

REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION
OF THE
PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

SITE VISIT DATES:

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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the Public Health Program at the University of Montana. The report assesses the program's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria for Public Health Programs, amended June 2011*. This accreditation review included the conduct of a self-study process by program constituents, the preparation of a document describing the program and its features in relation to the criteria for accreditation and a visit in April 2017 by a team of external peer reviewers. During the visit, the team had an opportunity to interview program and university officials, administrators, teaching faculty, students, alumni and community representatives and to verify information in the self-study document by reviewing materials provided in a resource file. The team was afforded full cooperation in its efforts to assess the program and verify the self-study document.

The University of Montana was originally chartered as an institution of postsecondary education in 1893 and is affiliated with the Montana University system.

The university seeks to educate students, providing training, education and service to the greater Missoula community and Montana rural areas. As of spring 2017, there were a total of 9,505 undergraduate students and 2,110 graduate students.

The University of Montana consists of 13 schools/colleges: 1) College of Humanities and Sciences, 2) College of Health Professionals and Biomedical Sciences, 3) Missoula College, 4) School for Extended and Lifelong Learning, 5) Bitterroot College, 6) Davidson Honors College, 7) Graduate School, 8) Phyllis J. Washington College of Education and Human Sciences, 9) School of Business Administration, 10) W.A. Frank College of Forestry and Conservation, 11) School of Journalism, 12) Alexander Blewett III School of Law and 13) College of Visual and Performing Arts.

The College of Health Professionals and Biomedical Sciences is comprised of five programs/schools: 1) family medicine residency of Western Montana, 2) Skaggs Schools of Pharmacy, 3) School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science, 4) School of Social Work and 5) the School of Public and Community Health Sciences (SPCHS). At the time of the site visit, the public health program was the only program housed within SPCHS.

The chair of the school acts as the program director, assuming this role as of May 2016. The program is in transition, guided by new leadership that seeks to change the program so that it can better fulfill its stated mission, goals and objectives.

The program offers a distance-based MPH generalist degree. Beginning January 2017, the program began offering a PhD in public health studies in an on-campus format. In addition to these degrees, the

program also offers a certificate in public health. In the coming academic year, the program plans to offer up to four additional certificate programs, new joint degrees with pharmacy (PharmD/MPH) and physical therapy (DPT/MPH) and an MPH in community health and prevention, depending on resources.

This is the program's second accreditation review. The Council granted the MPH program an initial five-year accreditation term in 2012. The program submitted an interim report related to the culminating experience, assessment, faculty and staff diversity and student diversity in 2014, which the Council accepted as evidence of compliance. The program submitted a substantive change notice in 2016 to add its new PhD in public health to the unit of accreditation, and the Council approved the notice. The first PhD students matriculated in January 2017.

Characteristics of a Public Health Program

To be considered eligible for accreditation review by CEPH, a public health program shall demonstrate the following characteristics:

- a. The program shall be a part of an institution of higher education that is accredited by a regional accrediting body recognized by the US Department of Education or its equivalent in other countries.
- b. The program and its faculty and students shall have the same rights, privileges and status as other professional preparation programs that are components of its parent institution.
- c. The program shall function as a collaboration of disciplines, addressing the health of populations and the community through instruction, research and service. Using an ecological perspective, the public health program should provide a special learning environment that supports interdisciplinary communication, promotes a broad intellectual framework for problem solving and fosters the development of professional public health values.
- d. The public health program shall maintain an organizational culture that embraces the vision, goals and values common to public health. The program shall maintain this organizational culture through leadership, institutional rewards and dedication of resources in order to infuse public health values and goals into all aspects of the program's activities.
- e. The program shall have faculty and other human, physical, financial and learning resources to provide both breadth and depth of educational opportunity in the areas of knowledge basic to public health. At a minimum, the program shall offer the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, or an equivalent professional degree.
- f. The program shall plan, develop and evaluate its instructional, research and service activities in ways that assure sensitivity to the perceptions and needs of its students and that combines educational excellence with applicability to the world of public health practice.

These characteristics are evident, for the most part, in the public health program at the University of Montana. The program is part of an institution of higher learning accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The program, its faculty and students have the same rights, privileges and status as other professional programs at the University of Montana.

The majority of the faculty are involved with community outreach programs, reflecting the program's and the university's commitment to community outreach and experiential learning. With the focus on serving underserved communities, particularly rural and tribal communities, the program provides students with applied learning experiences that will enable them to become effective public health professionals who have the cultural awareness to collaborate effectively across disciplines and communities. The program's clearly defined mission statement, goals and objectives are aligned with the university's mission, and the program uses the objectives to evaluate its ongoing planning and evaluation efforts. At the time of the site

visit, however, the program did not demonstrate adequate faculty or staff resources to support the PhD in public health

1.0 THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM.

1.1 Mission.

The program shall have a clearly formulated and publicly stated mission with supporting goals, objectives and values.

This criterion is met. The program has a clear and concise mission statement developed initially in 2009 and reviewed in early fall 2016. With the addition of the PhD program in 2017, the faculty modified the statement to recognize on-campus learning opportunities for PhD students. The program's mission is as follows:

The mission of the SPCHS is to provide distance-based (MPH) and on-campus (PhD) learning opportunities, supported by scholarship and service activities, to prepare public health practitioners and researchers who will use global insight to improve the health of the people of Montana and other rural areas.

The program adopted the University of Montana's statement of values, summarized in the university's strategic plan, "UM 2020: Building a University for the Global Century." The program indicates that the strategic plan serves as the foundation for decision making and provides a framework for assessing progress and success. The four stated values include leadership, engagement, diversity and sustainability. The program reports that the values underpin teaching, research, creative scholarship and service activities.

The program identifies three goals with 12 corresponding objectives. The goals relate to student preparation for public health practitioner careers, research by faculty to foster an atmosphere of scholarship within the learning environment and service by faculty and students to meet public health needs of Montana, the intermountain west and rural areas. The 12 objectives provide overall guidance for the program to measure achievement in the areas of research, instruction and service, facilitated by 19 measurable targets specific to the objectives.

The program and its committees conducted a series of retreats and meetings in 2009 to develop statements of mission, values, goals and objectives. The participants included faculty, students and administrators on campus and also faculty affiliates and public health practitioners located across Montana and nationally. The chair and faculty review the statements typically on a two-year cycle to determine adequacy in meeting the program's needs. The program, in an effort to gain the perspective of university and community partners, provided opportunities for review by multiple entities during fall 2016 and spring 2017 semesters, including the External Advisory Committee and the Public Health Student

and Alumni Association. However, there have been no changes to the mission, values, goals or objectives since the last self-study. During the site visit, members of the External Advisory Committee reported that faculty are appreciative of their input and are very responsive. They cited the recent revision of the committee's mission statement to reflect workforce development support as an example of change resulting from their discussions.

The program publicizes its mission, values, goals and objectives through the SPCHS website, the student handbook and by providing the directional statements to the Public Health Student and Alumni Association.

Although this criterion is met, faculty who met with site visitors acknowledged the need to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the mission statement, values, goals and objectives because the program's leadership, faculty, degree programs and resources have changed significantly over the past three years, including the initiation of a PhD program and the approval of new certificate programs focused on four public health areas and several joint degree programs. In meetings with program constituents, site visitors found a program in major transition revealing a clear need for reviewing and revising the directional statements to ensure relevance.

1.2 Evaluation and Planning.

The program shall have an explicit process for monitoring and evaluating its overall efforts against its mission, goals and objectives; for assessing the program's effectiveness in serving its various constituencies; and for using evaluation results in ongoing planning and decision making to achieve its mission. As part of the evaluation process, the program must conduct an analytical self-study that analyzes performance against the accreditation criteria.

This criterion is met with commentary. The program has a defined process for monitoring and evaluating its efforts, assessing the program's effectiveness and using evaluation results for planning and decision making on an annual basis. Overall, the program director/SPCHS chair, in consultation with the Steering Committee and in conjunction with other standing committees, is responsible for program evaluation and communicating results to stakeholders.

The university launched its strategic plan in 2011 that is described in the publication, "UM 2020: Building a University for the Global Century." The plan identifies five strategic initiatives: 1) partnering for student success, 2) education for the global century, 3) discovery and creativity to serve Montana and the world, 4) dynamic learning environment and 5) the planning-assessment continuum. The planning-assessment continuum consists of four steps: plan, budget, implement and assess led respectively by the University Planning Committee, University Budget Committee, Council of Vice Presidents and University Assessment Committee. As part of this process, the Provost's Office mandates that each academic unit provide a biannual assessment report showing the alignment of department objectives with the university's strategic issues and specifying student learning goals and measurement tools, results and

modifications and future plans for continued assessment. The stated goal of the assessment report is to demonstrate the translation of data into action plans to improve overall program quality.

The program coordinator is responsible for compiling and maintaining evaluation data collected from identified sources such as SPCHS and graduate school administrative offices, surveys and internal tracking. The self-study identifies the standing committees responsible for examining the data and evaluating progress towards objectives. Of the 12 objectives, the Steering Committee and program coordinator are responsible for three objectives, and the Steering Committee is also responsible for another six objectives in cooperation with either the admissions or the research committees.

The chair reviews data results prior to dissemination to the Steering Committee for review and comment during late spring or early summer each year. Following review, the Steering Committee will develop and propose changes, as needed, to the chair for implementation during the subsequent fall semester. The program identifies several resulting programmatic changes, such as: revising courses and changing instructors in response to student course evaluations, adding a community service project in one core course to address the very low service participation rates, enforcing a requirement that students document their service activities in their portfolios and CVs prior to graduation to secure potentially missing student service data and using focus groups and key informant interviews to improve data collection from employers.

The chair and individual instructors receive and review summary profiles of student course evaluations following each semester. Any needed changes to a course will be addressed prior to that course being taught again.

The program identifies 19 measurable targets supporting 12 objectives. The self-study shows that nearly all targets are being met or are trending in a positive direction. There was one measure that has not been met over the past three years: 100% of students will report engaging in service (20%, 22% and 39%).

