

**DATE:** January 30, 2014

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program-University of Memphis, Health Systems and Policy, PhD

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The School of Public Health at the University of Memphis proposes to offer a doctoral degree in Health Systems and Policy. This program is designed for those who intend to teach and conduct research utilizing best-practices and rigorous scientific theories and methods to understand the processes, functions, and policies of health systems on local, state-specific, regional, national and international scales. Moreover, this program will emphasize attention to policy-specific opportunities within urban health systems, as well as the transformative nature of healthcare informatics within those systems, and the need to address health system issues within the context of improving population health through effective policy creation, reformation and implementation.

Graduates will be prepared to conduct innovative, interdisciplinary, and translational research in a variety of health system settings with systemic and policy-specific solutions for health systems issues in Tennessee and the Mid-South region.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Fall 2014

**1.1.20A MISSION:** The University of Memphis is committed to the needs of its metropolitan setting, its emphasis on high quality educational experiences, and the pursuit of new knowledge. The addition of the new doctoral program in Health Systems and Policy completes the required three majors for accreditation by the Council of Education for Public Health. With its programs accredited, the School of Public Health can professionally fulfill its missions: excellence in education, research, and outreach to improve public health and promote health equity by generating knowledge and translating research discoveries locally, statewide and nationally.

The proposed program directly complements the State Master Plan as it recognizes the capacity of the Memphis Research Consortium (MRC). The MRC combines the research resources of the University of Memphis, University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center, St. Jude Children’s Research and other leading research and business entities in Memphis for promoting research and development in health care and other disciplines. Additionally, the Health Systems and Policy PhD program is in alignment with the goals outlined in the THEC 2010-15 Public Agenda for Higher Education, specifically the focus on strengthening Tennessee’s Knowledge Economy.

**1.1.20B CURRICULUM:** The degree program will require completion of 60 semester credit hours divided into six major components: (1) Health Systems and Policy core (21 hours); (2) Doctoral Seminar Core (6 hours); (3) Research Methods Core (9 hours); (4) Biostatistics (9 hours); (5) Health Systems and Policy Electives (6 hours); and (6) Dissertation (9 hours). Students will also have to complete nine hours of prerequisite courses or document equivalent coursework. These prerequisite courses will include Biostatistics Methods, Epidemiology in Public Health, and Health Policy and will not count toward the required 60 hours of doctoral study. Courses will be delivered primarily in the traditional format with a few of the elective courses available online.

Doctoral students will be expected to work closely with one or more faculty mentors on research projects and as they work to complete their doctoral dissertations. Additionally, students will be provided opportunities to gain teaching experience throughout their program of study.

**1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS:** Program admission requires a Master’s degree; satisfactory scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE); three letters of recommendations; curriculum vitae, and a personal statement stating the applicant’s career goals and academic preparation.

Students must meet progression and graduation standards as published annually in the University of Memphis catalog.

**Projected Program Enrollment and Productivity**

Program enrollment and productivity projections are based on trends at three peer schools of public health (University of Alabama – Birmingham, University of Arkansas and University of North Texas). These institutions have similar characteristics as the University of Memphis and offer degree programs similar to the programs proposed for the School of Public Health. The enrollment projections are consistent with the number of faculty in the Division of Health Systems Management and Policy.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
<b>2014</b>	3	--
<b>2015</b>	6	--
<b>2016</b>	9	1
<b>2017</b>	12	3
<b>2018</b>	13	3

**1.1.20D FACULTY:** The proposed PhD in Health Systems and Policy is a multidisciplinary program involving faculty holding academic degrees in several disciplines. By spring 2014, the Division of Health Systems Management and Policy will have five full-time core faculty members. The Division is currently conducting a faculty search for one of the five faculty positions. An accreditation condition from the Council on Education for Public Health requires the division to allocate five full-time faculty to the program.

Additionally, the program will be supported by a broad group of affiliated faculty from departments across the University and healthcare organizations in the Memphis and Shelby county areas. Affiliate faculty will serve important functions in the proposed program by serving on key committees such as curriculum planning and doctoral dissertation.

**1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES:** The Ned R. McWherter Library supports the instructional and research programs at the University of Memphis. Students will have access to a broad array of library resources. Additionally, the library has budgeted \$15,000 to support national and international journals, books and databases focusing on public health.

**1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION:** This program will be offered through the Division of Health Systems Management and Policy, one of three divisions in the School of Public Health. A faculty member from the Division of Health Systems Management Policy will serve as the program coordinator for the proposed PhD program. The program coordinator will work collaboratively with the dean, other academic leaders and community partners to launch and administer the program and facilitate student recruitment, matriculation, retention and degree completion.

