



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs

Cc: Nancy Nix, Committee Chair & Interim Director, Division of Population Health Sciences
Gabriel Garcia, Associate Professor of Public Health
Elizabeth Hodges Snyder, Associate Professor of Public Health

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Public Health Practice MPH

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): The Public Health Practice MPH is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role:

The mission of the Public Health Practice MPH, as stated in the UAA catalog and the program's Academic Assessment Plan, is to enhance health in diverse communities across Alaska, the circumpolar North, the nation and the world. This is accomplished through excellence in the education of public health practice leaders, scientific investigation of public health issues and engaging communities in an organized effort to identify, assess, prevent and mitigate community health challenges. The program addresses a broad array of public health issues that have been significant problems in Alaska. Students and faculty make an important contribution in promoting the health and wellbeing of people and communities. Market demand for program graduates is modest (most students are already employed, and 100% are employed after graduation). Growth in most public health professions is expected to be under 10%.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity:

The program has struggled with efficiency and productivity. Despite imposing a professional program fee equal to 50% of resident tuition, instructional costs exceed revenues from tuition and fees by more than 30%. Recent changes in faculty have not substantially impacted the program's low return on investment for instruction. While the program maintains a significant number of majors, most are part-time students. A significant number are outside of Alaska. Few students graduate from the program each year (an average of 12). On average, students required 5.7 years to complete an average of 36.3 credits (and the number of years required per degree has increased from 5.7 in 2013 to 6.9 in 2019). The program reports that efficiency and productivity increased in 2019. The program expects that these improvements will continue.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success:

The Public Health Practice MPH is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). In 2016, CEPH introduced new accreditation requirements and the program's curriculum was updated to comply with these new requirements. Unfortunately, CEPH was not able to validate coverage of all curricular components from these new accreditation criteria. As a result, the program was asked to prepare an interim report for the Council's winter 2020 meeting with updated documentation for the elements that could not be validated. This updated documentation was submitted in January 2020. The next reaccreditation is scheduled for fall 2023. The program regularly assesses its student learning outcomes, but Assessment Reports often lack detailed outcomes and recommendations. Despite these shortcomings, the program demonstrates a strong commitment to quality and student success. High impact practices are incorporated throughout the curriculum. For example, the curriculum incorporates service-learning activities, student reflections, and community-engaged research. Strong professional writing skills are developed in the majority of required courses. The program benefits from intensive community partnerships.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness:

There is no other Master of Public Health degree available in the state of Alaska.

Commendations and Recommendations:

The program makes an important contribution to the College of Health's efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of people and communities. It offers students throughout the state of Alaska a high quality program to address significant public health issues. The program maintains a strong focus on student success. Unfortunately, the program has struggled with efficiency and productivity. Trends are just beginning to improve. The program must reassess how to most efficiently maintain a high quality program for our students. For the program to continue, productivity must improve. The program should address these specific issues and should undergo another review within the next two academic years. The program is especially encouraged to evaluate its recruitment efforts, curriculum, course scheduling, and faculty workloads. The program is also encouraged to assess the impact of these factors on program efficiency and productivity. It is likely that efficiency could also be improved through greater collaboration with other graduate programs in the College of Health.

Decision:

Continued Review.