The commentary relates to the critical need for faculty to focus more ongoing and careful attention to re-examining and refining the measurable targets set for the outcome measures. Faculty were unable to explain the basis for establishing the targets and acknowledged that the targets had not been revised since the previous self-study process five years ago. Five of the targets are program or university requirements that contribute only limited information about the program's progress including maintaining a 42-credit curriculum; the completion of a practicum, portfolio and professional paper and attaining at least a 3.0 GPA for course completion. Site visitors learned about multiple examples of changes that occur when a concern or suggestion is brought to the attention of program leadership or faculty, including feedback from course evaluations and the alumni survey, however it was not evident to the site visit team

that the program is using their outcome measures data to assess the program's overall effectiveness. Faculty who met with site visitors also acknowledged the need to focus more on outcome measures, especially given all the changes the program is experiencing such as change in program leadership, new degree offerings and faculty turnover. Successful program improvement requires measuring outcomes over time, monitoring achievement levels and adjusting the targets to more fully challenge the program to advance towards its potential. Assembling data relevant to the targets will assist the program in determining if progress is being achieved and in identifying trend lines essential for planning and advocacy purposes. The program leadership recognized many of the outcome measures have reached a ceiling effect and has a plan to revise the outcome measures so that they can provide meaningful data to better assess the program's effectiveness and for using the evaluation results in ongoing planning and evaluation efforts. The program's plans include involving the Steering Committee, the Curriculum Committee and other constituents.

An ad hoc six-person Accreditation Committee, composed of the program director, the former director and four staff members met frequently and drafted the first version of the self-study document. As sections were completed, the committee circulated them to primary and affiliated faculty for review and comment. The final self-study document was posted on the SPCHS website to enable students, alumni and other stakeholders such as local and regional public health professionals to provide review and comment. The college dean also reviewed the document. The committee revised the draft in line with input from the reviewers and forwarded it to CEPH as a preliminary self-study. After receiving CEPH's response, the committee revised the preliminary self-study and circulated it for review and comment by the student and alumni association, staff, External Advisory Committee, dean, provost and Steering Committee. Members of the External Advisory Committee and students who met with site visitors stated that they were aware of the self-study process and that there were ample opportunities to provide input during the development of the self-study document.

1.3 Institutional Environment.

The program shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education.

This criterion is met. The program is an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education. The University of Montana is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. The university was founded in 1893 and is affiliated as a public unit in the Montana University System. The university also responds to a number of other accrediting agencies in fields such as chemistry, computer science, clinical psychology, accounting, business, nursing, education, music, law, pharmacy, social work, physical therapy, journalism and forest resource management.

The University of Montana consists of 13 schools/colleges: 1) College of Humanities and Sciences, 2) College of Health Professionals and Biomedical Sciences, 3) Missoula College, 4) School for Extended and Lifelong Learning, 5) Bitterroot College, 6) Davidson Honors College, 7) Graduate School, 8) Phyllis

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The MPH program is led by the chair of the SPCHS, who reports to the dean of the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences, who reports to the university provost and vice president for academic affairs, who reports to the university president, who reports to the Commission of Higher Education, which reports to the Montana Board of Regents.

The chair is responsible for budgeting and resource allocation for the public health program. The SPCHS retains only the tuition surcharge of \$150 per credit. The remainder of the tuition monies reside at the university level with the Office of Vice President for Administration and Finance. The indirect rate is set at 45%, with a distribution that includes 27% of indirect costs going back to the College of Health Professions and Biomedical Sciences. This is further broken down with about one-third distributed to the principal investigator, one-third to the chair of SPCHS and one-third to the dean of the college.

Personnel recruitment, selection and advancement occur at the university level. The chair informs the dean of faculty and staff lines needed. The approval then goes to the university provost. Once approved, the university's Office of Human Resources begins the search. The chair, in consultation with faculty, can make recommendations of potential candidates to the provost. The university is a unionized campus, with both faculty and staff unionized so that the program follows its own unit standards related to tenure and promotion.

The program's Steering Committee and Curriculum committee are responsible for academic standards and policies, including establishment and oversight of the curricula.

Academic standards and policies originate at the program level and must comply with the broader university-wide policies. Oversight of the curriculum begins at the program level. Major programmatic changes are reviewed and approved by the university provost and the Montana Board of Regents.

University leaders, including the interim provost, vice provost and college dean confirmed the high priority given to the public health program, including plans to expand and grow the program in the immediate future. They described the public health program as the crown jewel of the university, acknowledging the importance of the training, instruction, service and research the program provides to the university, local community and state of Montana. University leaders expressed a sincere commitment, particularly the hard work and dedication of the dean in supporting the program to meet its current and future needs. The dean also acknowledged the diligence of the program chair, praising his forward thinking and leadership.

1.4 Organization and Administration.

The program shall provide an organizational setting conducive to public health learning, research and service. The organizational setting shall facilitate interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and collaboration that contribute to achieving the program's public health mission. The organizational structure shall effectively support the work of the program's constituents.

This criterion is met. The program provides an organizational setting that is conducive to public health learning, research and service. The chair for the SPCHS reports to the dean of the College of Health Professionals and Biomedical Sciences. A full-time program coordinator assists the chair to oversee the program.

The self-study provided numerous examples of how the program facilitates interdisciplinary communication, cooperation and collaboration, contributing to achieving its mission, goals and objectives. The program's secondary faculty are faculty members with appointments in other academic units across the university including pharmacy, psychology and the Department of Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences. On site, site visitors learned of the regular collaboration among faculty across the campus programs and within the Montana university system. The program also draws faculty from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, which creates an active learning environment for students. As the program matures, the chair seeks to continue to increase the breadth of expertise of the faculty component.

The program is also planning on offering new joint degrees in fields such as pharmacy and physical therapy. This is another example of the program contributing to interdisciplinary collaboration.

Community stakeholders, alumni and students stated that the program's success is due to the dedication and commitment of its faculty and staff. Faculty, alumni and students who met with site visitors acknowledged the chair and coordinator's hard work, dedication and commitment to ensuring the longevity and growth of the program.

Faculty who met with site visitors also acknowledged the program is in a transition. The chair assumed his position in May 2016 and has worked to strengthen the program and ensure that it achieves its full potential. Faculty who met with site visitors confirmed the program lacked guidance under the previous

program administration. The program has also experienced a turnover in faculty, losing two key primary faculty in summer 2016 and fall 2016, respectively. At the time of the site visit, the program was still searching for an additional full-time faculty member to fill this deficiency. Lastly, the program, with the direction of the new chair, is undergoing changes to better reflect the program's mission and goals and to accommodate growth in the near future. Site visitors also learned that the university is in a transition, having both an interim president and an interim provost. Faculty acknowledged they are optimistic about the program's new direction and reported feeling invigorated about future program directions. The college dean shared the same sentiments.

1.5 Governance.

The program administration and faculty shall have clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning program governance and academic policies. Students shall, where appropriate, have participatory roles in the conduct of program evaluation procedures, policy setting and decision making.

This criterion is met. The program has clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning program governance and academic policies. Faculty members and key external stakeholders are primarily responsible for reviewing and periodically amending the program's policies and development through service on committees.

The program has five standing committees: 1) Steering Committee (meets every two weeks), 2) Curriculum Committee (meets monthly), 3) Research Committee (meets once per semester), 4) Admissions Committee (meets once per semester) and 5) External Advisory Committee (meets once per semester). The program also has one ad-hoc committee: CEPH Self-Study Committee which will be in place until the program adopts and fully implements the 2016 CEPH criteria. This committee met regularly during the development of the self-study, however it now meets as needed until after the accreditation review, when efforts will focus on revisions to the program to meet the 2016 criteria. MPH faculty also serve on university committees and are well-represented throughout campus.

The program engages key community stakeholders through a new External Advisory Committee. This committee helps the program assure that students are developing professional skills that are relevant and will advance public health practice. The committee also provides programmatic guidance and is primarily responsible for identifying workforce development needs for the local Missoula area and for the state of Montana.

In addition to serving on standing committees, the program also engages students in governance using course evaluations, informal meetings and the Student Evaluation Committee. This committee operates at the school level and is primarily responsible for program and faculty assessments. The program also offers a Public Health Student and Alumni Association. In spring 2017, this association became an official chapter of the Montana Public Health Association. The Public Health Student and Alumni Association

sometimes has low enrollment and participation due to the distance-based format of the MPH degree. The program anticipates that with the addition of a campus-based PhD program in spring 2017, student participation will increase. The program is continuing to explore innovative ways to increase engagement among their online students in governance.

Alumni, students and community stakeholders who met with site visitors said that they have an important role in the program's governance and are engaged by primary faculty and the chair for feedback on a regular basis. In addition, they expressed that their opinions are valued and appreciated. They have also witnessed improvements and quick responses on the program's behalf based on the feedback provided. Constituents praised the program's receptiveness to feedback as a major strength.

1.6 Fiscal Resources.

The program shall have financial resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives.

This criterion is met. The faculty assess the program as financially strong, reporting that the tuition surcharge based on credit hours generated is a constant and reliable source of income. The program director, the college dean and the provost negotiate faculty support through legislative appropriations. Although 5.25 FTE faculty are funded by legislative appropriations as of January 2017, the program suggests that new faculty lines may be needed to support growth in program enrollment and expanded enrollment in continuing education programs that are taught by program faculty. For example, program leaders discussed impending plans for State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and local health department staff to enroll in the public health certificate program in fall 2017.

The university determines units' funding adequacy, and the state legislature allocates a lump sum biennial appropriation to the university using a base plus increment approach. The program indicates that the "base plus" approach is not focused on student enrollment. The university's sources of general fund revenues include: 41.3% legislative appropriations, 56.4% tuition and 2.3% other. The UM Academic Affairs Office determines the share of the general state appropriation that is allocated to the college, and the college distributes funds to the schools.

