INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Document

This Strategic Situation Assessment presents a summary of the following input that has been collected during this strategic planning process:

- Discussions held during the Steering Committee’s first three meetings (see page 25 for the Committee roster).
- Comments from 30 informal discussions facilitated by Steering Committee members between April and June 2011. These discussions were promoted as community-wide discussions about the future of the School. They were held in a variety of settings on campus and in the community; and attended by nearly four hundred faculty, staff, students and community partners.
- Responses by more than 800 alumni, students, faculty, staff, and community partners to a web-based survey (full survey results are summarized in a separate document and available online).
- Stakeholder interviews conducted with 19 individuals, including deans of associated schools at the University of Washington and representatives of partner agencies (see list of interviews on page 23).

The project schedule on page 24 shows when each these components were created during the planning process.

The School’s Strategic Plan will be an Action Agenda Grounded by a Few “Big Ideas”

The School’s Strategic Plan will establish a clear action agenda, by describing clear and ambitious directions the School will take. This plan for action and change will be focused around 3 to 5 “Big Ideas” or Strategic Initiatives that will encapsulate our vision for the School we want to evolve into in the coming 10-20 years, guide new investments, and focus our messages internally and externally.

A primary purpose of this Situation Assessment, and the Retreat discussions it will support, is to identify and develop a short list of “Big ideas” that will focus the Plan and the School’s efforts.

Organization of this Document

The contents of this document are organized according to the Strategic Planning Framework on page 3.

- Representative stakeholder comments are shown throughout the document as bulleted statements in quotes.
- Potential “Big Ideas” are noted throughout document and listed all together as a reference on page 23. BERK staff and the project management team selected the ideas listed in this document by sifting through the volumes of input gathered through discussions of the Steering Committee schoolwide outreach, quantitative and qualitative survey input, and stakeholder interviews. The ideas shown here serve as potential starting points and it is hoped that Retreat participants will both bring new ideas and help winnow the universe of “potential big ideas” down to a focused set of 3-5 Strategic Initiatives that will require Schoolwide resources to accomplish and will significantly determine the future directions of the School.
- Themes that run throughout the document are noted throughout by bold underlined text.
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STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The outline below defines the individual components of the final Strategic Plan that will be developed. These pieces are organized hierarchically, with higher-level items informing items below them.

I. The School’s Role, Purpose, & Values
   - Vision: How we want the world to be in the future.
   - Mission: The School’s purpose: its role in realizing its Vision.
   - Values: Guiding principles that shape how the School will function and make decisions.

II. Core Activities: What We Do to Fulfill our Mission

III. Strategic Areas of Focus
   - 3-5 "Big Ideas": Strategic Initiatives that will focus investment and new directions taken by the School. These will likely address one or more of the Core Activities and the linkages between them.

IV. Critical Supports
   - Externally-Oriented Supports: Coordination and relationship building with individuals, groups, and organizations on and off campus. Being a better partner.
   - Internally-Oriented Supports: Visibility and profile raising, including strengthening the School’s identity and brand, developing and sharing key messages, and establishing an advancement function.

V. Implementation Planning
   - Funding
   - Phasing: short-, med-, long-term actions
   - Roles/implementation leads
   - Performance metrics
THE SCHOOL’S ROLE, PURPOSE, & VALUES

This section summarizes the School’s existing guiding statements as shown on the School’s website and elsewhere. Related feedback gathered from stakeholders is shown on page 5 and page 7 summarizes the Steering Committee’s initial directions for the Vision, Mission, and Values.

Current Mission, Goals, Objectives, & Values

The MISSION of the University of Washington School of Public Health is to promote population health, prevent illness, disability, and injury, and ensure efficient, effective, and equitable health care systems through education, research, and service.

To fulfill its Mission, the SPH has the following GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

a. **Educate innovative, effective, and culturally competent public health researchers, faculty, and practitioners.**
   - Recruit and retain outstanding faculty in the range of disciplines and specialties consistent with SPH’s mission.
   - Recruit graduate and undergraduate students of the highest academic capabilities who are committed to public health.
   - Provide a multicultural setting for public health learning.
   - Provide excellent educational programs and opportunities.
   - Apply innovative pedagogical methods to enhance teaching and learning.
   - Promote lifelong learning.

b. **Advance knowledge in the public health sciences through research and discovery.**
   - Develop new programs in response to emerging health problems, new technologies, and advances in the public health sciences.
   - Foster an environment that promotes creativity, collaboration, and interdisciplinary research.
   - Develop the infrastructure to support state-of-the-art research.
   - Compete successfully for research funding in the public health sciences.
   - Contribute scientific knowledge in the public health disciplines.

c. **Contribute to sound public health policies and increase the recognition of the importance of public health through dissemination and community collaboration.**
   - Disseminate public health knowledge and research findings to policy-makers, public health professionals, and the general community.
   - Engage in collaborative research, training, and service activities with governmental and non-governmental organizations.
   - Build community alliances that will bridge science and practice.

