

**Johns Hopkins
Bloomberg School of Public Health**

Self-study Report

**Prepared for the Council on
Education for Public Health**

September 2006

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health has been at the forefront of public health education, research, and practice since its founding in 1916. In the ensuing years, the School has expanded its academic programs, research, and practice activities to meet the evolving global and domestic public health challenges.

Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The School is committed to self assessment by monitoring and evaluating students, faculty, educational programs, research, and practice on an on-going basis. In 1993 and again in 2000, the School undertook an in-depth strategic plan at the conclusion of the accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). The last self-study in 1999 laid the foundation for the School's Strategic Plan 2000 that established four major goals and objectives that guided the School during the past six years. The current self-study reports on our progress in achieving these objectives in relation to the 10 CEPH criteria. The self-study will form the basis of the next strategic plan that will identify the most salient issues affecting the School's future and provide the blue print for our continued contributions to public health education, research, practice, and service.

Major Goals of Strategic Plan 2000

Education	Continue to evaluate and strengthen the School's academic programs to ensure they are of the highest quality and meet the needs of a diverse and outstanding student body
Faculty	Recruit, promote, and retain outstanding faculty
Research	Prepare the School to respond quickly and competitively to emerging public health challenges
Practice	Emphasize the importance of professional practice

External and Internal Organizational Setting

Within the University, the School enjoys autonomy to set strategic direction and priorities, develop and oversee academic programs, recruit and promote faculty, and practice responsible fiscal management. Within the School, each of the 10 academic departments serves as the locus for academic, research, practice, and service activities for its faculty. This decentralized structure fosters entrepreneurial and innovative activity. At the same time, the cohesiveness of the University and School settings facilitates collaboration across University divisions and School departments.

The School plans to continue developing collaborative relationships within and external to the University that promote shared academic and scholarly excellence. For example, the School will continue developing interdisciplinary academic programs that reflect the external environment and interests of faculty and current and prospective students.

Governance

The School's governance is broadly participatory. Policies may be proposed by any of the School's governing bodies, including committees, deans, department chairs, the Faculty Senate, and the Student Assembly, or by individual faculty, staff, or students. These initiatives are vetted through a series of boards, assemblies, and committees that represent the School's various constituencies before being voted on by the School's Advisory Board.¹

The non-hierarchical governance structure fosters cross-constituency communication and exchange. The School's Web site makes the policies and procedures easily accessible. Nonetheless, the School's size and complexity can pose challenges in assuring that all faculty, staff, and students understand the policy-making processes and issues and participate in consensus building. The School will, therefore, continue to strengthen communications among faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other constituencies regarding the School's priorities, initiatives, processes, and policies.

Resources

Since 1999, revenue from grants, contracts, and designated funds increased by 50 percent, the endowment grew by 75 percent, student scholarship funds almost doubled, full- and part-time student enrollment rose from 1,538 to 1,949, and full-time faculty increased from 413 to 485. The Office of Information Systems expanded technical support for 5,000 users and strengthened data security and access. University libraries pioneered the digitizing of journals, books, and other documents to provide faculty, students, and staff access to information from anywhere at any time. Since 1996, space in the School's main Wolfe Street Building doubled, laboratory facilities were substantially upgraded, and amenities were added that create a dramatically improved indoor campus.

Since the last accreditation, the School's total revenues exceeded expenses each year, except during fiscal year 2005. Preliminary data indicate a modest surplus for fiscal year 2006. While the School expects to be deficit-free in 2008, it must adapt to the predicted budgetary constraints of the National Institutes of Health by relying more on non-governmental agencies and foundations to fund research activities and infrastructure.

The School will continue its long-standing conservative financial management policies to maintain reserve funds and increase the endowment fund. It will also continue to fund state-of-the-art libraries and information systems and improve student support services quality and use.

¹ The Advisory Board is chaired by the University's President or Provost. Membership includes the School's Dean, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Dean for Professional Practice and Programs, department chairs, leadership of the MPH and Applied Public Health programs, and deans of the Schools of Medicine and Nursing.