As a professional school, the SPCHS generates a tuition surcharge of \$150 per credit hour, identified as program tuition. All program tuition surcharge dollars are returned to the SPCHS chair to be used at his discretion in supporting the program's instructional activities, such as salary and benefits for teaching adjuncts and staff, student work studies, office supplies, travel and other operational expenses. The program actively pursues grant and contract funding and secures additional funding through indirect cost recovery. The university's full indirect cost recovery rate is 45%, of which 73% is distributed to the Vice President's Office of Research and 27% to the generating college. The funding returned to the college is

distributed in one-third shares to the college dean, principal investigator and chair to support operations including travel and research activities.

Table 1 shows the program's sources of funds and expenditures for the past five years, with revenue covering expenses in each of these years. With the exception of FY 2013, legislative appropriations have increased each year, representing about 50% of total income reported for FY 2016. However, the percent of income from legislative appropriations was higher in the other four years, ranging from 57% in FY 2012 to 73% in FY 2014. Other sources of total revenues for FY 2016, the most recently completed budget year, include about 8% of funding from tuition and fees, 26% from grants and contracts, 12% from indirect cost recovery, 2% from college and university funds and 1% from gifts. The larger indirect cost recovery reported for fiscal year (FY) 2016 is due to the transfer of two faculty and their grants from another academic unit to the public health program.

Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures by Major Category, 2011-2012 through 2015-2016					
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Source of Funds					
Tuition & Fees	\$74,400	\$71,700	\$81,600	\$87,000	\$81,000
State Appropriations	\$383,057	\$383,392	\$426,983	\$428,885	\$503,807
College/University Funds	\$16,365	\$8,502	\$26,089	\$26,388	\$23,816
Grants/Contracts	\$151,424	\$76,511	\$47,901	\$94,350	\$262,225
Indirect Cost Recovery	\$25,875	\$2,516	\$2,869	\$1,956	\$116,460
Gifts	\$11,727	\$49,919	\$0	\$4,151	\$14,337
Other-Disadvantaged Student Scholarships	\$12,969	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other-Application account	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,500	\$0	\$0
Total	\$677,217	\$593,940	\$586,942	\$642,730	\$1,001,642
Expenditures					
Faculty Salaries & Benefits	\$407,154	\$463,754	\$481,764	\$532,500	\$611,973
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$86,763	\$53,884	\$54,792	\$52,952	\$185,424
Operations	\$92,333	\$20,713	\$20,604	\$16,469	\$53,044
Travel	\$31,220	\$16,799	\$13,962	\$21,019	\$27,721
Student Support	\$12,969	\$9,816	\$5,089	\$5,700	\$5,340
Administrative Assessment	\$2,034	\$4,403	\$350	\$154	\$1,680
Other-F&A	\$44,744	\$24,571	\$10,381	\$13,936	\$116,460
Total	\$677,217	\$593,940	\$586,942	\$642,730	\$1,001,642

Of overall FY 2016 expenditures, faculty salaries and benefits constitute 61% and staff salaries and benefits 19%. Operations account for 5% of total expenditures, travel for 3% and 12% for facilities and administrative (F&A) costs. The F&A costs include the indirect cost recovery money from grants with distribution described above. Student support expenditures represent less than 1% of total expenditures in FY 2016. The expenditure for administrative assessment, representing less than 1% of the program's

total expenditures, is used to fund campus operations and offices such as business services, human resource services, facility services and utilities. The administrative assessment is based on 8% of the expenditures from designated auxiliary accounts.

The program identifies three fiscal resource objectives with specified targets for measuring capability related to 1) generating program tuition, 2) support of faculty travel and 3) generating extramural research dollars annually. Over the past three years, the program consistently has met its established targets. Reviewers noted that extramural research dollars for FY 2016 nearly tripled compared to FY 2015, enabling the part-time employment of a 0.15 FTE grants management specialist.

In a meeting with university leaders, the college dean expressed to site visitors that he viewed the public health program as one of the strengths in his college and that as an advocate for growth, he has funded infrastructure renovations for the program in the Skaggs building and will continue to find additional financial support for the program. The interim provost agreed that resources need to be allocated to growth areas and that public health has been identified as a priority area for support. The interim provost indicated that strategically the university is poised to help the public health program maximize its opportunities by shifting resources as needed.

1.7 Faculty and Other Resources.

The program shall have personnel and other resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives.

This criterion is met. The program reports the headcount and full-time equivalence (FTE) of the primary faculty as 4.0 for academic year 2014-2015, 5.0 for 2015-2016 and 4.0 at the time of the site visit, during 2016-2017. One faculty line is currently vacant due to a resignation that became effective in January 2017, and the program plans to recruit a replacement faculty member by January 2018. The search was pending action by the university's human resources office, but the search had received the authorization of the interim provost. In addition to this new faculty hire, the college dean indicated that a proposed transfer of a research assistant professor to public health was likely to occur soon. The individual, currently housed in the Division of Biological Sciences, has appropriate qualifications to support the program and is fully funded through grants for five years; the dean anticipates that if the fit is satisfactory to all, the position may be converted to a tenure-track line housed in the program within one to two years.

The program's response to the site visit team's report documented the transfer position, providing the program with five primary faculty as of October 2017. The program's response also noted that the program has a search underway for an additional primary faculty member, with interviews tentatively scheduled for late 2017.

Using the primary faculty FTE, the program reports that the AY 2016-2017 student-faculty ratio (SFR) is 9.2 for a calculated student FTE of 36.7 for 51 part-time MPH students and four PhD students. The SFRs for 2014-2015 and for 2015-2016 are 8.0 and 5.3 respectively.

The program's small faculty component has also affected class sizes. Students and alumni that met with site visitors appreciated the small class size offerings of the program, identifying it as one of its strengths. They also indicated as the program continues to grow, faculty should be cognizant and mindful of the class sizes. They expressed that some classes have dramatically grown in size; classes formerly enrolled about 10 students and now may enroll 25 or more students. They expressed that this limits the amount of peer-to-peer interactions available, given that the MPH program is distance-based and large class sizes make it more challenging to have discussions or be heard. The small class sizes offer a more intimate setting, where students can interact more, learn more from each other and overall allows for more effective instruction.

The program has four part-time staff for an overall FTE of 1.4 plus five staff members supported by research grants. In addition, the college provides information technology support. In discussion with program administrators, site visitors learned that additional staff support is needed to address the demands of enrolling and advising 45 new certificate students and especially to provide more grants management support.

During the site visit, reviewers noted limitations related to the fact that the grants management support staff member was allocated at 0.15 FTE, equating about six hours per week. This time allocation appeared to be insufficient to support the needs of a research-active faculty who are successful in achieving large grant awards and to support students who will be seeking extramural funding for their projects in the new research-focused PhD program. After the site visit, the program successfully increased the staff member's time allocation to 0.50 FTE.

The program is located in the Skaggs Building, which offers common space for administrative staff in a newly renovated Administrative Office and additional office space for students and staff in another recently renovated room. Each of the primary faculty and a 0.25 FTE faculty member have office space and the four current doctoral students have dedicated desk spaces, with adequate remaining space for work cubicles for additional PhD students. As a mostly distance-based program, the program requires only minimal use of classroom space, but such space is readily available through use of two rooms when needed. In addition, meeting space is available for biweekly faculty meetings and for practicum and portfolio defenses.

Three of the primary faculty have laboratory spaces with bench-top space and fume hoods allowing for wet-chemistry experiments. Faculty permit interested students to conduct laboratory experiments, but MPH students pursuing their degrees through distance-based learning have not availed themselves of the opportunity, and none of the incoming PhD students has expressed an early interest in lab-based work.

Computer facilities and resources are excellent with college and university IT staff maintaining and updating the computer labs. Primary faculty have computer equipment that is replaced by the college every three years based on the collective bargaining agreement. The Skaggs Building has a 30 station computer lab for those students who are on campus. Off campus, faculty expect students enrolled in the distance-based MPH program to own or have regular access to a computer and a reliable internet connection. The university's Office of Continuing Education supports Moodle as the online learning platform for distance education. The program possesses laptop computers for loan as needed to meet special needs of faculty and students. The on-campus PhD students have access to existing computers in the Skaggs Building. Classrooms are well-equipped with extensive presentation technology such as desktop computers, internet and local network access, document projectors and ceiling-mounted projectors. The University Presentation and Technology Services provides a full range of media equipment available at no cost to assist students and faculty in developing presentations, creating videos or conducting research.

The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, containing over 1.75 million bound volumes, more than 218,000 electronic books, access to over 67,000 print and electronic journals, a federal government depository collection and an expanding array of electronic databases, provides students and faculty ready access to library and information resources through the physical facilities or online. The faculty librarian liaison and the library's Information Center personnel are available to provide reference assistance and to help students and faculty access databases and electronic holdings and to provide instruction on searching, research and information management as needed.

The program reports that local agencies, the local health department and various components of the state health department serve as practicum and as research sites.

The program has established five outcome measures to assess the adequacy of its faculty and other resources. These include measures for administrative support and number of faculty plus three measures related to financial support. Two of the three financial measures, program tuition generated and grant and contract funding, are also reported as outcome measures in Criterion 1.6. The data indicate that the program resources are trending in the right direction or meeting all targets, except for FTE total faculty, which was impacted by the recent faculty resignation.

1.8 Diversity.

The program shall demonstrate a commitment to diversity and shall evidence an ongoing practice of cultural competence in learning, research and service practices.

This criterion is met with commentary. Diversity is an integral component of the university's mission and values. The program demonstrates a commitment to diversity and cultural competence in its learning, research and service practices. This commitment is reflected in the university's vision statement and its core values of leadership, engagement, diversity and sustainability, which reinforce the university's goal to foster a community of respect and celebrate differences.