The list below reflects the current VALUES of the School:

a. Objectivity and professional integrity in research, education, and service
b. Creativity and interdisciplinary approaches in solving local, national, global public health problems
c. Pursuit of knowledge to better understand human health, environmental health, and their interconnections
d. Scientifically rigorous evaluation of evidence to inform public health recommendations
e. Building partnerships between academic public health and communities to improve
f. human and environmental health
g. Compassion, equity, and social justice in defining and addressing health
h. Expanded opportunities for learning beyond the classroom to individual mentorship
i. and applied experience in the community
j. Educational outreach to the public health workforce
k. Respect for and inclusion of diverse values, beliefs, and cultures in research and teaching
l. Vigilance to recognize and forecast threats to public health
Stakeholders and survey respondents praised the School for many areas of strength:

- “The School has been on an evolutionary trend. They are focusing more on public health practice, not just research. They are offering undergraduate degrees and they are connected to state, local, and non-profit public health. Their increasing global health focus is key.”

- The caliber of the School’s research in general and the strength of the School’s various departments, most of which are commonly seen as housing great depth of expertise. Global health, epidemiology, and biostatistics in particular are frequently noted as strengths.

- The School’s location in the Pacific Northwest: close to Asia and relatively far from other (competing) schools of public health. An attractive place to live for faculty, staff, and students. (Location: is also noted as a weakness: “Our distance from DC is a natural disadvantage for us to be exceptional in US health policy. We are a long ways away from the center of things.”)

- Strong collaborations with SPH, with other UW organizations, and with outside organizations. (Partnerships and internal coordination are also noted as areas that can be improved.)

A consistent message from stakeholders is that while the School is strong in much of what it does, it will require focus and leadership to raise it to the next level. The School isn’t seen as having a strong point of differentiation other than perhaps doing great research. While this research strength is recognized as important, it isn’t seen as a unifying and transcending factor. This discussion is related to potential strategic areas of focus (beginning on page 13).

- “The School suffers from the blind man and the elephant syndrome. The SPH gives the impression of being very siloed and people see it in a very granular way. People can’t tell you the three big concepts that unite the SPH. What is the bigger whole?”

- “We have areas of strength, but they’re a patchwork. The strengths that reside at the program or individual faculty member level are often the most visible contributions the School makes. We don’t have a School-level organizational approach to answering key questions or playing a role in shaping the public discourse or investigation.”

Although 78% of survey respondents reported that the current Mission Statement (shown on the previous page) “well” or “very well” reflects what the School’s focus should be, there were more than 400 written comments suggesting changes or additions to the School’s focus and edits to the Mission Statement. These comments conveyed that respondents find the current Mission Statement to be accurate, but not inspiring, memorable, or unique to the University of Washington School of Public Health:

- "The Mission Statement has the right ideas, but it is not very exciting. It doesn’t move me, excite me, or inspire me."

- "The Mission Statement is pretty generic. It encompasses everything, but doesn’t really say anything. It is not a motivating Mission Statement."
Survey Responses: Potential Additions to the Mission Statement

In responding to a list of potential concepts that could be added to the Mission Statement, survey respondents favored the following three options:

- “Establishing Evidence Base,” selected by 39% (235) of respondents.
- “Leadership,” selected by 33% (209).
- “Social and Environmental Justice,” selected by 31% (197).

Informal Discussions: The Community’s Vision for the Future

The following ideas emerged from informal discussion of the question: “What would you like the School of Public Health to be like in 10 years?”

- Greater visibility awareness of the School and of public health generally
- Be well known for drawing attention to the fact that our nation’s health status is declining and for helping to turn it around: be known for making a difference, solving problems
- Be known as a place that contributes to solving major social problems (disparities) that plague the health of populations: be a leader in the field of social determinants
- Be well known and well-regarded as a training institution for practice and research
- See the UW SPH positioned as one of the top 3 schools of public health
- Be a leader in public health and a primary source of public health information
- Stronger connections to other schools at UW, to K-12 education system, to the community at large (partnerships)
- Reflect the diversity of our region, the nation, and the world
- Be a leader in policy development, with decision makers seeking our input

There was some debate across discussions about the appropriate geographic focus:

- Local: Serve the community by addressing pressing health issues
- State: Be a statewide center for effectively establishing social justice
- Global: Should we become the School of Global Health or the School of Global Public Health?
Initial Directions Established by the Steering Committee: Key Elements of the School’s Vision, Mission, and Values

Portions of two meetings of the Steering Committee focused directly on reviewing the input summarized above and discussing what the School’s Vision, Mission, and Values should be. The key ideas agreed upon by the Committee during these discussions are summarized here.

