REVIEW FOR ACCREDITATION

OF THE

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH SCIENCES

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

SITE VISIT DATES:
October 15-17, 2014

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Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) regarding the School of Public Health and Health Sciences (SPHHS) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst). The report assesses the school’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 school constituents, the preparation of a document describing the school and its features in relation to the criteria for accreditation, and a visit in October 2014 by a team of external peer reviewers. During the visit, the team had an opportunity to interview school 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 school and verify the self-study document.

The University of Massachusetts is a five-campus, public university system created in 1991 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. UMass Amherst, the flagship campus, was established in 1863 through the Morrill Land Grant and is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a “very high research activity” university. UMass Amherst comprises nine schools and colleges: Commonwealth Honors College; Education; Engineering; Humanities and Fine Arts; Management; Natural Sciences; Nursing; Public Health and Health Sciences; and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The university enrolls more than 28,000 students; about 6,400 are graduate students. In addition to the Amherst campus, the UMass system includes campuses in Boston, Dartmouth, Worcester and Lowell.

The school is currently in a time of transition related to its organizational structure. It currently has four departments (public health, communication disorders, kinesiology, nutrition) and three divisions within the Department of Public Health (biostatistics and epidemiology, community health studies, environmental health sciences). The school is working through the university’s approval process to establish the current divisions as departments. The school’s largest enrollments are in the MPH in public health practice program (MPH-PHP) and in the BS in kinesiology program. Student enrollment in the academic master’s and doctoral public health programs as well as in the BS in public health are generally lower than enrollments in the areas of communication disorders, nutrition and kinesiology.

The school has been continuously accredited by CEPH since 1970. The school was put on probation in 2004 due to concerns about the organizational structure and the adequacy of faculty resources. The last review in 2007 determined that the school had come into compliance with these standards. Since that review, the school has submitted interim reports about its evaluation and planning efforts, coverage of the core knowledge areas, competencies, assessment procedures, academic degrees and workforce development efforts. The school has also submitted substantive change notices related to the addition of the 4+1 BA or BS and MPH joint degree and the fully online MPH in nutrition.
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 SPHHS at UMass Amherst. The school is located in a regionally accredited university and has the same rights and privileges as other professional schools on campus. The school has a planning and evaluation process that is inclusive, timely and focused on public health research, teaching and service.

The school’s faculty are trained in a variety of disciplines, and the relatively small student body and the inclusion of allied health degrees within the school ensure that the environment supports interdisciplinary collaboration. The school’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 school fosters the development of professional public health concepts and values. The school has a clearly defined mission with supporting goals and objectives.
The school 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 school offers additional academic public health degrees, as well as degrees in kinesiology, communication disorders and nutrition.

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 with commentary. The program has a clearly formulated, publicly stated mission with supporting goals and objectives. The latest version of the school’s vision, mission and goals drew upon the school’s 2006 strategic plan, the University of Massachusetts 2010 Chancellor’s Framework for Excellence, and strategic plans for peer schools of public health. In 2010, the dean, faculty and staff engaged with a larger university strategic planning process. The mission and goals were developed in alignment with the university process as well as with guidelines from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) and are part of a strategic plan spanning 2013-2018. The school’s mission is as follows:

To optimize the public’s health and quality of life through education, research, outreach, and practice using innovative approaches that integrate the core areas of public health and health sciences.

The Executive Council Strategic Planning Working Group, convened by the dean in fall 2010, consists of the Executive Council (division directors, department chairs and associate deans), an associate professor and one undergraduate and one graduate student. The group developed a draft of the vision, mission and goals for the school. The draft was then shared and vetted through the faculty and staff and was posted online for student, alumni and community feedback. The self-study describes a process in which the mission, goals and objectives were posted to the website, and the link was communicated to students, alumni and community groups through the school’s newsletter; however, students, alumni and community members who met with site visitors had little memory of this process. The success of this approach in receiving and incorporating feedback into the strategic plan is questionable, and the school may consider other communication strategies in the future.

The goals and objectives outlined in the self-study support the broad mission and vision and are focused on four key areas: conducting innovative research; strengthening and expanding academic programs; increasing engagement in service; and increasing the diversity of students and faculty.

The commentary relates to the vague language used in some of the objectives, which makes it difficult to measure success in a meaningful way. For example, statements such as “increase support for grant
writing” and “provide seed money for grants and quality research space” do not specify details or amounts. Site visitors found it difficult to determine what the ideal outcome would be or if the school’s efforts are at an appropriate level. School administrators and faculty explained on site that the goals and objectives were designed ambitiously and were then updated to be more attainable.

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 with commentary. Several evaluation mechanisms are in place to collect data informing progress in reaching the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan. The self-study describes a process in which the self-study coordinator and data manager collect, analyze and distribute the data to the Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee and the Executive Council. Professional accomplishments are self-reported by faculty in the annual faculty reports. Periodic, multi-year reviews provide a progress check for faculty assessment, and scheduled reviews of department chairs ensure that adequate support is given at the departmental level. The school also gains feedback through end-of-semester teaching evaluations, exit evaluations at graduation, alumni evaluations and fieldwork evaluations from both students and preceptors.

The school has a centralized data management office where data are gathered and aggregated from other campus offices, such as the Registrar’s Office, the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Grants and Contract Administration. This office also administers exit surveys, key informant surveys and practicum preceptor surveys.

The self-study provides two examples of how the school has used data to address concerns. First, the undergraduate student exit survey indicated low levels of satisfaction with academic advising and the capstone course. The school responded by creating a full-time undergraduate advisor position and developing a peer-advisor program. Second, data from the Office of Institutional Research showed that doctoral student graduation rates were below the 60% threshold. The associate dean for academic affairs asked department chairs and doctoral student advisors to complete an annual review of individual students that assesses their progress toward degree completion. The school will see in coming years whether these efforts impact the desired outcomes.

The commentary relates to the need for a more systematic process of data review that translates into informing the direction of programs and activities. The self-study acknowledges that the school could benefit from a more thoughtful process of data review, and site visitors agreed with this assessment. Site
visitors noted that the school has invested in a data analyst who will presumably lead the effort to sustain these processes beyond the strategic planning period.

In the school’s response to the site visit team’s report, the school articulated a plan that addresses how data will be communicated and actively applied to monitor, improve and accomplish the school’s goals and objectives going forward.

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. The school is an integral part of a regionally accredited institution and has the same level of independence accorded to other professional schools at the university. UMass Amherst is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It received a 10-year accreditation term during its last review in 2009. The university also responds to 15 specialized accreditors in areas such as dietetics, engineering, hospitality administration, landscape architecture, teacher education, music and forestry. Two departments within the school maintain their own accreditation processes in addition to participating in the CEPH process. The Department of Communication Disorder’s graduate programs (MA and AuD) are accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. The MA in communication disorders is also accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department of Nutrition’s dietetics program and the dietetic internship program are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics.

The UMass college system is a five-campus, public university created in 1991 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition to the Amherst campus, the UMass system includes campuses in Boston, Dartmouth, Worcester and Lowell. The Amherst campus includes nine schools and colleges, about 22,000 undergraduate students and about 6,400 graduate students. The university offers more than 116 undergraduate majors, 74 master’s degrees and 47 doctoral degrees through 53 academic departments and interdisciplinary programs.

The Board of Trustees and the president are responsible for university-wide administration and coordination across all campuses. These entities oversee budget allocation, approval of tuition and fees, labor relations negotiations and tenure approval. On the Amherst campus, the provost/senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, three vice chancellors, the athletic director and the chief information officer report to the chancellor. The provost holds monthly meetings with the deans, both as a group and individually.
The dean of the SPHHS has all the authority and prerogatives accorded to all school and college deans at the university. The dean sits on and/or participates in several university administrative committees including the Provost’s Council, the Deans’ Council and the Campus Leadership Council.

The dean is responsible for budgeting and resource allocation within the school. The process is guided by the plans and priorities established by the Executive Council in consideration of the mission, goals, objectives and specific needs and circumstances of each department and program.

The school has independent bylaws that establish the names and titles of its departments and committees and determine the internal organization of the school. Academic units select department and/or division names, which are subject to approval by the Faculty Senate. Departments may determine their own internal structure with the approval of the provost and the Massachusetts Society of Professors, the faculty union.

The university’s policies and procedures guide personnel decisions. Department chairs have full responsibility for the recruitment and selection of faculty and staff within these guidelines. Decisions about advancement and merit awards are the responsibility of the departments, subject to review and approval by the dean, provost and chancellor. The dean and department chairs oversee staff recruitment, hiring and promotion in accordance with university standards and practices.

The school is responsible for generating curriculum, establishing degree requirements and defining admissions criteria. The campus-wide Faculty Senate must approve new courses. The Faculty Senate and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees must also approve new degree programs. The Graduate School has authority to admit graduate students; however, recommendations from the school are usually followed.