The program adheres to the university's 2020 Diversity Strategic Plan, which outlines the university's approach for embracing and enhancing diversity. It includes four strategic choices, specific goals and action items to meet the goals. In its definition, the university notes that diversity includes differences in age, ideas and perspectives, disabilities, creed, race, ethnicity, gender, veteran status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and geographic composition of its faculty, staff and students. The Diversity Strategic Plan is consistent with the Board of Regents Minority Achievement Policy 1902, Article X, Section 1 of the Montana Constitution of 1972 and Montana Indian Education for All statutory law. Accordingly, the program complies with university policies that support a climate free of harassment and discrimination. The program participates in the campus-wide DiverseU, has representation on the Diversity Advisory Council and the college's diversity work group.

The program includes service learning that addresses and builds competencies in diversity and cultural considerations. MPH students take two required courses that emphasize cultural competence, particularly in the context of the underserved communities most relevant to program students, PUBH 525: Multicultural and Native American Public Health and PUBH 580: Rural Health Issues in a Global Context. In spring 2017, as a result of increased demand and feedback from students, the program added PUBH 595: Indigenous Research Methods, as an elective class. Students who met with site visitors appreciated the program's commitment to working with culturally diverse populations. Doctoral students praised research opportunities available to work in tribal communities. Students felt the program supported diversity but noted that there was room to integrate cultural competencies into more of the courses.

The self-study identified the following populations as underrepresented: Native American students and faculty; mid-career professional students; students of color and/or Hispanic/Latino; female students, faculty and staff; and non-Caucasian faculty and staff. Native Americans make up the largest minority group in Montana. The self-study indicates that the program has not met its objectives tied to mid-career professionals and non-Caucasian faculty and staff. The program's percentage of mid-career professional students has remained constant at approximately 48% over the past three years, just below the program's stated target of 50%. At the time of the site visit, there were nine core and teaching faculty. Of

those, one was Native American. The program plans to recruit a Native American faculty member to fill the vacant faculty position and will focus on tribal colleges in addition to traditional recruitment strategies. No non-Caucasian staff were hired in the past three years.

The commentary relates to the retention of Native American students. During the site visit, faculty members acknowledged that despite meeting targets for student enrollment, Native American students have had difficulty adjusting to the program and its online environment, which contributes to significantly higher attrition rates. Faculty recognized there is an immediate need to provide support and mentorship to Native American students and further discussions about strategic models for improvement to ensure their success.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.

2.1 Degree Offerings.

The program shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals, leading to the Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent professional master’s degree. The program may offer a generalist MPH degree and/or an MPH with areas of specialization. The program, depending on how it defines the unit of accreditation, may offer other degrees, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is met. The program offers instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals. Table 2 presents the program’s degree offerings.

Table 2. Degrees Offered		
	Academic	Professional
Master’s Degrees		
Generalist, distance-based		MPH
Doctoral Degrees		
Public Health Studies	PhD	

The program offers a distance-based MPH generalist degree. Beginning January 2017, the program began offering a PhD in public health studies in an on-campus format.

All MPH students complete six required courses that represent the five core areas of public health (two courses address health services administration). MPH students are also required to complete the following courses:

- Rural Health Issues in a Global Context (3 credits)
- Program Evaluation and Research Methods (3 credits)
- Ethical Issues in Public Health (3 credits)
- Practicum course (3 credits)
- Two-part culminating experience encompassing a professional paper (3 credits) and a professional portfolio (3 credits)
- Two electives (6 credits)

Site visitors reviewed syllabi and the curricula and determined the program offers an appropriate depth of coursework for the MPH degree.

The program's Curriculum Committee conducted an in-depth review of the other graduate programs at the university, creating a list of pre-approved electives students choose from. The electives all have a strong public health focus and promote the interdisciplinary collaboration among students from different academic units.

Given the program's priority to increase transdisciplinary collaboration among students as well as high demand across campus for new joint degrees with public health, within the upcoming AY 2017-2018, the program anticipates implementing several new joint degrees such as with pharmacy (PharmD/MPH) and physical therapy (DPT/MPH). On site, site visitors learned that the Montana Board of Regents have approved these joint degrees, however the program has not finalized a curriculum for any joint degree yet. The Board of Regents has also approved a new MPH concentration in community health and prevention sciences. The plan of study is not finalized for this new concentration either. The Curriculum Committee has made the development of the curriculum for these joint degrees and the new MPH degree a priority. The program acknowledged they may not have sufficient resources, specifically faculty and staff support, to begin offering these new degrees, so for now the program has put these new offerings on hold. The program plans to submit a notice of substantive change before implementing any of these newly approved degree offerings.

2.2 Program Length.

An MPH degree program or equivalent professional public health master's degree must be at least 42 semester-credit units in length.

This criterion is met. The program adheres to the university-wide policies related to semester credit hours. One credit hour represents 15 contact hours so that a three-credit course corresponds to 45 contact hours per semester.

The MPH degree requires completion of 42 semester credit hours. No student has completed the degree for fewer than 42 semester credit hours.

2.3 Public Health Core Knowledge.

All graduate professional public health degree students must complete sufficient coursework to attain depth and breadth in the five core areas of public health knowledge.

This criterion is met. All MPH students must complete coursework that allows them to attain knowledge in the five core areas of public health. The program contains an 18-credit required core curriculum that includes one course each in epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences, environmental health sciences, two courses in health services administration (one on health administration and management

and one on health policy) and either one course or a combination of four courses in biostatistics. No course waivers are permitted. These courses are identified in Table 3.

Table 3. Required Courses Addressing Public Health Core Knowledge Areas for the MPH Degree		
Core Knowledge Area	Course Number & Title	Credits
Biostatistics	PUBH 520: Fundamentals of Biostatistics	3
	OR STAT 451: Statistical Methods I and STAT 457: Computer Data Analysis I AND STAT 452: Statistical Methods II and STAT 457: Computer Data Analysis II	4
Epidemiology	PUBH 510: Introduction to Epidemiology	3
Social and Behavioral Sciences	PUBH 540: Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health	3
Environmental Health Sciences	PUBH560: Environmental and Rural Health	3
Health Services Administration	PUBH 530: Public Health Administration and Management	3
	PUBH 535: Health Policy	3

MPH students have the option of enrolling in either PUBH 520: Fundamentals of Biostatistics or a year-long sequence that includes STAT 451 and 452 Statistical Methods I and II, respectively in addition to STAT 457 Computer Data Analysis I and II. Students interested in a more intensive and in-depth training in quantitative methods are encouraged and advised to take the second year-long biostatistics course sequence.

Site visitors reviewed course syllabi and determined that the core course offerings demonstrated an appropriate level of breadth and depth to expose students to the five core areas of public health knowledge for the MPH degree. Core competencies and associated learning objectives were listed on syllabi for all required courses.

2.4 Practical Skills.

All graduate professional public health degree students must develop skills in basic public health concepts and demonstrate the application of these concepts through a practice experience that is relevant to students' areas of specialization.

This criterion is met. All MPH students are required to complete 200 contact hours of a planned, supervised, competency-based and evaluated public health practicum. Students must complete at least 12 credits of core courses prior to enrolling for the practicum. Students are required to complete one, three-credit practicum course (PUBH 591). Students may not waive, substitute or reduce the number of practicum content hours.

The practicum provides students with direct, hands-on public health experience after successful completion of the required core courses. Moreover, it is intended to provide meaningful opportunities to apply public health knowledge gained through academic coursework in a professional public health setting. Students may identify their practicum site from a list of previous host sites or identify a new site.

The program has relationships with state and local health departments, community-based organizations, tribal organizations, non-profit organizations and other organizations that serve underserved populations. Examples of previous practicum sites include the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Missoula City County Health Department, University of Montana, Akros, American Heart Association, South Valley Child and Family Center, University of Gondar, Maternal & Newborn Health and the University of Montana Rural Institute. Students are encouraged to apply for funding to support their practicum.

Faculty advisors are available to assist students in identifying a practice site and preceptor. However, students are ultimately responsible for site and preceptor selection, committee member selection and ensuring that the practicum fulfills the program requirements. Students may complete a practicum with their current employers only if the practicum is substantially different from their existing responsibilities and the fieldwork is completed under the supervision of someone other than the student's current supervisor.

Preceptors provide on-site supervision and real-time evaluation of students. Students collaborate with preceptors to develop a work plan and three to five learning objectives specific to the practicum project. Students also identify which competencies are addressed by accomplishing the identified learning objectives. Preferred preceptor qualifications include graduate-level training in public health. When requirements cannot be met, students must identify a co-mentor with the desired qualifications.

Students are required to demonstrate the public health competencies and practice-oriented skills by successful completion of the practicum contact hours and through a written report and an oral presentation, which are evaluated by the preceptor, faculty advisor and committee members. Preceptors complete an evaluation of the student's practicum experience and validate the student's contact hours. Students also evaluate the practicum site and preceptor. In spring 2017, the program is piloting, with two students, Griz eRecruiting, a new online process to systematically evaluate student and preceptor experiences.

During the site visit, reviewers noted a concern related to the lack of orientation and support for preceptors. During the site visit, preceptors shared that they rely on their own experiences as well as the students for guidance on requirements and competencies to be attained. Several preceptors expressed

interest in having a preceptor handbook to formalize and identify roles and responsibilities and provide information about the minimum practicum requirements. Preceptors and alumni acknowledged more formalized training for preceptors would greatly enhance the practical experience, providing a more enriching experience for both the students and preceptors. Additionally, preceptors noted that the process was student-led, with limited to no communication from the program. In the program's response to the site visit team's report, the program documented establishment of new practices that will ensure an individualized orientation for each preceptor.

Despite this lack of guidance for preceptors, students and alumni who completed the practicum had positive experiences. One student shared that the practicum solidified their public health knowledge and skills. Overall, students felt satisfied with the frequency of communication with preceptors and advisors. They also felt challenged by the practicum and well supported by preceptors and appreciative of their guidance and feedback on areas for improvement.

2.5 Culminating Experience.

All graduate professional degree programs identified in the instructional matrix shall assure that each student demonstrates skills and integration of knowledge through a culminating experience.