While these ideas are certainly presented for discussion and refinement, they should be seen as important guiding direction for the Plan. The text below is not actual draft language, but conveys the key ideas agreed upon by the Committee.

**Vision**

What the School wants the world to be like.

Key elements around which the Steering Committee had consensus:

*A healthy, sustainable, and just world.*

**Mission**

The School’s *role* in achieving its Vision – what it does.

Key elements around which the Steering Committee had consensus:

*The UW School of Public Health produces science and professionals to positively impact the world’s health.*

**Values**

Guiding principles which will guide the School’s choices and actions.

Key elements around which the Steering Committee had consensus:

- *Our work should have an impact, contributing to the better health of communities locally, regionally, and globally.*
- *To serve our community well, we must reflect its diversity and ensure staff, students, and faculty are cultural competent.*
- *We value evidenced-based decision making.*
- *We appreciate the social determinants of health and act to affect them positively.*
- *We value multidisciplinary, collaborative approaches with School, University, and community partners.*
CORE ACTIVITIES: WHAT WE DO TO FULFILL OUR MISSION

A New Model

In the past, the School has presented itself as having teaching, research, and service missions. Based on input from a variety of sources, SPH leadership developed a new model, which was discussed and approved by the Steering Committee. This model better reflects the roles of and opportunities for the School, highlighting the interconnected flow of “producing, transmitting, synthesizing, and applying knowledge.”

A point made by the Committee is that the connections between these functions are as important to focus on as the functions themselves. A key issue to consider during the strategic planning process is how we can strengthen the interconnections among producing, transmitting, and applying knowledge.

Start with the Application of Knowledge and Work Backwards

The *application* of knowledge was raised in many discussions as a fundamental end around which the production and transmittal of knowledge should be oriented. This would focus education on transmitting practical knowledge and skills, while research would be oriented toward topics that are of practical benefit to the health of populations. This idea is explored in the following sections.

The concepts raised around applying knowledge are somewhat different than the notion of service that is discussed under the School’s current framework. Many participants noted that service is less well-defined than the other two elements and the School’s desire to provide ‘service’ contributions may be best accomplished through the targeting and practical application of its producing and transmitting knowledge functions:

- “Direct service is less critical for SPH than producing a well-prepared workforce. The SPH’s service role is the creation of this skilled workforce which in turn supports the practice community.”
- “The word ‘service’ is confusing to me. The one place I would call out service would be in the training of public health professionals who are not enrolled in School like through the Center for Public Health Practice. Other ‘service’ components are the School’s teaching and research functions. Service in relation to research would involve prioritizing research in the interest of the people in the community. The question should be how can I cross-walk my teaching or research interests to make a difference in my community?”
Link Producing Knowledge to Transmitting and Applying Knowledge

Many conversations focused on a desire to align research with the School’s education function, ensuring that research informs education, and to focus on generating knowledge that can be applied to improving the health of populations. Such discussions also featured voices that articulated the need for maintaining a focus on cutting edge research that advances our understanding of the field and bolsters the School’s reputation.

- “The School needs to be more proactive in advancing the practice of public health, not just via service provision, but also in their research. This is particularly true for emerging areas of public health practice. Their research is not necessarily relevant to making things better for the public.”
- “Research is part of the mission of the School and hopefully informs a lot of the teaching. Cutting edge research is vital to the School’s reputation and informing what we teach.”
- “Make sure that theme runs through all research that’s done: what has been the response of the public health system and how can it be improved?”
- “The challenge is how to get the incentives right. How are faculty evaluated and rewarded? Are you advancing faculty for published peer reviewed papers or for public health impact? How does the work I do make a positive impact on people’s lives? If you could get that metric aligned, people would start doing it. The School should be about impact not about peer reviewed research.”

Link Transmitting Knowledge to Applying Knowledge

The majority of survey respondents believe that the School can best improve education by connecting science to real world problems and solutions. Stakeholders echoed these themes of grounding graduates in an interdisciplinary approach that includes a strong linkage between the classroom, practical experience, and working effectively “in the real world.” Practical skills in communication, policy development, community development, program evaluation, facilitation, and compromise were emphasized, as was the ability to continue to learn and adapt post-graduation.