**1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES:** Students will have access to a wide range of support resources, including advising and mentoring support from faculty in the School of Public Health. All doctoral students will be assigned a faculty adviser based on their field of study prior to matriculation into the program.

Additionally, the Division of Health Systems Management and Policy will provide graduate assistantship support for two new full-time students each year for a commitment of two years.

**1.1.20H FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** Facilities and instructional equipment are adequate to support the program. The School of Public Health moved into a newly renovated building (Robison Hall) in October 2011 that adequately meets all current and projected needs.

**1.1.20I NEED AND DEMAND:** Despite an increasing need for public health services and research, there is an acute shortage of public health professional nationally, in Memphis/Shelby County, and the Mid-South area. The Association of Schools of Public Health estimates that 250,000 additional public health workers will be required nationally by 2020 to replace the retiring workforce and meet the growing need. Public health scholars and educators in health systems and policy will be needed to develop and lead the public health infrastructure to assure a competent workforce and access to health care.

There is an immense need at the local and state levels for public health professionals to combat a myriad of health issues that can be positively affected by graduates with a degree in Health Systems and Policy. Doctoral level public health leaders with expertise in health systems and policy will engage the community in participatory research, address systemic determinants of healthcare and prevention, and provide

their expertise to help reduce health disparities by way of policy analysis, creation, and implementation.

**1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION:** The proposed program will be the only doctoral level program in Health Systems and Policy in Tennessee. The only other doctoral program closely related to the proposed program is the Health Outcomes and Policy Research at the University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center. This program is focused on clinical health outcomes with an emphasis on pharmaceuticals and psychopharmacological aspects of health.

**1.1.20K COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS:** N/A

**1.120L DIVERSITY AND ACCESS:** University of Memphis is committed to an inclusive and diverse campus that values the uniqueness of its student body and employees. Attracting a diverse group of students to the proposed program is a stated goal of the proposal. The School of Public Health expects that the proposed PhD program in Health Systems and Policy will mirror the excellent diversity that has been achieved in the Master's programs and the doctoral programs in Epidemiology and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

**1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION:** As a proposed program within the School of Public Health, the University of Memphis will be eligible for accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Accreditation requirements for CEPH require that institutions offer a Master of Public Health and offer at least three doctoral degrees. This proposed program along with the Epidemiology PhD and Social and Behavioral Sciences PhD programs will now position the University of Memphis to seek CEPH accreditation.

The School of Public Health filed for candidacy with CEPH in August 2012 and the Council approved candidacy in October 2012. The School has two years from candidacy approval to conduct an accreditation self-study and have a site visit by CEPH. A site visit is expected to occur during the Fall 2014 semester.

Additionally, the Health Systems and Policy PhD program will continuously monitor program and student learning outcomes using multiple evaluation tools. Program faculty and staff will review outcomes to make on-going improvements in curriculum, programs and practices to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and University of Memphis policies.

**1.1.200 EXTERNAL JUDGMENT:** External review of the proposed program was conducted during an institution site visit on July 11-12, 2013. Dr. Stephen O'Connor, Professor of Health Services Administration at University of Alabama at Birmingham and Dr. Jose Pagan, Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Management and Policy at North Texas Health Sciences Center served as external reviewers.

Dr. O'Connor and Dr. Pagan made a joint recommendation for the approval of the Health Systems and Policy, PhD program for the following three reasons: "There is a need for doctoral-level graduates in health care systems, health policy, and health services research at the local, state and national levels. The proposed program

addresses this important need. Second, the program is well designed to meet the needs of students and it has the institutional resources and commitment necessary to make the program a success. Third, the program is an institutional priority and it is strategically linked to the State Master Plan. The Health Systems and Policy PhD program will provide unique opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration not only with the University of Memphis but also through the Memphis Research Consortium.”

**1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT:** The proposed Health Systems and Policy PhD program will be funded through campus reallocations and additional tuition revenues generated by the Master of Health Administration and Master of Public Health programs. Additional support comes from currently awarded federal and private grants. In 2011, as part of the \$20 million in funding from Governor Haslam’s office to the Memphis Research Consortium (MRC), the School of Public Health received \$1,050,000 in start-up support funds for new faculty hires in key areas of obesity prevention, health informatics, and systems science. Of this amount, \$360,000 of the MRC funding is earmarked for faculty hires in the Division of Health Systems Management and Policy.

**1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING:** An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost; progress toward accreditation and other metrics set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.