1998

Curricular Report No. 8A from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate: Proposal for a Master's in Public Health Degree

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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TO: President Robert L. Carothers
FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Curricular Report No. 8A from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate: Proposal for a Master's in Public Health Degree is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.

3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on May 14, 1998.

4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

5. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective June 4, 1998, three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Governors for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

   May 15, 1998
   (date)

   Leland Jackson
   Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate
FROM: President of the University

   Returned.

   a. Approved ___.

   b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors ___.

   c. Disapproved ___.

   5/20/98
   (date)

   President

Form revised 9/91
MASTER'S IN PUBLIC HEALTH DEGREE

At Meeting No. 347 held on 17 April, 1998, the Graduate Council approved the following proposal which is now submitted to the Faculty Senate.

SECTION I

ABSTRACT

The Graduate Council approved the proposal for a Master’s in Public Health (MPH) degree and voted to recommend approval at the Class C level (funding of the proposed new program is recommended should additional funds be made available to the University). The interdisciplinary program would be offered through the Graduate Professional Center at URI’s College of Continuing Education in Providence.

BACKGROUND

The Master’s in Public Health degree is proposed as a collaborative effort among the University’s health sciences programs and the RI Department of Health. The program is designed to provide the basic professional degree for front-line public health professionals in the fields of behavioral health, environmental health, epidemiology, and health care policy and management.

The proposal was reviewed under the process established by the Faculty Senate in which the Graduate Council serves as the Coordinating and Review Committee for new graduate program proposals. Announcements of the receipt of the proposal were sent to the President and the Joint Educational Policy Committee (JEPC), the Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Graduate Directors. Recommendations were sought from each of these groups. Comments and recommendations from these groups are appended, have been kept on file in the Graduate School, and were considered in the Graduate Council’s review.

The JEPC voted to approve the proposal with the following stipulations:

1. That funding be secured for a minimum three-year period from the cooperating agency as proposed.

2. That the program be led by a coordinator who will be responsible to the Provost through a lead dean.

3. That additional opportunities for collaboration be explored with the University’s MPA program and other related programs at Rhode Island College.
The review from the Budget Office stated, "... there will be no additional costs to the University of Rhode Island's unrestricted budget." Further, it was reported, "Any deficits or surpluses which the MPH degree program generates will be covered by the funds in the Graduate Professional Center's cost center account."

The Council of Deans recommended that the University proceed with the MPH to begin in 1999, and unanimously endorsed the establishment of the program if new funding can be identified. The endorsement from the Council of Deans carried the following understandings:

1. The University has strengths in the area of Health, and this program would clearly enhance one of the University's identified focus areas.

2. Faculty members on campus indicate that this would be a magnet for additional funding from federal agencies.

3. The deans feel it is important that we initiate conversations immediately with the appropriate accrediting agency and that we bring in a consultant to review the proposal as it moves forward. We have agreed to do this immediately, and funding for this has been identified.

4. The support from the deans comes with the understanding that we will use our traditional pricing policy. A special pricing policy with a lower tuition would cause problems with existing programs (e.g., the MBA).

**SECTION II**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Graduate Council approved the following proposal for a new Master's in Public Health at its regular meeting on 17 April, 1998. The proposal is now presented to the Faculty Senate with a recommendation for approval at the Class C level - funding for the proposed new program is recommended should additional funds be made available to the University. (Following is an abbreviated version of the proposal in the format required by the Board of Governors for Higher Education. A complete copy of the proposal including appendices is available for review in the Faculty Senate Office.)