- “There is a tendency for schools of public health in the US to go for the lowest common denominator of training for public health. All core competencies begin with ‘know and understand.’ The European model emphasizes methodologies, skill building, problem solving, conducting research or other practice in the field. We should be doing that.”
- “UW SPH graduates come out armed with technical skills and knowledge but often not enough emphasis on how to match up skills with policy development. They need to learn more about the structures by which public health happens and have the ability to set up processes that work. Whether local or global, they need to understand the systems and politics of culture. Commonalities include relationship building, the art of compromise, adaptability/flexibility, and how to do community development: how to activate people in a way that will turn them on.”
- “It’s really important that we teach people how to learn, how to adapt. Especially in a 2-years master’s program: we can’t really teach them much other than what to do on their own, giving them the tools to leave here with ability to figure out what to do and how to do it.”
- “The skills we need people to have are not taught at universities. Everyone coming out of public health schools knows how to do randomized clinical trials. But practical program evaluation and operational research is what most practitioners do. The practical skills of how to combine quantitative and qualitative data with limited resources that will improve programs in a short period of time. How do you help a family planning clinic meet the needs of its clients, faster, better, and cheaper?”
- “It is VITAL that every student graduating from the School has the critical resource and technology skills to address the enormous problems they will face around improving population health.”
Strengthen the School’s Education Function & Reform its Curriculum

Many opportunities were identified related to strengthening the School’s educational function. Stakeholder discussions to date highlighted the following, focusing in particular on curriculum reform:

- Consider a stronger public health core curriculum, possibly including public health history; relationship to medicine; focus on the social, political, and economic determinants of health; public health ethics.

- Improve mentoring support for students and junior faculty. The School should emphasize teaching quality by selecting and evaluating faculty based on their performance as educators and mentors.

- Encourage more case studies and problem-based learning, less “death by PowerPoint”; practica or course projects that create stronger interdisciplinary connections across departments and to other areas of study at the University, such as economics, business, policy, law, social work, nursing, medicine, the environment, and the built environment.

- “A school such as ours would be suited for very broad, interdisciplinary based approach. This would start with serious look at curriculum, not just by department, but by the School as a whole. Let’s look at the degree to which that curriculum is appropriately consistent across departments and truly interdisciplinary rather than developed in a siloed approach.”

- “I would start with a School-wide curriculum committee. Not only would it be valuable to see where we have gaps, but also to focus on this notion of interdisciplinary teaching. This is where you’d get value from a School-wide look.”

- “I see tensions between academic programs that impart strong skills in granular disciplines and a curriculum that allows a more robust relationship with overall public health field. This is a real challenge. One approach is an integrated curricula for the public health degree, but that would throw the out baby with the bathwater: we’re attractive as a school because of the strength of our disciplines. I see lots of opportunities at the margins. Every department offers a 511 survey or intro course that is offered to all other students from other departments. We could offer a ‘public health 511’ – not a little of this, little of that, but a general exploration of the biggest public health questions. We need to make evolutionary change rather than wholesale deconstruction of what we have.”

Informal and stakeholder discussions highlighted a few opportunities to strengthen the structure and requirements of the School’s degree programs.

- Review degree tracks, evaluating requirements and alignment among tracks.

- Strengthen the undergraduate program and linkage to graduate programs.

- “We should focus on our traditional strength: requiring thesis and research as part of graduation.”
Prepare Students by Imparting Subject Matter Expertise and Advanced “Soft Skills”

The majority of external partners and stakeholders report that the most important skills for students to acquire while at the School are subject matter expertise in a chosen discipline and advanced communication and collaboration skills. Understanding the social and environmental determinants of health, practical experience, and advanced leadership and management skills are also considered important.

What are the most important 21st Century public health skills that the School should prepare all students with? Please select the 3 most important skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core public health subject matter expertise in their chosen discipline</td>
<td>58% (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced communication and collaboration skills</td>
<td>51% (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A robust understanding of the social and environmental determinants of health</td>
<td>47% (42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical experience in the field</td>
<td>38% (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced leadership and management skills</td>
<td>33% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health policy development</td>
<td>26% (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced quantitative skills</td>
<td>19% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical experience with public health research</td>
<td>12% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 90

Potential Big Ideas: Aligning the Production, Transmittal, and Application of Knowledge

i. Launch a School-wide curriculum reform effort with a focus on:
   o The linkages between production, transmittal, and application of knowledge
   o Practical skills: social media, communication, policy development, etc.

ii. Establish stronger linkages between research and teaching and encourage research in line with community needs.
    o Develop incentives and other mechanisms to create

iii. Create opportunities for faculty members to compete for dollars that support innovative approaches to the School’s redefined Mission and approach to producing, transmitting, and applying knowledge.

iv. Other?
Broaden the School’s Reach by Diversifying its Educational Model

Informal conversations and stakeholder input surfaced support for exploring distance learning opportunities and other emerging educational models.

