

REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION
OF THE
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

SITE VISIT DATES:

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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the College of Public Health at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). The report assesses the college's compliance with the *Accreditation Criteria for Schools of Public Health, amended June 2011*. This accreditation review included the conduct of a self-study process by college constituents, the preparation of a document describing the college and its features in relation to the criteria for accreditation and a visit in October 2016 by a team of external peer reviewers. During the visit, the team had an opportunity to interview college and university officials, administrators, teaching faculty, students, alumni and community representatives and to verify information in the self-study document by reviewing materials provided in a resource file. The team was afforded full cooperation in its efforts to assess the college and verify the self-study document.

The University of Nebraska (NU) was founded as a land-grant institution on February 15, 1869, and is the state's only public university. NU comprises four individually accredited universities: the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Nebraska at Kearney and UNMC. The NU system enrolls nearly 50,000 students and employs a workforce of 13,000.

UNMC is Nebraska's only public academic health sciences center and includes six colleges: public health, medicine, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy and allied health professions. The Office of Graduate Studies oversees many master's and PhD programs under the university-wide Graduate College.

NU established an MPH program and admitted the first students in 2002. This program was offered collaboratively by the University of Nebraska at Omaha and UNMC with support from the Nebraska Minority Public Health Association.

The NU Board of Regents established the College of Public Health at UNMC in 2007 after the MPH program had built a solid track record and state leaders recognized the importance of public health training and research. The MPH program migrated from a collaborative program to a standalone college with approval of the Board of Regents in April 2010.

The collaborative MPH program was first accredited in 2004, and it transitioned to an accredited single-institution college in 2011. Since that review, which resulted in a five-year accreditation term, the college has documented compliance with competencies and graduation rates through interim reporting.

Characteristics of a School of Public Health

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

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

These characteristics are evident in the UNMC College of Public Health. The college is located in a regionally accredited university and has the same rights and privileges as other professional colleges on campus. The college has a planning and evaluation process that is inclusive, timely and focused on public health research, teaching and service.

The college's faculty complement and broad range of centers support interdisciplinary collaboration given the variety of disciplines addressed. The college's degree programs are organized with an ecological perspective, and faculty and student connections with public health practitioners and local community members ensure that the college fosters the development of professional public health concepts and values. The college has a clearly defined mission with supporting goals and objectives.

The college has adequate resources to offer the MPH degree in the five core areas of public health knowledge and doctoral degrees in at least three areas. The college offers additional public health

master's and doctoral degrees in such areas as maternal and child health, emergency preparedness and occupational biomechanics.

1.0 THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

1.1 Mission.

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

This criterion is met. The college has a clear, publicly available mission with supporting goals, objectives and values. The mission statement was developed in 2009-2010 via an inclusive process that involved faculty, students, staff, alumni and community members. The college's mission statement is as follows:

The mission of the College of Public Health is to promote optimal health and well-being through robust education, research, and service in collaboration with communities in Nebraska, across the country, and around the world.

The values fit the mission and align with general values of the field of public health. For example, the commitment to diversity makes reference to diversity of ideas, disciplines and people. Faculty committees developed the goals, quantifiable metrics and targets. The three goals correspond to education, research and service. The objectives are straightforward and comprehensive, and the metrics are meaningful, fully quantitative and measurable. Site visitors found the targets to be forward-looking without being overly ambitious. Progress toward goals is summarized in an annual report that is shared with the college's Governing Faculty, staff and Panel of Advisors.

Through on-site discussions, site visitors learned that the college is in the process of a complete review, updating the metrics and targets to reflect the college's current level of maturity. The mission, values, goals and objectives are made available on the college website.

1.2 Evaluation and Planning.

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

This criterion is met. The college has a comprehensive, explicit process for monitoring its progress toward achieving its mission, goals and objectives. The college maintains an Evaluation Committee, which coordinates assessment and evaluation efforts. The Evaluation Committee produces the annual assessment report each winter, which is sent to various responsible individuals and committees. These individuals and committees review the data and provide recommendations and plans for improvement. These plans are incorporated into the final report, which is disseminated to the college's Leadership Council, faculty and Panel of Advisors. Recommendations and plans for improvement are implemented

spring through fall. The self-study includes several examples of changes that have recently been made as a part of this process, including improvements to career counseling and academic advising. All faculty who spoke with site visitors seemed very aware of and involved in this process.

The college prepared its self-study through a process that was inclusive of faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders. In July 2015, all faculty, staff and students, as well as community partners and alumni, were invited to participate in the workgroups. Self-study workgroups met approximately monthly and contributed to drafts of the self-study, as directed by a steering committee. The preliminary self-study was posted to the college intranet in March 2016 to solicit comments from faculty, staff and students. The college provided copies to community stakeholders. Based on discussions during the site visit, the workgroups had robust participation, including from students and community members. The college makes good use of distance technology to engage with stakeholders across the state.

1.3 Institutional Environment.

The school shall be an integral part of an accredited institution of higher education and shall have the same level of independence and status accorded to professional schools in that institution.

This criterion is met. UNMC has been accredited by the Higher Learning Commission since 1913. Its last review in 2007 resulted in a 10-year accreditation term. The university responds to 16 specialized accreditors in such areas as dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and dietetics.

UNMC is one of four campuses that comprise the University of Nebraska system. As of fall 2015, UNMC had 3,790 enrolled students and nearly 5,000 employees. Six colleges comprise UNMC: allied health professions, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy and public health. The six college deans report to the UNMC chancellor, who reports to the university president. The president reports to the Board of Regents, an elected group of eight statewide representatives plus non-voting student representatives from each of the four campuses.

The College of Public Health has the same level of authority and autonomy accorded to all other professional colleges in the institution related to decision making about budgeting and resource allocation, personnel recruitment, selection and promotion and academic standards. The dean determines the allocation of state aid (appropriations from the legislature and tuition). The dean also oversees funds from grants and contracts in consultation with department chairs and center directors. The college oversees personnel recruitment, selection and advancement in accordance with UNMC's Department of Human Resources requirements. Each degree program is responsible for developing and overseeing its own curriculum. Professional degree programs are reviewed and approved by the College Curriculum Committee, dean and Board of Regents. Academic degree programs are reviewed and

approved by the College Curriculum Committee, UNMC Graduate Council and Board of Regents. The Office of Graduate Studies provides basic guidelines for MS and PhD degree programs.

During the on-site meeting with university leaders, the chancellor discussed the college's fit within the larger campus and said that it is the glue that holds all of the health professions together. He spoke about the college's foundational role within the campus and throughout the community.

1.4 Organization and Administration.

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

This criterion is met. The college has an organizational setting that is conducive to public health learning, research and service. The college is organized into five departments based on the core public health knowledge areas. Departments have a great deal of autonomy concerning research, academic programs, recruitment of faculty, staff and students, departmental budget preparation and administration. Department chairs report to the dean.

Seven centers are housed within the departments and address areas such as biosecurity, biopreparedness and emerging infectious diseases; rural health research; global health and development; and toxicology. Center directors are responsible for budgeting, grant submission, hiring of personnel and strategic planning. Directors report to the chair of the department in which they are appointed.

The organization of the college is conducive to interdisciplinary learning, research and service. The college offers eight dual-degree programs that allow students to integrate public health with other professions. Courses within the MPH curriculum engage faculty from multiple departments and allow them to contribute their academic and professional perspectives. In addition, centers must demonstrate an interdisciplinary breadth encompassing commitment of funding and faculty from more than one department and have a multi-departmental function to be approved by the Board of Regents. College faculty have partnered with other researchers across the NU on topics such as exercise science, architecture, information technology and public affairs. College faculty also participate in collaborative service initiatives sponsored by the university such as Water for Food, Food for Health and the Rural Futures Initiative.

Site visitors learned that pilot funds offered by the college and by UNMC nearly always require interdisciplinary involvement. Faculty said that other colleges at UNMC, as well as state and local agencies, are becoming more familiar with the college's strengths and are seeking out public health faculty for collaborative projects, which is further diversifying the college's partnerships.

1.5 Governance.

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

This criterion is met. The college has clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning college governance and academic policies. The Governing Faculty, composed of faculty who hold official appointments in the college and have voting rights, is responsible for reviewing and periodically amending the college's bylaws, mission statement and values statements and for participating in programs and strategies through Governing Faculty committees. The Governing Faculty meets at least six times each year to receive reports from departments, centers, committees and other entities relevant to the college.