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 school has an organizational setting that is conducive to public health learning, research and service. At the time of the site visit, the school consisted of four departments: public health, communication disorders, kinesiology and nutrition. Within the Department of Public Health were three divisions: biostatistics and epidemiology, community health studies (which included health policy and management) and environmental health sciences. While on site, the site visit team learned that the university’s Faculty Senate had approved establishing the three public health divisions as departments the previous week, which will return the school to its pre-2004 structure. School leaders anticipate the changes taking place in January 2015, pending official approval from the Board of Trustees.
The public health divisions function operationally as departments. Division heads have the same responsibilities as department chairs, and each division has the same representation in governance as the departments.

The school has natural opportunities for interdisciplinary work given its organizational structure that combines public health and other health sciences. Faculty provided site visitors with a number of examples of collaborations that address transdisciplinary health issues and said that these partnerships help to meet the expectations of many current grant opportunities. Doing translational work that allows research to inform practice is a common goal shared by the various departments in the school. A faculty member from kinesiology discussed a physical activity assessment that allowed him to collaborate with faculty and students from epidemiology and community health education. The self-study provides additional examples of interdisciplinary coordination, cooperation and collaboration with university centers and institutes, interest groups, Baystate Medical Center, the School of Medicine and the state Department of Public Health.

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 with commentary. School administrators and faculty have clearly defined rights and responsibilities concerning school governance and academic policies. The school has six school-wide standing committees as well as those at the department and division level. Faculty members are elected or appointed at the division or department level unless otherwise specified by the bylaws.

The Executive Committee advises the dean on all matters relating to the school. This non-voting committee meets twice a month and includes the dean, associate deans and department/division chairs. The School Personnel Committee performs all personnel actions, including adjunct appointments and promotion and tenure evaluations. Membership includes one representative from each department/division.

The Curriculum Committee reviews and implements academic standards and policies. Representatives include one member from each department and division as well as one graduate student and one undergraduate student. The Strategic Planning and Evaluation Committee evaluates the school’s goals and objectives, assists with the development of the self-study and plans for the future. The committee includes six faculty members (ie, one member from each department and division) and a graduate student representative. The associate dean of academic affairs is an ex-officio, non-voting member.
The School-wide Bylaws Committee, which includes a member from each department and division, reviews and monitors the school's bylaws. The School-wide Research Committee assesses research activities and needs in order to develop plans to enhance research productivity. This committee includes one member from each department and division and two graduate student representatives. The associate dean for research and administration is an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Each department has its own Curriculum Committee, Undergraduate Advisory Board and Personnel Committee. Each division has a Personnel Committee and Admissions Committee. When the school's public health divisions become departments in early 2015, each will have its own Curriculum Committee.

The Faculty Assembly includes all full-time, tenure-track faculty and non-tenure-track lecturers, instructors, assistant professors, associate professors and full professors within the school. Voting membership extends to all full-time faculty members holding the academic rank of lecturer or above and having at least a 0.5 FTE appointment for the full academic year. A tenured faculty member serves as the chair of assembly meetings, which are typically held one to two times each year. Special meetings may be called with the written request of five members of the faculty.

Public health faculty serve on several university committees, including the Academic Matters Council, the Academic Priorities Council, the Undergraduate Education Council, the International Studies Council and the Research Council. Two school faculty members serve on the university-wide Faculty Senate, and six faculty members serve on the university's Faculty Senate committees.

The first point of commentary relates to the lack of defined mechanisms to make students aware of opportunities to be involved in governance processes. When asked how student representatives get to serve on school committees, one student reported overhearing faculty members discussing the need for a student representative and volunteering, which suggests the need for a more inclusive process of populating committees.

In addition, the school does not appear to have student-driven organizations that are well-known and active among the student body. The self-study discusses the school's Graduate Student Senate; however, no students who met with the site visit team reported awareness of this organization. It should be noted that this issue was also identified during the school's last review in 2007. In addition, while faculty referenced department-specific organizations, students who met with the team were not familiar with their existence. The Undergraduate Advisory Board was mentioned, but graduate students said that there was not something similar at the graduate level.
The second point of commentary relates to the influence of community partners on the school’s strategic thinking and governance processes. It was clear to site visitors that the school has good working relationships with preceptors and does conduct key informant surveys; however, the school is still in the early stages of building the infrastructure for more structured and comprehensive relationships. The school could do more to clarify the role of community partners in school governance. While on site, the team learned about a Dean’s Advisory Board that is composed of external members who meet with the dean two to three times a year. A community partner who met with site visitors said that this group discusses what is happening in the workforce and how to get alumni more involved in the school. A second attendee said that he is on the board but has not attended a meeting yet. In a separate meeting, faculty members described this group’s role as raising awareness of the school within the community and promoting work done by the school. Overall, site visitors did not get the impression that the community regularly informs the activities and decisions of the school. It appears that feedback is most frequently received from preceptors at the completion of student internships.

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 with commentary. Revenues for the school have increased significantly since the last review, growing from $14.7 million in FY08 to $23 million in FY14. State appropriations are a primary source of these revenues for the school. The process of obtaining these funds begins with legislative approval through an appropriation to the university system. Thereafter, the president and the Board of Trustees allocate funds to each campus, including UMass Amherst. These allocations have generally been historically based and incrementally adjusted on an annual basis.

At the Amherst campus, the chancellor oversees the allocation process by working with the vice chancellors, including the provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs. The dean oversees the allocation of these revenues within the internal budget of the school. Tuition amounts to about 10% of total revenue, and its allocation is made complex by the policy guiding its collection and distribution. For example, tuition from in-state students reverts to the state, while tuition from out-of-state and continuing education students is retained on campus. In FY10, the chancellor allowed the schools to retain a larger percentage of out-of-state tuition revenue thereby incentivizing the development of recruitment plans and distance education programs. Traditionally, allocations have been based on prior funding rather than growth in programs. The university is investigating the implementation of a resource allocation model that would recognize revenue generation.
The university collects a tax on tuition revenue, and 40% of all such revenue is returned to the dean who allocates funds to departments based on her determination of needs for research and educational enhancements and to hire faculty and staff.

As shown in Table 1, the school has seen significant growth in both revenue and corresponding expenditures during the review period. Consistent with a significant enrollment increase, tuition and fees have increased from $669,000 to $2.3 million. The budget has maintained a positive balance of at least $478,000 per year.

The first point of commentary relates to the limited usefulness of the indicators to assess the adequacy of the school’s fiscal resources. The school has identified four outcome measures that address 1) extramural funding, 2) research dollars per faculty FTE, 3) graduate student support and 4) expenditures per FTE student. The range of academic and professional degrees, the diversity of the curricular offerings and range of methods for student engagement make the school a relatively complex organization. A more robust monitoring system would likely strengthen the evaluation of whether the fiscal resources are adequate.

The second point of commentary relates to the school's opportunity to link funding evaluation to the strategic plan and its objectives. The school has an admirable vision for the future, with strong community interest and regional need for its programming. Developing a more complete objective framework for describing progress in the many dimensions of the strategic plan could be an important contributor to the school’s ability to achieve its vision.
### Table 1. Sources of Funds and Expenditures by Major Category, 2008 to 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
<td>$669,058</td>
<td>$1,312,767</td>
<td>$1,106,965</td>
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<td>$1,846,074</td>
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<td>State Appropriation</td>
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<td>Grants/Contracts</td>
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<td>Indirect Cost Recovery</td>
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<td>Gifts</td>
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<td>Academic Instruction</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$15,382,649</strong></td>
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<th>Expenditures</th>
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<td>Faculty Salaries &amp;</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
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<td>Student Support</td>
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<td>University Tax</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$14,030,263</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,673,355</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$17,781,685</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,014,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>$22,589,697</strong></td>
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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 partially met. The school has the faculty and staff resources to fulfill its mission, goals and objectives. At the time of the site visit, the school had a primary public health faculty count of 32 with hiring for three additional faculty underway. In addition, the school has 41 faculty in its other health sciences programs (ie, communication disorders, kinesiology and nutrition). The school has also retained the services of joint appointments and adjunct faculty to fill out its academic roster. For example, the online MPH in public health practice (MPH-PHP), MPH in nutrition and MPH-Worcester programs use part-time faculty when it is determined that course support is necessary. As a result, the school’s teaching mission is carried out by a total of 35.8 FTE faculty in the Department of Public Health, 37.4 FTE supporting the BS in public health sciences, 5.7 FTE supporting the MPH-PHP, MPH in nutrition and MPH-Worcester and 47.6 FTE addressing the other health science departments in the school.

The school maintains a support staff of 58 individuals accounting for 46.3 FTEs. This staff complement supports activities related to research, business and outreach and the academic programs.

