

Criterion X.B – Self-Study Process

For purposes of seeking accreditation by CEPH, the school shall conduct an analytical self-evaluation and prepare a self-study document that responds to all criteria in this manual.

Expected Documentation

1. Provision of all documentation specified as being expected.
2. Description of the process used for the self-study.
3. An analysis of the school's responses to recommendations in the last accreditation report, if any.
4. Summary statement of the school's strengths and weaknesses in regard to each accreditation criterion and to the school's performance overall. (This statement may be organized as an executive summary, if the school so chooses.)
5. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.

Criterion X.B – Self-Study Process

1. Documentation

All documentation requested by CEPH is provided in either the main self-study document or the appendices.

2. Self-Study Process

The self-study for reaccreditation began more than a year before the self-study report was due, with a listing of all tasks related to conducting the self-study and producing the report. This list was reviewed by the Executive Committee and each task had an assigned team responsible for overseeing and completing that task (see Appendix X.B.1). In addition, an ad hoc committee including faculty, students alumni, and administration developed, administered and analyzed surveys of all current students in the fall semester of 2005 and a sample of alumni who have graduated since spring 1995. Drafts of the self-study document were posted on the UIC Blackboard site and provisions were made for comments. Drafts were reviewed by the Executive Committee during regularly scheduled meetings, as well as in a couple of extended retreat-type meetings, and the assessment of the extent to which each criterion was met was made by that committee.

3. Responses to Last Accreditation Report

The 1999 Accreditation Report highlighted two criteria that were met with commentary (Criterion V.A. and Criterion VIII.C). The remaining criteria were fully met.

Criterion V.A

With respect to this criterion, there were two areas of concern to the site team, both of which were addressed in our response to the initial site visit report. First, the site team report stated that the MPH tracks in community health sciences did not constitute a specialization in behavioral sciences per se. The behavioral science concentration is evident within our Community Health Sciences division and students can, and do, select this as a concentration for their degree programs. Further, as was true at the last site visit, behavioral scientists are prevalent throughout the school, thus giving students in at least three of the divisions, exposure to social sciences methods within an interdisciplinary context in courses within and beyond the core curriculum. The second issue at the time concerned the MPH in biostatistics, which at the time of the site visit had not been approved for implementation by all of the university committees. Subsequent to the site visit and prior to the final vote of the CEPH Board, these approvals were garnered and the MPH in Quantitative Methods has been in existence since the fall 1999 semester.

Criterion VIII.C

This criterion was deemed met with commentary both in the initial site team report and in the

final report issued from CEPH. The report commended the SPH on the attention directed towards achieving faculty diversity, but also stated that achieving faculty diversity is particularly important at UIC. Our current consensus is we still deem this as a met with commentary. Given the nature of the tenure system, the lack of a required age at retirement and the limited resources available in state institutions like UIC, changes in the faculty complement mostly, but not entirely, come from hiring new assistant professors. The school has achieved diversity through strategic tenure track hires. While overall we recognize that inequalities remain in the associate professor and professor academic ranks (we have made some strides with respect to increasing the percentage of women who are professors), the future of the school faculty can be seen in the assistant professor rank where over 30% of the faculty are from underrepresented groups, albeit none are Hispanic. When we have had the opportunity, we have made important strides in diversifying our faculty. We are not satisfied, and we realize more work remains. We are focused on being successful in this endeavor. As of this writing, our HPA division has just finalized the recruitment of an African American female assistant professor who will join our faculty in August, 2006. Further, the dean has leveraged resources from a recent retirement for our health disparities strategic initiatives. One faculty line has been set aside for an under-represented minority faculty candidate and the other two lines will, as is true for all new searches, make every effort to diversify the faculty.

4. Summary Statement

The strategic planning process carried out in 2004-2005 and the self-study reaccreditation process has combined to help the school identify areas of strength, of weakness and of potential for growth. Both the strategic planning and the self-study involved faculty, staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders. The school has benefited greatly from these planning efforts and will continue to benefit as the reaccreditation process continues. Below, we summarize our strengths and weaknesses for each of the ten criteria. Overall, our assessment is that the school is a strong, highly respected presence in the university and in the community; we have a highly productive faculty in terms of teaching, service and research; we have an academically strong and ethnically diverse student body; we are in a dynamic setting in which to carry out our mission; and we enjoy strong institutional support and adequate resources. We recognize the national and state resource and policy challenges facing us and are well positioned within UIC, the regional community and nationally to meet these challenges.

Criterion I – Mission, Goals and Objectives

Strengths

- The school has a broad public health mission which it interprets in a manner appropriate to its position in a land-grant state institution in a large urban area of the Midwest. We focus, as appropriate, on instruction, research and public health practice and community service. Our mission and vision are supported by the goals and objectives developed, and articulated, by our strategic planning efforts. Our new strategic plan identifies strategic priorities that respond to the shifting challenges facing public health.

Concern:

- There are no concerns regarding mission, goals and objectives.