The college has three standing committees: 1) curriculum, 2) faculty promotion and tenure and 3) research and development. Chairs of standing committees are members of the Governing Faculty and are nominated and elected by this group for a three-year term. The chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee must be a full-time, tenured professor in the college. The committee chairs report quarterly to the Governing Faculty and to the dean regarding committee activities. Each standing committee includes representation from each department, and the committees overseeing curriculum and research and development include MPH and PhD student representatives.

The college has two non-standing committees established by the dean to study and resolve specific problems, issues or proposals. The college had a Bylaws Revision Committee that was active in 2014 and 2015, resulting in the adoption of several bylaws amendments. The college's Evaluation Committee designs and administers the assessments needed for accreditation and strategic planning. This committee meets monthly during the fall and spring semesters and currently includes faculty, staff and PhD students.

In addition to standing and non-standing committees, the college also has a number of advisory entities that focus on issues such as diversity, Latino recruitment and retention, admissions to professional programs, strategic planning and self-study development. The Leadership Council includes the dean, associate and assistant deans, department chairs, center directors and key staff administrators. The council considers any matters pertaining to governance or administration brought before it by the Governing Faculty, the dean, a committee or another member of the council. The Leadership Council provides recommendations and advice to the dean and coordinates and implements institutional policies recommended by the Governing Faculty.

The college is also served by a Panel of Advisors that provides information, ideas and insights to the leadership of the college that will help it to achieve its mission and guide its growth. The panel meets

twice a year, and meetings are led by the dean. The panel currently has 17 advisory members who serve in roles such as health department director, county commissioner, executive director and CEO of community health organizations.

The college has broad representation on 83 NU and UNMC committees. Governing Faculty members serve on the UNMC Graduate Council, the Safety Leadership Committee, the Institutional Biosafety Committee, the Clinical Research Advisory Board, the Mentoring Committee and the Conflict of Interest Committee, among many others.

Public health students have active roles on standing and non-standing committees as well as on advisory entities. All students enrolled in programs offered by the college are members of the Public Health Student Association. This student organization represents public health students to the college leadership and external entities; advances the academic and social needs of students; provides communication between students, faculty, administrators, alumni and the community; creates opportunities for community involvement; and disseminates educational and professional development resources. Public Health Student Association officers include the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and Student Senate representatives. Students who met with site visitors discussed their involvement on the Public Health Student Association and the role the president serves as a liaison between students and the college's administration. Students noted that their concerns about academic advising were raised through this process and were being addressed at the time of the site visit.

Students also have the opportunity to give feedback to the dean during an open student forum each semester. Recent topics have included research and collaboration in public health and policy and advocacy in Nebraska. These informal meetings have contributed to new programming and resources in the areas of career services, academic advising and research.

Alumni and community partners who met with site visitors spoke highly of the collaborative nature of the college and of their ability to provide feedback and ideas to the administration, faculty and staff. These stakeholders serve on formal committees and ad hoc work groups and participate in focus groups and through written surveys. Community representatives told site visitors that they are looking forward to the college's continued and growing involvement with local public health agencies as it continues to grow and mature.

1.6 Fiscal Resources.

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

This criterion is met. The college has financial resources adequate to fulfill its stated mission and goals, and its instructional, research and service objectives. Table 1 provides the college's budget for the last six years.

Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures by Major Category, 2010-2011 to 2015-2016						
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Source of Funds						
Tuition & Fees	\$160,946	\$363,948	\$598,177	\$771,087	\$1,281,822	\$1,614,979
State Appropriation	\$3,237,879	\$3,253,583	\$3,366,595	\$3,321,736	\$4,200,265	\$4,068,588
University Funds	\$4,101,561	\$4,817,893	\$5,399,442	\$5,370,535	\$5,232,068	\$5,521,871
Grants/Contracts	\$7,111,677	\$10,161,646	\$13,087,462	\$13,353,433	\$6,149,166	\$7,650,802
Indirect Cost Recovery	\$622,104	\$1,029,239	\$1,048,367	\$1,104,711	\$934,159	\$1,265,102
Gifts	\$252,395	\$343,475	\$300,545	\$315,216	\$451,458	\$910,452
Other ¹	\$3,466,476	\$3,030,576	\$2,874,987	\$1,397,821	\$3,333,636	\$4,501,291
Total	\$18,330,934	\$21,971,123	\$26,675,575	\$25,634,539	\$21,582,576	\$25,333,085
Expenditures						
Faculty Salaries & Benefits	\$7,485,534	\$8,843,445	\$9,206,731	\$9,459,576	\$9,900,283	\$10,462,392
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$5,801,274	\$6,247,127	\$6,393,077	\$6,062,160	\$5,223,343	\$5,313,242
Operations	\$2,387,434	\$4,245,238	\$8,928,422	\$8,801,576	\$2,962,736	\$4,014,392
Travel	\$422,452	\$502,657	\$584,913	\$593,896	\$509,924	\$678,192
Student Support ²	\$971,857	\$955,629	\$1,112,697	\$1,190,561	\$1,280,881	\$1,544,747
University Tax	\$497,683	\$823,391	\$827,260	\$871,721	\$737,986	\$999,431
Other ³	\$1,000	\$34,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$1,000
Total	\$17,567,233	\$21,651,488	\$27,054,100	\$26,980,490	\$20,618,152	\$23,013,395

¹ Includes auxiliary, consulting and special purpose funds

² Includes student scholarships and awards and compensation for students employed as graduate assistants plus support for student fees

³ Includes the 'Chancellor Robert D. Sparks, MD, Award in Public Health and Preventive Medicine' community scholarship

As shown in Table 1, total unrestricted base funding levels (ie, funds from tuition and fees, state appropriation, university funds and indirect cost recovery) have increased from about \$7.7 million in FY 2011 to about \$10.7 million in FY 2015, which is a significant increase in revenue during this period. However, as clarified during the site visit, the indirect costs reported in this table are based on the total indirects for grants and contracts accrued to UNMC; the reported figures do not reflect the fact that the college actually only receives 21% of the total indirect costs. The Chancellor's Office retains 79%. Hence, the total indirect cost funding for the college is substantially lower, and the total unrestricted funding is correspondingly lower than what is reflected in the table. Nonetheless, even adjusting the indirect costs data, the financial resources are adequate and are trending up at a respectable pace. This upward trend in unrestricted funding in future years will be necessary for the implementation of planned growth in faculty and students.

The dean and assistant dean for operations and administration reported during the site visit that the significant drop in grants and contracts from FY 2014 to FY 2015 was due to the loss of a single grant. However, they also noted that this grant was set up as a pass-through of resources to fund a variety of other activities and programs and did not actually represent a significant loss of actual resources to the college.

Gift income during the six-year reporting period has been relatively stable, although an almost 80% increase is noted between the last two years shown, largely due to the increased priority on fundraising as reported by the dean during the site visit. The budget line item of "other" includes auxiliary, consulting, special purpose funds and some grant and contract direct and indirect funding. This line is notable for contributing, on average, approximately \$2.9 million per year to the college's budget. Site visitors learned that this category contains a variety of funding sources due to how UNMC categorizes some sources of funding in its accounting system.

The NU administration works biennially with the Nebraska legislature to develop its overall budget for the system. The NU President's Office disburses funds to the respective campuses after the overall budget is approved by the legislature. The UNMC Office of Business and Finance works with the six UNMC colleges in the development and aggregation of their budgets. A hybrid approach, combining a responsibility centered management approach and incremental budgeting, is used on the UNMC campus.

The college receives funds in four categories: state funds; tuition; grants and contracts; and charitable contributions. State funds include funds allocated to 1) Programs of Excellence to ensure adequate faculty in core areas and more recently for other, more flexible purposes; 2) Tobacco Settlement funds allocated by the legislature to the vice chancellor for research and then to the college to reduce health disparities; and 3) a total of \$50,000 allocated by the legislature to the college in a line item for student scholarships. Tuition is disbursed by the UNMC Chancellor's Office based on an agreement established when the college was created. The college receives 50% of the tuition increase from the previous year. The other 50% goes to the President's Office. The college will receive 100% of the growth the second year after it is earned. All non-online tuition is spread to the departments based upon credit hours. In addition, tuition generated through the NU-based online program (NU Online WorldWide) is credited to the college less a 5% overhead fee; 25% of this online tuition is retained by the dean, and the rest goes to the department generating the credit hours. Grants and contracts funding, as well as gifts generated by the college, are also distributed to the college.

