

## **UCC Program Review Committee Summary of Review**

**Program:** Social and Public Health

**Date of last review:** AY 2014-2015

**Date of this review:** AY 2022-2023

The program offers the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- M.S. in Child and Family Studies
- M.H.A. (Health Administration online)
- M.P.H. (Public Health)
- M.P.H. (Public Health online)
- Epidemiology Certificate (graduate)
- Gerontology Certificate (graduate)
- B.S. in Child and Family Studies
- B.S. in Community and Public Health
- B.S. in Environmental Health Science
- B.S. in Health Services Administration
- Minor in Community and Public Health
- Minor in Environmental Health Science
- Minor in Health Services Administration
- Appalachian Studies Certificate (undergraduate)
- Gerontology Certificate (undergraduate)
- Workplace Health and Safety Certificate (undergraduate)

**Recommendation:** This program is found to be viable.

See report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

The report was forwarded to the program director and college dean. Their responses are attached.

The Graduate Council's comments are included as well.

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

**SITE VISIT** Thursday, November 10, 2022

### **REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Dr. Candice Thomas-Maddox  
Professor - Communication Studies  
Ohio University

Dr. Greg Obi  
Associate Professor -Management Sciences  
Ohio University- Chillicothe

Dr. Catherine Sherwood-Laughlin  
Clinical Professor-Applied Health Science  
School of Public Health-Bloomington  
Indiana University

### **EVALUATIVE NARRATIVE**

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates

#### **Undergraduate Programs**

Child and Family Studies  
Community and Public Health  
Environmental Health Science  
Health Services Administration

#### **Undergraduate Certificate and Minors**

Community and Public Health Minor  
Environmental Health Minor  
Health Services Administration Minor  
Appalachian Studies Certificate  
Gerontology Certificate  
Workplace Health and Safety Certificate

#### **Graduate Programs**

Master of Child and Family Studies  
Master of Health Administration (online)  
Master of Public Health (MPH) (online  
and on-campus)

#### **Graduate Certificates**

Epidemiology  
Gerontology

**RECOMMENDATION:** This program is found to be **viable**, see report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

### **REVIEW PERIOD: AY 2014/2015 THROUGH AY 2021/2022**

Ohio University is in Athens, Ohio, and in the Appalachian foothills of southeastern Ohio. It is a four-year public institution with more than 250 undergraduate programs but also offers two-year degree programs. The university is designated as a research university (high activity) under the Carnegie classification. Ohio University is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. [Ohio University's mission statement](#) "holds as its central purpose the intellectual and personal development of its students. Distinguished by its rich history, diverse campus, international community, and beautiful Appalachian setting, Ohio University is known as well for its outstanding faculty of accomplished teachers whose research and creative activity advance knowledge across many disciplines." [Ohio University's vision statement](#) is to be "the nation's best transformative learning community where students realize their promise, faculty advance knowledge, staff achieve excellence, and alumni become global leaders." The [mission of the Department of Social and Public Health](#) is to create well-prepared graduates with an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills and abilities. Their faculty members are committed to creating and disseminating knowledge through research and scholarly endeavors, while simultaneously serving our professions through a variety of initiatives. Their programs provide experiential opportunities for students in professional settings to maximize individual growth and development. The [vision of the Department of Social and Public Health](#) is to become the preeminent academic home for meeting and addressing the diverse needs of all our stakeholders and constituents, including, but not limited to, students, alumni, the public health, and society as a whole.

### **GOALS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW**

1) to provide a mechanism to track the continuous improvement of programs, and to recognize and publicize those improvements; and 2) to provide a framework to assist programs with strategic planning.

### **OVERALL PROGRAM**

In 2021, the department reported 415 undergraduate majors and 573 graduate students.

The Department of Social and Public Health is an academic program in the College of Health Sciences and Professions. The mission of the Department of Social and Public Health is to create well-prepared graduates, with an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills and abilities. To accomplish this mission the department offers four (4) undergraduate programs in Child and Family Studies, Community and Public Health, Environmental Health Science, and Health Services Administration; three (3) undergraduate minors in Community and Public Health, Environmental Health, and Health Services Administration; three (3) undergraduate certificates in Appalachian Studies, Gerontology, and Workplace Health and Safety; three (3) master's level programs in Child and Family Studies, Health Administration (online) and Public Health (online and on-campus); and two (2) graduate certificates in Epidemiology and Gerontology.

As noted in the self-study, there were changes in the number of academic programs offered since the last self-study assessment in AY 2014-2015. The changes include a reduction in the number of undergraduate programs from 7 to 3; an increase in the number of undergraduate certificates and minors from 3 to 6; a reduction in the number of graduate programs from 4 to 3. The number of graduate certificates was unchanged. The self-study indicates the changes were due to the Social Work program leaving to become its own department in the College, two programs experienced low enrollment, and the elimination of degree programs that were no longer in demand. The MPH degree has become a stand-alone in the department and recently expanded to an online program. To complement the public health program offerings, a

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

certificate in Epidemiology is now offered. There was a decrease in the number of faculty over the course of the review period from 21 to 15 faculty, and with the departure of tenured faculty, the majority of faculty ranks in the department were mostly non-tenure track faculty.

### The site visit resulted in the following, overall themes:

- Faculty were open and felt comfortable sharing their needs
- Faculty work well together, and there is a strong supportive culture within the department, collegiality is “awesome” and “makes the work enjoyable.”, and they have a strong support system that exhibits equality, equity, and mutual respect
- Overall, the students are happy once they get to the major, meet the faculty and other students
- Some students found it difficult to find their major and suggested more marketing about the department and careers when they are in high school, at orientation, and/or when they arrive to campus
- All the department programs are viable- focus on the current needs and planning for the future
- Faculty have great experiences with their students
- Concern from faculty that the number of majors declining- intro courses need to be in person because the instructor and passion draw in the students
- The faculty need resources for research since OU has the commitment to be competitive as an R1 institution
- Recommendation to expand some of the programs to the regional campuses, opportunities to pursue partnerships
- Discover mechanisms to work more closely with the centralized University Communication and Marketing staff

### THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE:

#### **IS THE CURRENT NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY SUFFICIENT TO CARRY OUT THE BROAD OVERALL MISSION OF THE UNIT RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY?**

The department has 15 total full-time faculty, a reduction of 6 full-time faculty over the course of the review period. With a decrease in the number of tenured faculty, tenure-eligible, and instructional faculty, and an increase in the number of clinical and visiting faculty, the department depends on 17 adjunct faculty to help the department fulfill its teaching goals. At the time of the development of the self-study, the faculty rank was as follows: Pre-tenure: 0; Tenured: 9; Instructional: Clinical:1; Visiting Professor: 2

Faculty in DSPH Programs at the time of the self-study- (\*denotes faculty who participated in the site-visit interviews)

#### *Child and Family Studies (B.S.C.F.S.) Number of Students 147*

1. Julie Brown, Ph.D., – 2014 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
2. Jennifer Chabot, Ph.D. – 1998 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
3. Jennine Mick, M.A., – 2016 – present, Associate Professor of Instruction\*
4. Janelle Mitchell, M.S., – 2017 – present, Assistant Clinical Professor\*

#### *Community and Public Health (B.S.H.) Number of Students 64*

1. Tiffany Arnold, Ph.D., – 2018 – present, Assistant Professor of Instruction\*
2. Kitty Consolo, Ph.D., – 2021 – present, tenured Associate Professor
3. Rebekah Crawford, Ph.D., – 2018 – present, Visiting Professor\*
4. Heather Harmon, MPH – 2011 – present, Professor of Instruction\*
5. Caroline Kingori, Ph.D., MPH, CHES, – 2012 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
6. Kelly Nottingham, Ph.D., MPH, – 2021 – present, Visiting Professor\*
7. Michael Reece, Ph.D., MPH, – 2019 – Present, Assistant Professor of Instruction\*
8. Alexander Sergeev, M.D., Ph.D., MPH, – 2006 – Present, tenured Associate Professor\*