The school occupies 66,043 square feet of space distributed among six buildings on campus. All buildings are located within one mile of each other. Classroom space is centrally allocated by the university based on class size, with locational preference given to the program most closely located to the classroom. About half of the space assigned to the school is dedicated to laboratory space for either research or computer activities. The kinesiology program occupies 17,471 square feet of this space, which includes six laboratories addressing energy metabolism, muscle biology and imaging, physical activity and health, biomechanics, motor control and muscle physiology.

Environmental sciences faculty and laboratories occupy 8,229 square feet in four suites in the Goessmann laboratory and the Morrill Science Center. During the site visit, the dean provided a tour and showed the significant development of this space that she has been able to achieve over the last several years. Faculty and researchers expressed appreciation for her support and the lab facility improvements.

Communication disorders occupies 4,653 square feet in two separate facilities. The site team also visited some of this space and noted both size and flexibility limitations. The dean expressed her strong desire to see significant improvements in this situation as well. The school also operates a biostatistics consulting center and telephone center that supports computer-administered interviews.

Students, faculty and staff have access to computer resources provided by the school as well as additional computer resources around campus. All faculty and staff have computers in their offices. The
school maintains a server with security systems managed and monitored by the university's Office of Information Technology. Data are backed up daily with files stored at a remote location. The university provides general support for the instructional and research needs of the campus. This support includes email, personal and course website hosting, file storage systems and a Unix server for statistical software. The university has installed the Eduroam wireless access system, which enables easy internet access for students, staff, faculty and visitors to the campus.

Under the direction of the associate dean for research and administration, the school supports a 15-workstation lab with SAS for Windows, Microsoft Office, Dreamweaver and other software useful for students, faculty and staff. Funding for the lab comes from a trust fund and the Office of the Dean. Additionally, students enrolled in graduate courses can access a Local Area Network on a first-come, first-served basis. Two classrooms have computer projection equipment, and other classrooms can be supported with portable projectors and laptops.

The university offers extensive library facilities including a 28-story W.E.B. Du Bois Library, a Science and Engineering Library and an Image Collection Library. The university also is part of a five-college consortium and a Boston Library Consortium, which enables access to electronic and print resources. Collection expenditures in FY13 totaled over $7.2 million with nearly $6 million directed toward electronic resources. The libraries offer interlibrary loan services at no cost to faculty and students. The university library also provides a liaison librarian for the school. This individual is master's prepared in both library science and natural science. Students expressed strong satisfaction with the availability of library resources and the responsiveness of library staff.

The concern relates to the problematic aspects of the space resources available to the school. As described, the school is distributed across six locations, which is fundamentally discordant with the collaborative nature of public health research and practice. Furthermore, the on-site tour of the space available revealed extraordinarily challenging space for classes, research and group work. The team determined that the school's space is inadequate and insufficient. For example, public health students do not have adequate office space to work as graduate assistants or to meet in groups, and the classrooms primarily used for public health courses have worn furniture and limited technology. Furthermore, the communication disorders program has a student enrollment of 78 with only two sound-treated rooms and six therapy rooms. The dean described the completion of a comprehensive study of the physical needs of the school, which supports the need for a new facility. In subsequent discussions, the site visit team heard agreement from both the provost and the chancellor that the needs of the school are great, and that while some improvements have been made, much remains to be done. The chancellor said that a new building would be his highest priority after resolving concerns over deferred maintenance.
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 school references the university’s definition of underrepresented populations and uses it as a foundation to define underrepresentation as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian/Alaskan native. The university definition also expands to include race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, gender identity and expression, marital status and economic condition.

Since 2007, the school has seen the number of underrepresented students increase from 9.5% to 13.7% (a 44% increase). Additional data provided in the self-study show a steady increase in underrepresented and first-generation undergraduate students since 2012. The school seeks to achieve a faculty complement that comprises at least 25% of individuals from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds and at least 25% from racially/ethnically underrepresented communities. The school has been consistently close to the former goal in the last three years, but has experienced greater fluctuations with the latter goal (50%, 33% and 20% in the last three years). The school also seeks racial and ethnic diversity among its staff and reports rates of 12%, 13.8% and 15.5% in the last three years, which is moving in the right direction toward the goal of 20%.

The self-study provides a plan of action that weaves diversity into the vision, goals and objectives of the school. The self-study references university-wide policies around a climate free of harassment and discrimination, classroom civility and respect, building competency in diversity issues and cultural civility and recruitment strategies for both faculty and students at all levels. While the school has adequately outlined a plan to support these efforts and priorities, the plan is still in its infancy and has yet to be implemented equally across all programs and departments. This stage of development and implementation was further confirmed though inquiries with alumni, community partners, the provost and chancellor. Responses from faculty on how the diversity plan is being implemented focused on portions such as mentoring programs and class discussions about health disparities. Faculty described recruitment efforts as focusing on the school’s engagement in research in diverse settings.

UMass Amherst has had incidences of discrimination and harassment, and university leaders are actively seeking solutions to create a more inclusive university community. The dean is involved in the University Diversity Committee and is committed to increasing diversity across the school. The chancellor has been identified as an ally to help implement the university’s diversity plan and reach this goal.
The commentary relates to missed opportunities on the part of the school to be an active participant in embracing and promoting diversity. For example, the nursing program has identified opportunities in the town of Springfield, and public health faculty and students could better serve this diverse community and provide services to the underserved while also providing a valuable experience for students. Greater visibility in Springfield and other communities that surround Amherst would allow the university and school to interact with more prospective students of color. Active participation and leadership in cultural competency and diversity training across the campus is also an ideal role for the school.

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 school offers the MPH in the five core knowledge areas, an MPH in nutrition, an MPH in general public health (at the university’s Worcester campus) and an MPH in public health practice (offered solely via distance education). Site visitors’ reviews of plans of student and course syllabi from the concentration areas show appropriate breadth and depth of content.

The school also offers a professional master’s degree in communication disorders and academic master’s degrees in the five core knowledge areas, kinesiology and nutrition. Each of the four departments in the school offers a bachelor’s degree. The school also offers PhDs in the five core knowledge areas, as well as nutrition, communication disorders and kinesiology. Finally, the school offers a professional doctorate in communication disorders and two joint degrees. Table 2 presents the school’s degree offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Degrees &amp; Specializations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor's Degrees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Disorders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Master's Degrees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
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<td>Community Health Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Policy and Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPH-PHP*</td>
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Table 2. Degrees & Specializations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Professional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPH-Worcester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition*</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>MPH</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Doctoral Degrees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biostatistics</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Health Education</td>
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<td>Environmental Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Policy and Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Disorders</td>
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<td>AuD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Joint Degrees</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>BS-MPH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These options are offered in a fully distance-based format.

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. All MPH degree options require a minimum of 42 credits. The MPH in nutrition requires 44 credits. Typical full-time students can expect to fulfill the degree requirements in four semesters, while part-time students can expect to take six semesters.

The university awards one credit hour for a weekly lecture/recitation of 50 minutes or laboratory exercise of 110 to 170 minutes for a 14-week semester. One credit represents about 45 hours of practice for field experiences.

The school approved a 42-credit requirement for all MPH degrees in 2007. The school graduated four students in 2011-2012 and one student in 2012-2013 who were admitted prior to the implementation of this credit minimum and met the earlier requirement of completing 36 credit hours. At the time of the site visit, one student was still remaining who would graduate under the earlier requirement of fewer credits.

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 with commentary. MPH students obtain knowledge in the five core areas of public health through successful completion of five core courses, each worth three credit hours, as shown in Table 3. These courses are offered in both traditional classroom and online formats.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>PUBHLTH 630 Principles of Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBHLTH 540 Introduction to Biostatistics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBHLTH 601 Social and Behavioral Theories in Public Health Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBHLTH 620 Introduction to the US Healthcare System</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBHLTH 565 Environmental Health Practices</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The commentary relates to the inconsistent detail provided on syllabi, which made it more difficult for site visitors to confirm the presence of appropriate content and for students to understand the expectations at the beginning of the course. Site visitors understand that it is likely that additional information is established in Blackboard as the semester progresses; however, this information was not available for site visitors’ review. Site visitors found the syllabi for the social and behavioral sciences and epidemiology core courses to be the most descriptive and detailed. Site visitors also learned that course syllabi for courses that are not new to the system are not routinely examined. A more structured syllabus format would simplify reviews, which could occur on a regularly scheduled basis.

### 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 with commentary. All MPH students are required to complete 200 hours of fieldwork. Prior to starting their practicum, students must take a minimum of three core public health classes to prepare themselves. Students meet with the practicum coordinator (a part-time staff member) to assess their skills and interests and be matched to a site. Students then attend a practicum orientation at the division/department level and are asked to complete a practicum experience planning form, which is submitted to both the practicum coordinator and faculty advisor. This planning form is then shared with the practicum preceptor and reviewed at the conclusion of the internship as part of the final evaluation. At the end of their practicum experience, students are required to complete a project that incorporates at least one of the Ten Essential Public Health Services. Students must submit a student assessment form to their faculty advisor and are encouraged to prepare a poster to present at the Annual Research Day, which is held in April. Preceptors must provide supervision and mentoring to students and complete a supervisor report form at the conclusion of the experience.