Criterion II – Organizational Setting**Strength**

- The organizational setting (Criterion II.A.) of the school provides excellent support for fulfilling the mission and vision. The school, an integral and equal part of UIC, is one of 15 colleges in a major Research I university and is one of the health science colleges making up a complete academic health center. This setting provides a rich interdisciplinary context for teaching, research and service. The Chicago setting provides opportunities to work with a wide variety of cultures in an urban environment. Our health science links to other UIC campuses (e.g., Rockford, Peoria, Springfield) allows for expansion of our interdisciplinary teaching, research and service activities into a rural context.
- The school provides the appropriate organizational setting (Criterion II.B) for our mission and vision. Our interdisciplinary coordination, cooperation and collaboration are supported by SPH and UIC. The University and the campus are supporting a culture of cross-disciplinary approaches to our land grant mission. The SPH is viewed as an innovative leader on campus which affords us special consideration at many levels campuswide.

Concern

There are still some walls to break down and lessons to learn in terms of nurturing interdisciplinary, cross college, research and teaching efforts.

Criterion III – Governance**Strength**

- The University has a policy of shared governance. Within the school, the rights and responsibilities concerning school governance and academic policies are defined clearly for the school administration and the faculty and staff. That faculty discussions are often frank and stimulating reflects the respect and trust which has developed over time between the administration and faculty and across the divisions. Students have several opportunities to participate in the governance process.

Concerns

- Student involvement in governance could be improved – the SPH has expanded opportunities for student participation but a few committee slots for students remain unfilled.

Criterion IV – Resources

Strengths

- The student faculty ratio is quite reasonable—we have an adequate critical mass of faculty in all core areas of the school and our target enrollments of students mirror the number appropriate to maintain the current overall ratio.
- Indirect cost recoveries have more than doubled since the last self-study, an indication of increased research productivity of the faculty.
- Our new building which houses 3 of 4 academic units and several small centers, is a nice environment in which to work. The new building for our Institute for Health Research and Policy has brought these researchers closer to most of the faculty at the school, allowing for easier collaborations.

Concerns

- The decline in state funding for higher education and the reduction in our state budgetary allocation over the last several years is a challenge we and other state funded institutions face.
- The decline in federal research dollars may limit our ability to continue increasing our research success.
- The building housing our Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences division is in need of upgrading, most especially the laboratories.

Criterion V – Instructional Programs

Strengths

- We added a Masters in Healthcare Administration degree in fall 2006 and revised our DrPH program to make it a schoolwide degree program (Criterion V.A). Both of these efforts were the result of extensive analysis of the needs and interests of the public health workforce and the School commitment to applied public health.
- The school has revised learning objectives that are in line with the various disciplines and general public health competencies (Criterion V.C.).
- The School now offers a completely online MPH in public health informatics (Criterion V.H). This program is attracting students from all over the world.

Criterion VI – Research

Strengths

- We continue to be first in per capita research funding for our campus. Our research program is totally consistent with our mission and vision.
- Our grant success rate is approximately 65%, evidence of excellent efforts on the part of our researchers.
- Faculty have increased their research productivity in terms of dollars awarded per FTE faculty by more than 2.5 times and faculty visibility in terms of publications and presentations is very good.
- Our new SPH Office of Research Services is providing excellent support for faculty and students in terms of pre-award grant activity. This has allowed for the expansion of research activity in the School by supplementing the divisions research staff in times of high grant submission activity.
- Our students are increasingly successful in competing for grant support for their dissertation research.

Concern

- We are concerned about the downward trend in the grant success rate—a national trend as well as the routine cost cutting of awarded grants.

Criterion VII – Service

Strengths

- As a state school, we take pride in our service record and are a frequent partner with community groups, the city, counties and state in research/service projects. We frequently partner with health agencies on video conferencing, in particular, assisting them to reach minority and underserved communities (e.g., rural local health departments).
- Our continuing education activities have greatly expanded their reach.

Criterion VIII – Faculty

Strength

- Our faculty are well trained with diverse educational backgrounds and experience. This provides a multi-disciplinary educational experience for our students and clearly supports the school's mission. The faculty maintains strong links with national research organizations and with the practice community which enhances the educational

experience of our students and further facilitates our ability to achieve our strategic objectives.

Concern

- The associate professor and professor ranks are not yet as diverse as we would like (Criterion VIII.C). We plan to continue our strong efforts to recruit minority faculty and to mentor and support all junior faculty so that, ultimately, minority faculty will be adequately represented in all ranks.

Criterion IX – Students

Strengths

- The school, through the activities of the Committee on Admissions and Recruitment Policies, the Office of Urban Health and Diversity Programs, the Office of Student Affairs and the academic divisions has developed recruitment and admissions policies that reflect our mission (Criterion IX.A).
- We have one of only two currently funded HCOP programs in a school of public health. Our student diversity continues to increase. Our student diversity is the greatest among professional schools on campus (Criterion IX.B).
- The school has been successful in admitting interesting, committed and diverse students with excellent academic and practice qualifications (Criteria IX.A and B).
- Many students are hired as research assistants or teaching assistants and thus qualify for a tuition waiver (Criterion IX.C).

Concern

- Tuition is increasing, due to the reduction in state funding to the university. We need to actively seek more funds to assist our students in affording a public health education. It is important that we keep our research funding up so we have research assistantship money for students.

Criterion X – Evaluation and Planning

Strengths

- The school has many mechanisms for planning and evaluation, ranging from course planning and evaluation to planning and evaluation at the division and school level (Criterion X.A).
- The school completed a comprehensive strategic planning effort in 2004, which involved the entire school and external stakeholders (Criterion X.A).

5. Assessment

This criterion is met. The UIC has completed a comprehensive and inclusive self-study. We have addressed problems identified by the prior self-study, and identified some new ones in the course of the current self-study. The self-study involved faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members.