**PROPOSAL FOR A MASTER'S IN PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) DEGREE**

**A. Program Information**

1. **Name of Institution:**
   University of Rhode Island (in conjunction with the Rhode Island Department of Health)

2. **Colleges Involved:**
   Nursing, Pharmacy, Arts and Sciences, Human Science and Services, Resource Development, Engineering, and Business
3. **Title of Proposed Program:**
   Master’s in Public Health (MPH)

4. **Effective Date of Program:**
   September, 1999

5. **Anticipated Date for First Degrees:**
   June, 2003

6. **Intended Location of Program:**
   Graduate Professional Center
   College of Continuing Education

7. **Institutional Review/Approval Process:**

   Date approved
   
   Program Development Committee  1/23/98
   Health Science Focus Group  1/26/98

   Deans of Participating Colleges:
   
   Dayle H, Joseph, Nursing  1/26/98
   Louis Luzzi, Pharmacy  1/26/98
   Barbara Brittingham, Human Science and Services  3/17/98
   Winifred Brownell, Arts and Sciences  1/26/98
   Margaret Leinen, Resource Development  2/3/98
   Thomas Kim, Engineering  1/26/98
   Frank Budnick, Business Administration  1/26/98
   Walter Crocker, Continuing Education  1/27/98

   Graduate Council  4/17/98
   Faculty Senate  5/14/98
   President of the University

8. **Summary of Proposed Program:** An interdisciplinary Master’s in Public Health (MPH) is proposed as a collaborative effort among the University’s health sciences programs and the RI Department of Health. Offered through the Graduate Professional Center at URI’s College of Continuing Education in Providence, the program will provide the basic professional degree for front-line public health
professionals in the fields of behavioral health, environmental health, epidemiology, and health care policy and management. Program specialty tracks in these areas will use existing courses offered at URI, plus an internship and project requirement to be established.

9. **Resources:**

(See APPENDIX for Budget)

a. **Income:** Student fees. Per course student fees have been established by the URI College of Continuing Education for its graduate professional program courses. These fees are standard for both in-state and out-of-state students. The current and projected future amounts over the next three years is $595 per three-credit course.

Projected number of students. The MPH program will initially admit a limited number of students (15 in the first year) to insure program quality and managed growth. Subsequent years we expect to have a total of 30 students in the program in year 2 and 40 in year 3. Numbers slightly in excess of these may be admitted, assuming some normal program attrition.

b. **Expenses:** Program coordinator. The program coordinator will be released from teaching 3 courses per year (at the rate of $3,000 per course), for a total of $9,000 per year. This instructional release time will enable him/her to devote the necessary effort to program development and management, accreditation preparation, and student and faculty recruitment.

Faculty stipends. As indicated earlier, faculty will have the option of "on load" or "off load" instructional payment for this program, at the level of $3,000 per course.

Track coordinator stipends. Those four faculty who provide leadership in each of the MPH program specialty tracks will be released from teaching one course per year for their time in program administration. Two such faculty will be released in years 1 and 2, and three in year 3 as new program tracks are brought on-line.

Operating. A modest amount of in-state travel support to allow the Program Coordinator to travel to meetings and to make presentations to promote the MPH program will be necessary. Advertising in newspapers and other media will be necessary for student recruitment. Transcript fees support the production of official University transcripts for enrolled students. Library resources (outlined earlier) include the purchase of expanded serials and books necessary to support this new program.
Overhead. Standard overhead charged by the College of Continuing Education is 25%, to cover office support staff, mailings, brochure development, copying, and student costs.

10. Signature of the President

Robert L. Carothers

11. Persons to be contacted during the review:

Dr. Dayle Joseph, Interim Dean College of Nursing
White Hall
874-5300

Dr. Blair M. Lord
Vice Provost
Carlotti Building
874-2447

Dr. Phillip Clark, Director
Program in Gerontology
White Hall
874-2689

B. RATIONALE

1. Public Health as a Field: Public health initiatives historically have accounted for dramatic improvements in life expectancy and quality of life, and once again this field is at the forefront of health developments for the future. The mission of public health is to "fulfill society's interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy" (Institute of Medicine, 1988). Its focus is on the community or population as a whole, rather than the individuals that comprise it. Generally, public health practitioners address concerns related to the primary and secondary determinants of disease, dysfunction, and premature deaths, and the planning and organization of health services, including health promotion. Public health is the quintessential interdisciplinary health field, drawing on the fields of epidemiology, biostatistics, behavioral science, environmental health, and administration and management. Indeed, these disciplines constitute the "five pillars" of public health.