The college has experienced increases in tuition and philanthropic funding to support its instructional, research and service endeavors. Site visitors' meeting with university leadership indicated continued support from the chancellor, university president and the state.

The college has identified five measures by which it assesses the adequacy of its fiscal resources. All measures relate to securing external research funding, and most of the data is trending in a positive direction. The college assesses and adjusts its targets annually to keep them as goals to strive toward.

1.7 Faculty and Other Resources.

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

This criterion is met. The college has sufficient faculty, staff and other resources to successfully work toward its mission, goals and objectives. The college has eight faculty in the Department of Biostatistics, five in the Department of Environmental, Agricultural and Occupational Health, 12 in the Department of Epidemiology, 14 in the Department of Health Promotion, Social and Behavioral Health and nine in the Department of Health Services Research and Administration. Headcounts have been relatively stable in recent years except for growth in the number of faculty affiliated with the epidemiology programs. Student-faculty ratios are on the order of 3:1 to 5:1 even when only primary faculty members are counted. Several departments are augmented with non-primary faculty, but this is a relatively small component of the faculty complement. The staff resources appear to be adequate. Each department has, at a minimum, an administrative assistant and a grants staff member. Student services staff members are centralized.

The college has its own building with adequate office, classroom and social space. There are nine well-equipped classrooms and numerous meeting rooms. The reported faculty and student satisfaction with the learning spaces is close to 100%, and satisfaction with teaching technology is around 90% on surveys. A 24-seat computer lab is also used for teaching. Wet lab facilities are located in a variety of other buildings on campus; both faculty and students praised this arrangement, saying that it promotes collaboration across the campus.

During the site visit, students, faculty and alumni all expressed satisfaction with resources, including the physical space, library resources and computing resources. The college has access to a public health librarian who was reported to be an important resource to students and faculty. Computing resources are available at other campuses when needs exceed what is available on site.

The college assesses the adequacy of its personnel and other resources using seven measures. The measures relate to student-faculty ratio and the learning environment, including space, classrooms and technology. The college aims to have a median class size of at least 15 students; data for the last three years show that the median was 17, nine and eight, respectively. Data for all other measures well exceeded the targets.

1.8 Diversity.

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

This criterion is met with commentary. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity among its faculty, staff and students. The college set numerous targets in this area and monitors representation of women and minorities (African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander) and international status. Currently, 43% of faculty (tenured and tenure-leading) and 33% of staff in administration/managerial positions are members of minority populations. The highest portion of minority faculty are Black/African American (13%) and Hispanic/Latino (8%).

Among MPH students, 24% (of domestic students) represent minorities; 70% are female; 12% are international; 2.5% are Hispanic/Latino; 6.7% are Black/African American; 4.2% are two or more races; and 0% are American Indian/Native Alaskan or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders. The rates are similar in the MS and PhD programs; however, 44% are international and no students identify as Hispanic/Latino.

The diversity efforts of the college cascade from, and align with, NU and UNMC plans and policies for diversity in faculty, staff and students and seek to create an environment of inclusivity. Two of the college's eight values address diversity of ideas, people and disciplines and the championing of equity and social justice. The college has identified 40 outcome measures to assess its diversity efforts.

UNMC has a Bias Assessment and Response Team. The team responds to non-emergency bias incidents and aims to improve the campus climate in regard to bias. The university has diversity-focused recruitment efforts to inform undergraduate students, high school students and others about public health earlier in their education and also has opportunities for financial support.

The self-study and on-site interviews confirmed that diversity values are fostered through policies, procedures, plans and experiential learning. The college's recruitment plan describes strategies for outreach to underrepresented minorities and first-generation college attendees from low-income families. The UNMC Faculty Diversity Fund is intended to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty in the university. The college recently established a Public Health Diversity Council. The college established a Latino Public Health Advisory Group to help with recruitment, retention and increased relationships with the Latino community.

UNMC conducted a diversity engagement survey in March 2015 to assess the baseline for its major initiatives for 2016-2017. The university received a 22% response rate. Key results regarding inclusivity and diversity found that the goals for diversity were not well communicated or understood and that

broader inclusiveness/comraderie was limited to select populations. Specific strategies are evolving at UNMC and its units to address these findings.

The commentary relates to the opportunity to develop a more cohesive thread across various college initiatives to focus efforts, simplify measures and use data to set priorities and shape strategies. The recently formed Public Health Diversity Council is charged with the development of the college-specific plan and related metrics. The college's diversity, equity and inclusion plan is to be completed by July 2017 and will have specific plans for recruitment, retention and graduation of diverse students. The Public Health Diversity Council will also propose a more inclusive definition of diversity by March 2017. These efforts will significantly shape progress in meeting the intent of this criterion for diversity and operationalizing UNMC's strategic initiatives related to diversity.

2.0 INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.

2.1 Degree Offerings.

The school shall offer instructional programs reflecting its stated mission and goals, leading to the Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent professional master's degree in at least the five areas of knowledge basic to public health. The school may offer other degrees, professional and academic, and other areas of specialization, if consistent with its mission and resources.

This criterion is met. The college offers the MPH and PhD in the five areas of knowledge basic to public health. The college also offers additional MPH concentrations, joint degrees and an MS in emergency preparedness, as shown in Table 2.

The college discontinued its MPH in health policy and MPH in social marketing and health communication in August 2015. The college will continue to offer courses to students enrolled in these concentrations (five and three students, respectively); no students may enroll in these concentrations going forward.

In addition to the five core courses, MPH students are required to complete a foundations in public health course, an integrated research course, a minimum of 12 credits in their area of concentration, appropriate electives and a service learning/capstone experience. Site visitors reviewed the curricula for all degree programs and verified that the college offers an appropriate depth of coursework in each MPH concentration. The curriculum for PhD programs is discussed in greater detail in Criterion 2.12.

Table 2. Degrees Offered		
	Academic	Professional
Master's Degrees		
Biostatistics ¹		MPH
Community Oriented Primary Care		MPH
Environmental and Occupational Health ¹		MPH
Epidemiology		MPH
Health Promotion		MPH
Maternal and Child Health		MPH
Public Health Administration		MPH
Public Health Practice ²		MPH
Emergency Preparedness ¹	MS	MS
Doctoral Degrees		
Biostatistics	PhD	
Environmental and Occupational Hygiene	PhD	
Occupational Biomechanics	PhD	
Toxicology	PhD	
Epidemiology	PhD	
Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research	PhD	
Health Services Research, Administration and Policy	PhD	
Academic Family Medicine	PhD	
Joint Degrees		
Environmental Studies		BSES/MPH
Information Technology Innovation		BSIT/MPH
Physician Assistant Studies		MPAS/MPH
Social Work		MSW/MPH
Medicine		MD/MPH
Law		JD/MPH
Business Administration		MBA/MPH
Pharmacy		PharmD/MPH

¹ Offered in on-campus and online formats

² Offered in an online format only

2.2 Program Length.

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

This criterion is met. The college requires a minimum of 45 semester-credit hours for the MPH. The college defines a single semester-credit hour as 15 contact hours per semester (one contact hour is equal to 50 minutes). The fall and spring semesters are approximately 17 weeks long, with most courses being three-credit hours. Courses require at least two hours and 30 minutes of contact time per week, or 45 contact hours per semester. The college has not awarded any degrees for fewer than 42 credit hours in the past three years.

2.3 Public Health Core Knowledge.

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

This criterion is met. The curriculum includes a three-credit course in each of the five traditional core areas. In addition, there is a three-credit foundations course and a three-credit research design course. Table 3 presents the required core courses for MPH students.

Core Knowledge Area	Course Number & Title	Credits
Biostatistics	CPH 506 Biostatistics I	3
Epidemiology	CPH 504 Epidemiology in Public Health	3
Environmental Health Sciences	CPH 503 Public Health Environment and Society	3
Social & Behavioral Sciences	CPH 501 Health Behavior	3
Health Services Administration	CPH 502 Health Services Administration	3

Based on site visitors' review of syllabi, the core courses cover the required areas at an appropriate depth and are available in both in-person and online formats. The overall structure of the core has not been reviewed by the college for a number of years, but a comprehensive review is planned in response to CEPH's revised accreditation criteria.