- “Given the concentration of resources in Seattle, it would be great if UW could be leader in distance-based degree programs, allowing someone in a rural county to participate without having to travel.”
- “SPH should look at additional models for educating practitioners that go beyond the extended degree program and summer institutes which tend to be time and cost prohibitive for practitioners and the public health practice community to attend. There is high demand for continuing education which could include short courses, certificate programs and online options, all of which go beyond the traditional model. Online trainings or courses can provide opportunities for staff to take mini-courses. Short courses would help tremendously since there is limited time to devote to training.”
- “The School has not thought carefully about alignment and alliances with other schools of public health on the West Coast. Wouldn’t it be great if West Coast schools of public health formed a consortium? We don’t have the faculty to teach this and they don’t have the faculty to teach that… but we’ve got phones and internet connections, so we can share resources through distance learning. This recognizes a fundamental issue: given budget constraints, we can’t have experts in every field: without an endowment or enormous student body, you can’t sustain it. The opportunity is to focus on what you do well and leverage what others do well. By aligning ourselves with other top-ranked schools, we’d make ourselves even stronger and compete with others in the country as an alliance. Cal would complement us well: we don’t compete, but build in different directions and we’re in the same time zone so classes could be live, allowing dialogue.”

Potential Big Ideas: Expanding the School’s Educational Models and Audiences

i. Expand the School’s educational offerings and pool of students via more distance learning and lifelong learning.

ii. Develop a 1-year MPH degree for health practitioners, including medical students.

iii. Take a leadership role in developing alliances with West Coast schools of public health.

iv. Other?
Many stakeholders emphasized the need to focus on what the School does best within the field of public health, echoing a desire for a unifying, cohesive Vision for the School as described on page 4.

- "The way we do public health now, in this country and around the world, is not working. There are some radical changes happening in this field and the School needs to rethink the way it is organized and what it does to match and address those radical changes."

- “At a very high level my answer for teaching and research are the same: align them more closely with emerging priorities. My sense is a lot of what the School does from a teaching and research perspective doesn’t align with what will determine the success of the School in the 21st Century.”

- “It’s important to focus on strengths: what is distinctive and competitive. Cover weaknesses in essential areas, but don’t spend a lot of resources on weaknesses in non-core areas.”

- “The School is doing too much. We can’t continue to be all things to all people. We have to cut to strengthen and build new programs. This crisis creates an opportunity to have this discussion.”

Other stakeholders emphasize that the individual departments are the School’s greatest strength and that it would be detrimental to determine School-wide areas of focus if it weakens the individual departments.

Specific recommendations about potential areas of focus are listed on the following page. Strategies to pursue any of these topical areas of focus might include establishing a center, recruiting star faculty, obtaining funding to support research, partnering on and off campus, and other ideas.

Survey respondents were asked to identify potential growth areas for research. As shown in the chart below, beyond focusing on health disparities there was little agreement among respondents.
Potential Big Ideas: Focus on Specific Public Health Topics to Guide Recruitment, Research, Teaching, and other Functions

i. Orient the School around addressing the local, regional, and global disease burden transition from infectious disease to chronic disease.

ii. Expand the School’s focus to incorporate the full continuum of health from prevention to early detection to treatment to palliation and from public health to medicine.
   - “Health across the continuum needs to be more closely linked, from preventive to palliative. More collaboration and partnership is needed, and a more comprehensive view of health as both public health and health systems.”
   - “The way that public health needs to do its business is totally changed. While it used to be clinic or regulatory, the new business model needs to be focused on health promotion.”

iii. Be the school of public health focused on the social determinants of health.
   - “Understanding the relationships between race, socioeconomic status and health are important areas for growth. Social epidemiology should be enhanced in our program.”
   - “We have a reasonably good local and state health system and a political environment that is open to innovation. We are better positioned to advance this topic than any other city or region in the country.”
   - “The social and structural determinants of health inequities and the community- and system-level interventions are where I believe we should be putting our energy.”

iv. Become the premier school of global public health, interweaving global to local and local to global.
   - “We have tremendous expertise in global health. We need true global health addressing how we provide better health to people around the world.”
   - “A totally overlooked issue is that all the things we learned in the developed world about worker health have been exported to developing world. These issues are rampant there, creating a population of disabled workers. How do we bring them up to our standards, plus not repeat the mistakes of our past?”

v. Be the national leader in addressing environmental issues such as the urban and built environment or climate change.
   - “Climate change is mentioned frequently as an important issue; however, it is not to be found in most course descriptions, and I don’t see any classes devoted to these areas. This is a huge problem since most other good schools have coursework in this area.”
   - “We should address the intersection between problems such as injuries and physical activity/nutrition within the built environment.”

vi. Focus on addressing the needs and health of Pacific Northwest communities.
   - Determine local needs via a coalition of community partners and raise funds and create incentives for faculty to work in these areas. (See page 17 for related ideas on funding.)
vii. Be the national leader in addressing particular public health challenges that are emerging, such as obesity or the health of an aging population.

