

Network News - December 8, 2016

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A message from the Network Chair: Framing the Future in Baccalaureate Public Health

I am pleased to report the recent release by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) of the [revised accreditation criteria](#) for graduate schools and programs of public health. CEPH's aim in updating the criteria, clearly articulated throughout the 18-month-long process of public vetting, was to ensure the quality of education in public health, by fostering flexibility and innovation, all while reducing the reporting burden. These updated criteria are grounded in a number of recommendations from the ASPPH-led [Framing the Future](#) (FTF) initiative guided by a large and diverse group of contributors. I had the privilege of leading this effort and traveling throughout the country to meet with a wide variety of stakeholders.

The FTF launched seven expert panels that researched and produced recommendations on innovations around education in public health in time for the 100-year anniversary of the seminal [Welch-Rose Report](#). The Welch-Rose report, issued in 1915, provided a rationale and blueprint for the first schools of public health in the United States. Drs. Welch and Rose, however, did not anticipate the explosion of undergraduate public health during the past two decades, as documented in "[Characterizing the Growth of the Undergraduate Public Health Major: U.S., 1992-2012.](#)" The great increase in baccalaureate public health programs, both in ASPPH-member institutions and especially in colleges and universities outside of the ASPPH umbrella, was the catalyst for founding this exciting Undergraduate Network for Public Health and Global Health Education.

The FTF Task Force prioritized undergraduate education in public health as a key area in need of direction and, therefore, charged its *first* expert panel to provide guidance for institutions both seeking to start a new undergraduate program in public health or to expand or enhance an existing program. The panel developed a pioneering framework, published as the [Undergraduate Baccalaureate Critical Component Elements Report](#) in 2012. The report outlines foundational skills, public health content, experiential learning, and cross-cutting areas essential for all baccalaureate holders, regardless of the graduate's ultimate career destination and as applicable both to science-based and liberal arts degrees.

The Critical Component Elements (CCE) were so well accepted by the field that CEPH adopted nearly all of the panel's recommendations in their [Standalone Baccalaureate Program \(SBP\) criteria](#) in 2013. CEPH implemented similar standards for baccalaureate programs within schools and programs in the recent 2016 criteria updates.

The CCE came on the heels of a joint ASPPH and Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) effort in 2011 that produced [34 learning outcomes](#) in public health for *all* undergraduates. Developed using an "Educated Citizen" approach, this initiative aimed to provide faculty, students, and administrative leaders in two- and four-year institutions a framework for helping produce enlightened members of society who could become more active participants in the health of their communities.

In designing the new accreditation criteria, CEPH also considered the FTF [Blue Ribbon Employers Advisory Board report](#), in which prominent employers from diverse health-related sectors provided real-world perspectives on 21st century workforce needs and trends in the field of public health. The board outlined essential elements of an education in public health that, not surprisingly, concurred with a number of other recent national reports from partners in the field.

The FTF task force, in collaboration with the League for Innovation in the Community College (The League), also created a Community Colleges and Public Health expert panel that proposed opportunities for public health in community colleges as well as offered curricular prototypes for a number of public health learning pathways. These recommendations can be found in the [Community College report](#).

FTF work that touches upon baccalaureate training in public health is still underway, with a Baccalaureate to Masters Relationship Workgroup, formed by the ASPPH Education Committee, which launched early in 2016 to explore issues associated with the path from, and the relationship between, undergraduate and master's degrees in public health. Their goal is to provide guidance to ASPPH-member schools and programs, and others who have expressed questions or concerns, about the relationship between undergraduate and master's courses and degrees. Stay tuned in 2017 for a report on the results of a recent survey on this issue.

FTF reports on the MPH degree, DrPH degree, and other areas are available [here](#).

Have a happy new year and watch for the next issue of *Network News* in March 2017.

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