Practicum sites are identified in partnership with the Office of Public Health Practice and Outreach as well as the Western Massachusetts Public Health Training Center. The practicum coordinator contacts sites and meets with preceptors to outline expectations of both parties before the student begins.
Exceptions to the practicum requirement are rare and have not been granted to anyone since 2011-2012. In the past, some students at the Worcester campus were granted a waiver, based on extensive professional experience.

The commentary relates to feedback received from preceptors that students could be better prepared in terms of skills and knowledge needed to work in "the real world" of an actual practice setting. Preceptors reported general satisfaction with students placed at their agencies; however, they said that some students with little previous work experience lacked some of the practical skills needed to be successful in the workplace. They recommended that program planning be required prior to the practicum and suggested developing a series of classes that would allow students to stay with them longer and continue to expand their skills and their projects as they move through their program. Preceptors also said that greater communication with a school representative throughout the experience would be helpful. Site visitors noted that if students only complete three core courses before beginning the practicum, this may also contribute to preceptors’ perceptions of a lack of preparation.

Preceptors who met with site visitors said that the school has improved the process for the practicum in recent years by instituting individual preceptor meetings with the practicum coordinator and developing the planning form and supervisor report form. They also noted that if funding were available, they would feel comfortable hiring most of their interns after graduation.

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 with commentary. All professional degree programs require the completion of a culminating experience. Due to the distinct nature of different degree programs, the school offers a flexible framework for culminating experiences that allows programs to tailor an approach that best meets the needs of the individual program area. Programs may opt to require students to complete a capstone course, a comprehensive exam or a special project. This model enables the MPH-PHP program to provide an online capstone course to the working professionals who are pursuing that track. Alternatively, students pursuing a more traditionally conducted academic program may complete a scheduled comprehensive exam. In, MPH students in biostatistics or epidemiology as well as students in the online MPH in nutrition program and students earning the MPH at the Worcester campus may choose between a comprehensive exam, a special project or a comprehensive exam.

The capstone course is a three-credit course requiring students to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in coursework and through their learning experiences and to apply theory and principles in a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice. Students are required to apply the core
sciences of public health to their analytical process and produce a final course report in thesis format. Students receive a letter grade for the final report.

The MPH project reflects a topical investigation in the student’s area of study. Projects are developed in consultation with a faculty advisor. Projects may be developed as a result of the student’s practicum, from faculty-initiated projects or from external sources such as community- or agency-based projects. A written project report receives a letter grade.

Comprehensive exams are given once during the fall and spring terms. Students who choose this option must complete an additional three-credit elective course to satisfy the 42-credit degree requirement. Students are graded and may retake the exam one time.

The commentary relates to the comprehensive exam option available to MPH students in epidemiology and biostatistics. Reviewers were able to review the exam for epidemiology and found that it only addressed this area of public health but lacked coverage of other core areas, therefore making it an insufficient demonstration of the integration from throughout the curriculum. However, faculty have now changed the exit exam so that it now includes questions from all five core areas of public health, and it was administered to MPH students in the epidemiology program in April 2015. Reviewers did not receive an example exam for biostatistics, but this option was listed in the self-study. Faculty said that nearly all students in this division complete the MPH project, suggesting that the documentation of available options may need to be updated. The school has now updated this language to accurately communicate that students enrolled in the MPH degree program in biostatistics will complete an MPH project.

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 with commentary. The self-study provides a set of competencies for each degree program and area of specialization. The core competencies for all MPH students include six to nine competencies in each of the five core knowledge areas for a total of 37.

The school has also developed a set of competencies for each degree and concentration offered by the school, including academic degrees and baccalaureate degrees. The self-study provides a matrix of these competencies and the courses in which they are addressed. Site visitors noted that some MPH concentration-level competencies, such as oral and written communication skills, professionalism and the
ability to work collaboratively, would be appropriate for all MPH students but are only defined for students in the health policy and management concentration area.

The primary faculty in each program or discipline develop the competencies for their students. Faculty were guided by the core competencies published by ASPPH as well as recommendations from external advisors. The Undergraduate Advisory Committee also used recommendations from ASPPH. The undergraduate peer advisors and the Undergraduate Student Advisory Board review the competencies each year to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The faculty assess the changing needs of public health practice by participating in national conferences, serving on committees and special interest groups and regularly interacting with alumni, practicum preceptors and other key informants. The curriculum review process allows faculty to address changing needs and incorporate new or revised competencies as needed.

The commentary relates to the lack of distinction between core and concentration-specific competencies. Some of the competencies identified as concentration competencies for MPH students in biostatistics, health policy and management and environmental health sciences are duplicate competencies from the core set. Faculty said that this duplication reinforces the competencies that should be attained; however, concentration-specific competencies are expected to be at a higher level of complexity than the core competencies expected of all MPH students regardless of concentration area.

As discussed in Criterion 2.3, the variability of course syllabi make it difficult to ensure that learning objectives are appropriately linked to competencies. For core competencies, the self-study provides a simple matrix that only identifies the core course as the means of addressing the competency. However, site visitors could identify other parts of the curriculum in which the competencies are also addressed and reinforced. A more detailed matrix, identifying courses from throughout the curriculum, is important for the school to better identify gaps and areas of overlap.

The school’s response to the site visit team’s report indicated that the associate dean for academic affairs and representatives from the departments that offer the MPH degree had formed a committee. The committee reviewed the current competencies and made significant changes to these competencies. The faculty representative then brought this list of MPH competencies to faculty within each of the departments where revisions were made to the core competencies. This new list of core competencies was agreed upon by faculty in each of the departments, resulting in a final list of core competencies that are now published. At the same time, each department reviewed the concentration-specific competencies to assure a higher level of specificity beyond the core competencies and a more detailed matrix was constructed and published.
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 school has made improvements in its assessment of student demonstration of competencies and in its tracking of graduation and job placement rates since the last accreditation review.

The school assesses student performance in coursework through exams, papers, individual and group projects and class participation. All graduate students must earn at least a B- in each core course and maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 each semester to remain in good academic standing.

The practicum also serves as an opportunity to assess student attainment of competencies. While this could be improved with a stronger set of core and concentration-specific competencies, faculty and students did say that competencies are discussed as experiences are planned. Faculty advisors grade the experience based on the preceptor evaluation, deliverables, presentations and a discussion of how the practicum relates to competencies.

The commentary relates to the assessment of competencies in the culminating experience for MPH students. The school acknowledged in the self-study and during the site visit that assessment of competencies could be strengthened and made more consistent among faculty members and across departments and divisions. Site visitors found the projects to be generally appropriate, but could not find documentation that assures that students are assessed on the integration of skills and knowledge from the entire curriculum. Clarification of the core and concentration-specific competencies, as discussed in Criterion 2.6 will likely assist in the ability to document this work. Given the narrow focus of the comprehensive exam available to epidemiology and biostatistics students, there is no ability to assess core competencies.

The school’s response to the site visit team’s report indicated that the committee that was convened in response to MPH curricular concerns also discussed and reviewed current assessment practices for the culminating experience. For all MPH projects, faculty agreed to now use a common rubric for assessment of the integration of skills and knowledge linked to the core competencies. Each capstone final project will be reviewed by one or two faculty in the program and assessed along a set of core competencies using a common scoring guide/rubric. The rubric for the assessment of the MPH project was piloted for the spring 2015 PUBHLTH 696D, Independent Study, MPH Project. Revisions will be made to the rubric by the MPH committee as necessary for use beginning in fall 2015. As noted, clarification of core and concentration-specific competencies has made this process of assessment more attainable. Also, epidemiology faculty
have made the exit exam more robust and it includes assessment of core competencies across the five core areas.

Graduation rates for each degree, with the exception of doctoral degrees, exceed the minimum thresholds. Cumulative rates for the MPH degree for the last four years were 81%, 66%, 81% and 76%, respectively, at the time of the site visit; however, some students are still continuing in the program. Graduation rates for bachelor’s students were 87%, 92% and 92% for the last three years. Other master's degrees reported graduation rates of 85%, 86%, 87% and 84% for each of the last four years. Other doctoral degrees reported graduation rates of 75%, 100% and 100% for the last three years. Graduation rates for those earning a PhD in a public health discipline were 20% in 2010-2011, 69% in 2011-2012, 56% in 2012-2013 and 45% in 2013-2014.

The school implemented an enhanced doctoral student monitoring system in 2011. The associate dean of academic affairs now sends an annual PhD student progress report form and the current list of doctoral students to each of the graduate program directors. Graduate student advisors schedule a meeting with each doctoral student and complete the progress report, which includes identifying steps that the student should take to successfully complete the degree. A copy of the report signed by the student and the advisor is given to the associate dean for academic affairs. At the end of each spring semester, departments/divisions with doctoral students meet to review each doctoral student’s progress and identify any potential difficulties so that they can be addressed proactively. When students with concerns are identified, the department/division faculty member will request that the student meet with the appropriate graduate program director to seek additional guidance. The process has not been in place long enough to see trends in the data, but anecdotal information indicates that student retention and completion is improving.

