



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

January 27, 2011

To: Gerald Baldasty, Dean
The Graduate School

From: Frederick A. Connell, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs *FAC*
School of Public Health

Subject: Graduate School Program Review of the School of Public Health Graduate Certificate Program

Below is the School of Public Health response to the Graduate Program Review Committee Report of May 21, 2010.

The program faculty, staff, and I would like to thank the Committee for what we feel is an accurate and fair assessment of our overall Graduate Certificate Program and the individual Graduate Certificates or “pathways”. We agree with all of their findings and have no additional comments or clarifications. Below we respond to the specific recommendations listed in their report.

Recommendations:

- 1. Internal review: We believe the SPH-GCP provides a high quality educational experience for learners. Nonetheless, we recommend that the SPH school-level curriculum committee complete internal reviews of all certificate programs curricula regularly (every 2-3 years) to evaluate best practices and ongoing program quality....**

We agree with this recommendation. The School’s Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee will institute a bi-annual meeting of all Certificate pathway directors to share successes and issues, to troubleshoot, and to promote optimal uniformity of program requirements and effort.

- 2. Capstone variability: The range of intensity required for the capstone is large. In the emerging ABB environment, you may wish to consider structuring the capstone to better capture the faculty effort either through documentation of student credit hours (i.e., course credit) or looking for creative opportunities for integration (i.e., an integrative seminar or research symposium that might address multiple certificate programs)....**

While the full implementation of ABB may be some years away, the faculty associated with the Global Health Certificate is currently reviewing the nature and faculty effort required for the Global Health Certificate Capstone Project. In addition, the bi-annual reviews described under (1) above will provide a forum to review and improve the capstone or integrative experiences in the various programs.

- 3. Assess outcomes of certificate programs via central mechanism: ...We would recommend that you consider evaluating the value of the SPH certificate programs for marketing and student recruitment purposes, employability, and success in future career goals. You might want to consider using student exit surveys, alumnae surveys, employer surveys, and the like. In addition, surveying students who do not complete the certificate might be useful to better understand obstacles and perceived benefits from their perspective.**

We are adding assessment of the capstone experience to both exit and alumni surveys. Program staff will try to assess reasons for non-completion on an informal basis by contacting certificate students before the expected time of graduation.

- 4. Consider requesting a mechanism to sunset pathways: At this time it appears that pathways that are no longer being offered, and where there are no plans to offer in the foreseeable future, remain listed in official school documentation....**

The sunsetting of certificate pathways is not administratively difficult and, in fact, has been exercised by some pathways in response to low demand. Annual review of the pathways by the Dean's office will also promote eliminating programs which do not appear to have a sufficient enrollment.

- 5. Tracks versus certificates: The self-study asked for guidance on whether certificates could replace tracks within the SPH. The answer to this question is not clear. For some, the certificate allows specialization across departments. In others, the certificates are an added value to the graduate degree. It is not clear whether removing tracks will solve the problem as articulated. In addition, it is not clear how this decision will be affected by implementation of ABB. We are not able to offer guidance for this question.**

The Department of Health Services has eliminated formal tracks so that, in fact, the Certificates now do offer the way to have a concentration, e.g. in Maternal and Child Health, formally recognized on the transcript.

- 6. New topics for pathways: This issue was raised in the questions poised in the self-study. One student in the review session suggested a new pathway in nutrition. ...How generation of certificates (versus degrees or tracks) are counted in ABB will be critical to your decision-making.**

Generally, we have found that it is best to rely on faculty to generate proposals for new Certificate pathways. Since the May 2010 review, faculty have consulted with the Dean's Office

for assistance in developing Certificate pathways in Nutrition and in Global Injury Control. Any new proposals require approval by the parent department and the School of Public Health Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee. Currently, the ABB-related financial implications are being modeled theoretically, but approvals are not contingent on these analyses.

7. Expansion of certificate programs to GNM students via fee-based mechanism: As noted in the self-study, this question has become considerably more complicated in the ensuing months....

At the present time one of our Certificates (Global Health) does allow GNM students to enroll. Without ABB support, it is not clear that this practice will continue or that other pathways will choose to admit GNM students. The possibility of using the fee-based approach has gained some interest in the past six months as the school has explored moving some degree programs to a fee-based model. As a result, we have learned more about the factors that make a fee-based program feasible. This may lead to moving some of the Public Health Certificate pathways to a fee-based model in the future.

In summary, we are grateful to the review committee for their thoughtful review and helpful recommendations. The School of Public Health Graduate Certificate Program serves a valued function for our school and students and we are gratified that the committee concluded that this Program is worth continuing. We are also pleased, of course, that the committee recommended a 10-year cycle for the next review; nevertheless, we take their first recommendation to heart, and will assure the more frequent internal reviews and discussions are instituted.

cc: Dean Howard Frumkin
Victoria Holt, Chair SPH Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee
Program Directors