The current era is marked by rapid and dramatic changes in the organization and payment of health care services, challenges posed by the aging of the population, new understanding of preventing such old diseases as cancer and the advent of new diseases such as AIDS, and growing concerns about environmental quality. There is now a compelling need to educate a new generation of health professionals who can deal with the multifaceted social, economic, political, and ethical dimensions these issues represent, with the scientific rigor and professional skills represented by the field of public health (Institute of Medicine, 1988; U.S. Bureau of Health Professions, 1997). The Master's in Public Health (MPH) Degree is the basic professional degree for this front-line public health worker.
2. Public Health Education in Rhode Island: The Rhode Island Department of Health (DOH) is the designated public health agency in the state, with broad regulatory, educational, and programmatic responsibility for the health of Rhode Islanders. Because of its concern about educational preparation and professional training in this field in the state, it has had a long-standing interest in the development of public health instruction in general and in the offering of a Rhode Island MPH degree in particular. In spite of its efforts, no MPH degree is currently offered within Rhode Island. Importantly, however, many resources are already in place that make the development of such a degree program logical and compelling: the RI Department of Health has substantial professional staff with advanced degrees in health fields, and it can provide an array of internship opportunities and practical expertise and experience; the University of Rhode Island (URI) has recognized strengths in epidemiology, health behavior change, environmental health, and health services administration and policy—and it has recently launched two innovative partnerships to foster public health-related applied research, teaching, and service. In short, important resources are already in place in support of the development of an MPH degree.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ROLE

Health and the health sciences have been determined to be high University priorities. Because of the traditional emphasis on the health sciences at URI, and the strong national standing of several of its programs, health has been cited in several recent reports and public statements as a field targeted for further development and investment. At the same time, there has been growing recognition at the University that the nature of health and the health sciences is changing—moving from the traditional, more narrow clinical and institutional focus into a broader, more community-based context. The University has invested in two new Partnerships that embody this changing emphasis and highlight the growing importance of public health.

Simultaneously, the health sciences faculty have been meeting, under the leadership of former Dean of Nursing Jean Miller, to develop more collaborative and interdisciplinary linkages within an organizational framework that will bring the health sciences closer together in their working relationships in research, teaching, and service. The interdisciplinary programs and processes embodied in both the Partnerships and the Health Sciences Focus Group have created the ideal climate for the MPH—which, indeed, is the embodiment of the new conceptual framework for the health sciences at URI: interdisciplinary, community-oriented, and collaborative.

In addition, the consortium basis for the MPH—linking URI to the RI Department of Health—is in keeping with the trend nationally and in the state to develop collaborative programs. These help to avoid duplication, share the burden of developing and supporting a program, and represent new configurations of institutions as community-academic partnerships using the resources and expertise of institutions of higher education to meet identified and important community needs.

-30-
Although the MPH program is itself a new degree program, the resources--faculty, courses, and research projects--are already in place. Essentially all the courses to be included in the MPH curriculum already exist or can be created as special sections of existing courses. The program simply pulls together the existing resources that are presently scattered across the University, and concentrates and focuses them on public health. The MPH will be linked to other programs and departments on this campus. We expect that faculty for the MPH will be drawn from a wide range of disciplines, including pharmacy, business, natural sciences, psychology, and human sciences. Courses offered in the MPH will rely largely on existing offerings in these departments. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of public health in general and the MPH in particular, close working relationships with these other departments and centers are to be expected and encouraged. The University should develop a Program in Public Health to coordinate existing resources on campus and serve as the underlying organizational entity for the MPH. Such a Program could offer joint appointments to faculty (in conjunction with their primary department), promote public health initiatives across the campus, and increase the visibility of public health programs within the University and larger community.

D. CONTENT

The proposed program will require an expected 45 credits for the completion of the MPH degree, a requirement consistent with other programs in the Northeast. Provisions for waiving such program requirements as the Public Health Internship, depending on prior professional experience (see below under the description of these requirements), make it possible for a student to complete only 39 credits for the MPH.