#### *Environmental Health Science (B.S.E.H.) Number of Students 36*

1. Tiffany Arnold, Ph.D., – 2018 – present, Assistant Professor of Instruction\*
2. Michele Morrone, Ph.D. – 1998 – present, tenured Professor\*

#### *Health Services Administration (B.S.H.) Number of Students 168*

1. Sara Berens, M.Ed., – 2017 – present, Assistant Professor of Instruction\*
2. Suzanne Cromlish, Ph.D., – 2020 – present, Assistant Professor of Instruction
3. Cory Cronin, Ph.D. – 2015 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
4. Thomas Kamau, Ph.D., – 2010 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
5. Cristina Popescu, Ph.D., MA, – 2019 – present; Assistant Professor of Instruction\*
6. Kristin Schuller, Ph.D. – 2015 – 2022; tenured Associate Professor

### **Graduate Programs**

#### *Master of Child and Family Studies (M.S.C.F.S.)*

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

1. Jennifer Chabot, Ph.D. – 1998 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*

### *Master of Health Administration (MHA) (online)*

1. Cory Cronin, Ph.D. – 2015 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*
2. Cristina Popescu, Ph.D., MA, – 2019 – present; Assistant Professor of Instruction\*

### *Master of Public Health (MPH) (online and on-campus)*

1. Michael Reece, Ph.D., MPH, – 2019 – Present, Assistant Professor of Instruction\*

### *Graduate Certificates*

#### Epidemiology

#### Gerontology

1. Julie Brown, Ph.D., – 2014 – present, tenured Associate Professor\*

The student to faculty ratio has remained steady since the last review, with an increase during AY 20-21. This could be related to the pandemic as the ratio decreased the subsequent academic year to levels like AY 19-20. Faculty teaching responsibilities are a significant consideration to meet the department's mission. The typical expectation is a 3/2 or 2/3 load (5 courses or 15 semester hours per academic year) for tenure-track faculty, and a 4/4 load (8 courses or 24 semester hours per academic year) for instructional faculty. It was noted that the department policies do not differentiate between undergraduate and graduate teaching responsibilities, or whether the course is taught online or in person. All full-time faculty develop a New Year Faculty Plan (NYFP) that describes their teaching, research (TT/T only), and service activities for the subsequent year and plans for the next academic year. Related to teaching responsibilities, some faculty assume overload teaching responsibilities to meet the needs of the students (e.g., the course is required to graduate on time). The NYFP provides the department chair with faculty proportion of teaching in relationship to their research and service activities. Faculty are afforded release time from teaching which is discussed with the department chair and planned in advance. Most of the courses are taught by tenure-track and instructional faculty, and the remainder are taught by qualified adjunct faculty. Adjunct instructors cover many of the courses in the Master of Health Administration and Environmental Health Sciences programs. It is noted in the self-study that the department does not utilize Teaching Assistants (TAs) to teach any course.

**Site Visit Assessment: Strong and Supportive Department Leadership:** The Department acquired a new Interim Chair in the Fall of 2022, Dr. Michael Reece. While he is working remotely to oversee the department, the faculty, staff, and students did not indicate this was a hindrance to meeting their academic and professional needs. The site visit participants and the College Dean stated Dr. Reece's exemplary professional and research portfolio, along with his decades of practical community-based experiences along with his national and international reputation in the field, make him a valuable leader for the department. Dr. Reece's previous experiences are in faculty (tenured Professor) and administrative roles such as an Associate Dean and Center Director at an R1 institution. While the preparation of the self-study was the first for Dr. Reece as the Interim Chair, he stated that he directed and coordinated self-study reports for program and school-level accreditation and this experience helped him to gain perspective on the department. Dr. Reece joined the department as the Director of the MPH Online Program and developed a relationship with the department members and others across campus. They support his continuation in this role until the department determines when a search for a permanent department Chair will occur. The site visit team did not determine Dr. Reece's interim status as a detriment to their current needs and planning for the future.

**Faculty Committed to the Mission of the Department:** The site visit team met with tenure-track (TT) and non-tenure track (NTT) faculty and discussed their successes and challenges related to the current number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the broad overall mission of the unit related to teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity. Overall, the faculty are very committed to meeting the needs of their students, ensuring their programs provide the appropriate academic rigor required to earn a degree in that program, and meet all accreditation and/or certification criteria. The administrators and faculty are dedicated to providing quality academic and practical experiences for their students, and they all go above and beyond what is expected of a faculty member in the department by taking on overload teaching responsibilities so students can graduate on time. In addition, faculty are engaged in seeking out local partnerships and offering practical experiences for students from the beginning of their degree as well as in and out of the classroom setting. Faculty provide; opportunities to synthesize content and apply skills at the conclusion of their program through research projects, capstone experiences and/or internships. The number of tenured faculty accounts for approximately half of the full-time faculty numbers. While this allows the department to meet its research and service goals, the site visit team is concerned about the low number of tenured department faculty and the implications for accreditation and licensure requirements associated with the degrees offered. If additional full-time faculty are not hired to help meet their teaching responsibilities, there is potential for faculty burnout due to the number of courses required to be offered per semester, and the high enrollments in some of the courses. These high enrollment courses are those offered online as well as the introductory courses that tend to recruit new students into the department.

**Successes and Positive Aspects:** The faculty have the foundation in their fields and years of experience to deliver high-quality instruction in their courses. They are extremely passionate about their content areas and have support from the department and college to provide their

## **Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University**

students with content and practical experiences that make them marketable in the field. Faculty mentioned that there are several community-based organizations and other agencies that seek the department's graduates for employment. Within the department, the faculty do not ascribe to a hierarchy, rather each faculty member and staff supports a culture of uniqueness and embrace the diversity they bring to the department. All faculty have the right to vote, which encourages them to be fully engaged in department matters.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** The department needs to tighten the academic portfolio by addressing the curricular sprawl to determine which courses are required/needed based on market data. The need for faculty to teach overloads, in addition to their assigned course loads, is impacting their ability to engage in research and creative activity. In addition, the department currently has the minimum number of tenure-track faculty required for some licensing and accreditation guidelines (four faculty). The site visit team recommends that additional tenure-track lines be incorporated into the University's faculty resource plan to ensure that the department's national credentials are not in jeopardy. The University needs to consider disciplinary boundaries that lead to the pursuit to get accreditation and/or certification for all programs.

Several students left the department and changed their major to the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences (IHS) degree program. The reasons cited for their departure are primarily based on students' inability to do well in science and/or business/math-related courses. The College was in jeopardy of losing students, so this new degree program allowed students to finish a program and not abandon their desires to get a degree in health-orientated areas.

Due to budget crises, a lack of opportunities to hire new faculty, and a decline in enrollment numbers, faculty are concerned about the university's commitment to supporting the department and programs. The Department Chair stated that he believes the enrollment reductions are not a significant concern because it has allowed faculty to focus on maintaining a level of rigor to meet accreditation standards and to prepare students to be competitive in the current job market. The goal is not to reduce the rigor of the programs because the enrollments are so high that teachers cannot attend to the requirements and reduce the chances of becoming accredited or certified.

The College leadership needs to articulate to the university Provost that the lower enrollment numbers are appropriate for the types of programs in the department due to the rigor of the programs and the need to meet aligned accreditation and/or certification criteria. There are numerous reasons for the recent low enrollments, and some include that we, as a nation, are just learning how to address the enrollment declines (e.g., "Enrollment Cliff") and dealing with the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in academic settings. Additionally, the stigma attached to public health professions during the pandemic has caused some students to reconsider working in a field where they are under attack due to the politics and challenges associated with the pandemic.

