MPH Steering Committee Meeting

September 12, 2013

Agenda

1. Approval of July 25 Minutes

2. Update on Committee Membership

3. Subcommittee and Program Updates
   a. MPH Student Progress Committee
   b. MPH Admissions Committee
   c. First Year MPH Experience Committee
   d. Internship Director
   e. MPH Internship Waiver Committee
   f. Online MPH Director

4. Status of Committee Recommendations from June and Where We Go from Here
   a. June Recommendations
   b. Tasks for Fall Semester
   c. Time Table

5. Discussion

6. Other
   - Meeting Time and Frequency

Next Meeting: September 26, 2:30-4:00 PM
MPH Steering Committee Meeting  
September 12, 2013  
Meeting Notes

In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Hyunok Choi, Mary Gallant, Lenore Gensburg, Lauren Howland, Janine Jurkowski, Brenda Kirkwood, Caitlin Reid, Perry Smith, Norma Tavakoli, and Wendy Weller

Unable to Attend: Punkin Stephens

The meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m.

Review of July 25, 2013 Minutes:

- The meeting minutes were approved.

Subcommittee and Program Updates

- There were no urgent reports at this time.

Status of Committee Recommendations from June 2013

- Perry Smith provided an update on the status of the Committee’s work:
  - The committee submitted a letter to the Dean detailing recommendations to enhance the First Year and Capstone Seminars. The following recommendations were made:
    - Change the title of the First Year Seminar to Public Health for Professionals
    - Change the Fall semester of the First Year Seminar to a 4-6 week course that will cover the Principles of Public Health, with smaller classes, two groups, shorter sessions, and changing the course grade from Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory to A-E
    - Cover professional development during the second semester of the First Year seminar
    - Utilize the same instructor to teach the Capstone Seminar
    - Change course start time (preferably to an earlier time)
    - Appoint an MPH program Director to coordinate the First Year Seminar
  - The committee’s long-term plan will include submitting a list of recommendations to the Dean’s Office. The committee discussed the time frame for submitting additional committee recommendations. It was agreed that the committee would submit a report with recommendations to the Dean’s Office by December 2013.
  - The committee’s Capstone Seminar recommendations were based on feedback from a student survey administered during the Spring 2013 semester.
  - The Dean’s office was responsive to the letter and implemented some of the proposed changes.

- Discussion

  Capstone Seminar
The capstone experience might encompass the internship experience, course work and a professional portfolio.

**Online MPH**

- The committee discussed the impact that changes to the MPH program would have on the online MPH program. The online MPH program is an interdisciplinary track within the MPH program. All MPH students are required to follow the same curriculum. As a result, any changes made to the MPH curriculum would impact students in the online program. Currently, the online MPH program requires students to complete the Principles of Public Health course as one of the advanced requirements.

**Internship Experience**

- The committee considered changing the internship program. One suggestion was that the internship be a part of the capstone and culminating experience for students.
- Internship advisors are in need of training and explicit objectives to ensure students are receiving a quality internship experience.
- A suggestion was made to reduce the internship credit requirement from 9 to 6 or 0 credits with the same hour requirement.
- Some committee members felt that a full-time internship in the summer is the best option for students. It was mentioned that summer internships require more out-of-pocket expenses for students because of the credit registration requirement.
- A suggestion was made to require students to conduct an internship presentation to their peers, mentors and department faculty on a set day, when all presentations in the concentration would be completed.

**Next Steps:**

- The committee will change its weekly meeting schedule to accommodate committee members’ schedules. Mary Gallant will have Donna Perkins send new meeting dates to committee members.
- The committee would like to use Wiki for future meetings. Caitlin will look into the Wiki meeting space for future use.
- The committee will spend time discussing decisions, ramifications of each decision and ultimately what changes need to be made to the MPH curriculum.
- Caitlin will explore whether it is possible to reduce or eliminate the registration requirement for the internship while keeping with the same hour requirement for completion of the experience.
- Caitlin will forward the following items to committee members:
  - The recommendation letter that was sent to the Dean
  - The results of Casey’s national scan of Schools of Public Health
  - Student seminar survey results
The meeting concluded at 4pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2013.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting
September 19, 2013
Meeting Notes

In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Mary Gallant, Lauren Howland, Janine Jurkowski, Brenda Kirkwood, Caitlin Reid, Perry Smith, and Wendy Weller

Unable to Attend: Hyunok Choi, Lenore Gensburg, Punkin Stephens, Norma Tavakoli

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m.

Review of September 12, 2013 Minutes:

- The meeting minutes were approved, pending some edits.

Subcommittee and Program Updates:

- There were no urgent updates at this time.

