



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The Graduate School
G-1 Communications
Box 353770
Seattle, Washington 98195-3770

Telephone: (206)543-5900

Fax: (206)685-3234

February 14, 2006

To: Phyllis Wise, Provost
Ana Mari Cauce, Executive Vice Provost
Office of the Provost, Box 351237

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean
The Graduate School

RE: Department of Epidemiology Review

At its meeting of February 2, 2006, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the Department of Epidemiology and with Fred Connell (Associate Dean of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine), Scott Davis (Professor and Chair of the Department of Epidemiology), and Stephen Schwartz (Professor and Director of the Epidemiology Graduate Program).

The Department of Epidemiology was last reviewed in 1993. The M.S. and Ph.D. programs were granted continuing status at that time, with subsequent review in 10 years. The Department currently offers the M.S. in Epidemiology, the M.P.H. in Epidemiology, and the Ph.D. in Epidemiology. The M.P.H. is a School-wide program that will be reviewed in 2006-07. The Epidemiology review site visit was conducted on May 12-13, 2005, at which time the review committee met with Department faculty, students, and staff.

The review committee emphasized the great strength of this department, as one of the best in the country for both research and graduate education in epidemiology. Strong department leadership, high faculty morale and collegiality, and the high quality of graduate students all contributed to the committee's positive assessment of the program. The committee noted the following areas in which improvements could be made:

- 1) A lack of adequate state resources threatens the Department's teaching mission that, in addition to serving the Department's own students, also serves students in other units;
- 2) Dispersal of departmental personnel over a large, multi-building area with a lack of shared, centralized space limits vital exchanges among faculty and students;
- 3) Need for a process to examine the curriculum systematically in order to remain on the forefront of national trends;
- 4) Need for a broad strategic planning process;
- 5) Consideration of ways better to integrate the resident interdisciplinary programs into the Department.

The Graduate School Council commended the department for the successes they have achieved despite their limitations with respect to space and state resources and noted the high esteem in which it is held nationwide. However, the Council expressed concerns about the tensions inherent in a situation where sponsored research is the primary funding mechanism for most of the faculty. The ratio of Department faculty to state FTEs is approximately 10 to 1, which leaves little faculty time designated for either governance, mentoring, or programmatic innovation. While this funding model is not unique to this program, it is at an extreme case that demands attention. It was noted that the upcoming strategic planning process is an opportunity for the department to explore ways of finding a better balance of these tensions.

The Graduate School recommends the Department of Epidemiology's graduate programs be granted continuing status, with the next review conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year.

c: Mark Emmert, President
 Patricia Wahl, Dean, School of Public Health and Community Medicine
 Frederick Connell, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Public Health and Community Medicine
 Scott Davis, Professor and Chair, Department of Epidemiology
 Adam Grupp, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate
 David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School
 Members of the Department of Epidemiology Review Committee
 Graduate School Council