- “We should address aging issues because in the next 18 years baby boomers will be turning 65. And we should address early development because we have the highest obesity rate in the world.”

viii. Be a national leader in addressing health care reform.

- “Huge changes are happening—how health care is delivered, how we pay for it. This is a tremendous opportunity for the School that they have not taken advantage of.”
- “There is a hole: the School is not doing research in health care reform.”

ix. Establish a School-wide foundational focus on public health informatics

- “Public health informatics can be the ‘glue’ which binds together research agendas and curricula across the departments. The School has outstanding public health informatics leaders in research, training, and services.”

x. Other topical areas of focus, drawing on the full list from the chart on page 13 or other ideas.
CRITICAL SUPPORTS FOR SUCCESS

In addition to and in support of three to five focusing “big ideas,” the Strategic Plan will address issues that are critical for the success of the School. A number of such topics are explored on the following pages, including:

- Addressing funding challenges
- Growing school visibility
- Increasing diversity and cultural competency
- Strengthening cohesion and sense of School community
- Strengthening internal coordination
- Growing and strengthening partnerships
- Investing in people
- Investing in infrastructure
Addressing Funding Challenges

The School’s dependence on soft money during a time of decreasing federal resources is of great concern and has a direct impact on faculty, staff, and students.

- Faculty members face tremendous pressure to generate funding and they focus on fundable research.
- The School is under-resourced for staff support and existing staff are stretched thin.
- Increasing costs of education may further diminish student diversity.
- Students are facing increasing class sizes and decreasing support for TAs and RAs.

Discussions and survey responses suggest taking innovative approaches to augmenting traditional revenue sources, drawing on private and corporate philanthropy, foundations, and other means.

- “The School should be looking for soft money in new places – maybe there are foundations that are interested in governmental efficiency/performance management. Be creative – look beyond public health funders in particular. Think about funding from business.”
- “Until the current fiscal crisis, our strategy has been to whine at the university, asking it to support us as it supports other schools. Instead, we need to pursue development, recruiting sponsors who like the general mission of public health to give funds to a public health foundation. A coalition of community partners – the School, the state, NGOs, and other partners – would use the funds to develop capacity and do work in areas we collectively deem most important. The model has to include more than seed funding, because some topics may never be sustainable on grants alone.”
- “Philanthropy is an option, but it’s not easy. Endowed chairs are wonderful. Such results are highly personal and dependent up cultivating long-standing relationships. The School should partner with other schools – law, business, the environment – to join forces and recruit support. I know it’s hard because each school has its own development officer, but individuals and families have multiple interests. It’s no longer just the husbands who are engaged in philanthropy – you need to court multiple points of interest.”
- “If this were a business plan, we’d identify the market we’re going to try to capture to increase revenues. We should look at the value of the services we provide: they’re largely public. We have to find a way to have our expertise be relevant to the public sector so they’re willing to underwrite it. We create savings to the region. We need to be able to market and sell that value to health care institutions, the state, and providers of water, sewer, and other services. We should take the Liberty Mutual model: they’re an insurance company, but they spend a lot of money on research and prevention. Health care costs are largely in the private sector, borne by firms. Public health is insurance against getting sick in the future. If we can cash in on this, we have a revenue stream. We need to identify revenue streams that address bad things for people or organizations willing and able to pay us.”

The University’s systems and accounting mechanisms need to facilitate more creative approaches.

- “If SPH wants to pursue more interdisciplinary collaboration, they need to push for more common understanding and frameworks to make this kind of collaboration easier on campus.”

Survey Input. Addressing funding challenges was seen as a critical issue by the majority of survey respondents. In fact, this was the highest-scoring “top issue” facing the School, identified by 57% of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. With nine options provided:

- 52% selected “Explore more creative, innovative, and coordinated approaches to securing more federal government support.”
- 52% selected “Solicit more foundation support.”
- 48% selected “Solicit more private donor support.”
- 40% selected “Develop additional revenue-generating programs.”