There are barriers related to resources to recruit and hire for TT lines. Currently, the department is comprised of approximately 30% TT, and the department relies heavily on instructional faculty and adjuncts. The program accreditation and/or certification criteria state the faculty requirements are the minimum and the department needs to clearly articulate to college and university leadership why more faculty are needed.

There has been a loss of TT faculty. Reasons offered for the decline in faculty include- left to pursue positions that offered higher salaries, more opportunities for leadership roles, and better professional quality of life (e.g., not required to teach multiple overloads to "make ends meet"). The College and University have not approved the hiring of new faculty to fill these vacated TT faculty lines.

Instructional faculty expressed the importance of more collective support for those not in T/TT roles. Some faculty ranks are not valued as much as the T/TT faculty by the university because the instructional faculty are not generating research and funds; however, they still need support for what they do and bring to the programs. In this department, all of the faculty, regardless of ranks, value and respect each other. There was consensus among all faculty (TT and NTT) that everyone brings value to the program, and instructional faculty are no less valuable to the department and university. Additional support is needed to prepare instructional faculty for promotion. This was communicated during the interviews through the statement, "...the university didn't know what to do with instructional faculty applying for promotion". As the university continues to depend on instructional faculty for teaching resources and to revise its guidelines for the promotion of instructional faculty, mentoring programs need to be strengthened to provide instructional faculty for advancement in rank.

The department relies on several adjunct faculty to teach many of its courses. A barrier to recruiting outstanding adjunct faculty members in a timely fashion is the lengthy timeline required by the University's current hiring policies. The faculty stated that adjunct faculty must go through a hiring process, which takes time. This has resulted in the department losing the opportunity for high-quality faculty. It is recommended that the Department Chair, in consultation with the program faculty, be empowered to propose adjunct faculty hires without requiring a comprehensive search process.

**Updates to the Self-Study:** At the time of the site visit, the department had two pre-tenured faculty who joined the department in the Fall of 2022 in tenure-track positions. These new faculty hires indicate that the department has addressed the statement in the self-study that there was a lack of pre-tenured faculty in the department. With these new hires, the department can build a foundation for future growth and stability.

### **IS THE LEVEL OF THE UNIT'S RSCA APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROGRAM GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE FACULTY AND THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE UNIT BASED ON THE SIZE OF FACULTY AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE UNIT?**

The self-study document indicated that the department's Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (RSCA) are evaluated by the department's Promotion and Tenure and Annual Workload & Merit Committees. As noted in the self-study, tenured and tenure-track faculty



## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

are responsible for teaching, advising, research, and service. Other full-time faculty are primarily responsible for teaching, advising, and service as a condition of their employment. After three years, the probationary faculty develop a “mid-probationary review” in the form of a dossier and portfolio like what they will submit when they go up for tenure and promotion. The department T/TT faculty receive start-up funds and reduced teaching loads to assist in the development of their research agendas, and conferences/presentations.

The self-study reveals that there is a range of publication records among the T/TT. This rank in the department published an average of 15.75 journal articles during the review period, with a range of 0 to 38 journal articles, a total of 150. As an R1-designated institution, it is appropriate that the T/TT faculty are actively engaged in research and publications. Though neither instructional nor clinical faculty members have formal RSCA workload components, it was noted that visiting professors and instructional professors had published manuscripts.

The T/TT faculty indicated that there was sufficient internal funding available through the department and university to support adequate RSCA. The CHSP Start-Up Funds Plan provides T/TT faculty for research activities to new faculty as part of this initial three-year research plan. Examples include paying for release time, providing, and paying for summer contracts, etc. T/TT faculty are provided graduate assistants (GA) to support their teaching and research efforts. Faculty are eligible for a sabbatical/fellowship leave after 7 years of employment to further advance RSCA initiatives. During this self-study, the department fully supported all faculty requests for leaves. OU provides many internal grants and awards through The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs in terms of grants and external funding submissions. The CHSP also has several opportunities for grants and awards through the Community Engaged Research Grant, the Interdisciplinary Research Grant, the Mentored Research Grant, the Summer Research Grant, the International Research Incentive Grant, the Teaching Effectiveness Research Grant, and the ASPIRE Awards. Several SPH faculty have received these awards over the review period.

The self-study indicated that T/TT faculty have adequate RSCA resources.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The department leadership and faculty take their RSCA responsibilities seriously and contribute to their overall professional growth and development, which in turn provides their students with current trends and needs in the field. The faculty are provided resources to support these activities through internal grants and scholarships, sabbaticals, and administrative support to develop and submit funding applications. The TT/T faculty have been very productive related to publications, presentations, and service in their academic and professional communities.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** The department leadership is very supportive of RSCA and provides resources and support to all faculty in the department.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** Numerous challenges prevent faculty from meeting all their RSCA goals. The university continues to reduce funding mechanisms for faculty leading to them not being able to continue to be or become the scholar they want to be. The TT/T faculty are teaching overloads which prevent scholarly productivity; acquiring too many administrative responsibilities and lacking other scholars/peers to collaborate with or become mentors/mentees.

Access to internal resources is a concern of the faculty. Faculty view the resources within the Athens campus as minimal, and difficult to navigate over the past few years. Faculty stated that it has become more challenging to conceptualize an action-oriented CBPR program when community and academic partners are overwhelmed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health challenges. Faculty need support from the college and university to provide faculty with adequate training to navigate the internal funding mechanisms, and once those have been identified, the faculty need administrative support to develop and submit the proposal.

An example of a challenge is a faculty member who would like to apply for a K-Award, which is a research early career development award but cannot find a mentor to partner with on the grant.

### IS THE UNIT’S LEVEL OF EXTERNAL FUNDING AT AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL?

As noted in the self-study, several of the T/TT faculty have been active in securing external funding to support their research agendas. Departmental faculty secured external funding for 33 research projects. The amount of external funding has significantly decreased (~\$142,000 in 2015 to ~\$96,000 in 2020). Reasons for the decline could be related to the following factors: loss of T/TT faculty, fewer grant opportunities, COVID, current faculty being overwhelmed with teaching and administrative responsibilities, and/or lack of resources to support faculty external funding goals. Total since 2015: **TOTAL \$1,531,739.87**

2015 \$142,537.50	2017 \$229,831.66	2019 \$676,106.02	2021 \$6,875.00
2016 \$153,543.83	2018 \$226,781.71	2020 \$96,064.16	

### IS THE LEVEL OF SERVICE, OUTSIDE OF TEACHING, APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROGRAM GIVEN ITS SIZE AND THE ROLE THAT IT PLAYS IN THE UNIVERSITY AND BROADER COMMUNITIES IT INTERACTS WITH? IS THE UNIT ABLE TO FULFILL ITS SERVICE MISSION?

Overall, the department can fulfill its service mission. The level of service appears to be appropriate for the program size and role in the University. Department faculty actively participate on committees in the department, university, communities, and in their professions. Newly hired TT faculty are protected from excessive service obligations early on so they can focus on their research responsibilities, but these responsibilities are expected to increase over time. NTT faculty focus on their teaching responsibilities but have significant service activities. Within the department, tenured faculty serve as “mentors” to tenure-track faculty to guide them through the tenure and promotion process. In addition, faculty serve on student project/thesis committees as chairs and committee members. All faculty are expected to be involved in professional organizations related to their research and/or teaching responsibilities.