The college does not permit waivers of the core courses. Students may transfer credits earned at other CEPH-accredited schools or programs into the MPH program with approval of the course instructor and the Curriculum Committee.

2.4 Practical Skills.

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

This criterion is met. All MPH students complete a service learning project that allows them to apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom in a practice setting. The college combines the practice and culminating experiences into a single service learning/capstone experience (SL/CE). Each component requires 150 on-site hours and must be conducted with the same organization. For the service learning component, the focus is on the student's ability to apply coursework and public health competencies to meet the needs of the selected organization. The experience is intended to help students understand how an organization works and what is required to deliver specific public health services. The SL experience informs how the capstone can be conducted successfully to achieve student goals and contribute to the organization and public health. The project hours can be completed in a block of time or over multiple semesters.

The college hired a full-time service learning manager in January 2015 to improve coordination of the SL/CE. This manager presents details on the practicum and expectations at recruitment meetings with potential organizations. Preceptors must be willing to provide one hour of direct supervision per week. There are 20 approved public health organizations and 10 health departments meeting the college's site

criteria. Each has a signed UNMC affiliation agreement in place. These organizations represent a broad range of public health service opportunities (eg, agricultural safety, health education materials, database development, policy analysis support). The college maintains a website with a list of approved organizations and areas of interest. The number of sites used in any semester (fall, spring, summer) ranges from eight to 12.

Students must complete 27 credit hours before registering for the service learning course unless they can document significant experience; 17% of MPH students were approved to register early because of their background. The academic advisor and the chair of the student's SL/CE supervisory committee must approve student status prior to registration. The college does not permit waivers of the service learning experience.

The SL/CE handbook is available on the college's website and provides students with detailed information on the process, timeline, forms and deliverables expected for both the service learning and capstone experience.

A supervisory committee consists of a chair (a faculty member from the concentration), another college faculty member and the preceptor. The committee meets at least twice for the proposal meeting/review and final presentation. The committee and student review roles and responsibilities, objectives, activities, timeline, evaluation procedures and expectations. A signed form clarifies expectations for all involved. The deliverables for a project may vary at this stage of the SL/CE given that the organization's needs and respective timelines (student vs. organization) may not be completely in synch.

On-site interviews with preceptors confirmed that the college, students and organizations are continuously improving the ability to mesh the various expectations successfully. Preceptors from community organizations said that the students are a welcome resource who often catalyze creative action and new ideas.

Students evaluate preceptors and organizations. The service learning manager evaluates the practice site and monitors all feedback for continuous improvement of processes, policies, procedures and relationships. Based on discussions with preceptors, the college continuously improves communications, training materials, forms and other guidance to benefit both students and the organizations they serve. The committee evaluates the reflection and deliverables and agrees on the grade.

The student provides a self-assessment of the competencies applied during the service learning experience and reflects on insights gained. Each student must log all hours and submit a project reflection form at 75, 150, 225 and 300 hours. The following prompts stimulate written reflections: what

have you learned about how the organization operates?; what are important management skills observed?; what have you learned about your own skills and abilities?; give three examples of core competencies applied or strengthened; share other experiences. Discussions with faculty and preceptors indicated comfort with assessing student performance in the service learning experience. Students indicated a desire for more and varied practice-based learning to supplement the SL/CE.

The college recently improved the student handbook to clarify the process for preceptors, students, academic advisors/faculty and the service learning manager. On-site interviews indicated that the process is improving. Community leaders said that additional practice experiences beyond the SL/CE would be helpful to assist students in securing employment after graduation. The service learning manager plans to further refine ways to assist students without practice experience to more smoothly link the service component and capstone to their career goals.

2.5 Culminating Experience.

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

This criterion is met. All MPH students complete a capstone experience that allows them to demonstrate skills and integration of knowledge. As described in Criterion 2.4, the culminating experience is integrated with the practice experience as the SL/CE. Students complete 150 hours of service learning at the site as their practice experience, then develop and execute a project requiring an additional 150-hour commitment for the culminating experience. The capstone project can be research, evaluation or program development. Based on the capstone project, students produce a paper of at least 20 pages that integrates public health knowledge, principles and skills. Students also present the project findings orally. The capstone project is guided by a committee that includes faculty members and the preceptor from the service learning portion of the experience.

The SL/CE handbook is extremely thorough and leads students through selection of topic and supervisors, processes and proposals, production of the end product, and assessment and reflection requirements.

Evaluation of the experience includes detailed reference to specific competencies. It is well-documented that students are integrating skills from across the curriculum while completing the projects. Based on discussions during the site visit, both students and faculty find the SL/CE program to be strong. Preceptors reported a learning curve involved in becoming familiar with the requirements, but also expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the value of the student projects to their organizations. Faculty expressed some issues around blurred lines between the practice and culminating aspects of the experience, but this did not appear to be a major concern.

2.6 Required Competencies.

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

This criterion is met. The college has clearly defined competencies for the MPH, MS and PhD degrees. The MPH curriculum is guided by 32 core competencies that address the five public health knowledge areas as well as the cross-cutting domains of applied research, leadership, advocacy, culture and diversity and ethics. Each MPH concentration also has a set of defined competencies that allows students to demonstrate a more advanced skill set in a specific area.

The college has developed 10 core competencies for PhD students and seven to 27 concentration-specific competencies depending on the area of study. The MS in emergency preparedness has 18 competencies organized into the domains of leadership; communication and information management; planning and improving practice; and protecting worker health and safety.

MPH faculty developed the core competencies after considering lists promulgated by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, the Council on Linkages between Public Health Practice and Academia and peer institutions. The college's Curriculum Committee approved the most recent list in 2012. Departments are responsible for the development of competencies for the programs they administer. Concentration-specific competencies are based on lists developed by professional organizations, peer institutions and Curriculum Committee input. Students, alumni, faculty and community stakeholders participate in the development of core and concentration-specific competencies.

Competencies are used to evaluate the relevance of curricula, to communicate the skill development expected by each program of study, to evaluate the breadth and depth of competency development through culminating experiences and to reflect on the knowledge and skills gained by graduates.

Competencies are available to students and other stakeholders on the college's website, on the Blackboard site, in the student handbook and on course syllabi.

Site visitors' review of syllabi showed explicit competency statements and clear links to course learning objectives. Students who met with site visitors had strong familiarity with their program's core and concentration-specific competencies. Students discussed competency integration within coursework and the use of competencies to guide the service learning and capstone experiences.

2.7 Assessment Procedures.

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

This criterion is met with commentary. The college assesses student attainment of competencies in a variety of ways, including through coursework, the service learning and culminating experiences and student self-evaluation.

Students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 or higher to continue in the program. For MPH students, a grade lower than a B- in a core course or a grade of C or lower in more than one non-core course requires remediation. Students and advisors work together to create a remediation plan, which must be approved by the Curriculum Committee. MS and PhD students may receive one grade of C; more than one C or any grade below a C may be cause for dismissal. Students work with the Graduate Program Committee to remediate unsatisfactory grades.

Each semester, students rate how well a course addresses program competencies by responding to two questions in the course/instructor evaluation: 1) Competencies to be gained through this course were clearly identified in the syllabus and 2) The course was effective in helping me gain the competencies.

Students must identify specific core and concentration-specific competencies to be addressed and strengthened during their SL/CE and the specific activities they will do to strengthen a given competency. Students provide reflection on their progress toward strengthening competencies at three times during the experience. Students write a reflection and self-assessment of each competency addressed in the project, and each student's supervisory committee evaluates each. On-site discussions with faculty as well as students reiterated this clear process of competency assessment.

MPH students are required to develop a portfolio that describes their experiences and accomplishments during the program. This portfolio tracks ongoing progress toward achievement of the core and concentration-specific competencies and includes an annual identification of competency strengths and weaknesses. Students discuss the portfolio contents with their academic advisor and develop strategies to address the weaknesses and identify work products that demonstrate strengths. Site visitors reviewed these portfolios and found them to be comprehensive reflections of students' time in the program and useful for future pursuits.