Each year, between 80% and 90% of MPH graduates report being employed upon completion of their degree. MS graduates report similar rates when employment and continuing education data are combined. PhD and AuD graduates reported employment and continuing education rates of 92%, 87% and 60% in the last three years. Doctoral graduates in the most recent year have not yet had a full 12 months to report their destination, so this rate may increase in coming months. Undergraduates reported employment and continuing education rates of 79%, 87% and 73% in the last three years. As with doctoral students, the most recent set of graduates have not yet been out of the program for 12 months.

The school received 55 responses to the 2014 alumni survey for graduate students. The questionnaire asks about a variety of topics including current employment, financial aid, salary level, etc. In open-ended questions, respondents indicated that some of the strengths of the degree and school were the convenience and rigor of the online MPH-PHP program, faculty engagement in applied public health
projects that informed lectures and faculty expertise related to the courses they taught. Identified weaknesses included academic counseling, particularly for distance-based students, and a lack of structure in the MPH project.

The school administered a key informant survey between June 2013 and February 2014 to agency representatives who have ongoing relationships with school faculty, staff and students. The respondents who serve as employers of graduates reported high satisfaction with their experience working with graduates and a willingness to continuing hiring UMass Amherst SPHHS graduates. When asked to identify areas in which students should have exposure to meet the needs of the public health workforce in coming years, respondents most often identified communication, community-based participatory research and cultural competency. In addition, some identified a need to strengthen student exposure to issues of policy and law and greater expertise in the use of statistical software.

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 school offers two non-MPH professional degrees: the doctor of audiology (AuD) degree and the MA in communication disorders. The requirements for the AuD degree consist of 17 required core courses (51 credits), six credits of non-departmental statistics/research design coursework and six credits of non-departmental electives. Students must design and complete a six-credit capstone research project in which they work with a faculty member to plan, conduct, analyze and write up results of a small-scale experiment. The MA in communication disorders requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, including completion of 14 required core courses in speech-language pathology.

Curricula for these degrees incorporate content consistent with public health science. For example the course, COMM-DIS 630 Introduction to Research in Communication Disorders, introduces students to statistical reasoning and analytical methods used to address public health challenges. All students in the AuD program are required to complete a capstone project in which they learn to apply the methods learned in COMM-DIS 630. Additionally, students in both degrees learn about environmental as well as genetic factors that affect health and well-being. These topics include patterns of disease and injury, prevention strategies and the behavioral, social and cultural factors related to individual and public health, disparity and access to healthcare over the lifespan.

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 (e.g., 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 met. The school offers four BS degrees and one joint BS-MPH degree and, over the last seven years has demonstrated significant growth, moving from 25 to more than 500 students. On-site discussions with alumni and practicing professionals as well as university administrators indicated that these undergraduate degrees will continue to see significant growth. Additionally, university leaders indicate that public health undergraduate degrees will be an important part of the university’s strategic engagement in western Massachusetts.

In support of the administration of the degrees, the school named both an undergraduate program director and an undergraduate student advisor. Guidance for curricula is provided by an Undergraduate Advisory Committee composed of representatives from each core public health program area, the associate dean for academic affairs, the public health department chair, the undergraduate program director, the undergraduate advisor and at least one undergraduate student. This group reviews program competencies and course offerings and serves as the curriculum committee for the undergraduate program.

To support students, the full-time undergraduate advisor has established regular office hours. This advisor is supplemented by 10 to 12 peer advisors each year. The students who fill these positions are selected based on a rigorous review of student success and formal interviews. Once selected, they receive intensive training in academic policies and university resources.

Currently, undergraduates may pursue either the social science or science curricular track. Each track consists of four components: math and statistics, foundation courses, public health core courses and
courses from fields related to public health. The required courses (14 credits) are designed to introduce students to the five areas of public health, including a three-credit course in epidemiology. The school has initiated a process through which the two tracks will be merged in the near future.

A public health capstone course is required of all students. In the course, a student is expected to synthesize and integrate knowledge from academic study and other experiences such as internships and service learning. Students produce a project report or paper that is presented at the state research conference. Instructors facilitate student work and provide a forum for group and individual learning. Guest speakers from public health are invited to talk about their own careers and how education and work has come together in their careers.

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 met. The school offers bachelor’s degrees in kinesiology, nutrition and communication disorders, as shown in Table 2.

Within each of these degrees, public health content is identified in existing courses. For example, KIN100, a required course in kinesiology, includes content on physical activity and public health. KIN 297 Physical Activity in Health and Disease addresses issues of health policy, community health and epidemiology. Issues of chronic disease are addressed in KIN 440 Physical Activity for All.

Similarly, the BS in nutrition includes information regarding public health concerns in several courses including NUTR 352 Lifecycle Nutrition, NUTR 577 Nutrition Problems in the US. Students also are required to take courses in public-health-relevant fields such as social and behavioral sciences.

Finally, the BS in communication disorders requires completion of fundamental courses using concepts of epidemiology and applying statistical analysis.

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 school offers academic degrees at the master’s and doctoral levels. MS degrees are available in the five core areas of public health as well as in kinesiology and nutrition. PhD degrees are also available in the five core areas as well as in nutrition, communication disorders and kinesiology.
All MS and PhD students in the five core knowledge areas must take a minimum of nine credit hours in core coursework, including the epidemiology and biostatistics courses and the core course aligned with their area of study if it is not epidemiology or biostatistics. Though not documented, faculty told site visitors that most of the students in the five core MS areas spend at least one elective on a core course in another area, thus they may get exposed to as many as four of the core public health disciplines. Similarly, most PhD students in the core areas take all of the core courses if they do not have a public health background. These unwritten rules were relatively consistently communicated to the site visit team, though this is not assured through policy.

MS students in nutrition follow one of two tracks: all take epidemiology and biostatistics, and those who choose the thesis option take an additional biostatistics course beyond the core. Furthermore, MS in nutrition students take NUTR 640—Public Health Nutrition, which provides a general grounding in public health, including the core functions, essential services and social determinants. PhD students in nutrition take epidemiology and biostatistics courses beyond the core. The self-study notes that all students in the nutrition PhD program to date have taken community health as their minor, providing further grounding in the core disciplines.

MS and PhD students in kinesiology take a graduate seminar every semester. The self-study suggests that this seminar incorporates a wide range of public health constructs from social determinants to epidemiologic methods and statistics. Area-specific seminars also incorporate many of these concepts. However, site visitors’ examination of the KIN 891 fall syllabus found little exposure to basic public health concepts. Epidemiologic methods and statistics are infused into other required courses, such as KIN 571 Physical Activity and Women’s Health, KIN 670 Cardiovascular-Cardiopulmonary Exercise Physiology and KIN 585 Energy Metabolism.

PhD students in communication disorders gain exposure to epidemiologic methods and statistics through required courses in the curriculum. They also are required to establish a minor area of study outside of the department which is intended to afford students the opportunity to engage in cross-disciplinary work. This study in a minor subject area does not require any tie to public health. Site visitors found it difficult to determine where epidemiology and statistics are covered in the existing doctoral curriculum. Review of the COMM 630—Graduate Research in Communication Research syllabus clearly includes basic research design and statistics exposure in a single seminar. The degree to which research design includes sound exposure to epidemiological principles is suspect. There is one course objective to “Discuss a population-based perspective on communication disorders;” however, there is little evidence in the material presented to suggest this is a meaningful component of the course.
Students in academic degree tracks in the five core public health disciplines gain epidemiology and biostatistics exposure. They also are exposed to public/population health in their own area of study. They tend to take courses in all areas of public health, but this is not mandated and likely not the case universally. Students in nutrition appear to get basic exposure to the core disciplines. Those students seeking academic degrees in kinesiology and communication disorders lack a well-grounded exposure to the breadth of public health. Some get basic research design and statistics, but little or no population health study.

Each academic degree program requires a culminating experience, which may be a thesis, research project with oral presentation, comprehensive written exam or dissertation, depending on degree and area of specialization.

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 met with commentary. The school offers a total of eight PhD degrees, five within the core public health disciplines and one each in nutrition, kinesiology and communication disorders. The school does not offer a DrPH degree, but does offer one professional doctoral degree (AuD) in communication disorders. Student enrollments in the doctoral degree programs in nutrition (n=14), kinesiology (n=24) and communication disorders (n=28 for PhD/AuD combined) appear strong. In aggregate, the doctoral programs in the five core public health areas of study are home to 34 students. Three of the five PhD degrees in the core public health areas have small numbers (policy management has six students; biostatistics has four students; and environmental health sciences has one student). Low enrollment was previously noted in the school’s 2007 review for accreditation, and the school’s response was that growth in doctoral student numbers was dependent on faculty expansion. This limiting factor appears to still be the case. The school noted that the environmental health program had dropped to two faculty members until a recent hire of five new faculty members. This program is a targeted growth area for the school.