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

The department administration and faculty highly value service to communities that contribute to the socio-cultural and economic needs of society. Their service to community organizations includes:

My Sister's Place	Athens County Children's Services.	Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Ohio	Habitat for Humanity
Coalition of Health Education	Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Athens AIDS Task Force	Health Recovery Services
John W. Clem Recovery House	Ohio Council on Family Relations	Boy Scouts of America	OhioHealth
Appalachian Ohio Domestic Violence Task Force		O'Bleness Memorial Hospital	American Red Cross of SE Ohio

The department has a unique institute that addresses the public health needs of the region. The Appalachian Rural Health Institute become ADVANCE during AY 2021-2022. ADVANCE implements a community-based research approach and will support the department's research mission and strengthen partnerships across the university and community. Specifically, ADVANCE focuses on "...research that contributes to the developing science of health equity and population health improvement through the study of health outcomes and services, as well as social factors that impact health."

It is apparent that the Department is fulfilling its service mission.

### **DOES THE UNIT HAVE AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES, STAFF, PHYSICAL FACILITIES, LIBRARY RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY TO FULFILL ITS MISSION RELATED TO: FINANCIAL RESOURCES, STAFF, PHYSICAL FACILITIES, LIBRARY RESOURCES, AND TECHNOLOGY**

The Department appears to have an appropriate level of resources to fulfill its mission.

The department resources are allocated through the Dean's office and additional funding sources are available through internal and external mechanisms. The self-study indicates there are financial resources sufficient to deliver curriculum across the programs, and some funding to provide instructional equipment, but limited related to travel to professional conferences, and supporting faculty research agendas.

The department's financial resources appear to be sufficient to support faculty to teach their courses. There are full-time faculty to deliver the instructional needs. The department has sufficient resources to hire adjunct faculty as needed to ensure that students can meet their major/minor/certificate requirements. In addition, the department's office staff, which consists of one (1) administrative assistant and 2-3 graduate assistants, appears to be appropriate in number and quality to ensure that the operational needs are met.

The department's financial resources are appropriate to meet the physical facilities needed to deliver its diverse programs. Faculty have sufficient office space, and where necessary, lab space to effectively fulfill the department's mission. In addition, the department office suite is sufficient for its operational management and staffing needs.

The department does not have dedicated library space, but there are library resources available to the department through the Ohio University Libraries. Library resources are available to faculty and current students through OhioLINK.

The department's technology resources are sufficient to meet its mission. All full-time faculty have computers to fulfill their instructional, research, and operational needs (i.e., word processing, email, and presentations). In addition, the faculty indicated that their classrooms are equipped with adequate technology to deliver effective instruction.

**Site Visit Assessment:** Faculty stated the Department and the College do provide an appropriate level of financial resources related to staff, physical facilities, library resources, and technology to fulfill its mission.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** The administrative staff is comfortable with the level of responsibilities. Two work-study students assist the administrative staff with faculty needs/requests, planning conferences, and marketing. The administrative staff has all the resources necessary and has worked in the OU system for many years and knows whom to contact if needed. Department faculty and administrators have not given up on asking the college and university for additional resources despite being turned down on numerous occasions.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** The variety of course delivery formats has expanded post-COVID to meet the needs of students. Faculty are now teaching in a variety of modalities, yet the technological resources to provide high-quality courses with a virtual synchronous component are inadequate. Faculty expressed a need for improved classroom technology to support hybrid teaching modalities and active teaching experiences. In addition, dedicated instructional design support, technology support, and faculty training on technology platforms is needed. One faculty member said that the instructional design support staff is working remotely and in a geographical area that does not have reliable internet; therefore, the ability to have consistent and reliable support does not exist. The university needs to provide the resources, superficially funding, to support the online programs with high enrollments. No additional administrative staff needs were mentioned during the visit. However, if the size of the online programs continues to increase, additional support is necessary.

### **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM:**

As stated in the Self-Study, the SPH program prepares health professionals for positions in community and/or public health. There are four (4) undergraduate degree programs, three (3) minors, and three (3) certificate programs.

### **IS THE UNIT FULFILLING ITS SERVICE ROLE, ADEQUATELY PREPARING NON-MAJORS FOR FUTURE COURSEWORK, AND/OR SATISFYING THE NEEDS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION?**

All students must satisfy the general education requirements. The SPH program offers courses to meet the university's general

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

education requirements that may be taken by non-majors. Many of the department courses fulfill the program's service role in preparing non-majors for future coursework.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** The department continues to submit proposals for their courses to be considered and accepted into the General Education (BRICKS) requirements for all Ohio University students. The courses are sequenced and offered on a schedule that allows students to build upon existing knowledge and skills.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** The faculty stated the new requirements for courses to become BRICKS designated are a hindrance for courses in SPH to be transferable to all universities across the state of Ohio (OTAG). One faculty member said the Introduction to Environmental Health course is one example of a course that, despite multiple attempts, has not been accepted as a general education approved course and therefore, the department is missing a valuable opportunity to introduce students to their degrees as potential career paths.

### UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

#### IS THE PROGRAM ATTRACTING MAJORS LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN THE PROGRAM? IS THE NUMBER OF MAJORS APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROGRAM? IS THE PROGRAM ATTRACTING A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS?

The department has been successful in attracting majors that are likely to succeed in the program based on their graduation rates and retention rates reported in the self-study. The undergraduate enrollment numbers in each degree program have fluctuated since the last program review. There were times when the enrollment numbers were overwhelming for faculty; however, the faculty indicated that the numbers are now more manageable.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty stated they are utilizing their resources to recruit and retain students in their programs. Some of the entry-level courses that provide an overview of the field are one of the primary mechanisms to recruit students into the department. Faculty stressed the importance of interacting with students in person or in one-on-one meetings so they can learn more about the programs and share academic and practical experiences that encompass the degree. There are a few scholarships to recruit a more diverse student population, but not enough to make a significant impact. The site visit team met with current and former students. They expressed that their decision to earn a degree in the department was the best decision related to their career goals. Many shared that they did not know about the career options or degrees available early on in their college experience. Upon first impression, the students that attended the site visit were diverse regarding demographic characteristics and degree paths.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** The faculty indicated the undergraduate programs have attractive minors and certificates to complement their major degree program. In addition, students majoring in other programs often choose the DSPH minors and/or certificates.

The faculty ratio is 27:1, and the number of students is appropriate for the program. This ratio allows for faculty to provide the mentoring and academic support the students need to be successful.

The retention rates have been consistent in all degree programs; however, the CFS program experienced an increase since the last report (the highest was 93%). These rates declined during the pandemic (from 79% to 77%). EH, HA, and PH have all increased since the last report from 67% to 100%, 90% to 100%, and 50% to 100% respectively.

Based on the demographics, the department serves a diverse population of students that is reflective of the university's student population, and the region, which is predominately white and female. The demographic composition of the majors is reflective of the current demographics in the related career fields. The department has been somewhat successful recruiting male students, but not as successful in the areas related to varying socioeconomic backgrounds, first-generation students, and students from, and committed to working in, Appalachia. The department faculty and administration are committed to identifying methods to increase the diversity among its students to reflect the disparities which exist in the region. It was noted that since the last review, the CPH program has been successful in attracting male students, students who identify as LGBTIA+, and students who are more diverse in terms of race.

Students did not perceive the number of majors in their degree programs as a hindrance to their success in earning their degrees. They reported that faculty, staff, and administrators are readily available to assist and support them.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** The Environmental Health faculty expressed their concern about the decline in enrollment numbers in introductory level courses which were typically used to introduce and recruit students to the major. Previously, enrollments in sections of EH 2000 (Intro to Environmental Health and Safety) were approximately 30 students, the enrollment appears to be approximately 15 students in Spring 2023. This makes it difficult to recruit first-year students into the programs.