Discussion:

- Perry reported that he met with Mary, Caitlin, and Katrina to discuss possible options for the MPH curriculum based on last week’s discussion. Three options were presented to the committee and discussed (attached are the three options after incorporating the committee discussion today).

- Perry stated that over recent months the MPH committee had generally agreed on the following:
  - The content of EPI 503 (Principles of Public Health) is important to include in all options in some form, whether it is the full course or a segment of the first year seminar etc.
  - There needs to be a capstone or culminating experience:
    - This is important for the CEPH Self Study.
    - According to the Self Study in 2007, the MPH program included 12 credits of internship, which was designed and described as being the “culminating experience.”
    - The MPH capstone course was created after the MPH curriculum review was completed in 2006.

- Discussion of incorporating the EPI 503 content
  - One person suggested that EPI 503 should be an SPH course rather than an EPI course. The ramifications of this change were discussed.
    - The Dean’s Office is pushing to change SPH courses so that they are attached to a “home” department. As a result, EPI 503 may need to remain as an EPI course or attached to another department.
    - The committee felt that the SPH tag indicates to students that the course is interdisciplinary, whereas students expect HPM courses to have an HPM focus, EPI courses an EPI focus, etc.
Many committee members felt that it is a valuable course for all MPH students, not just epidemiology students.

A committee member suggested that the course could rotate among departments, just like the first year seminar is currently rotated to reduce the burden on one department.

Good recommendations from the Steering Committee may not be effective if they are “variably implemented”. To help promote consistent implementation, the School is pushing for some of the core SPH courses to be assigned to fixed departments that would be asked to take ownership of them. The Committee agreed that one of our recommendations should be that every Department must help support the MPH program and SPH courses.

Discussion of the capstone seminar

The committee members felt that it was important to keep the seminar, but revise its current form. Elements of the revised capstone seminar may include:

- Bringing in dynamic, engaging lecturers to make students think deeply about issues.
- Poster presentations and an informational lecture on how to present a quality poster.
- Development of an electronic portfolio, which includes items such as a CV, writing sample, an abstract, etc. The portfolio could serve as a reflection of their experiences in the program and would be helpful in their job search.

Teaching the capstone seminar may be a large commitment for an instructor, especially for only one hour of credit.

- The committee discussed making the course two credits because of the workload for both the instructor and the students.
- A one credit course may be appropriate if students are broken into smaller groups.

Discussion of credits required for MPH degree

The Committee agreed that the number of total required credit hours for the MPH should be reduced from the current 51 to 45-48 hours, because currently we are a national outlier with one of the highest number of hours. Such a requirement adds to the cost of the MPH degree for students and may be a deterrent for enrollment. For example, reducing the credits would make our program more comparable to Boston University (48 credits), a school with which we compete for students.

Discussion of internship requirements

Caitlin reported that the University allows variable credits for internship hours. There was consideration of reducing the credits required for internships (while not necessarily reducing the total internship hours required). The number of credits required for internships at our school is high compared to most schools; some schools do not require (charge for) credit for internships.

The committee discussed the impact of shifting the internships from the summer months to the school year and the impact on summer tuition revenue. Because the SPH
receives half of paid summer tuition (above a certain target) from the University, reducing internship credits may affect some of this SPH income. Currently, the summer tuition revenue totals approximately $6,900, including both internships and summer courses. The committee felt that this figure was not large enough to influence the decision. Also, one person suggested that the summer revenue from internships may not outweigh the amount gained from possible increased enrollment resulting from reducing the number of required credits.

- The Committee’s review of other public health school curriculums shows that the number of internship hours that we require is very high. However, the committee discussed the possibility that the large number of hours may be looked on favorably, based on discussion with prospective students, and therefore may give us an edge over other programs.
- The committee decided to recommend leaving the internship requirement at 720 hours.
- The committee discussed dropping the internship from 9 credits to 3 credits in order to assist students in financing their program, while retaining the same hour requirement. As a result, students would be able to waive 2 out of the 3 credits, instead of 6 out of the 9 current credits.

- Discussion of the implications for the Online MPH program
  - A committee member proposed that since different concentrations have different core courses, such as EPI 500 and EPI 501, a similar approach could be used with the Online MPH and its seminar program.
  - It was discussed that Option B, with 1 credit for the first year seminar and 2 credits for the capstone seminar, may be better for the Online MPH program.
- The committee discussed the possibility of a 1 credit first year seminar that took place in the spring semester and focused on professional development.

