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TO: Robbie Melton, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Tennessee State University

FROM: Julie A. Roberts, Chief Academic Officer
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

SUBJECT: Tennessee State University
Letter of Notification: Public Health, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

DATE: February 3, 2023

Thank you for the revised submission of the Letter of Notification (LON) for the Public Health, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). After reviewing the revised LON, I approve Tennessee State University's (TSU) plan to develop the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) for the Public Health, PhD.

As TSU continues to develop the proposed program, all concerns italicized in the attached LON evaluation must be reflected in the NAPP. It is understood the proposed program will be developed in accordance with the mission of TSU and will meet the Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025 degree completion and workforce development objectives.

Attachment

cc: Robert M. Smith, THEC, Interim Executive Director
Glenda Glover, TSU, President
Charlise Anderson, TSU, Managing Executive Director Institutional Effectiveness, Research,
Planning, and Assessment
Ryan Korstange, THEC, Director of Academic Affairs

Tennessee Higher Education Commission
 Letter of Notification Evaluation
 February 3, 2023



The evaluation of the Letter of Notification (LON) is in accordance with the *THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. The evaluation is conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON is posted on the THEC website for a 15-day period of comment by interested parties. Based on the internal and external evaluation, THEC will make a determination to support, not to support, or defer a decision based on a revised LON.

Institution: Tennessee State University	LON Submission Date: January 22, 2020 LON Resubmission Date: February 14, 2022 LON Resubmission Date: June 21, 2022 LON Resubmission Date: September 28, 2022 LON Resubmission Date: January 17, 2023
Academic Program, Degree Designation: Public Health, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	
Concentration: Health Disparities and Cultural Competency	
Proposed CIP Code: 51.2201 (Public Health, General)	
Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2024	
Time Period Posted on Website for Public Comment: January 28, 2022- February 11, 2022	
Academic Program Liaisons: Robbie Melton, (rmelton@tnstate.edu)	

Note: Comments in italics within this document should be addressed in the New Academic Program Proposal

Letter of Support from President/Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter from President Glover dated May 23, 2022 offered support along with notification of June 2017 BOT approval.
Overall Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The implementation timeline needs to be adjusted.</i> <i>The submitted LON follows the old New Academic Program Approval process. As you submit the full NAPP, please reformat the LON material to follow the new LON checklist. This will require the addition of sections on accreditation, administrative structure, community and industry partnerships, and some revisions to the budget narrative section (required changes are indicated by questions in sections that are otherwise blank). Ensure that the full NAPP follows the updated NAPP checklist.</i>
Section II: Background	
Background on Academic Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the proposed program stems from stated desires by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) and the Metro Nashville Public Health Department. The LON includes a letter of support from both agencies. The proposed program addresses concerns stated by the National Institutes of Health and the US Department of Health and Human Services revolving around public health disparities, culturally

	<p>competent research, and historical issues facing the African American community and public health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed program will be one of a small set of doctoral programs in public health in the country with concentrations in health disparities or cultural competency. ▪ Providing doctoral level training in Public Health at Tennessee’s public HBCU will increase the diversity in the public health discipline, and aligns with priorities from the US Department of Health and Human Services’ office of Minority Health (see OHM October 2021 Health Equity Report) to increase public health researchers trained at the doctoral level with cultural competency focus to address systematic discrimination in public health research, and to increase health outcomes for African Americans and other vulnerable populations. ▪ This program would bring training in health disparities and health equity that exists in other regions of the country beyond the Southeast. Public health programs in Colorado, and at Johns Hopkins University, Berkley University, and Saint Louis University offer similar training. <i>Please revise these statements to specify which institution the public health training in Colorado is attached to.</i>
<p>Purpose and Nature of Academic Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Public Health, PhD will be the only program in the state to offer a concentration in Health Disparity and Cultural Competency. The proposed program will be offered on ground, requiring four years for full-time students to complete (the program will also enroll part-time students). ▪ Graduates will be prepared for careers in public health research, senior level administration, policy making, and education. ▪ The proposed program will allow TSU to advance efforts to preserve and promote the health of local, state, regional, national, and international populations, and would reduce disparities and improve health outcomes for vulnerable populations. ▪ The proposed program outcomes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recruit prepared students who will be highly competent in identifying and addressing factors contributing to health disparities, with a special focus on the influence of culture on health, ○ Train advanced degreed professionals, who will be a part of a diverse workforce, that are equipped with competencies that increase equity, diversity, and inclusion in leadership roles, and ○ Emphasize training and research competencies that are foundational in equipping underrepresent populations at all levels of public health policy, procedures, and management. ▪ The program has also created measurable program outcomes related to graduate employment, increased faculty scholarly productivity, and institutional partnerships.