During the interviews, a recurring theme that was expressed is the need for a marketing and recruitment plan. This plan needs to be developed with the strategic goal of informing high school and first-year students about the degree programs offered and the career opportunities available for graduates. Currently, students who discover the degree programs do so after their first year of studies. With a dedicated marketing and recruitment plan, this could occur much earlier and position the department to meet the growing needs for the local communities.

Faculty were not aware of specific and targeted recruitment strategies for current university students or high school students. It is recommended that the department develop a strategic plan to recruit students by employing the following strategies: classroom visits, tabling events, personal communication with students excelling in the introductory courses, and reaching out to high school academic counselors and teachers in public health/health education.

Students stated that they would have liked to learn about this department and degree programs earlier in their college career and perhaps in high school. Most of them reported that they discovered the degree through conversations with Ohio University's Career Services and



## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

academic advising meetings, and they shared that they had no awareness of the potential career opportunities until they sought out assistance in selecting a major.

Some of the degree programs traditionally attract specific demographics (e.g., CFH students are traditionally White females). Thus, it is challenging to recruit students from other demographics due to what is reflective in the profession.

### **DOES THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM PROVIDE MAJORS WITH AN ADEQUATE BACKGROUND TO PURSUE DISCIPLINE-RELATED CAREERS OR GRADUATE WORK FOLLOWING GRADUATION?**

In the undergraduate program, students participate in research-related course activities and are expected to demonstrate attainment of the learning objectives in specific research-related areas such as data analysis, data interpretation, synthesizing literature, and developing plans for evaluation research. During the study period, 10 undergraduate students received funding from the CHSP Student Research Grant program so they could conduct, or travel to present research findings from, faculty-supervised research projects.

The undergraduate curriculum is reflective of the community health services discipline and provides majors with the learning outcomes required to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation. As noted in the self-study, each program has learning objectives and assessments to determine the student's attainment of the content and skills. The DSPH program core curriculum for all majors represents the introductory and applied coursework of the disciplines. Related Health Content Core courses provide content-specific education to the community and/or public health areas. The Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) national testing is becoming a standard to assess the quality of entry-level community and/or public health professionals. The public health curriculum is aligned with CHES competencies.

Overall, the degree programs in the DSPH prepare majors with the knowledge and skills to pursue entry-level community and/or public health careers or graduate work following graduation.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The site visit resulted in the conclusion that each of the undergraduate programs provides their graduates with adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation. The students gain content and skills related to working with specific populations in communities, participate in community-based experiences throughout their course of study, as well as a complete capstone and/or field experiences. The degree programs attract students in nursing and pre-medicine. There are multiple opportunities for students to engage with community partners throughout their degree program.

**Successes/ Positive Attributes:** The faculty are dedicated to their students by ensuring they have experiences outside of the classroom and are engaged with community-based organizations. There is a goal for the community and public health degree to transition to a Bachelor of Science in Public Health. This is in response to the need in the field and the constant request from local public health agencies seeking graduates. The health 2000 course is approved for BRICKS and 150 students are enrolled in this course. As an introductory course, this can be a mechanism to recruit more students into the DSPH. The faculty stated that there is a very strong and active student organization. Faculty stated that they are engaged in the decision-making processes related to their curriculum, accreditation, and/or certification.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** While faculty stated they are consulted regarding the decisions made related to curriculum, they were not consulted when the College decided to develop and implement the newly created degree program in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences. The faculty made their concerns known to administrators, and the primary concern was a threat to their department programs because of the similarity of courses and expectations, minus the science and math courses. The degree was developed and implemented despite their concerns.

### **ARE THE RESOURCES AND THE NUMBER OF AND DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM?**

The department provides faculty with resources related to advising students during their first year as faculty members. The faculty are eased into their advising responsibilities. The department expects its faculty to advise students within their program area and the number of advisees is dependent upon the number of students in each program. Advising is shared equally among the faculty in each program.

Faculty provide their advisees with support related to academic planning and requirements, challenges, and successes (in their courses and extra-curricular activities), and career and professional advice. They meet with their advisees at least once per semester. The faculty maintain records of their meetings and report the outcomes to the department chair. Due to the research responsibilities of the tenure-track faculty, the department assigns them fewer advisees. Instructional faculty assume the primary responsibility for academic advising of the majors.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty are aligned with their areas of expertise and program focus. Over the course of the self-study assessment, the number of faculty has decreased, and the number of adjunct faculty has increased. The departing faculty left due to low salaries, high teaching responsibilities, high administrative responsibilities, and seeking a better quality of life. The faculty indicated they have adequate resources in terms of technology, classroom and lab space, and administrative staff support to support the undergraduate program. Faculty are also credentialed and/or certified in their areas of expertise.

**Successes and Positive Attributes:** The faculty indicated that the adjunct faculty are professionals in the field and offer valuable experiences for the students. Their network of professional contacts in the surrounding communities allows them to create hands-on learning opportunities and to introduce students to the real-world issues experienced in the Appalachian region.

Students expressed their appreciation for the faculty. Specifically, they commented on the attentiveness of faculty, their commitment to

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

getting to know their students, excellence in academic advising, the opportunities created by faculty for engaged community learning, their dedication to exposing students to and learning from diverse perspectives, and their commitment to assisting students in learning about all aspects of their chosen career fields. The students stated that the application, advising, and enrollment process has made it much easier to enroll to make sure their application is complete.

**Concerns/Needs/Recommendations:** Additional faculty are needed to adequately support the undergraduate, graduate, and certificate degree programs. Students commented that they wished more people knew about the department programs and there needs to be more efforts and resources to market the majors

### ARE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES APPROPRIATE? ARE PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES ADEQUATELY ASSESSED?

The department participates in the Ohio University Program Outcomes Assessment process on an annual basis. The OUPOA requires each degree program to establish learning outcomes for each degree program. The faculty report the student assessment outcomes to the department and university on an annual basis.

Examples of teaching innovation methods implemented by faculty in their courses for students to show attainment of the learning objectives during the review period include faculty developing their own methods for teaching, guest speakers, and students:

- examining and responding to real-world case studies
- seeking credible sources of information online
- engaged in mentoring programs (e.g., students and older adults)
- writing reflection papers
- developing websites, videos, and marketing materials
- engaged with current issues in the field
- participating in discussion boards on current public health topics
- reading and analyzing current books on public health
- responding to current news events
- conducting interviews with public health professionals
- researching policy changes, legal challenges, and economic factors that impact public health issues
- becoming engaged with public health professionals through capstone experience

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty shared examples of teaching methods and assessments that are appropriate for undergraduate degree programs. For example, the CFS program provides students with experiences working with at-risk youth and children in community settings, and the undergraduate degree prepares graduates with credentials to work as a child life specialist in pediatric health settings. Faculty stated that their programs are rigorous and require hands-on experiences through internships and practical experiences. The pedagogical practices are appropriate. The programs are delivered through blended learning methods, including online and interactive video conferencing. As noted during the site visit, the faculty explained that each program's curriculum map and learning outcomes are introduced and reinforced throughout the curriculum. Coursework and assessment activities provide the faculty with data about the student's abilities to demonstrate mastery and integration of the learning outcomes. Teaching assessments are expected in a department of health sciences. Student assessment is conducted using an online teaching survey distributed by the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** Faculty participate in a variety of professional development opportunities to strengthen their teaching methods and assessment techniques.