Next Steps:

- Mary will examine the CEPH response to the previous Self Study and gather any important passages relevant to these decisions.
- The committee will continue to discuss the suggested options, ramifications of each decision, the structure of the faculty/student survey this fall, and ultimately what changes should be recommended for the MPH curriculum.
- The committee will spend time mapping out what each semester would look like for students under the proposed revisions.

The meeting concluded at 4:10 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 3, 2013.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting

October 3, 2013

Agenda

1. Approval of Sept. 19 Minutes

2. Urgent Subcommittee and Program Updates

3. Discussion of MPH Options/Recommendations (Cont’d)
   - CEPH response to last credentialing review
   - Review of typical MPH track by semester

4. Discussion of Faculty/Student Survey

5. Recommendations for Content of Spring Semester “Public Health for Professionals”

5. Other

Next Meeting: October 17, 2:30-4:00 PM
MPH Steering Committee Meeting
October 3, 2013
Meeting Notes

In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Hyunok Choi, Lenore Gensburg, Lauren Howland, Janine Jurkowski, Brenda Kirkwood, Caitlin Reid, Perry Smith, and Wendy Weller (by phone)

Unable to Attend: Mary Gallant, Punkin Stephens, and Norma Tavakoli

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 p.m.

Review of September 19, 2013 Minutes:

• The meeting minutes were approved.

Subcommittee and Program Updates

• There are no urgent reports at this time.

Discussion

MPH Options/Recommendations

• CEPH’s response to the last credentialing review in 2007 will be made available to Steering Committee members. Caitlin will disseminate copies.
• A grid detailing proposed revisions to the MPH Curriculum was distributed to committee members for review.
• A student survey and a faculty/staff survey will be disseminated to solicit feedback regarding possible changes to the MPH curriculum. Perry drafted a letter that will accompany the survey.
  o SPH departmental staff, as well as the faculty, will be asked to complete the faculty/staff survey.
  o A concern was raised that the Steering Committee had not received feedback to alter the EPI 503 course. However, it was pointed out that proposed changes were recommended by the Steering Committee in 2006. The letter accompanying the survey will specify that the suggested changes to EPI 503 are based on these recommendations.
  o The survey introduction will mention the overarching goals (for example, one purpose of the proposed changes is to reduce the number of course credits required). The committee will synthesize existing information in order to develop the overarching goals and brief explanations to introduce the questions on the survey.
  o The committee suggested that the survey format include: bold words, bullet points, white space, check boxes and space to write-in responses.
  o Two weeks will be allotted for survey completion.
The committee discussed several options for grading the internship experience:
  o It was suggested that the internship mentor evaluate students using a rubric (with a range from 0 to 5) instead of using S for Satisfactory or U for Unsatisfactory. Some members felt that grading students using a rubric would be too restrictive for the internship experience. The final, general consensus was that the current S/U grading system was probably OK and that the benefits of reducing the credits for a 240-hour internship from three to one credit outweighed the negatives.
  
  • Perry, Lauren, Katrina, Mary and Caitlin will work on framing the proposed changes. One of the points that should be emphasized when framing changes is the cost-effectiveness for students

Next Steps

  • The committee will finalize the surveys by October 17th.
  • Caitlin and Perry will speak with Mary Gallant to discuss management and content of the First Year Seminar for the spring semester.

The meeting concluded at 4:10pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 17, 2013.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting

October 17, 2013

Agenda

1. Approval of Oct. 3 Minutes
2. Urgent Subcommittee and Program Updates
3. Finalize Faculty/Staff and Student Surveys
4. Recommendations for Content of Spring Semester “Public Health for Professionals”
5. Other

Next Meeting: October 31, 2:30-4:00 PM
In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Lenore Gensburg, Lauren Howland, Brenda Kirkwood, Perry Smith, Norma Tavakoli and Wendy Weller

Unable to Attend: Mary Gallant, Hyunok Choi, Janine Jurkowski and Punkin Stephens

The meeting was called to order at 2:42 p.m.

Review of October 3, 2013 Minutes:
- The meeting minutes were approved.

Subcommittee and Program Updates
- There are no urgent subcommittee reports at this time.

Discussion
- The main purpose of the meeting was to finalize the faculty survey.
- Once the faculty survey is finalized, the committee will use the survey as a template for the student survey.
- Faculty and students will have two weeks to complete the survey
- Survey Revisions
  - The survey results will be confidential but not anonymous. Only MPH Steering committee members will have access to the email addresses made available by Survey Monkey.
  - The survey should be sent to personal email accounts instead of using a web link. This will enable reminders to be sent to non-responders.
  - MPH Steering committee members’ titles and affiliations will be added to the survey.
  - The survey will go to faculty only, not staff.
  - A brief description of each course will be added to the survey.
  - Perry and/or Caitlin will revise the survey to reflect feedback provided by committee members. The updated survey will be disseminated by email.