This criterion is met. All MPH students engage in a three-course sequence of required learning activities that are intended to serve as capstone experiences. Students earn nine credits (21%) of the overall 42 credit-hour degree by completing the three experiences. Guidelines for completing the three capstone experiences are contained in the student handbook and available online. The three experiences include the practicum experience (report and presentation), professional paper and the portfolio.

The MPH student, in consultation with a public health primary or adjunct faculty member, completes the professional paper (PUBH 599), which includes planning and executing a project relating to one of the five core public health areas and communicates or disseminates public health knowledge. The paper may be based on data-driven research, activities completed during the practicum experience or an independent project. In addition to the written paper, the student must provide information regarding the communication format, intended audience, citation and structured abstract. Before completing the paper, students must complete a proposal which includes guidelines for completing a proposal form, identifying learning objectives and MPH competencies and specifying the planned tasks, deliverables and timeline.

The faculty member mentoring the student determines the acceptability of the professional paper without a standardized grading rubric. The site visitors reviewed three examples of professional papers that included one based on a convenience sample of 109 individuals and their perspectives on environmental health; a literature review of connections between gut health and mental health, accompanied by recommended meal plans and lifestyle guidelines; and a proposal to add public health education to a family medicine residency program. Each reflected solid student effort and offered a set of appropriate

references. Upon review of the professional paper guidelines, dated April 2012, site visitors found the rather brief guidance to be mostly procedural and less developed than the guidance for the other two experiences.

Students prepare the portfolio (PUBH 593) after successfully completing the practicum and professional paper, in adherence with detailed written portfolio guidance, dated February 2016. The portfolio offers the opportunity for students to synthesize and integrate knowledge gained through their academic and practice-based experiences. The 20-page report and 45-minute oral presentation present the opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding of the 10 defined MPH program competencies and professional readiness for successful practice, reflect on the professional preparation offered by the program and clarify career goals in public health. A three-person faculty committee selected by each student evaluates the portfolio and presentation and conducts the final defense session, which may include questions for up to an hour beyond the student's presentation. An alumnus may serve in lieu of one of the faculty committee members.

The portfolio defense grading rubric defines elements for faculty to consider. These include review of pre-program and post-program statements of purpose and the student's demonstration of competency knowledge and proficiency in 10 areas. Students complete pre- and post-program self-assessments as part of the portfolio experience. The rubric also provides for review of the student's portfolio and presentation in displaying discipline-specific knowledge and proficiency with the five core public health areas and with seven interdisciplinary/cross-cutting knowledge and proficiency areas. However, as structured, the two areas are grouped in a way that prevents reviewers from distinguishing proficiencies and assessing them separately within the areas. For example, the form does not allow for rating proficiency higher for epidemiology and lower for social and behavioral sciences. Although the rubric offers standardized ratings of pass with honors, pass, pass with requirements, remediation and fail, descriptive guidance for use by the faculty evaluators is not provided, which may allow for wide-ranging subjectivity in applying these ratings.

Faculty and students who met with the site visitors clearly understood the purpose and benefits to be gained by completing the practicum, the professional paper and the portfolio. Students who met with the site visitors indicated their support for the culminating experience requirement of a portfolio by explaining that it stimulated them to reflect more fully on their courses and other curricular experiences completed over several years and to effectively translate those learning activities and skill building exercises into readiness for professional practice. One student indicated that the portfolio helped her develop a greater understanding of systems thinking by allowing her to integrate acquired knowledge and skills.

2.6 Required Competencies.

For each degree program and area of specialization within each program identified in the instructional matrix, there shall be clearly stated competencies that guide the development of degree programs. The program must identify competencies for graduate professional, academic and baccalaureate public health degree programs. Additionally, the program must identify competencies for specializations within the degree program at all levels (bachelor's, master's and doctoral).

This criterion is met with commentary. The program has clearly stated competencies that guide the MPH degree program. For the MPH, the program has identified a set of 10 public health competencies that are further divided into 91 sub-competencies that function as learning objectives. For the PhD, the program identified a set of three competencies that have also been further divided into 18 sub-competencies.

MPH and PhD competencies are made readily available on the program's website and in the student handbooks. Competencies are also listed on the majority of course syllabi. On site, faculty and the chair expressed a commitment and recent university-wide initiative to standardize syllabi.

From 2012 through 2014, the program faculty reviewed courses to ensure that course content addressed the competencies in meeting learning outcomes. Faculty also map competencies to the course offerings.

The commentary relates to the program's need to revise the MPH and PhD competencies to better align with its mission, goals and objectives. The faculty and chair acknowledged the need to revise competencies for both degree offerings, making them more focused and reducing the number of sub-competencies. They also recognize the need to revise curricula to align with the 2016 criteria and noted that they had decided to wait until after the current accreditation review before beginning this process in order to incorporate the site visit team's feedback. Faculty expressed excitement about engaging in a comprehensive revision process, using the change to the 2016 criteria as well as the accreditation review as opportunities for major revisions to the program's competencies, improving the quality of education they provide to their students.

Faculty and the chair described the process they already have in place to carry out these revisions, identifying the Curriculum Committee as the starting point, proposing revised competencies before giving them to faculty and the External Advisory Committee for comment and discussion. The PhD program coordinator also acknowledged the need to map the PhD competencies to the list of pre-approved electives, given that the current doctoral curriculum includes many electives until more doctoral level courses are developed and implemented, a deficiency addressed in Criterion 2.10.

Faculty and preceptors expressed satisfaction with the level of competency attainment demonstrated by their students. Preceptors spoke of the high caliber of students contributing to the program's success. Alumni and students also expressed satisfaction with their competency attainment.

2.7 Assessment Procedures.

There shall be procedures for assessing and documenting the extent to which each student has demonstrated achievement of the competencies defined for his or her degree program and area of concentration.

This criterion is partially met. The program has implemented procedures for monitoring and evaluating student progress in achieving expected competencies, including grades and coursework; the practicum experience; culminating experiences; and meetings with faculty advisors and/or the chair.

Classroom activities such as midterms and final exams, oral presentations, research projects and group projects provide mechanisms to evaluate student performance and competency attainment. Any student receiving a grade of B- or lower in a core course is considered to have not met the competencies for that course and is required to retake the course. Students are also expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 throughout their enrollment. Faculty who met with site visitors described plans to create and implement mid-semester surveys that allow students to self-assess their competency attainment and provide feedback on their courses. Students also complete a pre- and post- assessment evaluating their competency attainment.

The program uses three methods to evaluate the practical experience. 1) Preceptors (site mentors) complete a practicum site mentor evaluation form based on the student's performance. 2) Students complete the student practicum site assessment form which provides feedback on the site as well as the preceptor. 3) A three-person committee, including the preceptor, evaluates the student's 15-page written paper and oral presentation using the practicum grading rubric form, which evaluates students on their overall performance and competency attainment.

The program also evaluates the professional portfolio, one of two components that make up the culminating experience, based on students' competency attainment. A three person committee, different than the committee used for the practical experience, complete the portfolio defense grading rubric that assesses the student's competency attainment.

For PhD students, the program has implemented a PhD defense grading rubric that includes a detailed analysis of the student's competency and sub-competency attainment. A five-member committee also helps evaluate the dissertation defense.

Students earning an MPH degree have a maximum of six years to complete the degree. The program has met or exceeded the minimum established thresholds for graduation rates (90.1% and 88.9%) for its MPH cohorts that have reached the maximum time to graduate.

The PhD program began enrolling students in January 2017. The maximum time to graduate for the PhD degree is six years, though the program expects students to complete the degree in four years.

The program has met or exceeded the minimum established threshold of 80% for post-graduation outcomes (employment or enrollment in additional education) for the past three years (80%, 90% and 100%).

During the site visit, reviewers noted a concern related to the lack of a systematic process for collecting and reporting alumni feedback regarding their attainment of competencies and ability to apply competencies in a workplace setting. This was also observed during the 2011 review. The program faculty and chair told site visitors that the alumni survey was recently revised in spring 2017 from a paper-based system to an electronic survey using Qualtrics in order to address a history of low response rates. Faculty were able to test this new survey in spring 2017 and have already seen improvements in the response rates; however the Qualtrics survey does not incorporate questions soliciting feedback regarding alumni perceptions of their preparedness and competency attainment in a workplace setting. The program coordinator and chair also commented on the inconsistent delivery of the alumni survey and expressed the need to develop a more systematic process to obtain information in a timely and consistent manner. The program's response to the site visit team's report documented new practices relating to data collection from alumni—the program collected additional data through a supplement to the spring 2017 survey that ultimately created an 87% response rate. The program also implemented a plan to administer future data collection at three points in time.

The concern relates to the need to implement a systematic process for collecting and reporting employer feedback regarding graduates' attainment of competencies and ability to apply competencies in a workplace setting. This was also cited during the 2011 review. The employer survey previously used also yielded low response rates. The program coordinator and chair summarized current revisions to data collection from employers, using a more mixed methods approach. Beginning in summer 2017, the program will begin conducting focus groups and key informant interviews to gather this data. The program's response to the site visit team's report described specific plans for future data collection; it will be important for the program to implement its plans and evaluate the success of the chosen methods.

2.8 Bachelor's Degrees in Public Health.

If the program offers baccalaureate public health degrees, they shall include the following elements:

Required Coursework in Public Health Core Knowledge: students must complete courses that provide a basic understanding of the five core public health knowledge areas defined in Criterion 2.1, including one course that focuses on epidemiology. Collectively, this coursework should be at least the equivalent of 12 semester-credit hours.

Elective Public Health Coursework: in addition to the required public health core knowledge courses, students must complete additional public health-related courses.

Public health-related courses may include those addressing social, economic, quantitative, geographic, educational and other issues that impact the health of populations and health disparities within and across populations.

Capstone Experience: students must complete an experience that provides opportunities to apply public health principles outside of a typical classroom setting and builds on public health coursework. This experience should be at least equivalent to three semester-credit hours or sufficient to satisfy the typical capstone requirement for a bachelor's degree at the parent university. The experience may be tailored to students' expected post-baccalaureate goals (eg, graduate and/or professional school, entry-level employment), and a variety of experiences that meet university requirements may be appropriate. Acceptable capstone experiences might include one or more of the following: internship, service-learning project, senior seminar, portfolio project, research paper or honors thesis.