The students expressed their appreciation for the variety of learning experiences and felt that they benefitted from the in-field and community-based experiences that do not confine learning to the classroom. They shared examples of working in the local community with peers from other program areas. They shared that these unique learning experiences provide them with a better understanding of how they can contribute to improving public health concerns in a collaborative approach. The students stated that they enjoy their classes, are engaged by the teaching methodologies used, feel that the knowledge shared is valuable to their career preparation, and appreciate the variety of topics covered in the current curriculum. Former students reported that they felt well-prepared at the beginning of their careers. Most of the learning objectives are appropriate and measurable for each degree program. Each objective is designed to measure one learning outcome.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** Most of the learning objectives are appropriate for the degree program and at the undergraduate level. Some need to be higher-level learning objectives, or more complex, and some objectives need to be separated out because there are too many assessments to measure in some of the learning objectives. Some of the objectives do not demonstrate students' abilities to perform beyond simple skills (e.g., remember) and there is not an indication of students moving from simple skills to complex skills (e.g., create).

CFS- the learning objectives are at lower-level assessments, or simple, - all, except the last one, are "demonstrate". Recommend revising some of the learning objectives to be more complex.

CPH- the learning objectives are at lower-level assessments- "describe"- doesn't show the student's attainment of the learning objectives at higher levels, or more complex levels of assessment.

EH- separate out each assessment for each objective. Each one is vague and may be challenging to measure. For example, how do the faculty measure the following objectives Students will perform methods, techniques, and activities at a professional level.

Some of the faculty stated a challenge was distinguishing some of their degree programs from other "helping" programs. Some EH students expressed that there is a need for more public interaction courses. They expressed as desire to research "how to interact" with a public who has varying degrees of perspectives and opinions of others. In addition, there are currently only a couple of courses examining codes and policies. Additional coursework and experience is needed in this area, with a focus on how to effectively read code, resources available to assist in interpreting code, and information about who writes the codes and how it is established. Additional student recommendations included: providing experiences focused on interpreting and evaluating data and statistics in public health, and a course that prepares them for conducting large-scale data analytics. One student commented that there is currently a heavy emphasis on health

## Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University

education and students could benefit from more courses on topics such as biostats.

### **ARE STUDENTS ABLE TO MOVE INTO TO DISCIPLINE-RELATED CAREERS AND/OR PURSUE FURTHER ACADEMIC WORK?**

The programs in the department are designed for students to be able to seek employment at the bachelor level; however, the programs are a solid foundation for students to springboard to graduate school and specialize.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty shared that the degree programs prepare students for their career paths. They indicated the local health departments seek graduates from this department for employment because they are well-prepared and in high demand. The students indicated they were prepared for their current jobs and did not state any additional resources or academic experiences were needed.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** Overall, former students were highly satisfied with their academic experiences, and they felt that they were well-prepared for employment and/or graduate school. Faculty provides a robust and rigorous curriculum that prepares students for the field.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** Faculty indicated that most students completing the program continue with graduate education. However, little data is available to determine students' ability to move into discipline-related careers. Alumni data available through internal institutional resources have been limited.

Faculty indicated it is a challenge to monitor alumni and rely on those students who "...keep in touch..." to determine post-graduation outcomes. Many of the data points are gathered anecdotally and faculty recognize the need to develop more data-driven evaluation methods. Some programs have credentialing or board-certified exams to track students' passing rates, which can be a variable to indicate students' academic preparation. It was mentioned that "OU students do consistently well on this exam", but no specific data was presented. At times, unsolicited positive comments are received from employers that indicate their newly graduated student from the program is performing well based on the student's academic preparation. Feedback from preceptors on the field experience learning outcomes is used to make any changes that strengthen the program to meet professional and career requirements. Feedback is obtained from the Alumni Advisory Council. Faculty need to determine the processes to measure student placement and gather student-provided data about their perceived ability to implement the program's competencies post-graduation. For students to meet the requirements of employment and have a solid foundation in their areas of study, the students/alumni stated that they would have benefitted from a course focused on stress, resiliency, and trauma to help address and support the current mental health concerns in their communities and work environments.

### **GRADUATE PROGRAM:**

#### **IS THE PROGRAM ATTRACTING STUDENTS LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN THE PROGRAM?**

The graduate programs are specialized and attract students that want to expand upon their undergraduate experiences. The department provides students with academic experiences and training in specialized areas that include meeting the requirements to become a Certified Child Life Specialist (CCLS). The MHA attracts experienced, early to mid-career, health professionals. MPH is designed for students to earn a certificate in epidemiology. These opportunities are attractive to students and based on their undergraduate experiences, along with support from administration and program faculty, the students are provided the foundation to be successful during the graduate program and in their careers. An additional pedagogical attraction is that graduate programs are delivered through blended learning methods, including online and interactive video conferencing. The variety of delivery methods shows the department is attentive to the learning needs of the students.

The graduate academic programs help students to develop skills related to many public health topics that include:

- Normalizing the hospitalization experience for children and families
- Coping skills for children during stressful experiences
- Therapeutic medical play
- Marriage and family therapy
- Healthcare systems
- Planning, implementing, and evaluating public health programs
- Leadership skills in public health
- Working on interdisciplinary teams
- Exploring the social and behavioral sciences
- Specialized training in epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy, environmental health, and behavioral science
- Specialized courses in foundations and theory, psychology, advocacy, and discipline-specific (e.g., early childhood and special education, aging, health care administration; rural health disparities)

**Site Visit Assessment:** The site visit team learned more about the recent accreditation of the MPH Program which is an attractive aspect of this program. Having the [CEPH Accreditation](#) status indicates this program has met their criteria that this program "...assures the quality in public health education and training to achieve excellence in practice, research, and service, through collaboration with organizational and community partners." The faculty would like to expand their graduate program to include an online Global Health degree. The graduate faculty bring decades of professional experience and have a solid record of teaching and scholarship. Many are active in their professional organizations and have leadership roles on campus and in communities. Overall, the administration and faculty feel good about the graduate degree programs, the types of students enrolled in the programs, and their abilities to be successful.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** MPH Program is CEPH accredited and met the criteria. The faculty believe their degree programs meet the needs of students and prepare the students for their careers. Not only is this due to their areas of expertise and experiences, but also evident

## **Program Review: Department of Social and Public Health, College of Health Science and Professions, Ohio University**

because the programs are either accredited or certified by their professional organizations and/or boards. The faculty are considering adding a graduate degree programs in Global Health. The faculty stated a desire to explore the options to attract students interested in exploring areas of study beyond the U.S. The MHA program allows for students to complete either as a part-time or full-time student, and offers many areas of specialization including quality improvement, aging, and project management. This program is scheduled for an accreditation site visit in March 2023.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** The online MPH Program has grown in numbers that the faculty did not expect to happen. Of the 128 students, 50% are in Ohio, most are in Columbus and rural areas. These students are choosing to stay where they live and work while completing the degree. This has impacted the on-campus enrollment numbers, which are very low. It is recommended that the faculty review the on-campus program and determines mechanisms to increase enrollment numbers and make it a more attractive initiative. Faculty expressed the need from campus and school administration to provide faculty with the resources they need to recruit and retain students.

### **IS THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS APPROPRIATE FOR THE PROGRAM?**

The on-campus program enrollment numbers are much lower than the online programs which have high enrollment numbers. CFS 27; HA 272; MPH online 128; MPH on campus 9

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty shared their experiences related to the enrollments in the on-campus and online courses offered in their department. Some faculty expressed their concerns about the high enrollment numbers in the online courses and managing the enormous assignments that need to be evaluated/graded.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** Review the MPH on-campus program and determine the reasons and variables for the low enrollment numbers. Provide faculty with resources to manage their online programs due to the high enrollment numbers so they do not have to compromise the rigor and course requirements.

### **IS THE PROGRAM ATTRACTING A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS?**

Graduation rates for graduate programs reflect that the program is attracting students that are likely to succeed in the program. The graduation rates show student success in the completion of graduate degrees. The MPH Online Program attracts many students from Ohio and the on-campus program is currently comprised of all international students. Many of the graduate programs are working professionals, some are early to mid-career professionals, and bring skills and experiences to the program.