7-28-11
Growing School Visibility

The need for better communication and increased visibility of the School has been a theme of discussions, highlighting the need to:

- Raise awareness about public health in general, including strengthening the understanding of what public health is and why it is important.
- Increase the visibility of the UW SPH in particular by presenting a stronger brand and tell compelling stories about SPH’s impact.
- Position and differentiate the UW SPH in the face of increasing numbers of public health schools.

Such efforts are important to maintain existing funding support, access new funding channels as described on the previous page, and attract high caliber faculty, staff, and students.

In particular, an effective advancement function (i.e. fund development) is needed to support fundraising from non-traditional sources.

- “We need to tap into private funds. We have no endowment and few endowed positions. There is a huge pool of untapped money in Seattle. I’m sure the Dean is going that way.”
- “We need to get out there and tell people more about what the School does and how it is helping at the local and regional level. We are not well recognized, and this is directly linked to the ability to fundraise from private sources.”

Stakeholders had additional recommendations about how the School’s visibility might be enhanced:

- “The Dean can’t be effective in his ambassadorship to UW and the external world without a good system to identify and capture the flow of great stories that come out of our school. It’s a key resource he needs. To a large extent this means managing what’s already underway at the department level. He doesn’t need to create something new, but tap efficiently into the flow of information that’s already established. We routinely provide copies of newsletters, website updates, annual reports, and short accounts of research projects to the Dean’s office, but I’m not sure how well it’s reviewed. We often get requests for information we’ve already posted and shared.”
- “There are things we can offer with little cost that add tremendous value, like talking on the radio or with community groups or getting involved in a local issue. This engagement adds a lot of value and builds community goodwill. These things are important to continue.”

Three of five potential strategies were selected as most important by the majority of survey respondents:

- 76% selected “Engage external audiences more frequently about what we do.”
- 69% selected “Measure and publicize our impact.”
- 66% selected “Expand interactions with University leadership to emphasize relevance and importance of public health.”

The only strategy that was not selected as most important by at least 40% of respondents was “Strengthen the School’s identity and logo,” which was selected by 21% or 127 respondents.
Increasing Diversity and Cultural Competency

Whether acting locally or globally, the diversity and cultural competency of SPH faculty, staff, and students directly impacts the ability of the School to accomplish its Mission by understanding and being able to connect with diverse populations. Many respondents viewed racial and ethnic diversity as a weakness of the UW SPH, other than strong representation by international students. While there is a popular desire to increase diversity, there is little consensus on how.

Stakeholder comments and suggestions include the following:

- “We need to move from talk to doing and elevate the importance of the issue by creating stronger tools and policies and actively implement them.”

- “If we want to address public health issues in the world and in this multicultural state of Washington, we need to reflect the population. Public health graduates need cultural competency and to be recognizable to people. We’ve been stuck in a self-enforcing cycle.”

- “If you don’t take diversity seriously, at every level of the organization, it will fall through the cracks. Results correlate with energy and attention. It has to be part of people’s jobs and we have to hold them accountable for it: it’s not optional, not an add-in. Addressing diversity happens at the level of individual units and at times central/school-level resources are needed to make an offer to faculty from underrepresented groups that are highly sought after.”

- “The School should have an office devoted to this issue and own more of the recruitment effort. Now we have several student recruitment efforts across the country and the departments all set-up and pay for different booths.”

- “It is pretty evident that they don’t have a lot of political diversity. It is a very liberal progressive political environment. There is a very strong anti-corporate and anti-industry sentiment. They should pay attention to this.”

- “We’ve been very successful at a department level by taking a pipeline approach and bringing undergrads to our campus for the summer. There are lots of barriers to getting faculty involved, but diversity often gets tasked to staff. The effort then becomes process-oriented that doesn’t go anywhere. The Dean’s office should talk about how to set goals that are commensurate with what faculty can do; incentivize and award faculty for addressing this important issue.”

Survey responses reflected a lack of consensus about how best to address this issue. Nearly half of respondents selected “Create a research and teaching focus on the social, economic, and political determinants of health.” About one-third of respondents selected one of the following strategies:

- “Develop a culture and climate that welcomes a diverse population.” (39%)

- “More effectively make the connection between public health and disadvantaged communities who are more at risk for environmental injustice.” (38%)

- “Establish a dedicated scholarship fund to recruit a more diverse student body.” (33%)
Strengthening Cohesion and Sense of School Community

SPH has a decentralized and relatively uncoordinated model built around strong departments that provide depth of expertise in specialized fields. This model contributes to fragmentation and a lack of affiliation or affinity with an SPH community.

Specific opportunities to strengthen the School’s sense of community were discussed, such as a dedicated SPH building and School-wide events that bring people together and strengthen the sense of community. Examples might include talks and symposia, problem-solving exercises, and a School-level orientation for new staff and students.