The required public health core coursework and capstone experience must be taught (in the case of coursework) and supervised (in the case of capstone experiences) by faculty documented in Criteria 4.1.a and 4.1.b.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.9 Academic Degrees.

If the program also offers curricula for graduate academic degrees, students pursuing them shall obtain a broad introduction to public health, as well as an understanding about how their discipline-based specialization contributes to achieving the goals of public health.

This criterion is met. The program offers one academic degree, a PhD in public health, as shown in Table 2. This doctoral degree program was launched in 2017.

PhD students receive a broad introduction to public health through the following courses: Research Rotations in Public Health and Qualitative Research Methods. These courses' learning objectives include those required by CEPH's 2016 criteria, such as explaining public health history, philosophy and values; explaining the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health; and explaining the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge. Program faculty who met with site visitors also expressed their commitment to incorporating additional public health coverage as they develop more doctoral level courses. Site visitors verified coverage of the learning objectives through course syllabi.

At the time of the site visit, faculty told site visitors that about half of their PhD students have prior epidemiological training and education to satisfy the introduction to epidemiology requirement for academic degrees. For the other half who do not, the doctoral curriculum has been recently revised in

spring 2017 to include a formal policy that requires PhD students without prior training in epidemiology to enroll in PUBH 510: Introduction to Epidemiology. This is also the core epidemiology requirement for MPH students. The PhD program coordinator and faculty who met with site visitors stated that they are currently developing an advanced neuroepidemiology doctoral course that will be implemented in spring 2018. Faculty also indicated the desire and goal to create additional courses for special topics in epidemiology at the doctoral level.

The culminating experience for the students pursuing the newly introduced PhD degree will include a dissertation report and dissertation oral defense evaluated by a student-selected, five-member advisory committee using a faculty grading rubric rating 18 sub-competencies and allowing for overall comments. The PhD grading rubric does not offer guidance to the evaluators regarding distinctions among the five evaluative ratings, which are the same used by the MPH portfolio grading rubric.

No student has yet to advance to the dissertation stage; however, site visitors reviewed the requirements and determined that they set reasonable expectations for the culminating experience of an academic doctoral degree.

2.10 Doctoral Degrees.

The program may offer doctoral degree programs, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is partially met. The program's new degree offering is the only PhD in public health for the state of Montana. This new doctoral degree program includes completion of 90 semester credit hours consisting of 52 didactic coursework semester credit hours and 38 research/dissertation semester credit hours. One of the program's core faculty assumed the position of PhD program coordinator. The program currently has four PhD students and will matriculate an additional three students in fall 2017.

At the time of the site visit, there were only two doctoral-level courses fully developed and implemented: 1) Research Rotations in Public Health and 2) Qualitative Research Methods. The program is in the final stages of implementing the following two doctoral level courses: 1) Advanced Quantitative Methods I and 2) Advanced Quantitative Methods II.

The concern relates to the need for an explicitly defined curriculum. During the site visit, site visitors learned that the PhD curriculum was approved by the Montana Board of Regents without requiring submission of syllabi or a finalized plan of study. Furthermore, since its inception in January 2017, the PhD proposed plan of study has already undergone numerous iterations so that the curriculum listed in the student handbook was inaccurate, as was the plan of study displayed on the program's website. The PhD program coordinator informed the site visit team that the proposed plan of study currently has moved both courses in advanced quantitative methods to the second year, whereas the plan on the website lists this course sequence as required in the first year. The first cohort of PhD students are also enrolled in

courses that are not included in the proposed plan of study so that the curriculum of future cohorts will be drastically different. The program has not yet identified a process to transition the first cohort and possibly the second cohort beginning fall 2017, to the finalized curriculum. The PhD program coordinator also told site visitors that the proposed number of electives has been reduced from 10 elective courses to five, while the curriculum outline on the program's website still indicates 10 course electives. As mentioned previously, faculty who met with site visitors described current efforts to develop doctoral-level courses in epidemiology that will be implemented in spring 2018.

Faculty who met with site visitors expressed the need to investigate additional sources of funding for their PhD students. They are able to guarantee tuition for the first two cohorts (spring and fall 2017), but were not sure if they would be able to continue to provide this support for future cohorts.

2.11 Joint Degrees.

If the program offers joint degree programs, the required curriculum for the professional public health degree shall be equivalent to that required for a separate public health degree.

This criterion is not applicable. Joint degrees with pharmacy (PharmD/MPH) and physical therapy (DPT/MPH) are planned but are on hold due to resource concerns. The program is expected to notify CEPH prior to enrolling students in those programs.

2.12 Distance Education or Executive Degree Programs.

If the program offers degree programs using formats or methods other than students attending regular on-site course sessions spread over a standard term, these degree programs must a) be consistent with the mission of the program and within the program's established areas of expertise; b) be guided by clearly articulated student learning outcomes that are rigorously evaluated; c) be subject to the same quality control processes that other degree programs in the university are; and d) provide planned and evaluated learning experiences that take into consideration and are responsive to the characteristics and needs of adult learners. If the program offers distance education or executive degree programs, it must provide needed support for these programs, including administrative, travel, communication and student services. The program must have an ongoing program to evaluate the academic effectiveness of the format, to assess learning methods and to systematically use this information to stimulate program improvements. The program must have processes in place through which it establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or degree is the same student who participates in and completes the course and degree and receives academic credit.

This criterion is met. The program offers the MPH degree in an online format to accommodate the needs of its student body. The majority of MPH students work full-time, resulting in time constraints to attending regular on-campus instruction. The online format allows the program to reach more students, especially in underserved areas throughout Montana. The online format also aligns with the mission of the program, addressing the workforce development needs of the rural regions, particularly the Northern Rocky Mountains. Finally, the online format allows the program to reach a more diverse student body, a

challenge in a predominantly Caucasian state. The online program attracts Native American students, which also aligns with the program's diversity outcome measures.

The online program uses Moodle, a web-based course management system. This system allows for virtual office hours, chat rooms, discussion boards and live stream presentations. The program also uses Blackboard Collaborate, a web conferencing system. Students who met with site visitors commended the program for its innovative ways of engaging students, taking advantage of the tools both of these systems provide. They particularly enjoyed the use of the live stream presentations and encourage faculty to incorporate more opportunities of this nature. The majority of the classes incorporate weekly discussion posts that encourage peer-to-peer interactions as well as student and faculty interactions. Faculty that met with site visitors also stated that some of their students strive to meet each other if they are in the same geographic location, also promoting peer-to-peer interactions. The chair incorporates field trips for the Environmental and Rural Health course, and students also appreciate this opportunity.

Upon acceptance into the program, all students are assigned an individual username and password for Moodle using their official university login credentials. The University of Montana's internet use policy prohibits sharing of login credentials. Student names are displayed in Moodle, and instructors are able to see who is currently online and the last time the student logged in.

Additional technological resources are also made available to online students. The UOnline Technical Support Team provides support to both faculty and students, including course design, implementation and delivery. This team provides trainings for faculty to be well versed in the Moodle system and offers workshops such as Learning Guide for Instructors. The team also provides training for the online students, helping them navigate through Moodle and offering trainings such as Moodle 101 for Students.

The program also uses university resources to assist online students. They encourage students to use the Writing Center and will refer students who need the added assistance throughout the course of study. This center is also introduced during new student orientation and is listed on course syllabi.

In an effort to promote a sense of community among their online students, the program offers on campus pre-approved elective courses from other academic units. With the addition of the PhD program, the program hopes to provide additional on-campus course offerings for their MPH students, to also promote peer-to-peer interactions among the two degrees. This provides a two-fold benefit for MPH students, allowing them to interact with each other and faculty on campus, as well as enhancing the program's interdisciplinary nature, encouraging collaboration between the different academic units on campus. The program will also start offering the option of an in person new student orientation. Students who met with site visitors expressed great interest in this orientation and expect future cohorts to take advantage of it.

The Curriculum, Steering and Admissions Committees all monitor the MPH program for academic rigor. The committees use course evaluations and feedback from the student representatives on the committees to make changes as needed. Alumni and students commended the program's faculty and chair for their responsiveness to feedback and have witnessed immediate changes, sometimes occurring mid-semester throughout the course. They acknowledged this is a strength of the program and illustrates the commitment of the program chair.

Faculty and students expressed satisfaction with the online courses. Students stated that online courses add flexibility to their schedule and meet their needs, particularly for full-time working students. Students also expressed a desire for expanding the array of available online courses. They would like to see more courses added as the program continues to grow.

3.0 CREATION, APPLICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

3.1 Research.

The program shall pursue an active research program, consistent with its mission, through which its faculty and students contribute to the knowledge base of the public health disciplines, including research directed at improving the practice of public health.

This criterion is met with commentary. The self-study and site visit confirmed that faculty are actively engaged in externally-funded research projects. The program has a clear expectation that faculty will contribute to knowledge generation and foster an atmosphere of scholarship considered integral to a high quality educational program in public health. The program encourages faculty to include students in research activities but reports that students are less available to engage in research with faculty due to the limitations associated with a distance-learning program in which most students are employed full-time and reside in locations other than Missoula. With the initiation of the PhD program, the faculty expect all PhD students to be actively engaged in research projects

Several university-level policies and guidelines guide faculty and student researchers, such as those on indigenous people, protection of human subjects, receipt and administration of external funding and others. Indirect cost recovery money is shared between the Vice President's Office of Research and the generating college as discussed in Criterion 1.6.

The UM Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies scholarship as an academic responsibility and outlines expectations for scholarly accomplishment to be reflected in all Unit Standards. Research-related activities and accomplishments must be considered in any evaluation of faculty for purposes of promotion, award of tenure, determination of salary increment or recommendation for retention. No faculty member may be promoted to full professor status on the basis of teaching and service only. The

SPCHS Unit Standards describe scholarly activity as a primary responsibility of each tenure-track faculty member and indicate that each faculty member must demonstrate annual productivity within a focused, independent research program. The Unit Standards state that faculty are expected to regularly publish in peer-reviewed journals and actively participate in the development of funded research.