The Graduate Studies bulletin establishes that PhD students must complete their degree within seven years of matriculation, and master's students must complete their degree within five years. The college has the prerogative to set the maximum allowable time to graduate for MPH students and has set a limit

of seven years to account for the many MPH students who are working professionals. The college achieved graduation rates of 71% and 83% for the MPH degree for students entering in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. More recent cohorts have not yet reached the 70% threshold, but students are still continuing in the program and attrition rates have not exceeded 30%. The first cohort of MS students entered in 2013-2014 and achieved a 67% graduation rate. This cohort included only three students, so the small student body significantly affected the graduation rate. The program enrolled six students the following year and achieved a graduation rate of 83%. Four of the five students who entered in 2015-2016 are still enrolled in the program; this cohort will achieve the 70% graduation threshold if there is no more attrition.

The commentary relates to fluctuating PhD graduation rates since 2010-2011. Site visitors learned that 10 of the 20 students enrolled in the environmental health, occupational health and toxicology program left the program in the last six years. On-site discussions indicated that some of this attrition was attributed to students who left with a faculty mentor to join a research laboratory at another university and others transferred to MS programs at UNMC not housed in the College of Public Health. The college reached a 60% graduation rate for students entering the PhD program in 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The college achieved graduation rates of 44% and 50% for students entering in the following two years. Since 2012-2013, the college has lost eight of 78 students, which allows it to remain on track to achieve the 60% threshold for each cohort.

The college collects job placement data in several ways. An alumni survey is sent via email each September to MPH, MS and PhD graduates at one-year and three-years post-graduation. In addition, the career services director gathers job placement information through contact with graduating students. Beginning in spring 2016, the college partnered with the university's Health Professions Tracking Service to gather contact and employment information from all alumni. The 2015 alumni survey yielded response rates of 45% and 71% for MPH and PhD students, respectively. The MS program began enrolling students in fall 2013, and the first data will be available in late 2017 after the first graduates have had up to 12 months to report post-graduation destinations. In the last three years, 100%, 96% and 92% of MPH graduates reported being employed, continuing their education or not seeking employment by choice. For PhD graduates in the last three years, these rates were 80%, 100% and 100%.

In addition to graduation and job placement rates, the college has identified two measures to assess student achievement in each degree program. The college tracks the mean GPA of MPH, MS and PhD students and the pass rate on the Certified in Public Health (CPH) exam. Data for the last three years show that the college has consistently exceeded its target. Since the CPH exam's inception in 2008, 20 students and alumni have taken the exam, and 18 have passed.

The college conducted an employer survey in 2013; however, the response rate was quite low, and the college considered alternatives to a survey. The director of career services held two focus groups with employers in February 2016, and the comments were recorded for analysis. Focus group participants indicated that the most identifiable value-add those with an MPH degree bring is their population health knowledge. When participants were asked to select strengths of UNMC MPH graduates, the top-rated areas were working collaboratively, communication, program planning and program implementation. During focus group discussions, additional soft skills emerged as strengths such as the ability to take initiative, be flexible and work in teams. Participants identified graduates' skills related to organizational management, budgeting, grant writing and program evaluation as areas for improvement.

Employers who met with site visitors provided feedback that was consistent with the focus group results. They said that while graduates have strong academic skills, they could benefit from more opportunities to practice translating those skills into a real-world setting before seeking employment.

Respondents to the 2015 alumni survey (for which there was a 45% response rate) said that they felt moderately prepared to well prepared to perform most skills. Scores were lowest for financial management and grant writing. In response, the college has incorporated more grant writing preparation into some classes and developed a new PhD-level course (Research Grant Proposal Development) that is recommended to all doctoral students. The college plans to consider how to better address financial management and budgeting skills as part of the upcoming MPH program review.

2.8 Other Graduate Professional Degrees.

If the school offers curricula for graduate professional degrees other than the MPH or equivalent public health degrees, students pursuing them must be grounded in basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is met. The program offers an MS in emergency preparedness with research and practice tracks. Although the college had classified this degree as an academic public health degree in the self-study, the site visit team determined that 'other professional and academic degrees' is a more appropriate classification. The program largely recruits professionals already working in the field of preparedness, and the curriculum focuses on FEMA's Emergency Support Function #8.

MS students obtain a broad introduction to public health and an understanding of how their discipline contributes to the goals of public health by taking the Foundations of Public Health course required of all students in the college. These students also complete a course in epidemiology.

2.9 Bachelor's Degrees in Public Health.

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

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

Elective Public Health Coursework: in addition to the required public health core knowledge courses, students must complete additional public health-related courses. Public health-related courses may include those addressing social, economic, quantitative, geographic, educational and other issues that impact the health of populations and health disparities within and across populations.

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

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

This criterion is not applicable.

2.10 Other Bachelor's Degrees.

If the school offers baccalaureate degrees in fields other than public health, students pursuing them must be grounded in basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is not applicable.

2.11 Academic Degrees.

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

This criterion is met. The college offers the PhD degree in eight public health concentration areas, as shown in Table 2.

To obtain a broad introduction to public health, all PhD students, regardless of program, are required to take EPI 830 (Epidemiology in Public Health), HPRO 830 (Foundations of Public Health) and BIOS 806 (Biostatistics II). A review of syllabi confirmed that each of these three courses is three credit-hours, thus ensuring that both the epidemiology course and foundations of public health course provide sufficient depth of knowledge. The syllabus for HPRO 830 describes the course as an introductory survey course to ensure that students are exposed to fundamental concepts and theories that provide a foundation for the

body of knowledge in the field of public health with a sound theoretical, conceptual and historical basis. Further review of the course syllabus competencies and learning objectives confirmed that those listed as primarily addressed or reinforced in this course do provide students with a broad introduction to public health, as well as an understanding of how their discipline-based specialization contributes to achieving the goals of public health.

The self-study notes that a college Grand Rounds series and departmental seminars and journal clubs also provide students with a broad overview of public health. During the site visit, PhD program directors confirmed that all departments have seminars and/or journal clubs to which students are required to attend for either one credit-hour per fall and spring semester or a requirement that they attend at least a few seminars or journal clubs per semester. Program directors confirmed that they view these sessions as an important part of doctoral students' education and expanding their exposure to public health issues.

2.12 Doctoral Degrees.

The school shall offer at least three doctoral degree programs that are relevant to three of the five areas of basic public health knowledge.

This criterion is partially met. All of the PhD programs are fully functional, with the curricula and courses fully approved and doctoral students enrolled in each. Three-year student data provided in the self-study indicate that four out of five departments with PhD programs have graduated students within this period (with the exception being the PhD program in biostatistics). In 2015-2016, the college had eight doctoral students in biostatistics, and one had advanced to candidacy. All PhD programs require dissertation hours at the doctoral level.

The PhD in biostatistics requires six core courses (18 credits), all of which are at the doctoral level. Many available electives (16 of 24) are offered at the doctoral level. Students also complete six credits of coursework in a cognate area.

The concern relates to the considerable amount of coursework at the master's level in all of the PhD programs, with the exception of the PhD in biostatistics. For the PhD in the environmental health, occupational health and toxicology tracks, only one to five credits are at the doctoral level out of 22 to 25 required credits. For the PhD in epidemiology, only four of the eight required courses are at the doctoral level with few of the selective courses at the doctoral level. For the PhD in health promotion and disease prevention, only one of the six required courses are at the doctoral level; only one of the eight required research courses is at the doctoral level; and none of the selective courses is at the doctoral level. Finally, for the PhD in health services research, administration and policy, only three of the required 13 courses are taught at the doctoral level; for selectives, it appears from the self-study that a significant number of the 15 to 18 credits are at the doctoral level, but the program allows tailoring of the selective courses by

the advisor so an exhaustive list of possible selective courses is not available. The overall pattern thus raises concerns about the availability and program requirements of doctoral-level courses for the PhD programs.

PhD program directors across all five departments indicated during the site visit that the amount of master's coursework in the PhD curricula is an issue that is being considered by each program. For example, one PhD program is in the process of reviewing the curriculum, increasing 900-level (ie, doctoral-level) courses and increasing the number of required hours.