**Site Visit Assessment:** A graduate student researched the top 10 graduate public health programs and OU was listed. As a student of color with a low undergraduate GPA and significant financial restrictions, she decided to reach out to an OU student support specialist. This person gave her the confidence to apply despite the challenges and assisted in helping the student develop her personal admissions statement. The students stated many times that the student-centered resources for all students at OU and within the department made the degree programs very attractive.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** Need better marketing efforts to diversify the students in each of the MPH Programs.

### **DOES THE GRADUATE CURRICULUM PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE BACKGROUND TO PURSUE DISCIPLINE-RELATED CAREERS FOLLOWING GRADUATION?**

In all the graduate programs, the students participate in research-related course activities. For example, in the MPH Program, the students are expected to demonstrate competency in specific research-related areas such as data analysis, data interpretation, synthesizing literature, and developing plans for evaluation research. Additionally, research-related outcomes are expected of graduate students who received a research assistantship. The self-study reported that two (2) graduate students received funding from the CHSP Student Research Grant program which supports their work to conduct, or travel to present research findings from, faculty-supervised research projects. Faculty in the Health Administration program shared that the Advanced Pathway was approved where current undergrads can choose to apply for the MHA during their senior year and if accepted, can enroll in some courses during their senior year.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The faculty expressed concerns about the current climate in our country related to the pandemic and public health careers resulting in recruiting students may become difficult. The public health profession has become stigmatized, and students may be hesitant to be associated with a career that has become questionable. The faculty see this as an opportunity to re-brand public health. None of the students indicated any regrets about their choices to become public health professionals and have been supported by their employers and communities.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** The Advanced Pathway option for health administration undergraduates to support their goals to earn a graduate degree in this are varied and meets the needs of the workforce

### **DOES THE PROGRAM PROVIDE ADEQUATE MENTORING AND ADVISING TO STUDENTS TO PREPARE THEM FOR DISCIPLINE-RELATED CAREERS?**

The graduate programs provide adequate mentoring and advising to students to prepare them for their discipline-specific careers. In the field and/or capstone experiences, students collaborate with faculty and community preceptors on projects that are meaningful to



public health.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The students praised their faculty for being accessible and available regarding their academic challenges and success, in addition to answering questions about their career plans. They stated that the online course faculty were also readily available, helped the students to build confidence, and gave them real-world situations that provided a solid foundation for their careers. One student said that they could not recall a time when they did not get the help they needed from faculty.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** Students stated they received feedback on assignments on time which helped them to always know their progress in their courses.

### **ARE THE RESOURCES AND THE NUMBER OF AND DISTRIBUTION OF FACULTY SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THE GRADUATE PROGRAM?**

As indicated in the Self-Study, the program has 15 faculty and of those, 5 are dedicated to the graduate programs. The department faculty have been active in scholarly activities and funding which contribute to supporting the graduate programs and students. The faculty have advanced degrees, are active in their professional disciplines, have acquired resources to enhance the students' experiences (e.g., the CFH simulation lab), provide travel experiences to South Africa, and plan to expand to Ireland.

**Site Visit Assessment:** Faculty discussed the current number of faculty in the department to meet the needs of the program and students. It was expressed that more faculty are desired to reduce the workload of the faculty, as many are assuming additional teaching, service, and administrative responsibilities, and to bring more faculty to the department with areas of expertise that will enhance and/or complement the existing programs. For example, hiring faculty with expertise in global health if a new graduate program in this area will be developed and implemented.

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** A significant challenge is the OU process to hire adjunct faculty. This department relies heavily on adjunct faculty to teach courses where they have the expertise and to reduce the teaching responsibilities of the full-time faculty. It is a hindrance to have all adjunct faculty hired through a faculty search process when the department faculty and administrators know of public health professionals in the field who are qualified to teach. The university supports the engagement with local health professionals in the classroom; however, adjunct faculty expressed the hiring process is cumbersome and not interested in going through this process. The department is losing out on having exceptional professionals in the field as part of the student experience due to this administrative barrier.

### **DOES THE PROGRAM OFFER APPROPRIATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO GRADUATE STUDENTS?**

During the study, two (2) graduate students received funding from the CHSP Student Research Grant program which supports their work to conduct, or travel to present research findings from, faculty-supervised research projects. There are scholarships, internal and external to the department, students can apply for. As noted in the Self-Study, the Ohio University program has made appropriate financial support available to some graduate students. The department offers graduate assistantships to students. Some of the graduate students have been recipients of research awards and some have taken advantage of program offers to go to state conferences free of cost.

### **ARE PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES ADEQUATELY ASSESSED?**

The self-study provided several methods to assess each program's learning outcomes-based discussions at faculty meetings about the curricula, learning outcomes, assessment methods, feedback from preceptors during capstone experiences, faculty teaching awards, consulting current students and alumni, student, and faculty evaluations; annual outcomes assessment process; and accreditation curricular requirements to assess their learning outcomes.

### **ARE STUDENTS ABLE TO MOVE INTO TO DISCIPLINE-RELATED CAREERS?**

The graduate programs offer specific areas of concentration that include child life and family gerontology. The graduate program in Child and Family Life received the Association of Child Life Professionals Graduate Endorsement (ACLP) in 2021, which strengthens the graduate's abilities for employment. Overall, the graduation and employment rates (including continuing education) are adequate and show there is a consistent pattern of students who have been employed or continuing education. Program data indicates that students can successfully move into discipline-related careers.

**Site Visit Assessment:** The students stated they enjoyed the courses focused on rural health because they were relevant and culturally appropriate. One student completed a fellowship at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reported that he was very well prepared to work in this government setting.

**Successes/Positive Attributes:** Faculty instill the skill to seek and search for career opportunities among their students

**Challenges/Needs/Recommendations:** RHE Faculty and Students' Perspective- One issue that was resounding absent in our visit and interaction with faculty, as well as students, was the absence of perspectives from the faculty and students from any of the Ohio University regional campuses that offer the program majors degrees. Ohio regional campuses have students with a different background than those on the Athens campus. RHE faculty by the nature of the employment contract also has a different workload from faculty employed at the Athens campus. Given these differences in faculty contracts and the "uniqueness" of RHE students, it would have been vital for the review team to have had a separate session with both faculty and students from the RHE.





**OHIO**  
UNIVERSITY

College of Health Sciences  
and Professions

December 13, 2022

Department of Social  
and Public Health,

Grover Center W324  
1 Ohio University Drive  
Athens OH 45701-2979

T: 740.593.4675  
F: 740.593.0555

Bärbel Such, Ph.D.  
Chair, UCC Program Review Committee  
Associate Professor of German, Dept. of Modern Languages  
Ohio University

Dr. Such:

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Social and Public Health, please accept our gratitude for your assistance with our seven-year review process. We are also grateful to the team of reviewers and the thorough nature of their review of our department's programs. This process helped us to identify our areas of strength and to develop priority activities to improve the quality of our academic programs and processes.

The site visit report has been shared with faculty and staff in our department, faculty and staff were invited to submit responses to me following their review, and the findings have been discussed at a recent meeting of the coordinators of the department's undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Consistently, faculty and staff expressed agreement with the overall finding that our department's programs are "viable," and found the review team's suggestions for quality improvement to be helpful and insightful.

Subsequent to our review, we have compared our future plans for improvement (included in our self-study) to the suggestions of the reviewers and have also identified additional areas that we will prioritize based upon their insights contained in the site visit report. We have also identified a few areas in the site visit report that would benefit from a correction of factual errors and other areas where reviewers may have misunderstood some of the content discussed during the site visit. In respective sections below, I highlight these plans and corrections.

