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May 22, 2007

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

From: Suzanne Ortega, Vice Provost and Dean  
Melissa Austin, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

RE: Review of the Department of Health Services

At its meeting of January 11, 2007, the Graduate School Council met with members of the team that reviewed the Department of Health Services (Roger A. Roffman, Professor, Social Work (Committee Chair); Frederica W. O'Connor, Associate Professor, Psychosocial & Community Health; and Jane M. Simoni, Associate Professor, Psychology), and with William Dowling, Chair, Department of Health Services, Diane Martin, Director of the Ph.D. program in Health Services, and Emily White, Associate Dean for Research, School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

The Department of Health Services was established in 1970 when the School of Public Health and Community Medicine was founded. The Ph.D. degree in Health Services was established in 2000, and this was the first comprehensive review of that program. The M.S. program began admitting students once again in 1997 after a long hiatus. While the programmatic scope of this review was limited to the PhD and MS degrees, the review committee was also asked to consider questions regarding the general health of the Department as a whole. The current review committee, including its external members (Jeffrey A. Alexander, Professor of Health Management and Policy, School of Public Health; Professor, Organizational Behavior and Human Resources, School of Business, University of Michigan and Bryan Dowd, Professor, Health Services Research and Policy, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota) held its formal on-site review on May 18-19, 2006.

The review committee was impressed by the quality and success of the Ph.D. program after only five years, particularly in light of the limited resources available. The committee noted the commendable leadership of Professor Diane Martin, Program Director, as well as the dedication of core faculty, and the research excellence in the Department. The department was considered

to be effective in articulating program goals and the expectations for students. Among the current cohort of doctoral students, there is considerable ethnic diversity, the degree completion rate is high, and student involvement in governance is good. The review committee reported that the Department staff spoke highly of the quality of interactions between staff, faculty, and students, noting a positive and respectful working culture.

Areas of concern noted by the review committee were: 1) the pros and cons of using a problem-based curriculum focus vs. discipline-based curriculum focus and the intellectual foundation of the program; and 2) preparedness of faculty in working with students who are academically capable, but lack readiness for doctoral work. It was noted that the Department uses a faculty point system to allocate existing resources, and recognized that the system risks creating faculty who are less attentive to student mentoring and service to the university community in the context of the low level of Departmental funding. The review committee urged the university to support fundraising efforts by the Department to raise external funds for doctoral students. The review committee also encouraged the department to locate the doctoral program more centrally within the school so that resources could potentially be shared with the highly regarded masters program. Please see the Review Committee report for a complete list of recommendations.

The Department Chair thanked the review committee for its insightful, thorough and helpful report. The faculty agree that the strength of the program is largely due to the director's leadership, and noted that approximately 60 applicants apply for only 6-8 doctoral places each year. The Department is committed to continuing to work on improving the diversity of the faculty. The Chair agreed the Ph.D. program could be more centrally located to promote a more cohesive culture. The program continues to be under funded and the Chair welcomed the review committee's recommendation that the university increase the department's instructional funding to meet this critical need. The Ph.D. program director pointed out the program is in a new field, and that a pragmatic approach was applied to develop the curriculum that designed to address the multidisciplinary problems of health services. She noted that the faculty recently revisited the curriculum, and continues to discuss the disciplinary-based approach as an alternative. The Associate Dean for Research acknowledged that both research and teaching are under funded in the Department, but does not consider the two unbalanced. During the Council discussion, it was also noted that all students in the Ph.D. program have funding for at least the first, and most often, the second year. At that time, students are generally linked with a faculty member for research support.

The Graduate School Council agreed with the Review committee recommendation that the Department of Health Services be reviewed again in 10 years, during the 2016-20017 academic year. The Council also supported the Review Committee's recommendation to encourage the Dean of the School of Public Health to find ways of increasing funding in support Department's instructional mission. Finally, the Council requested an interim report after 3 years, during the 2009-2010 academic year, to review responses to the committee's recommendations by both the Department and the University, and in particular to assure that the University attends to the needs of the Department. We concur with these recommendations.

cc: Patricia W. Wahl, Dean, School of Public Health and Community Medicine  
Frederick A. Connell, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,  
School of Public Health and Community Medicine  
William Dowling, Chair, Department of Health Services  
David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School  
Kimberly Friese, President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
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Graduate School Council