The program has developed a research support network to assist faculty with pre-and post-award grant activities. A faculty member who identifies a potential funding source will meet with the program's grants management specialist who will assist with submission forms and timeline development. She will communicate the timeline and, along with the principal investigator, help facilitate budget discussions with a designated college budget analyst and with a sponsored programs specialist at the university level. Following funding of the grant, the faculty member will work with these three research support personnel to set up a working budget and timeline for submitting progress and reports. This support network will also assist the faculty member in monitoring expenditures throughout the duration of the grant.

Faculty who met with site visitors stated that the university and college provide start-up funding to assist newly recruited faculty in initiating a research agenda, dependent upon the needs of the individual.

Both the primary and other faculty are engaged in a variety of collaborative research projects in Montana and other locales. The self-study provides several examples of the wide range of research activities undertaken by the program faculty. For example, one faculty member is engaged collaboratively with another university faculty member in developing, implementing and testing community-based approaches to address childhood obesity that is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and the National Institutes of Health. Another faculty member has completed a project with the Flathead County Health Department to determine sources of air pollution in the Whitefish Montana Valley air shed. He is also working with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to determine sources of air pollution in Pinehurst and other Idaho communities. Other program faculty, with funding from the National Institutes of Health, are engaged with population-based research with tribes located in Montana, Idaho and Arizona. Other projects include research related to an exploration of ethical conduct of clinical research in rural healthcare settings, household air pollution and health, tobacco cessation and developing research capacity related to wood smoke health studies throughout New Zealand.

Site visitors reviewed faculty CVs and found an active publication record for each of the four primary faculty. Each faculty member also documents ongoing and current external research support. University and college leaders who met with the site visitors praised the faculty for their robust grantsmanship, noting that each of the primary faculty member is research-active and has grant support.

The self-study lists funded research projects involving all four primary faculty and two of the secondary faculty serving as PI or as co-PI for funded research projects, about half of which were community-based, and about one-third listed student participation. Research funding generated by program faculty as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI during calendar years 2014-2016 shows close to \$2.5 million in 2014, \$2 million in 2015 and nearly \$1.4 million in 2016. The listing of projects shows multiple collaborations among the primary faculty and one of the secondary faculty members. Project funding totals range from a low of \$6,100 covering one year to the highest award of \$2,660,292, with a five-year funding period. The self-study document shows a decline in the program's research funding over the last three years. Faculty explained that grants by the two professors who resigned in 2016 are not included in the research activity table and that two large clinical and translational research grants are listed in the table of extramurally funded service projects in Criterion 3.2.

Students engage in research primarily through curricular requirements such as the student practicum, development of professional papers and enrollment in independent study courses for credit. The self-study provides examples of four students involved in research with faculty mentors, including three with external funding and one conducted with a local physician. Faculty are aware of the very limited involvement of students in research beyond their capstone projects and indicate that they are actively advising students about research opportunities and are expanding efforts in proposing student support funding when they submit grant applications. They acknowledge that grant support may be more likely for PhD students, because of their longer period of time on campus.

The commentary relates to the need for the program to expand the number of MPH students engaged in research activities. This was also observed during the 2011 review. The site visitors recognize that digital learning may lessen student participation in research due to geographical separation from the faculty and the university, but faculty should continue to find ways to interest and engage more MPH students in research, perhaps through facilitating conference presentations or peer-reviewed publications related to the professional paper or other mechanism.

Site visitors agree that faculty are demonstrating success with research and scholarly endeavors by consistently meeting annual program targets set for outcome measures regarding faculty publishing, submitting or acquiring grants and completing conference research posters or presentations. Funding from grants and contracts meets the target for AY 2015-2016 and falls slightly short of the target for AY 2014-2015. The program reports that it did not meet the funding target for securing indirect cost recovery from grants and contracts until AY 2015-2016. The student outcome regarding completion of a successful professional paper is a requirement for graduation and does not offer any relevant information about student research success or the program's progress in facilitating student involvement in research.

Students who met with site visitors stated that faculty notify students of opportunities to engage in research activities and are supportive of their involvement but do not necessarily emphasize the potential benefits to be gained. Some students indicated that the faculty were very receptive to requests for assistance if the student self-initiated a research project.

3.2 Service.

The program shall pursue active service activities, consistent with its mission, through which faculty and students contribute to the advancement of public health practice.

This criterion is met. Service is a discernable strength of the university, program and community. Faculty, staff, students and alumni are actively engaged at local, state, national and international levels. Faculty serve on community boards such as YMCA Missoula and the Air and Waste Management Association Board of Directors; hold leadership positions with tribal and service organizations such as Rocky Mountain Tribal Institutional Review Board; and serve as reviewers for peer-reviewed journals.

The program has measurable service objectives and consistently exceeded its targets over the past three years. Students are actively engaged in service learning in the classroom and community. Students have opportunities to serve communities and organizations through service learning courses, practical field experiences, faculty-initiated activities and student-initiated volunteer activities. Data from AY 2013-2016 included in the self-study suggests that service is primarily faculty-driven, with engagement from only 20-39% of students.

Site visitors learned during the site visit that service is a goal of the Public Health Student and Alumni Association. Students and faculty work collaboratively on community service projects such as river and park clean up, movie night, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for a Cure, state science fair judges and food drives. Data on these activities are not consistently collected and therefore student participation is likely underreported in the outcome measures.

Students who met with site visitors reported that they are actively engaged in community service projects and that faculty, alumni and community members regularly encourage them to participate in service opportunities. Community representatives who met with site visitors noted that commitment to service was a strength of the program, embodying the Montana spirit where a sense of community is part of the DNA of Montana and how you get things done. They also acknowledge the active presence of the program faculty and students in the greater Missoula and rural regions of Montana.

Plans are underway to more systematically collect data on student engagement in the future. The program revised the portfolio requirements to include student professional and community service activities. This change will assist in accurately capturing activities that were previously underreported.

3.3 Workforce Development.

The program shall engage in activities other than its offering of degree programs that support the professional development of the public health workforce.

This criterion is met. The program engages in a variety of formal and informal workforce development activities that support continuing education and workforce development. The program supports professional development of the public health workforce through presentations, lectures, seminars and conferences hosted by the university and external institutions, and public health service organizations.

The External Advisory Committee identifies new and emerging workforce development strategies for the program and region. It is comprised of public health leaders, alumni and community representatives. The program also informally gathers information about emerging continuing education and workforce development through relationships with public health professionals and alumni. The Steering Committee is another vehicle through which the program identifies the needs of the public health workforce on an ongoing basis.

The chair serves on the statewide Public Health Systems Improvement Task Force and its Workforce Development Subcommittee. This appointment provides a direct pipeline for real-time information from employers about workforce development needs for the entire state.

The program has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the State of Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. This MOU also serves as an additional platform for assessing the needs of the state of Montana. The agreement formalizes collaboration for student practica, staff mentorship, continuous training and education, student research opportunities and technical resources.

All faculty were actively engaged in workforce development activities. Faculty who met with the site visitors shared that they also fulfill a number of individual requests to conduct assessments and collaborate on public health grand rounds, grant writing workshops with the tribal college and ongoing efforts to assess state-wide safety workforce needs. They encourage student participation when possible.

The program offers a certificate in public health. The public health certificate is a 12-credit hour program comprised of three core courses in the five core areas of public health and one elective. It is designed to meet the needs of state and local health department employees, and students can transfer credit hours from the certificate program to the MPH program. The program recently received approval to begin four new certificate programs to address workforce development needs identified by state and local health departments.

4.0 FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.

4.1 Faculty Qualifications.

The program shall have a clearly defined faculty which, by virtue of its distribution, multidisciplinary nature, educational preparation, practice experience and research and instructional competence, is able to fully support the program's mission, goals and objectives.

This criterion is met. The program's four primary faculty members possess academic credentials relevant to four of the five areas of public health knowledge and provide instruction for the corresponding courses. At the time of the site visit, the program has four full-time faculty and one vacant line due to a resignation in January 2017, as discussed in Criterion 1.7. The four faculty have PhD degrees, are experienced with academic public health programs and are engaged in scholarly activities and funded research. Two of the four have earned MPH degrees.

The site visit team raised concerns about the program's lack of faculty expertise in the area of health services administration. Site visitors reviewed the PUBH 530 Public Health Administration and Management syllabus from fall 2016, however, and determined that the course provides an excellent overview of administrative concepts and principles and in-depth exposure to administrative skill building. The program draws on its relationships with the university's Public Administration program to fill in expertise in this area.

Of the four primary faculty members, two hold professor rank, one is an associate professor, and one is a tenure-track assistant professor. The two professors and the associate professor are tenured.

Five secondary faculty members have adjunct appointments ranging from 0.10 to 0.25 FTE and serve as instructors of specified public health courses. Three adjuncts hold positions with other UM programs, one is a doctoral student at another university and one is employed by a foundation outside the university. Three adjunct faculty have PhD degrees, one adjunct has a JD degree and an MPH degree and the fifth holds an MPH degree and is pursuing a PhD in maternal and child health. The 0.25 FTE adjunct has an ongoing joint appointment with the program funded by state legislative appropriations and has teaching, service and research responsibilities with the program.

In addition to the four primary and five other faculty, the program identifies 26 faculty affiliates who possess a variety of disciplinary training and degrees related to public health and who have relevant professional experiences as academics or practitioners. Sixteen have positions on campus and the others have positions of responsibility with local health agencies, clinical settings, local health departments and the state health department. Of the 26 affiliates, 17 have PhD degrees and four have clinical doctorates in dentistry, medicine and veterinary medicine. The faculty affiliates contribute to the program by serving as guest lecturers, course instructors, members of student committees, field preceptors and as members of

the program's standing committees. Site visitors concur that this mix of contributing affiliate faculty enables integration of realistic perspectives from the field of practice and related disciplines, offering students a more balanced understanding and appreciation of both academic and practice viewpoints.

