

2021 ANNUAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM
(Due October 15 to the dean)**PROGRAM SECTION (Due to the dean on October 15)****Submission date:** 10/12/2021**Submitted by:** Gabriel Garcia, MPH Program Coordinator, ggarc16@alaska.edu**Program(s) covered in this report:** Public Health Practice MPH

If you selected "Other" above, please identify. (100 characters or less)

College: College of Health**Campuses where the program(s) is delivered:** ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** Council on Education for Public Health**If explanation is necessary, such as only some of the certificates and degrees are covered by the specialized accreditation, briefly describe:****INSTITUTIONAL STUDENT LEARNING CORE COMPETENCIES**

In 2020, UAA launched a consensus-based, deliberative process to identify the key skillsets that help students achieve academic and post-graduation success. After a year-long process that included students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and employers, the UAA community identified four "core competencies" at the heart of a quality UAA education. Students develop mastery of these competencies through curricular (e.g., courses), co-curricular (e.g., internships, conferences), and extra-curricular (e.g., student clubs) learning experiences.

After the stakeholder-based process in AY20, UAA conducted a pilot project focusing on the core competency of Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility (PPCR). This decision was based on input from the 2020 Annual Academic Assessment Retreat.

Question #1 below is designed to engage program faculty in thinking about how they can or already do promote student learning in this core competency.

1. Personal, Professional, and Community Responsibility: The knowledge and skills necessary to promote personal flourishing, professional excellence, and community engagement.

- **What would you hope a student would say if asked where in your program or support service they had the opportunity to develop proficiency in this Core Competency? (500 characters or less)**

The UAA MPH Program has a strong emphasis in the competency related to personal, professional, and community responsibility. It is part of the program's mission, and it is addressed in our track-specific competencies. The core courses have specific activities and assignments related to building this specific university core competency. Moreover, the students are asked to demonstrate this competency when they do the program's required applied practice experience.

- **Do you have an example that could be a model for the university of an intentionally designed course, assignment, or activity that showcases the student learning in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

One of the assignments in HS A605: Public Health & Society asks the students to work with a local community health organization/agency to identify a public health issue relevant to them and their target population. Once an issue is identified, the student and community partner work together to develop a public health communication tool/material.

- **Do you have any ideas about where your program or the university might develop other intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop proficiency in this core competency? ☒ Yes ☐ No**

If yes, please briefly describe. (500 characters or less)

Our program requires students to work with a community partner in an applied practice experience. In that experience, students develop a minimum of two deliverables where they demonstrate both foundational public health and track-specific competencies, many of which address this university core competency. It is possible that this kind of requirement to be translated to other university programs or settings.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

2. Please list the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY21. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.

Example: Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.

Our program has a total of 12 student learning objectives (SLOs) that address profession and science of public health and factors related to human health; 22 foundational public health competencies

(FPHCs) that address evidence-based approaches to public health, public health and health care systems, planning and management to promote health, policy in public health, leadership, communication, interprofessional practice, and systems thinking; and 5 track-specific competencies (TSCs) that address public health response, applied research and evaluation, professionalism and ethics, diversity and cultural humility, and circumpolar health. In the past two academic years (AY 19-20 and AY 20-21), we focused our assessment on our 12 SLOs and 22 FPHCs. We didn't focus on our TSCs because we were making changes to it in the past two academic years. All of our SLOs and FPHCs met faculty expectations based on the following reasons. First, our accreditor assessed the topics, activities, and assignments of all our core courses via their review of our course syllabi in AY 19-20 and they determined that, collectively, all of our core courses address all 12 SLOs and 22 FPHCs. Secondly, our analysis of student self-assessment of our SLOs and FPHCs both in AY 19-20 and AY 20-21 showed that there was a significant increase in our students' acquisition of the 12 SLOs and 22 FPHCs from the time they entered our program compared to the time they exited our program. However, of the 22 FPHCs, we found that while we are meeting all our competencies, the competency related to epidemiological methods ("Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice") received a lower average than others.

3. Describe your assessment process in AY21 for these program student learning outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (750 characters or less)

Our assessment process involves collecting various data and providing several opportunities to address any areas of concern. We conduct baseline, midpoint, and exit survey among our students to have them rate their acquisition of the program SLOs, FPHCs, and TPCs. We also have our graduating students create an ePortfolio that allows them to file artifacts that pertain to each SLOs, FPHCs, and TPCs. Additionally, our alumni are surveyed regarding the competencies they use in their work. Any areas of concern from our findings are discussed and addressed during MPH faculty retreats and meetings, as well as advisory committee meetings.

4. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (750 characters or less)

Based on the student survey results and ePortfolios submitted both in AY 19-20 and AY 20-21, our main finding is that, by the time our students complete our program, they have acquired all 12 SLOs and 22 FPHCs. However, as mentioned in item #2, the competency related to epidemiological methods received lower than average student acquisition rating compared to all other competencies, which suggests that perhaps we need to further reinforce this competency in other core courses and/or offer more elective courses that address this competency. Additionally, since data on students' acquisition of TSCs have not been collected in the past two years (due to changes in TSCs), next year's assessment will include this.

- 5. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please describe the recommended action, what improvement in student learning the program hopes to see with this change, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (750 Characters or less)**

To address the lower than average student rating of epidemiological methods, three core courses (615, 626, & 629) were revised to address this competency. Additionally, in AY 21-22, we plan to have a presentation by a state epidemiologist highlighting the practical application of epidemiology methods in public health practice and to create excitement about the field. Further, we will offer electives that focus on public health methods and epidemiology. We anticipate that these activities will help increase students' acquisition rating of the epidemiological methods competency. To get a better understanding of competencies that may have lower ratings in future assessments, we plan to conduct follow-up surveys or focus groups with students.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS AND ASSESSING IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

- 6. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the program student learning outcomes? Please check all that apply.**

- ☒ Course curriculum changes
- ☐ Course prerequisite changes
- ☐ Changes in teaching methods
- ☐ Changes in advising
- ☒ Degree requirement changes
- ☐ Degree course sequencing
- ☐ Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- ☐ Changes in program policies/procedures
- ☐ Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- ☐ College-wide initiatives (e.g., High Impact Practices)
- ☐ Faculty, staff, student development
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No changes were implemented in AY21.

If you checked "Other" above, please describe. (100 characters or less)

- 7. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (750 characters or less)**

In previous years, we had several students having difficulties progressing in the project/thesis practicum stage in our program. Thus, in AY 20-21, we replaced our HS A698/A699: Project/Thesis

Practicum (5 cr) requirement with HS A695: Applied Practice Experience (3 cr) and HS A696: Integrative Learning Experience (2 cr) to help facilitate a more efficient degree completion among our students. This change was also more in line with our accreditation requirements. With this change, we graduated a record number of MPH students (more than 30) from our program last academic year.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND THE CLOSING OF EQUITY GAPS

8. **Programs are not required to respond to question #8 below for their report due on October 15, 2021. Question #8 will be required for the next round and moving forward.**
9. **Do you have any examples of post-graduate success you want to highlight? For example, major scholarships, the percent of students who pass licensure examinations, the percent of students accepted to graduate programs, the percent in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field. (750 characters or less)**

Some examples of our recent postgrad successes are as follows: 1) All our MPH students who graduated last two years are employed. 2) Two of our alumni recently were accepted in doctoral programs, and one just completed a doctoral program and is now working as a Program Analyst for the US Air Force. 3) One of our recent graduates was instrumental in facilitating hospital and community response to the pandemic in Juneau. 4) In spring 2021, one of our alumni was featured in UA's "Did You Know" project which highlighted an area of university excellence and its impact to the state's economy through the story of its graduates. 5) Two of our alumni are currently working at ANTHC's Epi Center, helping address the needs of AK Native communities.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

1. **Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? Is there a particular area the program should focus on? (750 characters or less)**
The Public Health Practice MPH includes the development of personal, professional, and community responsibility in its mission, competencies, and curriculum. The program conducts a detailed assessment of student learning outcomes and foundational public health competencies. Results clearly show that students achieve all outcomes, even though they struggle with epidemiological methods more than with other competencies. Course revisions were implemented to improve student achievement. The program also made significant changes to its thesis requirement. I commend the program for graduating a record number of students.
2. **Is there something the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, including the closing of equity gaps, that might**



serve as a model for other programs? If yes, please explain. You may skip this question. (750 characters or less)

In preparation for next year's assessment report, I encourage the program to examine equity gaps in student success and address those gaps.

Dean's signature:

André B. Rosay

Date: 1/6/2022