<p>Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed program supports the State Master Plan goal to provide “workforce and economic development and enhanced competitive research” and will contribute to desired “improvements to public health and improved civic engagement.” Further, the program provides skilled, credentialed graduates who are prepared for work in the high-demand fields of health care research. ▪ The proposed program aligns with the State Master Plan for workforce development goals by providing academic preparation at the doctoral level in an in-demand field, thereby ensuring that skilled Tennesseans are available to employers in the public health sector. The program will address the state’s economic development, workforce, and research needs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting Tennessee’s goal of ensuring “skilled, credentialed Tennesseans are available to employers,” which is particularly relevant for public health training given that THEC’s Supply and Occupational Demand report identifies a high need for professionals in health care research. ○ The proposed public health program will focus on providing research-based training, which will allow students the opportunity to develop skills leading to employment in state and federal agencies, private sector health care, industry settings, and academia. ○ The proposed program would provide an accessible pathway for underrepresented students to attain an advanced degree. ▪ The proposed program aligns with TSU’s institutional mission by creating an academic program that “prepares a diverse population of leaders” aligns with three specific aims of TSU’s strategic plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The proposed program correlates with TSU’s aim to prepare a “diverse population of leaders,” by offering a pathway to advanced public health training for diverse students ○ The proposed program will contribute to the institutions goal of offering of offering “affordable and accessible educational programming at various degree levels” by providing access to a CEPH accredited doctoral program at a lower cost than non-public institutions. ○ Finally, the proposed program will contribute to TSU’s goal to “cultivate a climate of interdisciplinary research and for all stakeholders,” and make TSU a premier public research land-grant university. The proposed Public Health, PhD will directly increase scholarly inquiry, research, and public service. The program will also provide opportunities for collaboration with programs across campus and other institutions to bolster and expand research opportunities.
<p>Institutional capacity to deliver the program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Public Health, PhD will be housed in the College of Health Sciences, which currently has eight undergraduate programs serving over 2,000 students and six graduate programs serving more than 600 students. The College of Health Sciences also houses a MPH

	<p>program that averages 15 graduates a year and is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current MPH faculty will teach in the proposed program and a current faculty member will serve as the program director until a permanent director is recruited and hired. ▪ A program director position will be requested, along with one new faculty position. ▪ Active collaborations in research and teaching with other colleges and departments at TSU will continue in the proposed Public Health, PhD program. ▪ The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at TSU will provide the infrastructure to support faculty and students through the grant development process which is critical for continued professional development and community engagement for both faculty and students.
<p>Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Five higher education institutions in Tennessee currently offer public health doctoral programs. None of these programs offer a concentration in Health Disparity or Cultural Competency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ East Tennessee State University - Public Health, DrPH, concentrations in Community Health, Epidemiology, and Health Management and Policy. ○ The University of Memphis - Public Health, PhD, concentrations in Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. ○ The University of Tennessee, Knoxville - Public Health, DrPH. <i>In the revised LON materials submitted in the NAPP, please include the Public Health Sciences, PhD at UTK—CIP 31.51.2201.00.</i> ○ The University of Tennessee Health Science Center, - Health Outcomes & Policy Research, PhD, concentrations in: Health Informatics and Information Management, Health Policy/Health Services Research, and Pharmacoeconomics. ○ Vanderbilt University, PhD programs in the following associated areas: Biomedical Informatics, Biostatistics, Epidemiology, and Health Policy. ○ <i>Please expand this list to include the Epidemiology and Biostatistics, PhD at the University of Memphis - CIP 18.26.1311.00.</i> ▪ The proposed program is distinguished from the existing programs by preparing students for research using theoretical and applied evidence-based solutions to community issues such as: 1) systematic racism; 2) rural and urban health applications; 3) cultural & mental health service applications; 4) chronic disease preventions; and 5) aging populations. The program also includes training in advanced epidemiological research skills. ▪ Graduation data from existing Public Health graduate programs report low percentages of black or African-American graduates.