A range of research and teaching graduate assistantships that provide tuition and fee waivers as well as a monthly stipend are available to students. The kinesiology program does not admit doctoral students unless there is an identified faculty mentor who commits to sponsoring the student financially. The self-study indicated that 59% of those in public health doctoral programs receive some form of financial support. In addition, divisions in public health are working to grow student travel funds. The resource file included several strong dissertation examples from various PhD tracks.

The courses required of students in the five public health core discipline PhD programs are available in student program guides, which can be accessed through the school’s website. The environmental health division is currently being reestablished. There appear not to be any common courses (eg, a statistics
that are required across the PhD programs. There appears to be little in the way of degrees of freedom in course options, though this is likely linked to the small size of the programs and faculty numbers.

The commentary relates to the low enrollment in some of the doctoral public health degrees. The school is encouraged to consider whether it has a critical mass of students in the PhD programs in biostatistics, environmental health sciences and health policy and management to ensure sufficient peer interactions and the level of quality expected at the doctoral level. The school enrolled two, zero and two students, respectively, in each of these programs in the 2014-2015 academic year.

**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. The school offers three joint degree programs: a BS/MPH in community health education, a BS/MPH in health policy and management and an MPPA/MPH in public policy and administration.

Undergraduate students may concurrently complete a bachelor’s of science and an MPH degree in five years. After students complete 60 credit hours of undergraduate coursework, they are eligible to apply for admission to the 4+1 program. They then complete 132 credit hours (versus 120 for non 4+1 undergraduate public health majors) and take four of the required MPH core courses during their senior year. These students then complete an additional six credit hours during the summer between their fourth and fifth years of study, and are subsequently considered for formal admission to the MPH program, which can easily be completed in one remaining year. Students complete all of the MPH requirements.

The MPPA/MPH program requires students to complete all coursework for both degrees. There are no substitutions or shared courses. The school has 11 students in the BS/MPH programs and one student in the MPPH/MPH program.

All joint degree students are required to complete all degree requirements for the MPH degree. The curriculum does not differ from that completed by standalone MPH students.

**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 school offers MPH degrees in public health practice and nutrition in a distance-based format, as shown in Table 2.

The MPH-PHP was initiated in 2001, and the MPH in nutrition was initiated in 2008. Both programs are overseen by the associate dean for academic affairs with additional professional staff directing each program. The admissions criteria for these programs are similar to other MPH programs within the school; however, applicants must also demonstrate at least three years of professional, full-time experience in healthcare, healthcare delivery, healthcare administration, public health or nutrition. These programs were created to meet the increasing demand from employed healthcare and public health professionals who wish to obtain an accredited MPH degree in an online format. Enrollment in the MPH in public health practice averages 195 students while the MPH in nutrition averages 60 students. Graduation rates show that the average student takes three years to complete either program.

The two distance-based MPH programs are delivered online, asynchronously using the WEB Blackboard Learn platform. While there is no residency requirement to complete the curriculum, students may take the same courses on campus with the program director’s permission. Online courses are vetted through the same procedural review of campus committees as all other courses. These reviews evaluate the structure of the syllabus and scholarly nature of teaching, the content, the learning and evaluation activities, opportunities for faculty-student interaction and evaluation, and activities that promote student-to-student interaction and discourse.

The integrity of each course as well as the curriculum as a whole is addressed by the security measures for testing; student and faculty performance; peer review; external national professional recommendations; and alumni surveys.

Although site visitors did not meet with any students from the distance-based programs, they comprise a large percentage of the respondents to the student exit survey and alumni survey. Responses indicate that they are generally satisfied, as discussed in Criterion 2.7.
Most of the faculty who teach in the MPH-PHP program are part-time faculty members external to the university. They bring a wealth of practice experience that is especially important for the needs of students in this track.

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 school is housed in a major research university that provides the typical array of research support services from new faculty training to pre-award support and IRB reviews to post-award support. School faculty are engaged in several university-level centers and institutes, and there are a number of university-level funding resources available. The university maintains an ample physical plant to support research, from IT resources to lab space and research offices.

The school’s mission commits to the establishment and maintenance of innovative, high-impact basic and applied research. The Faculty Handbook addresses research expectations and provides allowance for faculty to buy out of up to three of the standard nine-month, four-class teaching load. It is clear that the school has charted a course of increased expectations. Several new incentives have been established to support these efforts both with faculty and students, including new fellowships, research support funds and travel support to professional meetings.

At the time of the self-study submission, the faculty complement included 34 primary appointments in the department of public health. Total research expenditures in public health were about $6.3 million.

The self-study identifies seven measures by which the school evaluates the success of its research efforts. The school, as detailed in the 2007-2012 strategic plan, sought to increase extramural funding proposals submitted by 10%—the number grew by 19%, from 112 in 2007 to 133 in 2014. The school targeted a 10% increase in annual extramural funding awards, and these figures increased from $7.4 million to $10.4 million, a 41% increase. Annual expenditures grew from $5.3 million to $10 million, an 89% increase. The proportion of faculty who served as PI on an extramural grant increased from 20% in 2007 to 42% in 2012. Finally, the number of peer-reviewed publications, targeted for 20% growth, grew from 148 to 204, a 27% increase. Thus, as determined by the school’s own strategic targets, the school has exceeded its expectations for growth in research and scholarly activity.

The school has also articulated goals linked to community-based research. Nearly a quarter of the school’s faculty (24%) met criteria to be considered involved in a community-based project. This figure
increases to 26% when the analysis is limited to public health faculty members. Eighty-one percent of the 129 operational projects listed in the self-study engaged students in the research. This figure also was similar for public health projects and projects considered from across the entire school.

While it can be difficult to assess public health productivity relative to other departments of the school, there is ample evidence to suggest that the research engine at the school is functioning well and that most of the divisions within public health are generating appropriate research and scholarly outputs. The investment the dean is making in one of the smaller departments is encouraging. School leaders said that they hope to continue this growth by focusing on the area of health policy and management next.

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 with commentary. The school pursues service activities that engage faculty and students and are consistent with the school’s mission, goals and objectives. Service to the profession is most evident among the faculty. Faculty serve on peer-review panels for journals and conference submissions for professional associations. Service to the local community is also evident, but faculty said that the heavy focus on research can make it too time consuming and difficult to achieve considerable efforts in this area. Faculty demonstrating excellence in service are incentivized through recognition in the tenure and promotion process and can be rewarded the UMass Distinguished Academic Outreach Award.

Student service is prominent in the surrounding UMass Amherst community, and several community representatives told site visitors about the benefits and assistance they received from students in a variety of capacities, including community events and outreach.

The Office of Public Health Practice and Outreach was created to build campus-community partnerships and connect community groups with students and faculty who can best address their needs. This office also conducts key informant interviews and surveys to gather information. The school is still finalizing systematic processes to respond to and organize needs that allow for two-way communication. The Springfield/Holyoke Health Alliance for Research and Engagement (SHHARE) Program and the Health Equity Regional Workgroup both actively connect the school to the community for community-based participatory research projects and work around health equity issues.

The commentary relates to the small percentage of faculty who are engaged in service to the community. The school has set a target of 45% of faculty being engaged in community service by 2018. At the time of the site visit, data showed a participation rate of 24%. Community partners who met with site visitors cited some examples of faculty involvement in community service but said that the school could take a broader
leadership role both on campus and in the surrounding community around health issues related to alcohol abuse, assault and smoking.

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 school provides an array of workforce development programs to both the local community as well as internationally. Much of this work is done through the western Massachusetts Public Health Training Center, the UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program and the Institute for Computational Biology, Biostatistics and Bioinformatics.

Analysis of the community’s needs is conducted through the SHHARE Program, key informant interviews and surveys and an annual community needs assessment. The Office of Public Health Practice and Outreach collects and analyzes these data using a new system to assist in tracking. This staff member was recently increased from a 0.50 full-time equivalent position to a 0.75 position, allowing for more time to collect and analyze data and create programs to address needs.

The self-study provides examples of recent activities, including sessions on Teaching Lipid Disorders in the Management of Diabetes, Low Literacy and Culture in Diabetes Complications, Democracy and Development Training Initiative for Iraqi Students, Nutrition and Type 2 Diabetes and Client-Centered Communication 1 & 2. Community partners who met with site visitors expressed high satisfaction with the workforce development efforts currently provided by the school.

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 with commentary. The faculty complement is generally well qualified in education and scholarship to fully support the school’s instructional, research and service enterprise. While the faculty contingent in the Department of Public Health is relatively small (n=34 across the five core disciplines) and they are relatively junior in tenure (only five full professors), research expenditures for FY14 were over $10 million.