1. Program Tracks

The accreditation requirements for the MPH degree, as determined by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), require students to have a basic understanding of the five "pillars" of public health (i.e., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health behavior, and health policy and management) and permit an area of "specialization" in one of the core areas. We have decided to offer the following areas of concentration at the outset of the program:

Behavioral Health
Environmental Health

As the program becomes established, two additional curriculum tracks will be added:

Health Care Policy and Management
Epidemiology
2. Course Requirements

The following outline gives both the basic core courses required for the MPH degree and the specific tracks. Specific courses are drawn from current URI offerings; special sections of these courses will be offered at CCE for MPH students.

Core Courses
(18 credits)

1. Principles of Public Health Practice
   APS 459: Public Health (3 credits)

2. Principles of Biostatistics
   STA 411: Biostatistics II (3 credits) or Brown University equivalent*

3. Principles of Epidemiology
   APS 540: Principles, Methods, and Applications of Epidemiology (3 credits) or Brown University equivalent*

4. Principles of Environmental Health
   MPH 520: Introduction to Environmental Health (3 credits) or Brown University equivalent*

5. Principles of Behavioral Health (3 credits)
   PSY 479H: Health Promotion or Brown University equivalent*

6. Principles of Health Policy and Management
   MGT 630: Organizational Theory and Behavior (3 credits) or Brown University equivalent*

*Subject to URI graduate school 9-credit limitation on courses from other academic institutions.

Areas of Specialization
15 Credits

Tracks to be offered at outset of the MPH program:

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Required Courses: 9 credits
PSY 690S: Health Behavior Change Theory (3 credits)
PSY 690L: Community-Based Health Promotion (3 credits)
PSY 611: Methods of Psychological Research and Experimental Design (3 credits)

Elective Courses: 6 credits To be chosen in coordination with academic advisor to insure congruence with student’s career goals and coherent program of study.
PSY 520: Behavioral Change and Research
PSY 554: Community Health Promotion
PSY 625: Seminar: Social Psychology
PSY 690T: Women’s Health
EDC 530: Qualitative Research and Evaluation
PEX 425: Fitness and Wellness Program Development

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Required Courses: 15 Credits
BMS 546: Advanced Toxicology (3 credits)
MIC 432: Pathogenic Bacteriology, or MIC 523 (or FSN 523 or NRS 523): Water Pollution Microbiology, with MIC 525 (or FSN 525): Water Pollution Microbiology Laboratory (if student has no prior laboratory training).
CVE 472: Industrial Air Pollution, or CVE 570: Sanitary Chemistry, or CVE 474: Water Quality Sampling and Analysis.
CPL 539: Environmental Law, or CPL 434 (or MAF 434): Introduction to Environmental Law, or CNS 457 (or HLT 457): Health and Safety Issues of Consumer Products.
FSN 461: Food Safety, or CVE 572: Biosystems in Sanitary Engineering, or CVE 573: Theory of Water Purification and Treatment.

Tracks Proposed for Later Development:

HEALTH CARE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Required Courses: 9 credits
MGT 695: Managerial Skills Development (3 credits)
MSI 620: Quantitative Methods for Management (3 credits)
PHP 680: The Legal Environment in Health Administration (3 credits)

Elective Courses: 6 credits to be chosen in coordination with academic advisor to insure congruence with student’s career goals and coherent program of study.

Management/Marketing
MGT 695: Managerial Skills Development
MGT 696: Strategic Decision Making
MKT 695: Seminar: Health Care Marketing I
MKT 696: Seminar: Health Care Marketing II
LRS 533: Negotiating Pension, Health, and Employee Assistance Programs
PHP 651: Health Care Systems I
PHP 652: Health Care Systems II
HDF 527: Health Care Policy and the Elderly

Management Science
MSI 664: Health Information Systems
MSI 601: Business Research Methods: Linear Models
MSI 602: Business Research Methods: Multivariate Models

Statistics
STA 501: Analysis of Variance and Variance Components
STA 541: Multivariate Statistical Methods
EPIDEMIOLOGY

Required Courses: 9 Credits
APS 540: Principles, Methods, and Applications of Epidemiology (3 credits)
APS 640: Advanced Epidemiologic Methods (3 credits)
STA 535: Statistical Methodology in Clinical Trials