<p>Accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed PhD will seek accreditation with the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) as well as membership in at least two national associations: the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs (CAAPHP). Current undergraduate and graduate degrees in Public Health are accredited by CEPH.
<p>Administrative Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposed Public Health PhD will be housed in the Department of Public Health, Health Administration and Health Sciences in the College of Health Sciences. ▪ <i>Please include an organizational chart that includes the college, department, administrative unit, and program director for the proposed academic unit.</i>
<p>Section III: Feasibility Study</p>	
<p>Student Interest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 25 percent of the 51 Graduates from the TSU MPH program from 2016 to 2022 expressed interest in pursuing a PhD after their graduation in their exit interview. <i>Please add to Table 5 the number of students surveyed each year.</i> ▪ In 2019, a survey of 369 undergraduate and graduate students affiliated with the Department of Public Health, Health Administration, and Health Sciences, demonstrated that 77 percent (n=284) of students were moderately or very interested in pursuing a PhD in Public Health at TSU. ▪ A fall 2021 survey of HBCU students in public health programs among member institutions of the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs (CAAPHP), revealed that 88% of students in allied health degree programs have an interest in racial and ethnic disparities in public health especially related to maternal and child health (n = 69). ▪ In addition, in 2020 Kaiser Health News reported that between 2010 and 2020 applications to public health programs have increased 75 percent, new enrollments increased 83 percent, showing widespread demand for public health training.
<p>Local and regional need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program graduates will be prepared for various careers in public health research, including positions in postsecondary education, health education, epidemiology, biostatistics, health policy, along with positions in engineering and health safety. ▪ A sixty-day review of public health job postings which require doctoral training showed that an average of twelve jobs were posted daily. A list of twelve jobs that require a doctoral degree, and for which graduates of the proposed program would qualify was included. ▪ US HHS Region IV and all of Tennessee have been identified as having a shortage of minority researchers (CAAPHP, April 2022) and as having an increased need for equity and inclusion in PhD level administrators within state health departments (CDC 2022). ▪ Nashville has become a health care hub and growth in this sector is likely to continue given the aging population.

Employer Demand

- Shifts in public health training have resulted in increased demand for doctoral preparation (Sullivan and Galea, 2019). Trained, culturally competent health care workers and researchers are increasingly in demand for a variety of reasons, including changing demographics, need for health disparities research, and quality assurance.
- Graduates of doctoral programs at member schools of the Consortium of African American Public Health Programs (CAAPHP) are in high demand.
- Tennessee’s 2020 Masterplan suggests that the state should “support the development, recruitment, and retention of a sufficient and quality health and health care workforce.”
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) predicts that the employment of Epidemiologists will increase 30 percent by 2030.
- A 2020 Kaiser Health News report shows that the public health workforce is aging, particularly in the governmental sector, pointing to extended employer need as employees retire. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that 2.4 million new public health jobs will be created through 2029, not including replacing the 40 percent loss to the public health workforce that is expected due to retirement.
- According to a 2022 report by the CDC, shortages of public health professionals exist in: epidemiology, biostatistics, several environmental and occupational health sub-specialties, public health nutrition, public health nursing, public health education, and preventative education. Table 7 on page 24 explains several ways that the proposed PhD program will prepare graduates for employment in these areas of shortage.
- The Tennessee Department of Health, Health Disparity Task Force for Tennessee (OMH TDH 2021) has identified a growing increase in health disparities and social inequities that could be addressed through the translation and dissemination of culturally competent research in public health, by doctoral level researchers.
- Expertise in health disparities and cultural competence is increasingly a component of market demand for positions in biostatistics, epidemiology, and healthcare information specialists. Several federal agencies have identified increased need for educators, researchers, and practitioners in public health areas to address disparities in health outcomes, including the National Institutes of Health, the American Public Health Association, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- The proposed program will both provide minority and underrepresented graduates prepared for public health leadership when current programs produce an insignificant number of underrepresented graduates and provide vital training in cultural competence that will allow graduates to address emerging public health needs in TN.