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Instructional Programs

The School offers more than 100 masters and doctoral degree programs through its 10 academic departments, the Graduate Training Programs in Clinical Investigation, and the Master of Public Health Program. The breadth and scope of these programs are consistent with the School's mission, size, and strategic plan objectives to respond to the academic needs of present and future public health practitioners and researchers. For example, the School recently developed academic programs in molecular epidemiology, bioinformatics, and information security/health policy. It offers a part-time/Internet-based MPH degree with the same admissions and graduation requirements as the full-time MPH degree. It also offers more than 50 online courses for academic credit, a wide range of continuing education courses, certificate programs, and OpenCourseWare online courses.

Each degree program has well-defined learning objectives and required courses specific to the program's discipline area and objectives. To ensure a broad understanding of public health issues, professional masters students (MPH and professional MHS) take at least one course in each of the core public health areas.² Similarly, all academic (research-oriented) masters (academic MHS and ScM) and PhD students participate in a course that introduces public health concepts and methods and the translation of research into policy and practice. All students prepare a written culminating document that synthesizes their academic experience in the form of a capstone project,³ masters essay, masters or PhD/ScD thesis, or DrPH dissertation. In addition, all professional MHS students fulfill a practicum/field experience requirement. The MPH Program reviews each applicant for professional public health experience. Those without sufficient experience must complete a practicum relevant to their career goals.

Individual progress is monitored by the student's academic advisor and degree program, and is evaluated through course work and the culminating experience. Professional masters students undertaking a practicum are also evaluated by their practicum preceptors and doctoral students undergo an annual review by their Thesis/Dissertation Advisory Committee. In addition, the School routinely monitors indicators such as graduation and job placement rates and time to graduation.

Despite the high caliber of students and academic programs, challenges exist. Some doctoral students have delays in completing their degree and a small proportion withdraw before completing it. Exit surveys of graduating MHS students suggest some dissatisfaction with the quality of mentoring and advising in some programs.

The School will continue to evaluate and refine all degree programs and their learning objectives to ensure quality and relevance to emerging public health challenges and to

² Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Health Services Administration, and Social and Behavioral Sciences

³ MPH students must complete a capstone project (written and oral presentation) that synthesizes, integrates, and applies skills and competencies acquired during the MPH degree program to public health practice problems

identify new areas for degree programs. Professional masters programs will continue to expand field experience options. All degree students will continue to be monitored by academic advisors, Thesis Advisory Committees, etc. The School will identify and reduce, to the extent possible, systematic barriers to timely graduation by doctoral students. Online courses will continue to be evaluated to ensure quality comparable to their on-campus counterparts.

Research

The School's large and multifaceted research activities are closely aligned with its educational programs and commitment to professional practice. Faculty and students participate in a broad range of quantitative, qualitative, and laboratory-based research related to public health problems and the sciences that underpin. Students are integrally involved in faculty research, benefiting from a rich environment where faculty continually seek solutions to some of the world's most pressing public health problems.

The success of the research programs is challenged by the flattening of federal monies for research. The School must, therefore, continue to monitor trends in federal and other sources of research funding. It also will track changing regulations and procedures for conducting research on human subjects and animals, and work to influence regulations that support our ability to conduct research ethically and efficiently. In addition, research and practice programs must be integrated to ensure that researchers and health professionals collaborate on the most important health problems and their potential solutions.

Service

The School's mission statement, Strategic Plan 2000, and faculty promotions criteria articulate our commitment to service and professional practice. Faculty actively participate in local, national, and international service and professional practice activities with governmental and non-governmental organizations and industry. School faculty are closely aligned with the Urban Health Institute (UHI). Core School funds were used to expand the Student Outreach Resource Center (SOURCE), lease a new East Baltimore building for community-based activities, and establish the Interdepartmental Applied Public Health Program (APH) that is charged with training the public health workforce and developing close working relationships with local and regional professional practitioners.

Professional practice opportunities for students are increasing and include local community-based activities, affiliation with centers and professional practice faculty engaged in service and professional practice, and courses that provide mentored field experiences. Nonetheless, integration of professional practice opportunities into the curriculum is challenged by the rapid pace of the School's academic programs. Integration of part-time professional practice faculty across the School has been slower than anticipated, although we expect the pace to

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increase.