The school also has a number of other faculty members that contribute to the activities of the school. These colleagues serve as course instructors, visiting lecturers, community-based visitors to the classroom and preceptors from the field. In general, the school is slowly growing its faculty contingent. Ten additional faculty members are aligned with the divisions within the public health department. Another
these secondary faculty members bring considerable strengths to the department’s community ties. Five are affiliated with the community health education division.

The commentary relates to the fact that the primary faculty complement in public health includes only five full professors. The composition of the faculty compromises the ability to provide critical leadership to the significant numbers of junior faculty in research, scholarship, instruction, service and professional development.

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 with commentary. UMass Amherst establishes faculty rules and regulations at the university level under the guidance of the provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs as sanctioned by policies of the Massachusetts Board of Trustees. Six key documents provide guidance to the school and its faculty regarding appointment, promotion, tenure and assessment processes. These documents address such topics as academic personnel policies, bylaws and conditions of employment. These documents are made available to faculty on arrival and are all easily available on the university and school websites. The documents are generally easy to follow and straightforward.

The school has at its disposal a number of titles into which faculty can be hired, including professor, associate professor, assistant professor, lecturer, as well as several part-time roles. Those faculty members not on the tenure track typically serve as teaching members of the faculty. A fairly structured faculty workload plan is in place that allows for those heavily covered by extramural funding to teach as few as one course per year.

Well-specified procedures are in place for initial appointments, promotion and tenure decisions as well as for post-tenure or periodic multi-year reviews. Offer letters and annual reviews provide specificity in terms of expected productivity. The department head conducts annual reviews, with input from any other relevant parties. The annual review directly addresses progress toward tenure for those on the tenure track. A third-year review is conducted by the departmental Personnel Committee. The promotion process requires review by the departmental Personnel Committee, the department head, the school personnel committee, the dean and the provost. Tenure decisions must continue through to the chancellor, the president and the Board of Trustees.

The faculty annual report template calls for a compilation of performance across a wide array of activities including professional engagement, teaching, scholarship, grantsmanship, advising, service to the profession and service to the university and community. This report provides the foundation for the annual
review each spring, which is conducted by the department head. Goals for the year are reviewed in light of this documentation. When appropriate, this report also provides a tool when considering merit pay increases.

Resources are available to support faculty in their role. These resources include mentoring programs at the division, department, school and university levels. Funds are available to support faculty research through mechanisms such as the formal structure for pre- and post-award grants management; pilot investment funds and research enhancement awards; as well as doctoral student fellowships. Furthermore, 10% of indirect cost recovery funds are returned to the dean, 10% to the department and 10% to the PI in order to support faculty research. The university maintains a Center for Teaching and Faculty Development both to support those faculty members who need assistance and for those who are undertaking creative instructional efforts. Funds are available to invest in innovative instructional technologies as well.

An extensive teaching evaluation process is in place. This process includes a midterm assessment that allows faculty to gain student feedback while the course is still in progress. Feedback from the Center for Teaching and Faculty Development includes information about how well the students are grasping the material being presented. Traditional end-of-semester evaluations occur as well. This material is also shared with the department head.

The commentary relates to the fact that the school-level articulation of the appointment, promotion and tenure process does not reflect what occurs in operation. While the Academic Personnel Policy, known as the Red Book, allows for additional steps to occur at the school level, it defines the primary level of faculty engagement to occur at the department level. The school’s policies and procedures also define operations at that level. In reality though, the three divisions in public health may fulfill this role as the preliminary appointment, promotion and tenure point of review. Thus, faculty in public health have three committees (division, department and school) review their dossiers. While the review team feels strongly that the primary reviews should occur at the division level, the school’s policies and procedures and the self-study document do not reflect what is occurring in practice. The school has now clearly articulated that it does follow the University policy on tenure and promotion which has the following level and sequence of review within each school or college: departmental Personnel Committee, department chair, school Personnel Committee and dean. One deviation is that there is no departmental Personnel Committee in the Department of Public Health; rather there are three division Personnel Committees. Faculty in the Department of Public Health are reviewed by a Personnel Committee comprised of division faculty (division Personnel Committee) in lieu of departmental faculty (department Personnel Committee), and therefore primary reviews for promotion and tenure occur primarily at the division level. Subsequent to the division personnel committee review, the candidate’s dossier is reviewed by the chair of the
Department of Public Health, the school Personnel Committee and the dean. For example, a faculty member in epidemiology would have his or her dossier reviewed by a division Personnel Committee comprised of biostatistics and epidemiology faculty, the chair of Public Health, the School Personnel Committee comprised of faculty from each of the three divisions in the Department of Public Health, and Kinesiology, Nutrition, and Communication Disorders, and the dean.

However, as of January 2015, the Department of Public Health and the three divisions have officially been dissolved and three departments have been formed as they existed prior to 2004. The three new departments are the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, the Department of Health Promotion and Policy, and the Department of Environmental Health Sciences. Future reviews will follow the University policy because the division structure in public health no longer exists. What were called division Personnel Committees are now called department Personnel Committees in each of the new departments (Biostatistics/Epidemiology, Health Promotion and Policy, and Environmental Health Sciences). Each department has a department chair to carry out the review of faculty. The school Personnel Committee’s and dean’s review are unchanged with the formation of the three departments.

The second commentary relates to the fact that the divisions’ Personnel Committees that oversee promotion and tenure decisions are composed of only three members. Given the small number of faculty members within some divisions, in practice, it is often the case that members come from outside the division. This leads to a situation in which a faculty member may face a review committee, at the primary point of review, that includes one to two (of three) team members coming from outside of the primary subject area. And, with such a small number or members, the intra-division vote to choose which colleagues would serve on this committee may leave little or no degrees of choice for internal candidates. Where politics among colleagues can sometimes be challenging, this could compromise the integrity of the process. Some faculty members did express concern about this issue to the site visit team.

However, the establishment of personnel committees is defined in the Academic Personnel Policy of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Boston, and Worcester, Doc. T76-081, which describes the roles and responsibilities of faculty in personnel matters and does not specify numbers of individuals to serve on these committees. The university allows departmental Personnel Committees composed of three faculty members or greater, and some of the divisions have gone to the “faculty-as-a-whole” for tenure and promotion decisions. Regardless, review by the departmental Personnel Committee is only the first of several steps that ensure the integrity of the tenure and promotion review. Also, the public health faculty has undergone a period of regrowth in tenure-system faculty, from 21 in 2007 to 31 in fall 2014, and 33 in spring 2015. During this period, tenure-system hires have been approved primarily at the junior level. Biostatistics and Epidemiology and Health Promotion and Policy have sufficient numbers of tenured
faculty to serve on the departmental Personnel Committees to review junior faculty for promotion and tenure. Thus, these faculty are reviewed by tenured faculty from the primary subject area.

The greatest disparity in the ratio of untenured to tenured faculty exists in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences, which has seven tenure-system faculty, the majority of whom are untenured junior faculty. The provost and dean are aware of the problem, and the school has been approved to search for a senior hire in environmental health sciences in fall 2015. This individual will serve as chair, and as such would not be eligible to serve on the departmental Personnel Committee, but would add senior leadership to the department. The first of this group of junior faculty in environmental health sciences will be reviewed for tenure and promotion in fall 2015. The department Personnel Committee members may be chosen from other departments in the school or the university, including those who are most familiar with the work of the faculty under review. In the next three years it is anticipated that several of the current assistant professors will be promoted to associate professors, and the situation will be resolved because the ratio of untenured to tenured faculty will be sufficient for tenure and promotion reviews to be carried out by tenured faculty from the primary subject area.

In the next four years it is expected that this situation will be ameliorated for the other departments in the school because several associate professors will be promoted to professor, few retirements are expected, and some additional senior positions will be approved and filled. For example, there is a current search for an open rank faculty in biostatistics. The institution is currently more willing to consider senior hires when faculty positions are vacated. The goal of the dean is to have sufficient numbers of tenured professors such that all tenure and promotion files will be reviewed by faculty senior in rank to the candidate under consideration. Finally, it is the responsibility of the school Personnel Committee, department chair, dean, provost and chancellor to ensure the integrity of this process. The current university tenure and promotion system has several steps that ensure the integrity of the tenure and promotion review.

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 school has established a number of approaches to student recruitment and admissions under the direction of the associate dean for academic affairs. The school issues recruitment materials, conducts exhibits and visits to state and national public health meetings and conducts internships and career fair days targeted toward undergraduate students. The school also holds a research day, traditionally held during the American Public Health Week, at which time information regarding student projects is shared with the community and the media. The school’s website also includes recruitment materials and encourages prospective students to visit.
Within the school, departments are responsible for establishing and coordinating degree-specific admissions policies and procedures including record keeping and student inquiry correspondence. Divisions and departments provide research assistantships and teaching assistantships as well as non-working traineeships to qualifying graduate students. Divisions also may submit nominations for doctoral fellowships.