Community and Industry Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a narrative overview of existing and anticipated community and industry partnerships and how they will support the proposed program. Letters of Support are provided by: 	
	Feb 14 2022	1) TN Department of Health
	Feb 8, 2022	2) Rep. Harold Love
	Oct 18 2021	3) Congregational Health and Education Network: Nashville General Hospital
	Aug 11, 2021	4) TSU – College of Agriculture
	June 2021	5) Saint Augustine’s University *
	June 14 2021	6) Chicago State University *
	June 4, 2021	7) Metro Public Health Department
	Feb 25, 2019	8) Vanderbilt University Medical Center
	Feb 15, 2019	9) Metro Public Health Department
	Aug 19, 2022	10) Urban Campus & Core
	Aug 29, 2022	11) Morgan State University *
	Aug 31, 2022	12) Texas Southern University
	Oct 21, 2022	13) Consortium of African American Public Health Programs
* Member: Consortium of African American Public Health Programs		

Section IV: Enrollment and Graduation Projections

Projected Enrollment and Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the requested NAPP, please include projected enrollment and graduation figures for the first seven years using the table included in the LON Checklist.
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Section V: Projected Costs to Deliver Proposed Program

Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program plans to hire one teaching and research faculty member. Estimated reoccurring salary and benefit costs -- \$108,000 + 3% per year, or \$827,545 over the first seven years.
Non-Instructional Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A program coordinator will be hired to support administrative functions, including program accreditation and student recruitment. Estimated reoccurring salary and benefit costs for the administrative staff -- \$67,500 + 3% per year, or \$516,078 over the first seven years.
Graduate Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate assistantships do not have benefits associated outside of tuition and fee payments. Estimated costs for Graduate Assistants (one GA in year 1 for \$51,690, 2 Gas years 2-7, for \$104,465 + 3% per year), or \$695,709 total in the first seven years. Please explain how graduate stipends will change over time, and delineate amount increases for tuition and stipends separately.
Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accreditation and association costs are estimated at \$3,500 and \$3,000 per year, respectively. The accreditation fee is anticipated to increase in 2022, but overage is to be drawn from Geier funds. Are Geier funds subject to any restrictions? Please explain the process for qualifying to use Geier funds in more detail.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Year 1 to Year 7, these costs are anticipated to grow from \$3,000 to \$13,000 annually. Estimated costs do match the budget narrative. Please reconcile.
Consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise budget narrative to include costs of external review.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$12,000 has been allotted for faculty computers and accessories between Year 1 and Year 7.
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will information technology costs be incurred?
Library Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will additional library resources be needed to support the program?
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any costs associated with marketing/recruitment?
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program does not anticipate facility costs. Are there any laboratory expansions or supplies necessary for faculty and graduate assistant research?
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program anticipates that \$3,000 will be needed for faculty and administrator travel in Year 1, and \$2,400 in Years 3, 5, and 7, for a total of \$10,200. Travel costs associated with graduate assistant travel and research include an initial \$3,000, increasing each year by \$3,000 through Year 7, for a total of \$84,000.
Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other resource costs are identified, and no additional space is needed.

Section VI: Projected Revenues for the Proposed Program

Tuition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program projects a revenue of \$238,590 in year one. Revenue projections from tuition and fees are based on full time in-state rates (\$10,845) for 21 hours per academic year (out of state rate is \$23, 067 per year): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Year: No tuition and fees expected. Year-1: Expected tuition and fees \$137,081. Year-2: Expected tuition and fees \$225,418. Year-3: Expected tuition and fees \$374,707. Year-4: Expected tuition and fees \$472,175 Year-5: Expected tuition and fees \$494,595. Year-6: Expected tuition and fees \$494,595. Year-7: Expected tuition and fees \$506,227.
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant revenues are anticipated from research faculty that include the NIH, CDC, HRSA, SAMHSA and others. Range of grant funding is expected to start at \$200K in years two and three and increase to \$500K for the remaining four years.
Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipated funding from Geier funds are \$700,000 in Year 1, plus rollover funds of \$609,000 in Year 2. No Geier funds are anticipated after Year 2.

Appendices

Letters of Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters of Support are provided by: 	
	Feb 14 2022	1) TN Department of Health
	Feb 8, 2022	2) Rep. Harold Love

	Oct 18 2021	3) Congregational Health and Education Network: Nashville General Hospital	
	Aug 11, 2021	4) TSU - College of Agriculture	
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	Aug 31, 2022	12) Texas Southern University	
	Oct 21, 2022	13) Consortium of African American Public Health Programs	
	* Member: Consortium of African American Public Health Programs		
THEC Financial Projections Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The figures in the budget narrative do not match those in the financial projections form, please reconcile.</i> ▪ The budget narrative describes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recurring Expenses total \$1,208,083. ○ One-time expenditures total \$21,600. ○ Operating Costs total \$134,500 – covering graduate assistant travel and program membership dues and accreditation fees. 		
Public Comment			
Public comments received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No public comments were received. 		