The meeting concluded at 4:20pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 31, 2013.
In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Hyunok Choi, Lenore Gensburg, Lauren Howland, Janine Jurkowski (participated by phone) Brenda Kirkwood, Perry Smith, Wendy Weller, Caitlin Reid and Mary Gallant.

Unable to Attend: Punkin Stephens and Norma Tavakoli

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 p.m.

Review of October 17, 2013 Minutes:

- The meeting minutes were approved.

Subcommittee and Program Updates:

- There are no urgent subcommittee reports at this time.

Discussion

- MPH Internship Waiver
  - Students enrolled in the online program have requested internship waivers.
  - There was unanimous consensus to streamline the internship waiver review process for both on-campus and online MPH students, so that all waiver requests are reviewed by the same committee and on the same timeline.

- Faculty MPH Curriculum Survey
  - The committee reviewed the Faculty MPH Curriculum Survey and provided feedback. Perry will incorporate the feedback discussed during the committee meeting.
  - The Faculty Survey will be pilot-tested with new faculty members.
  - Dorcey and Lauren will review and adapt the faculty survey for students.

- Second Semester SPH Seminar
  - The committee will look into who will teach seminar during the 2014 Spring semester.
  - It was agreed that that the second half of seminar should focus on professional development.

The meeting concluded at 4:30pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2013.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting

November 14, 2013

Agenda

1. Approval of Oct. 31 Minutes

2. Subcommittee and Program Updates
   a. MPH Student Progress Committee
   b. MPH Admissions Committee
   c. First Year MPH Experience Committee
   d. Internships
   e. MPH Internship Waiver Committee
   f. Online MPH

3. Update on Faculty/Staff and Student Surveys

4. Discussion of Committee Report Recommendations

5. Meeting Schedule and Finalization of Committee Report

6. Other

Next Meeting: TBD
In attendance: Katrina Chamberlain, Hyunok Choi, Mary Gallant (by phone), Lenore Gensburg, Lauren Howland, Janine Jurkowski, Brenda Kirkwood, Caitlin Reid, Norma Tavakoli, and Wendy Weller

Unable to Attend: Perry Smith and Punkin Stephens

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

Subcommittee and Program Updates

- Caitlin Reid reported that an MPH Student Progress Committee meeting will be scheduled in early January.
- Mary Gallant reported that she plans to form an academic affairs student advisory group. She would like to meet with this group of students 1-2 times per semester to discuss academic related issues and provide feedback. Mary asked committee members to send her suggestions for students to ask to be on this committee.

Discussion of Faculty and Student Survey Responses

It was noted that due to the lower faculty response rate, the committee cannot state that there is overwhelming support for anything.

Following review of the survey results, the committee reached consensus on the following:

- First-Year Seminar – needs more discussion before a final recommendation is made.
- Public Health Course – needs more discussion before a final recommendation is made.
- Culminating Experience – the culminating experience should remain the same but include enhancements and the addition of an ePortfolio.
  - The ePortfolio should begin early in the student’s career at the SPH.
- Capstone Seminar – needs more discussion before a final recommendation is made.
- Internships – the survey provided a clear consensus in support of decreasing the credits required for the internship, but to keep hours the same.
- CPH Credentialing exam – this exam should not be a part of the culminating experience.

Hyunok Choi commented that she has encountered a lot of plagiarism in her online classes, and there more enforcement is needed.

There was discussion that a writing workshop can address this issue, and a suggestion that there needs to be a standard citation format for students to follow. Mary said she would check in with other schools to see how they address the writing problems.
There was a question of whether the reduction in internship credits would affect international students, as they are required to be registered for 12 credits to maintain their visa. Caitlin will contact Peg Reich in the International Office to find out more.

Mary is going to speak to the departments about teaching EPI 503, as it would become a school-wide course and not a department course if required.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 24, 2014 at 2:30pm in the Dean’s Conference Room.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting
March 26, 2014
Minutes

In attendance: Perry Smith, Lenore Gensburg, Wendy Weller, Norma Tavakoli, Katrina Chamberlain, Janine Jurkowski, Lauren Howland, Caitlin Reid, and Mary Gallant

Unable to Attend: Hyunok Choi and Brenda Kirkwood

The meeting was called to order at 9:35am

Approval of Minutes: Members present approved the March 6, 2014, meeting minutes

Updates

Committee members unanimously voted to have Adebukola Oluyole, a first-year MPH student, join the Steering Committee as a student representative.