Doctoral students confirmed during the site visit that they often take courses at the master's level during their early enrollment in the program. One student said that she took courses at the master's level for the first 1.5 years of her program. Students did report, however, that often the course requirements for these master's-level courses involved slightly different requirements for master's and doctoral students. When asked whether they felt that they had a sufficient number of doctoral-level courses to ensure their education at an appropriate level, the few doctoral students present during the site visit reported that they had taken courses at other institutions for topics that were not being offered in the college.

Site visitors noted that students have revealed concerns about the quality of their education in student surveys for Graduate School reviews. As program directors explained during the site visit, these concerns are a challenge to address because the data were aggregated across all doctoral programs. Program directors said that the source of the concern was evident in a few specific cases, and efforts have already been made to address the problems. In cases where the source of the concerns has not been obvious, the programs are planning to hold student focus groups to gain additional information.

2.13 Joint Degrees.

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

This criterion is met. Eight joint degrees with the MPH are available, as shown in Table 2. Each of these is available with certain MPH concentrations.

Requirements for each, including course substitutions and double counting, are listed in detail in the self-study. In most cases, courses from the non-public health degree are accepted toward the required six hours of electives for the MPH. If the non-public health degree requires elective hours, MPH courses are accepted. The MPH does not accept undergraduate course credit, so credit sharing with the BS degrees happens only in one direction: MPH core courses are counted toward the undergraduate upper-level elective requirements.

When credits are shared, students may choose from preselected courses with advisor approval to ensure that the electives are relevant to public health and consistent with the student's MPH area of study, areas of interest and career goals.

Site visitors reviewed the curricula for joint degree students and determined that all earn an MPH degree that is equivalent to a standalone MPH degree.

2.14 Distance Education or Executive Degree Programs.

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

This criterion is met. The college offers four online programs, as shown in Table 2. The online programs are equivalent to programs offered on campus in terms of competencies and content. The college decided to offer online programs to reach a broader audience outside of Omaha and to accommodate students' needs, schedules and preferences. For fall 2016, the college enrolled 37 MPH and two MS students in the online programs. Faculty said that they were excited to offer online programs to reach their rural populations throughout the state, giving these students opportunities that were not available before. Online programs have also allowed the college to recruit military personnel; the college currently has four active-duty members enrolled.

Additional technological resources and support are made available to students enrolled in an online program. The director of distance learning assists faculty and students with technology and connectivity issues. Faculty mentioned that rural students face the most internet connectivity issues due to their locations; the college is actively working on resolving this issue. The college's Curriculum Committee, faculty and departments develop, approve and monitor online courses with the same rigor as on-campus courses. Faculty conduct side-by-side comparisons of online courses and their on-campus equivalents, ensuring equity among the two delivery modes.

Online programs use the web-based course management system Blackboard. Upon acceptance into an online program, each student is assigned an individual username and password. UNMC's internet use

policy prohibits sharing of login credentials. All course and classroom activities are conducted through Blackboard, such as office hours, student presentations, recorded lectures and the grade book. SafeAssign is a built-in feature of Blackboard that enables faculty to check student papers for plagiarism. Site visitors learned that the entire university system will be switching to Canvas as its web-based course management system because it offers a more user-friendly interface and has better analytics for data collection and monitoring to aid in the college's evaluation efforts.

Faculty and students who met with site visitors said that there is a strong focus on building a sense of community among online students, in addition to ensuring that they feel part of the greater college community. Faculty did highlight this as an ongoing priority and goal when designing additional online courses and programs. For instance, faculty and students use VoiceThread, which allows them to see each other and interact online using a webcam. The college has also developed a new online community where students can interact with their peers and collaborate, share information and assist one another. Peer-to-peer learning is highly encouraged.

The availability of online courses has also allowed the college to conduct flipped classroom experiences for on-campus students. These students watch the same lecture videos as their online counterparts and then attend class, where they are able to use that time for additional practice, questions and discussions. Faculty said that they have witnessed their students' learning enhanced with this structure.

3.0 CREATION, APPLICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE.

3.1 Research.

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

This criterion is met. The college's research program is consistent with its stated mission of promoting optimal health and well-being in collaboration with communities in Nebraska and across the country and the world. Research goals support and complement learning objectives of the college's instructional programs, and the college prioritizes research programs in its goals. Faculty and the associate dean for research reported that the college's research priorities are aligned with the four recently developed strategic priorities for the college.

The college pursues a wide variety of research topics, but particularly appears to prioritize agricultural safety and health; tobacco and obesity control; disparities in health care access; sexual health and reducing teenage pregnancy and STIs; cancer prevention and control; health policy; health services research; rural health; biopreparedness for disasters and highly infectious diseases; violence prevention; and global health. The self-study notes examples of the impact of the college's research in Nebraska as

well as nationally and internationally, and faculty and students both contributed additional examples of the impact of research programs.

The self-study, as well as on-site administrators and faculty, emphasized the college's goal of increasing research funding. During the site visit, the associate dean for research highlighted methods for accomplishing this goal, including enhanced mentoring of faculty both in the college and across UNMC; pilot project funding for faculty from several sources, including the Chancellor's Office and the college; funding and a commitment by the associate dean for research to ensure that resources for review of grant proposals are available to provide investigators with feedback prior to grant submission; and a commitment by the associate dean for research and other senior UNMC and college leaders to internally review grants. Department chairs confirmed their commitment for enhanced mentoring of junior faculty and even using departmental funding to support a senior, external consultant to mentor faculty and help them form research projects.

The college's policies provide a strong basis for establishing an environment conducive to research and scholarly productivity. The promotion and tenure policy emphasizes excellence in research. Additionally, two incentive plans, one based in the college and the other at the university level, provide faculty with direct financial bonuses for salary offset with a portion of earned indirect costs allocated for research program development. During the site visit, college faculty and administrators discussed the university-based program of returning a portion of extramurally funded faculty effort to faculty (up to a maximum of 25%) in the form of a salary supplement bonus. It was also reported that the college-based program returns 10% of grant and contract indirects to the principal investigator in a faculty development account that can be used to cover a variety of professional development activities. Faculty confirmed that these incentives are very attractive, and one faculty member mentioned that these programs are among the best he had seen. Several faculty development programs at different career stages support the research development of faculty.

Data presented in the self-study indicate that 25 of the 53 research projects funded in the college in FY 2015 supported students. Data from the previous two years support student involvement in approximately half of the college's funded research projects. While this may seem to be a relatively low percentage of projects that support students, evidence is nonetheless provided that students are engaged in the college's research programs.

Other outcome measures document an increasing proportion of community-based projects over the past three years (up to 49% in FY 2015); and an increasing proportion of grants funded with public health practice partners (up to 44% in FY 2015). Outcome measures also document the high proportion of faculty who publish at least one peer-reviewed article per year and present at a national meeting.

3.2 Service.

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

This criterion is met. The college's faculty and students are involved in a broad range of service projects, linkages and collaborations. Two broad categories are service to the community and service to the profession. Service might include technical assistance, consultations, joint projects (community focus) and membership on governing bodies of service organizations. Examples include the work of the Center for Reducing Health Disparities and collaborations with school districts and health systems through Building Healthy Futures. The college provides lectures to the public through Science Café and provided critical updates about Ebola in 2014.

Faculty members document service to the profession and community in their annual performance reviews. For example, an assistant professor in the college is the current president of the Public Health Association of Nebraska, and another is the treasurer. Faculty are involved in various boards, journal and grant reviews.

The college has specific goals and objectives related to this criterion (eg, engage in activities that serve local, state, regional, national, tribal and global communities). The college facilitates participation in organizations that promote public health through outreach to communities of need.

There is a system-wide NU policy that includes community service and outreach. The college has community input to inform its service efforts through a Panel of Advisors and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities. In the past, the college established a Mutual Fund Program to support dedicated faculty who can work with community partners to create joint proposals for mutually designed service projects. More than 10 projects were supported, which set up sustainable service/practices sites and programs that can be used for service learning. The Office of Public Health Practice and the Center for Reducing Health Disparities coordinate service and engagement activities.

The college's Tenure and Promotion Guidelines are explicit about expectations for service. The annual faculty survey (2014-2015) indicated that 83% provided assistance to external organizations and 58% participated in outreach to serve communities of need. While these metrics are slightly lower than their targets, outreach to communities of need has risen from 41% in 2012-2013.