Elective Courses: 6 credits to be chosen in coordination with academic advisor to insure congruence with student’s career goals and coherent program of study.
APS 550: Pharmacoepidemiology
MIC 538: Epidemiology of Viral and Rickettsial Diseases
APS 697: Research in Applied Pharmaceutical Sciences
STA 542: Categorical Data Analysis Methods
STA 591: Directed Study in Statistics

Public Health Internship (MPH 590) 6 credits

Public Health Project (MPH 597) 6 credits

Comprehensive Examinations: Following completion of the MPH coursework, but not necessarily before the completion of the Internship and Project requirements, students will be required to take a written comprehensive examination on interdisciplinary topics designated by the Program Committee. These examinations will test students’ ability to integrate content and approaches from the different public health content areas, including their specialty track.

The examination will consist of three, four-hour long written questions. At least one question will be based on the core public health content areas, and at least one on the student’s chosen specialty area. Decisions regarding the successful completion of these examinations will be made by the MPH Program Committee.

New Courses:

MPH 520 Introduction to Environmental Health (I and II, 3)
Introduction to basic principles of toxicology; carcinogenesis; and risk perception, assessment, and management. Unique aspects of environmental health as a public health discipline are explored for several topics. (Lec. 3) Staff

MPH 590 Public Health Internship (I, II or SS, 1-6)
Experiential, field-based learning experience in public health. Requires agency/program supervisor, faculty advisor, and MPH committee approval. May be taken either semester or during summer. May be repeated for up to 6 credits. (Practicum) Pre: completion of core public health courses and one-half credits in MPH track. Staff

MPH 597 Public Health Project (I, II or SS, 3 or 6) Research or program/development/evaluation project in public health.
Requires topic/focus in MPH program track, faculty sponsorship, and MPH committee approval. May be taken either semester or during summer. May be repeated for up to 6 credits. (Independent Study) Pre: completion of core public health courses and one-half of credits in MPH track. Staff

E. INTERINSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Programs at Boston University, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, University of Connecticut and SUNY at Albany have similar objectives to the proposed Rhode Island MPH; however, they are all offered out of state and have proven difficult for Rhode Islanders to take advantage of because of commuting distances (with the exception of Boston University, which offers some of its courses in Fall River). Most are affiliated with schools of public health; only one (SUNY Albany) represents the type of collaborative institutional arrangement between higher education and the state department of health.

In addition programs out of state, there are a few programs in-state that have, in part, similar (but sufficiently different) objectives to the MPH proposed here. Brown University’s Master of Science in Health Sciences is based within the Department of Community Health in the Brown University School of Medicine, and it is exclusively focused on the preparation of researchers and those going on for the Ph.D. It is not a practitioner’s degree program. Providence College’s Master of Science in Health Care Administration is most similar to the Health Care Policy and Management track within the MPH. However, it lacks the basic preparation of practitioners for the interdisciplinary field of public health and does not include the basic core courses in public health. Bryant College’s Master of Business Administration includes a track on health care administration, though it lacks the broader public health focus. Its primary purpose is to train students for careers in the management of health care programs and systems.

Because this program is targeted on meeting the currently unmet need for public health professional education in the state, it is anticipated that this program will have little effect on enrollment in other programs currently offered in Rhode Island. The MPH will be based on an interinstitutional consortium comprised of URI and the RI Department of Health. This collaborative partnership will be established by letters of agreement between these two primary partners, outlining their respective responsibilities and duties. The RI Department of Health will facilitate enrollment by its staff in the MPH program, help recruit appropriately prepared professional staff to teach MPH courses, and provide field placements for student internships and projects.

F. EVALUATION

Program accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) will be sought within the first year of operation. Criteria for accreditation are outlined in an appendix. A site visit from CEPH staff to consult on program development will be held in the fall of 1998.
## Master's in Public Health (MPH) Program Budget

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**Notes:**

1. Support for these will be requested from the RI Department of Health.
2. Includes office support, mailings, brochure development, copying, student costs.
3. Covered by funds from CCE.