Admissions

- Caitlin: To date 43 students have confirmed their enrollment into the MPH Program
- Concern: Quality of students, especially regarding their math background
  - Strategy: Require students to take a math course during the summer or require students take a undergrad math course prior to taking EPI 551
    - Lenore: looking to see which Math class will be best fit for students to take before stats
    - Math ‘boot camp’ (during orientation week) has been helpful
    - May be helpful to look at how other schools are addressing this issue
    - Janine: maybe others should look at the syllabus for Epi/Bios 551 to make any suggestions for how it might be framed for specific tracks

Internships

- Katrina: The number of internship waiver applications has increased (We should add this to the proposal as suggestive evidence that students may have concerns about the current tuition for internship credits)
- Funding concern: MCH/PHLOT programs have fewer internship opportunities than usual
- Janine: We should look for opportunities to obtain external funding for internships within the non-profit sector

Discussion

- Reviewed MPH program proposed recommendations
  - Mary: Spoke with Dean Nasca regarding the MPH Director position; He is in strong support of this, and recommends that we have a strong rationale in our proposal; He is prepared to advocate for funding for this position with President Jones in the future
Will present a draft of the proposal to the Dean before the May 2 schoolwide faculty meeting so that he can be familiar with our recommendations before we share them with the larger faculty on May 2.

- Comments and appendices are due to Perry by April 21, 2014
  - Executive summary should be handed out and presented during the next faculty meeting (May 2, 2014); Perry will prepare a draft of this
  - Perry: Will prepare the final report and circulate it to the Committee by April 29, 2014
    - 48 hour turnaround for Committee approval

- Appendices
  - Katrina: Working on B and C
  - Brief summary of surveys done with students and faculty
  - Statement about variable credits related to internship process across the UAlbany campus

The meeting concluded at 11:00 am
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 2:30 in the Dean’s Conference Room.
In attendance: Perry Smith, Lenore Gensburg, Hyunok Choi, Wendy Weller, Norma Tavakoli, Katrina Chamberlain, Janine Jurkowski, Lauren Howland, Brenda Kirkwood (by phone), and Mary Gallant

Unable to Attend: Caitlin Reid and Punkin Stephens

The meeting was called to order at 2:40pm

Updates

EPI 503
- Mary Gallant reported that she spoke with Gregory DiRienzo; he does not support the idea of having the Epi/Biostats department teach EPI 503 to all on-campus MPH students
- He supports the idea of including content from EPI 503 into First-Year Seminar (Public Health for Professionals 1)

Admissions
- To date applications are down at about 25% in the MPH program; PhD-Epi applications are up; Deadline has been extended to May 1
- We may still be able to meet our enrollment targets
- Executing new ways to reach out to accepted students (i.e., sending letters)
  - Admitted Students Day will take place March 28
- Online MPH program continues to grow and may account for some decline in the on-campus MPH applications
- Looking for ways to improve our MPH program marketing tactics
- The Alumni network is improving

Discussion

Reviewed the draft recommendations for the MPH program

- First-Year and Capstone Seminars
  - Need to generate a draft syllabus outline to include in the committee report (will use current Spring First-Year Seminar Syllabus as template)
  - Currently for the online MPH program, First-Year and Capstone Seminars are offered as a combined 3-credit course

- Epi 503
  - Brenda Kirkwood stated that EPI 503 is offered as a concentration course to students in the online MPH program; Will need to be replaced with another course, if it is removed as a requirement
Lenore Gensburg commented that the course should be offered early-on in the student’s academic career; Proposed that the content does not need to be offered as a semester long course

- Culminating Experience
  - We should look at other schools to see how ePortfolios have been implemented

- MPH Leadership (MPH Program Director)
  - A new position should be created; May not be feasible right now
    - Could be a new faculty member?

- Perry Smith mentioned that help with the appendices and content is much appreciated
  - There was unanimous consensus on the presentation, order and format of the draft recommendations for MPH program

- Any changes to the MPH program will likely go into effect for the Fall 2015 incoming class
  - Some changes have already been partially implemented (i.e., Spring ’14 First-Year and Capstone Seminars)

The meeting concluded at 4:00pm.
The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 9:30am in the HPMB Conference Room.
MPH Steering Committee Meeting

May 8, 2014

Agenda

1. Approval of March 26, 2014 Minutes

2. Presentation of Committee Report to SPH Faculty Meeting on May 2

3. Subcommittee and Program Updates
   a. MPH Student Progress Committee
   b. MPH Admissions Committee
   c. First Year MPH Experience Committee
   d. Internships
   e. MPH Internship Waiver Committee
   f. Online MPH

4. Discussion of Topics in Need of Committee Attention for the Coming Year

5. Meeting Schedule

6. Other

Next Meeting: TBD