### Plans for Improvement

Based on our initial self-study and suggestions of the reviewers, the following are priority areas of focus as we work to strengthen our academic programs and the administrative systems that support those programs:

- Secure resources to strengthen the faculty profile in the undergraduate program in community and public health and the graduate program in health administration. This is critical ensure program stability and to meet standards for accreditation.
- Continue to focus on efforts to secure accreditation or certification for all programs for which such endorsement is available. Priority programs include the undergraduate programs in health services administration and community & public health and the graduate program in health administration.

- Standardize a departmental process for the annual collection of data from students to document student perceptions of academic program quality, the learning environment, satisfaction with academic and career advising, and perceptions of the department's success in ensuring a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment.
- Standardize a departmental process for the annual collection of data from program graduates to document student success measures such as employment characteristics, continuing education characteristics and perceptions of their preparedness to pursue career goals.
- Effectively engage campus and third-party (online) resources to develop robust and effective marketing and communication materials for purposes of student recruitment.
- Strengthen mechanisms to support faculty and student productivity in research, with a particular focus on an effort to secure resources to enhance the capacity of the Appalachian Institute to Advance Health Equity Science (ADVANCE).
- Identify resources to support the department's ability to remain engaged with community organizations to support student learning and faculty service, and to develop more efficient and effective models for the active engagement of community professionals in advisory capacities.
- Identify opportunities to expand degree offerings to the regional campuses and explore mechanisms for participatory efforts in research, community engagement, and professional development with colleagues on those campuses.
- Explore opportunities to engage community-based practitioners in our teaching, particularly by working with university and college administrators to identify mechanisms for such without the barriers presented by the need for a national search in order to hire adjunct faculty.
- Review and revise (as necessary) selected learning objectives that are used in university program assessment, particularly for undergraduate programs, in order to improve their measurability and the extent to which they reflect higher-level learning outcomes.

Corrections and Clarifications (page numbers refer to the site visit report)

- Page 1: The report indicates the department has three undergraduate programs; the actual number of undergraduate programs is four.
- Pages 2-3: The report only listed faculty members under the undergraduate programs and did not fully reflect faculty in the graduate programs. As a clarification, all faculty in the undergraduate child & family studies program also contribute to the graduate program, all faculty listed under the community and public health program contribute to the graduate Master of Public Health (MPH) program. Regarding certificates, the Graduate Certificate in Epidemiology should reflect Dr. Alexander Sergeev as the faculty member coordinating that certificate program.
- Pages 8 & 12: A program is identified as "CFH" when it should reflect "CFS" for the Child & Family Studies Program.
- Pages 11 & 12: Regarding plans in "global health," it is the case that faculty are currently exploring the possibility of developing a concentration in "global health" in both the undergraduate and graduate programs in public health. However, there are currently no plans to seek resources to expand faculty specifically in the area of "global health."

In summary, we appreciate the comprehensive nature of the site visit and the written report prepared by the site visitors. We were pleased to see the extent to which the reviewers validated the strengths of our academic programs as well as their articulation of specific resource needs that the department faces, particularly in the areas of faculty resources and support for degree program marketing and

recruitment. We believe that the review process helped us by validating needs and plans that we ourselves had identified and provided us with additional insights for other quality improvement priorities. We also again express our appreciation to you for your facilitation of this process in your role as Chair of the UCC Program Review Committee.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Reece", written in a cursive style.

Michael Reece, Ph.D., MPH  
Interim Chair, Department of Social and Public Health



OHIO  
UNIVERSITY

College of Health Sciences and  
Professions

Office of the Dean  
Grover Center W379  
Athens, OH 45701-2979  
T: 740.593.9336  
F: 740.593.0285  
[www.ohio.edu/chsp](http://www.ohio.edu/chsp)

12.23.22

Bärbel Such, Ph.D.  
Chair, UCC Program Review Committee  
Associate Professor of German, Dept. of Modern Languages Ohio University

Dear Dr. Such

Thank you and the internal and external reviewers for their time and care in reviewing programs within the Department of Social and Public Health covering the period AY2014-15 to AY 2021-22. I concur with the finding that the program is viable. I also wanted to respond to the report offered by the review committee and the response from the Interim Department Chair, Michael Reece.

The Department of Social and Public Health is one that serves a very complimentary role to the mission of the college. Serving the community is a vital college value and the majors, research, and people in DSPH all support this goal. Further, I would note that standards for interprofessional education competencies and the state of the world in general require an emphasis on thinking about the population level of health. It is critical that everyone in the College of Health Sciences and Professions understand that individuals' health is determined by the communities in which they live and that community conditions ultimately make people more or less healthy.

The faculty in Social and Public Health are a collegial group with a sincere interest in their fields and in helping others. I do believe that during the RCM budget model there were entrepreneurial efforts in the college that overlapped with their mission and the offerings in DSPH. I think the emphasis on creating new programs resulted in tracks, majors, and certificates that were not always well aligned. I recognize the spirit of what the committee stated in saying, "The department needs to tighten the academic portfolio by addressing the curricular sprawl to determine which courses are required/needed based on market data." I agree that finding a clear and concise way to identify pathways to students and to ensuring that the courses offered match those pathways is important. I'm not certain that "market data" is the sole driver of decision-making in the process. I believe that consultation with the Department and the college is a critical part of decision making and that improved alignment and shared decisions is even more critical in terms of furthering the Department's mission. The report noted the lack of RHE

input and that also is part of the alignment and input discussion. I agree that consideration of our RHE offerings under One OHIO is important and needed.

I appreciated the report including an update about positions that were added to the department. A replacement position for the departure of the previous chair is also underway for the Spring. This will help with the Master's in Health Administration as they seek accreditation.

I fully agree that there is stigma attached to public health professions during the pandemic and that presentation of our health offerings to prospective students at younger ages is critical. I further believe that our programs have much to offer if we can find ways to convey the professional options. I appreciated Dr. Reece making some corrections to the report for the record and found his notes correct and consistent with my understanding as well.

The University has recognized that the health sector is a key area of strength but that we need to do more to build our reputation in that area. I can say that DSPH has already been helpful through its research institute in ADVANCE, its partnerships with health systems willing to sponsor student scholarships, and its collaborations with the Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine and the George Voinovich School for Leadership and Public Service. There are many assets in DSPH and finding ways for DSPH to add to the collective impact of the college and university without adding any additional complexity is a key part of success moving forward.

Thank you again for the careful review

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. McCarthy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

John McCarthy, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, FNAP  
Dean  
Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders  
College of Health Sciences and Professions  
W381 Grover Center  
Ohio University  
Athens, OH 45701  
Phone: (740) 593-4717  
Fax: (740) 593-0287  
Email: mccarthj@ohio.edu



**From:** [Mather, Peter](#)  
**To:** [Such, Barbel](#)  
**Subject:** Re: program review reports at Grad Council  
**Date:** Saturday, February 25, 2023 12:54:45 AM

---

Hi Barbel,

Here is the approved review report from the last Graduate Council meeting. The next meeting will be next Friday (March 3rd).

Pete

Social and Public Health

The review indicated the program is viable. The School maintains 3 master's degree programs and 2 graduate certificate programs. The report noted the recent accreditation of the Masters in Public Health program, opportunities for research collaboration, as well as the success in preparing graduates for discipline-related careers.

Peter C. Mather, PhD  
Professor, Department of Counseling and Higher Education  
Patton College of Education  
Ohio University  
432B Patton Hall  
Athens, OH 45701

Office Phone:  
740.593.4454

If you'd like to make an appointment, please book here:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/PeteMather@catmail.ohio.edu/bookings/>

---

**From:** Such, Barbel <such@ohio.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 24, 2023 5:02 PM  
**To:** Mather, Peter <matherp@ohio.edu>  
**Subject:** program review reports at Grad Council