Individual student involvement is tracked through annual student surveys. Student groups are part of a Volunteer Day at specific sites (eg, Habitat for Humanity, homeless shelters or park clean-ups). Students are part of a Student Response Team to assist local health departments with outbreak investigations, immunization clinics and monitoring social media during disasters.

On-site interviews with faculty, students and community partners verified the importance of service. Each faculty member has 5% FTE protected for service (using the college's definition of service). There are challenges to accurately measuring service given that service is not directly compensated unless it is part of a grant/contract. The college seeks to prioritize its faculty service efforts for greater impact given the limited faculty time available for these activities.

Community partners indicated strong relationships with the college and appreciation for its expertise. The college's strategic priorities for public health and healthcare system integration and community-based practice/research engagement should facilitate and focus opportunities for measurable service impact going forward.

3.3 Workforce Development.

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

This criterion is met. The commitment to workforce development is evident in the scope of offerings provided by the college and its evidence-based approach to development, implementation and evaluation of offerings. The Office of Public Health Practice, established in 2012, coordinates a portfolio of training, education and practice-based research as well as technical assistance and organizational development. Over 15,800 individuals in the public health workforce across Nebraska participated in workforce development activities in the past three years. Many of these offerings were customized to specific local settings/issues. The college has a strong infrastructure to support workforce development and evaluate its offerings individually.

The Office of Public Health Practice conducts periodic needs assessments of the Nebraska public health workforce. The most recent survey was completed in 2015-2016. The college is the site for the Great Plains Public Health Leadership Institute, Region VII Midwestern Public Health Training, a NIOSH-funded agricultural medicine program and a CDC/ASPR Center for Preparedness Education. Until 2014, the college was the site of the HRSA-funded Great Plains Public Health Training Center. The college is now a funded local practice site for Nebraska. During the reporting period, the college completed 37 face-to-face offerings for local and regional audiences. In addition, core public health modules (six distinct trainings on Public Health 101) are available at any time through distance learning. The college demonstrated rapid response to local needs and reached 1,456 clinicians with The Nebraska Ebola Method For Clinicians program. The college continues to develop online and face-to-face trainings based on needs assessments and resources.

The Center for Preparedness Education, a collaboration with Creighton University School of Medicine, regularly trains with 65 critical access hospitals and has served 5,600 attendees at its workshops and

seminars. The college supports continuing education through the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and provides numerous offerings annually (eg, more than 1,000 attended demonstrations and training in respiratory protection for farmers). The college conducts Grand Rounds available to the practice community in person, live-streamed and archived on its website.

The college provides five professional certificate programs (community-oriented primary care; emergency preparedness; infectious disease epidemiology; maternal and child health; and general public health). The latter is the largest offering and serves an average of 20 students at any given time. The Great Plains Leadership Institute and the Nebraska Health Policy Academy are non-degree programs. The college is the home of the Public Health Practice Council. This autonomous group of academic and practice partners offers recommendations for educating and training Nebraska's public health workforce, which is aging and facing significant turnover in the coming years. The Office of Public Health Practice staffs the Public Health Practice Council.

The college offers tuition scholarships for individuals in the workforce to obtain an MPH or professional certificate in public health and plans to offer one class per year at the Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department to facilitate employee goals.

The college has a robust approach to workforce development and clear commitment to building a strong infrastructure and business model to support its efforts. The college may wish to prioritize resources to address the most critical and strategic areas for ensuring a sufficient and competent Nebraska public health workforce.

4.0 FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS.

4.1 Faculty Qualifications.

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

This criterion is met. The college has a faculty complement that is able to carry out its goals and objectives by virtue of its academic training and professional experience. The college has 44 full-time, primary faculty to support the instructional, practice and research mission of the college and an additional 18 part-time, secondary and adjunct faculty. All but one of the primary faculty members have a doctoral degree (the remaining primary faculty member holds an MBA). Secondary faculty members all have doctoral degrees, with the exception of three who hold master's degrees. Faculty have terminal degrees in areas relevant to public health or have an MPH in combination with a terminal degree in another area. Faculty expertise is appropriately distributed across the five core areas of public health with sufficiently diverse research experience to support the college's research and educational activities.

Among the primary faculty, a number have held significant public health practice positions at federal and state levels, including the dean; he served as Assistant US Surgeon General before joining the college. An additional three primary faculty members have also held significant public health practice positions. Additionally, the outcome measure addressing the proportion of grants that include public health practitioners supports the priority of public health practice in the college. Other faculty have also had or are currently involved in public health practice experience.

The college has identified eight objectives by which it assesses the qualifications of its faculty complement. The college tracks indicators such as faculty development opportunities, faculty education and training, research involvement and participation in service to the profession and the community. Data show that most targets have been met or exceeded in the last three years. Given that targets are adjusted annually to keep measures aspirational, some targets have not been met, but the data are trending in a positive direction.

4.2 Faculty Policies and Procedures.

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

This criterion is met. The college has well-defined policies and procedures to recruit, appoint and promote qualified faculty based on policies at both the system, university and college levels. These policies provide well-described guidelines and processes for evaluating faculty accomplishments and for establishing the professional development and advancement of faculty. The system (Board of Regents) and university provide web-based materials that outline faculty rules, regulations and policies. System policies define bylaws and other policies for all four institutions that comprise NU. The web-accessible UNMC handbook defines terms and conditions of employment, promotion and tenure. The college's Governing Faculty bylaws, policies and procedures and employee handbook provide additional, detailed information concerning governance, recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion and incentive plans specific to the college. These policies and procedures are readily available to faculty.

The UNMC Center for Continuing Education and the UNMC Office of Faculty Development offer a variety of opportunities for faculty development. The UNMC Office of Faculty Development provides a website to promote faculty development opportunities. The college also offers workshops on distance learning and other instructional development topics, and a large proportion of faculty (75%) take advantage of these offerings at least once annually. UNMC also offers a Faculty Development Fellowship Program (ie, a faculty sabbatical program for faculty who meet eligibility criteria). During the site visit, faculty and department chairs also noted the strong support by the chancellor to prioritize faculty mentoring throughout the campus. At the college level, pilot project funds are available to support faculty development and to pay for extramural grant reviews. The college is also emphasizing faculty mentoring

as a high priority. Finally, at the departmental level, department chairs and faculty reported during the site visit that each department is also emphasizing faculty mentoring. Junior faculty reported a high level of satisfaction with the development support they are receiving and could not identify anything additional that they thought could be added to the opportunities already available to them.

The college's Governing Faculty bylaws specify that recommendations for regular faculty appointments are made by the department chair to the dean. According to the college's policies and procedures, initial faculty appointment and hiring follow procedures outlined in the college's hiring policy. Faculty rank is determined in consultation with the dean according to guidance specified in the college's promotion and tenure guidelines.

Department chairs are responsible for making recommendations concerning faculty tenure and promotion to the dean and the Tenure and Promotion Committee. The committee's charge includes receiving applications for promotion and tenure and making recommendations to the dean. The dean then submits requests for tenure and/or promotion to the chancellor.

During the site visit, administrators and faculty reported a great deal of overall satisfaction with the college's governance structure. Both junior and senior faculty reported that mentoring of junior faculty concerning tenure and/or promotion is very good, and they said that the policies and processes by which tenure and promotion are enacted are also good.

The NU Board of Regents' policies require faculty to undergo an annual review that is begun in the college by faculty completing the Faculty Evaluation and Planning Form. This form is submitted by faculty members to the department chair who then provides faculty members with an annual performance evaluation. Students also evaluate courses and instructors at the end of every semester. Department chairs and faculty reported that these processes are followed consistently throughout the college.

The chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee confirmed that faculty are generally successful in being recommended for tenure and/or promotion when they apply. He stated that he could only recall one incident in which an unfavorable recommendation had been made over the past several years. Faculty consistently reported no concerns about the tenure and promotion process.

4.3 Student Recruitment and Admissions.

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

This criterion is met. The college's recruitment and admissions policies provide an appropriate framework for locating and selecting qualified students. The college's Office of Educational Services has primary responsibility for the oversight and implementation of recruitment initiatives and strategies. The Recruitment Advisory Group supports these efforts. The Office of Educational Services uses a broad range of strategies and communication channels including the website, social media, open house events, webinars, conferences and working with undergraduate advisors and career centers. Enrollment has increased steadily over the past three years. For 2015, enrollment totals were 55 MPH, six dual degree, four MS and 21 PhD students. For 2016, enrollment totals were 58 MPH, seven dual degree, three MS and 15 PhD students. The college achieved an average GPA of 3.8 for enrollees in its programs, which exceeded its target of a 3.5 average.