All master's degree students must apply to the program through ASPPH’s Schools of Public Health Application Service (SOPHAS) system. Doctoral students and applicants to the departments of kinesiology, communication disorders, joint degree programs and the online MPH degree program apply directly to the Graduate School. Procedures for admission to the school are available on the Graduate School’s website.

Admission coordinators in each division or department review admission requirements and procedures annually. In kinesiology, the PhD in public health in nutrition and both communication disorders degrees, the graduate program director also serves as the admissions coordinator. In the public health department, one faculty member from each of the five core disciplines serves as the admissions coordinator for the given area of concentration.

Applicants are expected to have a minimum 2.75 undergraduate GPA and to present GRE scores as well as TOEFL scores, when applicable. GRE scores are waived for US citizens who hold an advanced degree such as MD, DVM or DDS. Students may be admitted provisionally based on unique talents or potential.

Information provided by students is evaluated at three levels. First, an admissions coordinator and the division/department faculty review materials and recommend action to the dean of the Graduate School. Next, the graduate program director provides the dean of the Graduate School with any additional information necessary to make a decision about admissions. Finally, the Graduate School dean makes the final decision on admission or rejections. The Graduate School notifies students of results. Those who are unsuccessful may request reconsideration.

Recruitment policies and procedures specific to undergraduate programs are led by the UMass Office of Undergraduate Admissions and the associate provost for enrollment management. Documents required for admission include a high school academic record, standardized test scores, a personal essay and letters of recommendations. Students may track their application through an online process. Students are admitted in both the spring and fall; however, 95% enter in the fall.
About 40 students have been admitted to the school’s MS and MA programs each year for the last three years; about one-third of these students are enrolled in public health degrees. The MPH enrolled 29 students in its on-campus concentrations, 78 students in the MPH-PHP program, 19 students in the MPH-Worcester program and 11 students in the online nutrition concentration. The school has increased doctoral admissions over the last three years, growing from 11 admissions in 2012-2013 to 23 in 2014-2015. Of the 23 PhD students who enrolled in 2014-2015, 15 were in public health areas. Undergraduate admissions have increased significantly in the last three years, increasing from 241 in 2011-2012 to 301 in 2014-2015.

The school seeks to increase the number of applications for each degree by 20% by 2018 and increase its enrollees by 30% by 2018. The percent of students who accept an admissions offer has remained relatively stable in recent years, but the school is developing new recruitment and marketing strategies in a variety of areas. These efforts involve the Admissions Committees, the director of online programs, the associate dean for academic affairs, the school’s Diversity Committee, the school’s director of external affairs and a consultant who is working with the Continuing and Professional Education Department.

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 school has a clear and accessible academic advising system as well as readily available career counseling. Advising for bachelor’s-level students is comprised of hired staff advisors as well as a robust peer advising program. This program promotes leadership development of the peer advisors while providing nearly 40 hours per week of office hours to accommodate the large undergraduate student body.

Advising for graduate students begins with an orientation offered to new students each fall. During this session, students are welcomed and receive an overview of the school from the dean. Students are then separated into groups based on their department/division of study. A faculty advisor is assigned to each student based on concentration area or fit to the faculty member’s area of practice. Additional advising is also available to students directly from course instructors.

Doctoral student advising is provided by the professor overseeing the student’s area of research as well as by the student’s doctoral committee, which includes at least three faculty members involved in the doctoral program.

The school hosts regular workforce development fairs and panels to assist all students in identifying mentoring and career opportunities. During these events, employers and internship preceptors are
available to answer questions and promote their programs. Similar events such as Bistro Night and Alumni Networking Night provide opportunities for alumni to network and seek additional mentoring. Career advising at the graduate level is offered primarily by faculty advisors and internship preceptors. Each department or division also hosts events for their students. At the university level, students have access to UMass Career Center, which has staff who can assist with nationwide job searches.

At the undergraduate level, career counseling is provided by the university’s Career Center. There, students have access to career counselors, resume assistance, Myers Briggs personality testing and job search websites. Student exit surveys collect information about student satisfaction.

The school surveys students about their satisfaction with academic advising and career counseling each year. In 2013-2014, 70% of graduate students reported being either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the academic advising they received. Of these students, 45% reported being either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the career counseling services available. Site visitors discussed these issues with current students and alumni; those who met with site visitors reported generally high satisfaction but site visitors could not determine how well this group reflected the experiences of other students. Based on these survey results, the school plans to add more career information to school and department web pages and post job opportunities in a central location. Departments and divisions will more actively promote programs organized by the Graduate School, and the school is doing more to partner with UMass Career Services. The school also plans to develop a mentoring program for first-generation and underrepresented students to improve retention rates, student success and student experiences overall.

The school follows university procedures for handling student grievances and complaints. The school makes students aware of these procedures during orientation, and the grievance policy is included in the graduate and undergraduate student handbooks. Department chairs and division directors must maintain records of student complaints and any actions that resulted from those complaints. The school reported that it seldom receives formal complaints, and it is more common for students to resolve issues directly with a course instructor or faculty advisor. The school did not receive any formal complaints or grievances in the last three years.
### Agenda

**COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

**ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT**

**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

**School of Public Health and Health Sciences**

**October 15-17, 2014**

**Wednesday, October 15, 2014**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>Request for Additional Documents</td>
<td>Gloria DiFulvio</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 am</td>
<td>Meeting with Core Leadership Team</td>
<td>Marjorie Aelion, Joe Hamill, Dan Gerber, Jane Baran, Nancy Cohen, Patty Freedson, Ed Stanek, David Buchanan, Carol Bigelow</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 am</td>
<td>Meeting with Self-Study Committee</td>
<td>Carol Bigelow, David Buchanan, Lisa Wexler, Liz Bertone-Johnson, Lisa Chasan-Taber, Joe Hamill, Richard Van Emmerik, Elena Carbone, Risa Silverman, Gwyneth Rost</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch with External Constituents</td>
<td>Soloe Dennis, Sally Linowski, Laura Christoph, Ben Wood, Marissa Hebble, Chris Jasinski, Brenda Evans, Phoebe Walker, Diane Sutherland, Ana Jamarillo, Frank Martinez-Nocito, Charlene Mazer, Sarah Bankert, Nikki Nixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
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</table>
1:45 pm  Meeting about Public Health Degree Programs
      Liz Bertone-Johnson
      Lisa Wexler
      Mike Begay
      Lori Peterson
      Dan Gerber
      Paula Stamps
      Carol Bigelow
      Patsy Beffa-Negrini
      Megan Griffin
      Sue Hankinson
      Gloria DiFulvio
      Shirley Mietlicki

3:00 pm  Break

3:30 pm  Facilities Tour
      Marjorie Aelion

5:00 pm  Adjourn

Thursday, October 16, 2014

8:30 am  Meeting with Faculty Related to Research, Service, Workforce Development
      Dan Gerber
      Joe Hamill
      David Buchanan
      Elena Carbone
      Lisa Chasan-Taber
      Rosa Rodriguez-Monguio
      Tameka Gillum
      Risa Silverman
      Lindiwe Sibeko
      Jacqueline Kurland
      Nick Reich
      Raji Balasubramanian
      Giang Pham

9:30 am  Break

9:45 am  Meeting about Academic Degrees
      Katherine Reeves
      Aline Gubrium
      Jane Kent-Braun
      Karen Helfer
      Alexander Suvorov
      Krishna Poudel
      Paula Stamps
      Rosa Rodriguez-Monguio

10:45 am  Break

11:00 am  Meeting about Other Professional and Other Academic Degrees
      Claire Norton
      Frank Rife
      Richard Freyman
      Sarah Poissant
      Lorraine Cordeiro
      Katherine Reeves
      Dan Gerber
      Gloria DiFulvio

11:45 am  Break
12:00 pm  Lunch with Students
Amanda Cortese
Angela Costanzi
Olivia Guilmette
Alison Foreman
Brian Boates
Samantha Cohen
Nicole Fulginiti
Nene Okunna
Courtney St. Onge
Nicole Rau
Kara Lesniak
Aurora Rougeau

1:15 pm  Break

1:45 pm  Meeting with University Provost and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Katherine Newman
Betsy Dumont

2:15 pm  Meeting with University Chancellor
Kumble Subbaswamy

2:45 pm  Break

3:15 pm  Meeting with Faculty and Staff Related to Faculty Issues, Student Recruitment, Advising
Megan Griffin
Rebecca Thibault
Lisa Troy
Lori Peterson
Jill Hoover
Alicia Timme-Laragy
John Sirard
Karen Ertel
Laura Vandenberg

4:15 pm  Executive Session

5:00 pm  Adjourn

Friday, October 17, 2014

9:00 am  Executive Session and Report Preparation

12:30 pm  Exit Interview