We plan to continue strengthening our collaborations with local and regional community-based and governmental public health organizations, including increasing the scope of faculty and student engagement in UHI and APH activities, while ensuring community liaison involvement at every juncture. The School will continue to increase mentored professional practice opportunities for students and continuing education offerings to the public health workforce in Baltimore and elsewhere. In addition, the School is evaluating optimal methods to capture and describe the breadth and scope of faculty and student professional practice and service activities; currently there is no central reporting system.

Faculty

The School continues to focus substantial efforts to maintain an environment where faculty can carry out their scholarly, educational, and service activities to their maximum abilities. Faculty of all ranks participate in developing and modifying faculty and other School policies. The criteria for appointment and promotion are clearly detailed in a Policy and Procedure Memorandum. To maintain fiscal security, professorial appointments are based on planned roles in the School's academic programs. Formal mentoring support is provided for junior professorial faculty. Resources, though limited, are available for recruitment of underrepresented minority faculty. Sabbatical opportunities and core funding for research initiatives are available to professorial faculty members. Teaching workshops and other professional development opportunities are available to all faculty.

Despite its resources, the School must continue to develop and evaluate strategies to enhance the recruitment and retention of women and underrepresented minority faculty, particularly at the professorial level. Working with these faculty, the School needs to identify and mitigate obstacles to their recruitment and retention and provide them appropriate leadership opportunities and support. Continued vigilance is needed to assure that the tenure and non-tenure professorial tracks do not evolve into a hierarchy, valuing one over the other.

Students

The diversity of the student body is one of the School's many assets, enhancing academic, research, and practice activities of students and faculty. The diverse student body is recruited from a large, highly competitive pool of US and non-US applicants attracted by the scope and depth of our degree and non-degree options. Since the last self-study, School-sponsored student aid has increased to more than \$15 million, providing more opportunities for students from many backgrounds. The School has intensified its commitment to recruit and retain well-qualified disadvantaged and underrepresented US minorities. Enrollment rates for underrepresented US minorities and graduation rates for them and foreign nationals are similar to rates for all US students.

The School and departments will continue to use multifaceted recruitment strategies, including online information and efficient application processes. The School's principle fund-raising efforts will continue to focus on providing financial support for students. We will continue to target well-qualified disadvantaged and underrepresented US minorities and minimize their perceived barriers to application and enrollment. The School must also continue to identify factors related to failure to graduate, and develop and evaluate interventions for at-risk students. In addition, the School plans to expand nontraditional academic opportunities of the highest standards and commensurate with the School's faculty and other academic programs.

Information about the School's academic programs is available through various sources, including detailed, online academic program information easily accessible to prospective and current students, faculty, and staff. Once enrolled, each degree student is assigned an academic advisor from his/her degree program, invited to well-organized degree program orientation sessions, and offered a variety of counseling and career services.

The School solicits and is responsive to student concerns. The elected Student Assembly president meets monthly with members of the Advisory Board. Students sit on many School committees and participate in departmental and academic program reviews. Exit surveys provide feedback from graduating students about the quality of academic programs, services, and faculty advising. Concerns about the latter led to a review of and significant changes to the MPH advising system. The focus is now on improving academic advising in some MHS programs. A more direct and regular process is needed to evaluate the quality of mentoring and advising, and improvements will continue to be made to student services, including career services. These improvements will be based, in part, on qualitative and quantitative input from alumni. Finally, since the last self-study, students, faculty, and staff revised the course evaluation process. Because response rates to the exit surveys and course evaluations are not uniformly high across departments and academic programs, the School must continue to refine them to encourage higher response rates.

Evaluation and Planning

The School's leadership is committed to translating varied formal and informal evaluations from all of the School's constituencies into plans to strengthen the institution and reach out to new constituencies. Many of these activities are conducted on a routine basis, most often yearly. They enable the School to track its teaching, research, and professional practice activities across many domains.

A steering committee of students, staff, community representatives, and faculty from each department guided the self-study. The committee used many evaluation sources and processes, and involved numerous administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community participants. Discussions with the Advisory Board and Faculty Senate were held

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to apprise them of the self-study's status and to request input. The self-study draft report was posted on the School's Web site for review and input from interested parties, and a broad range of public health professionals was asked for comments to the School and CEPH. The final report is also posted online. The self-study report will inform the CEPH accreditation reviewers and the School's next strategic plan.