Applications for the MPH are submitted through SOPHAS. Application packages are reviewed by two faculty members who make recommendations to the Office of Educational Services. Final admission decisions are made by the dean. MS and PhD admissions are processed through the UNMC Graduate Studies Office. These applications are reviewed by the departmental Graduate Program Committee, recommendations are made to the Graduate Studies Office. Official notification is sent by the dean of Graduate Studies. Admission to the MS and PhD programs is limited to the number best served by available faculty who match academic and research interests of the potential degree candidate.

The following admissions information is required for all degrees: completed application, earned degree from an accredited institution of higher education, official transcripts with minimum 3.0 GPA for last 60 undergraduate hours or last 18 graduate credit hours, three letters of recommendation, personal statement, CV or resume and GRE scores with minimum in the 40th percentile or higher. Test of English as a Foreign Language is required for applicants whose primary language is not English or who graduated from a college or university in a non-English-speaking country. Required minimum scores vary depending on whether TOEFL is a paper-, computer- or internet-based test.

The college's website is the primary resource for prospective and current students and includes handbooks, course schedules, plans of study for each program and academic calendars.

The self-study notes that recruitment is challenging due to the growth of other schools and programs of public health and limited funds for scholarships and assistantships. In addition, there is no comprehensive system to track outreach efforts, contacts and results. This limits targeted strategic recruitment (eg, Hispanic/Latinos) and opportunities to evaluate results. The college intends to update its measurable objectives and targets related to recruitment when the new CEPH criteria are released in fall 2016. The college intends to establish a relationship management system, and the dean is making securing scholarship funds a top priority for his work with the NU Foundation.

Discussions with the faculty and administrative team confirmed continuous improvement and creativity in approaches to recruitment to meet current and proposed recruitment targets, especially those related to enhancing the diversity of the student population. Although metrics are not available, strategies include pipeline efforts with high schools, community colleges, minority groups (eg, African Americans, Hispanic/Latino, Native Americans, rural communities and first-generation college students). Recruitment efforts at the college are aligned with the larger UNMC initiatives and goals.

4.4 Advising and Career Counseling.

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

This criterion is met. The college has a readily accessible academic advising system and provides comprehensive career services to MPH, MS and PhD students. The college provides orientation in the fall and spring. There are two components to its advising services: web-based modules and either an on-campus one-day orientation or a live orientation webinar for online students. Additional orientation is offered to international students to help them adjust to the campus, US living and the Omaha metropolitan area.

A department-specific faculty advisor is assigned to each MPH student. Dual degree students have a faculty advisor from each program. Faculty advisors receive an advising packet for each advisee that summarizes information they submitted for admissions. MyRecords is an internet-based student information system where advisors can review plans, grades and enrollments in real time. MPH students complete an advising agreement at their first meeting to clarify mutual expectations. Training for academic advisors is held twice a year.

MS and PhD students are advised by faculty advisors and their graduate program chair. An internet-based system managed by the Graduate Studies Office tracks progress toward the degree. Faculty advisors assist students in forming theses and dissertation committees. The Office of Educational Services provides administrative advisement for MPH students, while the Office of Graduate Studies provides this for MS and PhD students. Since the site visit, each of the College's five PhD programs revised its student handbook to include details suggested by site visitors including: information about the format, content, and timing of exams; expectations for dissertation proposals and formats; and requirements for committee membership.

The director of career services position was established in 2012. In the most recent survey, 88% were satisfied with academic advising, and 85% were satisfied with career advisement. Career and Placement Services include one-on-one assistance on resumes and interviews, resources for career

search/fellowships, social media networking and job placements. Student satisfaction is assessed annually in the general student survey, and the trend has been positive.

Students can communicate concerns through a variety of ways within the college. Formal and informal mechanisms are available for academic and grade appeals. The formal grievance procedure is published in the college's student handbook and graduate bulletin. UNMC has an ombudsperson and a Bias Assessment and Response Team. The UNMC website includes all relevant information about these provisions. No complaints or grievances have been filed by students in the college in the last three years.

Students and alumni who met with the site visit team spoke highly of the support provided by the director of career services. They noted her knowledge of the profession and her willingness to provide support in a variety of ways as valuable resources at the college.

The college is planning improvements such as early identification of at-risk students for adverse academic outcomes; enhancing career services for the growing number of online students; identifying employment opportunities for international students; and encouraging greater faculty participation in student events.

Agenda

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

University of Nebraska Medical Center
College of Public Health

October 10-12, 2016

Monday, October 10, 2016

- 8:30 am Request for Additional Documentation
Cathy Ely
- 8:45 am Executive Session
- 9:30 am Meeting with Core Leadership Team
Ali Khan
Jane Meza
Kendra Schmid
Mo Siahpush
Keith Hansen
Li-Wu Chen
Paul Estabrooks
Deborah Levy
Eleanor Rogan
- 10:45 am Break
- 11:00 am Meeting with Self-Study Steering Committee
Aleta Gaertner
Stacey Coleman
Brandon Grimm
Keith Hansen
Ali Khan
Jane Meza
Kendra Schmid
Mo Siahpush
Jessica Tschirren
- 11:45 am Break
- 12:00 pm Lunch with Students
Jonathan Ali
Shelby Braun
Aastha Chandak
Kyra Crepin
Trang Hoang
Kushal Karan
Nora Kovar
Katherine Kotas
Kalyan Malgireddy
Sandra Gonzalez Ramirez
Tatiana Tchouankam
Shelby Watson
Lisa Wessenburger-Moser
- 1:15 pm Break
- 1:30 pm Meeting Regarding Professional Degree Programs
Kendra Schmid
Analisa McMillan
Jessica Tschirren
Laura Vinson
Fang Yu
Eleanor Rogan

Veenu Minhas
Melissa Tibbits
Denise Britigan
Nizar Wehbi
Hongmei Wang

2:45 pm

Break

3:00 pm

Meeting Regarding Academic Degree Programs

Kendra Schmid
Jessica Tschirren
Gleb Haynatzki
Eleanor Rogan
Aaron Yoder
Monirul Islam
Shinobu Watanabe-Galloway
Sharon Medcalf
Ghada Soliman
Fernando Wilson
Preethy Nayar

4:15 pm

Adjourn

Tuesday, October 11, 2016

8:45 am

Meeting with Faculty Related to Research, Service, Workforce Development

Brandon Grimm
Mo Siahpush
Fang Yu
Lynette Smith
John Lowe
Aaron Yoder
Deborah Levy
Shinobu Watanabe-Galloway
Paul Estabrooks
Fabio Almeida
Li-Wu Chen
Dave Palm

9:45 am

Break

10:00 am

Meeting with Faculty Related to Faculty Issues

Gleb Haynatzki
Lynette Smith
Risto Rautiainen
Aaron Yoder
Deborah Levy
Lorena Baccaglini
Dejun Su
Denise Britigan
Keith Hansen
Nizar Wehbi

11:00 am

Executive Session

12:00 pm

Lunch with Alumni, Preceptors, Community Stakeholders

Jessica Chavez Thompson
Justin Frederick
Jocelyn Herstein
Joan Nelson
Brianna Rooney
Ellen Duysen
Kim Engel
Chrissy Tonkinson
Margaret Brink
Kenny McMorris
Chris Rodgers
Andrea Skolkin
Judy Halstead

Colleen Svoboda
Rebecca Rayman
Jeanee Weiss

1:15 pm Break

1:30 pm Meeting with Faculty and Staff Related to Student Recruitment, Admissions, Advising

Jessica Tschirren
Brenda Nickol
Kendra Schmid
Lynette Smith
John Lowe
Lorena Baccaglioni
Veenu Minhas
Patrik Johansson
Melissa Tibbits
Nizar Wehbi
Jungyoon (JY) Kim

2:45 pm Executive Session

3:30 pm Adjourn

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

9:00 am Meeting with University Leadership

Jeffrey Gold
H. Dele Davies

9:30 am Break

9:45 am Meeting with the Interim Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs

Kendra Schmid

10:00 am Executive Session and Report Preparation

12:30 pm Exit Briefing