In meetings with site visitors, alumni and students expressed positive views of faculty engagement with the practice community. They reported that practitioners participate in course instruction and share insights about the realities of work in health settings.

The program has established four outcome measures assessing the qualifications of its faculty complement. These include percent of primary faculty with PhD or MD degrees, degrees earned from schools of public health, experience in academic public health program and active engagement in funded research. The program data indicate that all targets are met.

4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures.

The program shall have well-defined policies and procedures to recruit, appoint and promote qualified faculty, to evaluate competence and performance of faculty, and to support the professional development and advancement of faculty.

This criterion is met. The UM Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the SPCHS Unit Standards specify policies, procedures and expectations governing recruitment, appointment, evaluation and promotion of faculty. Specific sections of the CBA relevant to the accreditation review include the following: Faculty Rights; Faculty Development, Recruitment and Retention; Unit Standards and Faculty Evaluation Procedures; Academic Freedom and Responsibilities and Academic Governance.

At the university level, the Provost's Office provides professional development funding on a campus-wide competitive basis for international exchanges and for sabbaticals. The School of Extended & Lifelong Learning supports faculty with professional development opportunities such as short courses and sponsored events aimed at improving and expanding their skills. Dependent on available funding, the university provides for faculty sabbaticals funded at full salary for one-half of the contract period and three-fourths of salary for the full contract year, if approved at the department and college levels.

The college assists the program in providing resources for faculty development. In line with the CBA, the college maintains an equipment fund that funds new computer stations for primary faculty every three years. The program, drawing on program tuition and indirect recovery funds from grants and contracts, allocates about \$1,500 per year to support professional development of primary faculty, including travel to professional conferences and purchase of books, subscriptions and software. Although acknowledging that this funding is rather limited, the program anticipates that resources will not expand in the near future. Additionally, the program supports non-tenure track faculty for travel to professional meetings if they are invited to participate or present a research paper. Senior faculty and the chair provide mentoring for new

primary faculty, addressing such areas as student advising, committee service, grant writing and management and the process of promotion and tenure.

The CBA and SPCHS Unit Standards establish formal procedures for evaluating faculty competence and performance. The evaluation is based on an Individual Performance Record prepared by the tenure-track faculty member and teaching evaluations. The teaching evaluations are reviewed by a Student Evaluation Committee (SEC), which includes three to seven individuals, drawn from current students and alumni. The Individual Performance Record and recommendations from the SEC are forwarded to a Faculty Evaluation Committee, the chair and the college dean with recommendations made to each succeeding level. The recommendations include a finding that the faculty member is performing at a normal level, a below normal level or a merit level. The Office of the Provost examines the recommendations and provides final review and decision making.

A salary increase is provided for those faculty receiving a normal level outcome, and an additional salary increase is provided for those receiving a merit review. Tenured professors are reviewed on a three-year cycle, and tenured associate professors are reviewed on a two-year cycle if they are seeking only a normal salary increase and have not received a less-than-normal review for the past three years. The CBA defines the normal salary increase each year, and for FY 2017, it is the greater of \$780 or 2% of base salary. Non-tenured faculty are reviewed each year. The chair and the faculty member together select members for the student and faculty evaluation committees.

Each course concludes with a standardized electronic evaluation conducted by UMLearn Support Services to be completed anonymously by students for each course offered. In general, the evaluation form assesses student perceptions regarding the extent of learning, grading, distance learning format, the instructor and satisfaction with the course and the instructor. The online course evaluation form requests ratings for 17 items using a six-point rating scale plus an open-ended section inviting comments on the instructor or the class as a whole. The form also seeks information on hours spent per week on the course in and out of class, the number of hours per week considered valuable to the student's learning and the grade expected by the student.

The UMLearn Support Services provides course evaluation reports to the instructor and to the chair at the end of the semester. As needed, the chair will discuss the evaluation results with the faculty member and the college dean. The student evaluations are used in assessing teaching effectiveness in faculty performance reviews and for considering applications for promotion and tenure. The program reports that faculty are seeking to increase student participation in providing course evaluation responses through such methods as stressing that responses are anonymous and have value in improving courses and by early announcements and periodic reminders to students to complete the evaluation.

The faculty are exploring the opportunity for conducting mid-term course evaluations and plan to participate in training on course assessments with UOnline. The faculty also has recently surveyed alumni to seek their reflections and feedback on the quality of public health courses. Students who met with site visitors commented that faculty often ask for suggestions to improve courses prior to the end of a semester and have made immediate alterations responsive to student suggestions such as revising the course syllabus and changing textbooks.

4.3 Student Recruitment and Admissions.

The program shall have student recruitment and admissions policies and procedures designed to locate and select qualified individuals capable of taking advantage of the program's various learning activities, which will enable each of them to develop competence for a career in public health.

This criterion is met. The program has established student recruitment methods and admissions policies and procedures designed to identify and attract promising, highly-qualified candidates. Recruitment strategies include the program website, annual newsletter, alumni networks and health departments. Recruitment materials are primarily online to complement the program's online delivery.

The public health certificates also serve as a recruitment strategy for potential MPH students. A total of 12 credits can be transferred to the MPH program, upon successful completion of the certificate program. MPH applicants who do not receive admission into the program can also be referred to the certificate programs.

The program bases acceptance on both qualitative and quantitative measures. Applicants must provide official transcripts, GRE scores, admission essays, letters of recommendation and demonstrated potential. Students must have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 and GRE minimum scores of 158 for verbal, 159 for quantitative and 4.5 analytical writing score. Two members of the Admissions Committee critically review and assess each application and make recommendations to the chair regarding admission to the program.

Approximately 71 to 85% of applicants are accepted into the program. Between 59% and 70% of those accepted enroll. The total student headcount at the time of the site visit was 51 for the MPH program. In the first cohort of doctoral students, five students applied, four were accepted and all enrolled.

4.4 Advising and Career Counseling.

There shall be available a clearly explained and accessible academic advising system for students, as well as readily available career and placement advice.

This criterion is met with commentary. Academic advising and career counseling services are available to students. Each student is assigned an academic advisor at the onset of the program. Primary faculty serve as advisors. The academic advisors monitor students' progress and performance throughout the program.

The program uses four mechanisms to gather information on student and alumni satisfaction with academic advising and career counseling including 1) the alumni survey, 2) as part of the portfolio defense, students provide feedback specific to academic and career counseling, 3) informal discussions with the Public Health Student and Alumni Association and 4) informal discussions with students. Data from the alumni survey states alumni were satisfied, for the most part, with the academic advising and career counseling received.

Students who met with site visitors shared that they had good experiences with their academic advisors and felt they were supportive and responsive to their needs. Although students were satisfied, they also communicated that advising was primarily student-driven, and they could have benefited from more guidance.

The commentary relates to the need for additional career counseling at the program level. The university offers career advising services, including mock interviews, assistance reviewing job offers, space for Skype interviews and resume building workshops. Students who met with site visitors indicated that they rarely used these services given that many were unaware. Those that were aware, stated these were very useful resources. The program has not implemented a formal structure for program-specific career counseling. Program leadership stated career counseling primarily occurs during regular faculty and student interactions such as academic advising sessions. Students and alumni shared that career counseling discussions are self-initiated with faculty advisors and preceptors and were helpful when they did occur. Additionally, mid-career professional students expressed that it would be helpful receiving the type of career counseling appropriate for their current status, sometimes wanting guidance to better use the skills attained throughout the program to make them more effective in their current public health positions. Students and alumni acknowledged faculty and the chair are available for such discussions and the career advice is given, when solicited. Faculty who met with site visitors were made aware of this commentary and recognized this as an area for improvement.

The program follows university-wide grievance procedures, which are made available to all students on the university website. Historically, students have communicated concerns to their faculty advisors, the program coordinator or the chair. The chair can also bring these concerns to the college dean if necessary. The program has not had any formal complaints in the past three years.

Agenda

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

University of Montana Public Health Program

April 27-28, 2017

Thursday, April 27, 2017

- 8:30 am Meeting with Chair
Tony Ward
- 8:45 am Request for Additional Documentation
- 9:00 am Team Executive Session
- 9:30 am Break
- 9:45 am Meeting with Program and Department Administration
Tony Ward
Patrick Dye
Desirae Ware
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:00 am Meeting with Faculty Related to Curriculum and Degree Programs
Annie Belcourt
Patrick Dye
Kari Harris
Curtis Noonan
Erin Semmens
Tony Ward
- 12:00 pm Break
- 12:15 pm Lunch with Students
Kate Chapin
Erika Baldry
Jane Gillette
Amoy Jacques
Alisha Johnson
Beth Jones
Gini Kay
Emma Murter
John Palacio
Jane Vandegrift
Emily Coyle
Maja Pedersen
- 1:30 pm Break
- 1:45 pm Meeting with Faculty Related to Research, Service, Workforce Development and Faculty Issues
Christina Barsky
Annie Belcourt
Jean Carter
Kay Fox
Kari Harris
Trish Miller
Curtis Noonan
Eric Semmens
- 2:45 pm Break
- 3:00 pm Meeting with Tony Ward and Patrick Dye

3:30 pm Break

4:00 pm Meeting with Alumni, Community Representatives and Preceptors
Tovah Foss
Niki Graham
Shawn Hinz
Roxanne Hovenkotter
Ellen Leahy
Jeanna McPherson
Helen Russette
Lindsey Shankle
Todd Harwell
John Felton
Benjamin Schmidt
Neoma Greenfield
Sue Hansen
Tracy Miller
Shannon Therriault

5:00 pm Adjourn

Friday, April 28, 2017

9:00 am Meeting with Institutional Leadership
Reed Humphrey
Beverly Edmond
Nathan Lindsay

9:30 am Break

9:45 am Team Executive Session and Report Preparation

12:30 pm Exit Briefing

1:15 pm Adjourn