

### COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

California State University, Northridge  
Public Health Program

March 28-29, 2011

#### Monday, March 28, 2011

- 8:00 am Team Review of Resource File
- 8:30 am Additional Documentation Requests  
Lawrence Chu  
Vicki Ebin
- 9:00 am Break
- 9:15 am Meeting with Public Health Teaching Faculty  
Merav Efrat  
Tom Hatfield  
Gretta Madjzooob  
Lou Rubino  
Kathleen Young  
Ronald Fischbach
- 10:30 am Break
- 10:45 am Meeting with College and Department Administration  
Brian Malec  
Sylvia Alva
- 12:00 pm Break
- 12:15 pm Lunch with Students  
Chiayin (Joyce) Huang  
Cherie Cadry  
Chris Ong  
Christina Dafney  
Gueorgui (George) Agasandyan  
Gregory Koyama  
Halina Fardin  
Laila Alturki  
Laura Jung  
Lauren Menor  
Mandeep Kaur  
Maria Aguirre  
Mirvat Farrash  
Portia Barlow  
Rebecca Schoor  
Shawna Masih  
Tanya Wicks  
Wallis Adams
- 1:30 pm Break
- 1:45 pm Team Review of Resource File and Executive Session
- 3:00 pm Meeting with Alumni, Advisory Council and Preceptors  
Marianne Link  
Myriam Forster  
Carla Valdez  
Bita Ashtari

Robin Edmonds-Yeager  
Sheri Strahl  
Blair Craddock  
Kelly Friedland  
Rodney Mardirosian  
Diane Dobbins  
Jeff Bailey  
Susan Cohen  
Merav Efrat

4:15 pm            Break  
4:30 pm            Team Review of Resource File and Executive Session  
5:00 pm            Adjourn to Dinner and Executive Session

**Tuesday, March 29, 2011**

9:15 am            Meeting with University Administration  
                       Harry Hellenbrand  
9:45 am            Break  
10:00 am           Executive Session and Report Preparation  
1:30 pm            Exit Interview