Stakeholder comments include:

- “Bring people together quarterly for School-wide meetings. Have more social events. All departments should hold a weekly seminar at the department level.”
- “We could pick a focal problem on an annual basis and draw in people from across the School. One year could focus on homelessness, trying to understand and develop potential interventions.”
- “We could do more projects/problem solving based work that would cut across the School, either on a required or optional basis. What we do now is not integrated. Survey/intro classes aren’t offered for students in their own department, so there’s no chance for students to interact with people from other departments. We should challenge both students and faculty to better integrate.”
- There was some debate among discussion participants about the desirability and need for an SPH building (also see page 22). Pros were noted as increased cohesion and identity as a school; increased collaboration with more interdisciplinary interactions; better classrooms; and better technology provision. Potential cons included potentially diverting resources from faculty/staff salaries and student support and dislocation of School personnel from community locations and institutions.

There was strong agreement among survey respondents about which three strategies are most important to strengthen the School’s sense of community:

- 78% selected “Improve communication across programs, departments, and centers.”
- 57% selected “Establish a central SPH building.”
- 53% selected “Increase the frequency of School-wide events and information sharing.”

Strengthening Internal Coordination

In addition to a lack of cohesion, the School’s decentralized model creates challenges for internal coordination. Discussions focused on improving the flow of communication internally to increase coordination of programmatic details and information-sharing related to research.

- “There’s sometimes a disconnection in the university family, with new proposals sometimes overlapping with what is already being done by someone else within SPH. They need to coordinate more internally – particularly given the tightness of these times.”
- “We have the right mix of strong departments, but what we don’t do very well is talk to one another. There’s lots of compartmentalization of our disciplines, and we don’t do a good job building bridges to other disciplines like civil engineering. It’s partly historical and partly by necessity that we’ve evolved this way – we’re so intensely focused on the day-to-day hunt for money, we have no time or energy to devote to broader thinking. The Plan should address this stove piping issue.”
- “We could have a day where a topic is discussed – malaria, for example. We could show all of the different work in different departments and centers being done on the topic.”
Growing and Strengthening Partnerships

While the School’s current community connections were cited as both a strength and a weakness, the desire to build more and stronger partnerships was a clear theme. There are desires for stronger connections with: the local community, taking advantage of Seattle and regional strengths in health-related topics; the University; the State, particularly with policy-level decision makers; and the global community, particularly Asia.

Stakeholders also expressed a consistent desire for greater reciprocity in partnerships, ensuring they are fully mutually beneficial.

- “I’m happy with our partnership with the School. If I had more time and resources I would do more. There are organizational issues that get in the way of more effective partnerships, however. Personalities, institutional prerogatives, and entitlements often get in the way. Our faculty members are demotivated from developing resources to expand the partnership and often feel excluded from the University. We’re asked to do the work, but are treated as a junior partner and not given equal benefit from the partnership. The focus should be much more on developing a partnership model that maximizes mutual benefits.

The irony is that the greatest loser is the University; better partnerships would result in a much stronger graduate research program that would gain recognition for UW. At its heart it’s an attitudinal problem: the University feels its association with its partners is a favor to them, as opposed to a mutual benefit to the university as well as to other organization. I’m optimistic because Dean Frumkin seems truly focused on collaboration.”

- “At my level, I’ve never seen friction, but there are always opportunities for more and deeper partnerships. I don’t believe we’ve ever sat down and had that conversation.”

- “A strategic plan can support better partnerships. The best people are busy: we need to tempt them away from what they are currently doing with financial support. Seed support is important, as is assistance in finding funding sources outside the university. Co-investment by both schools in strategic direction can provide seed funding and hopefully result in larger projects.”

- “Let’s develop exchanges for faculty and public health professionals – rotations that allow them to walk in each other’s shoes.”

- “When SPH defines “local” it should not refer to just Seattle/King County. Not even just Washington, but the Pacific Northwest.”

- “Previously, there were periodic joint meetings among SPH chairs and the department heads at our institution. These meetings haven’t taken place for some time and we’d like to see them reinstated. They are important to share ideas, research and educational opportunities, recruitment efforts, etc. While there are numerous joint appointments and collaborations there is concern that diminished communication will affect relationships.”

Survey Input

The majority of survey respondents indicated that the School should be a better partner by strengthening links between what the School is doing and partners’ work and by creating opportunities for training exchanges. Many respondents also prioritized sharing research findings and other information.
Investing in People

Succession planning for faculty and mentoring both students and junior faculty members were frequently-raised themes. A commonly-articulated desire was to increase funding support for the School’s teaching function.

- “Given aging faculty, succession planning is needed. Due to the recession, many of our youngest and brightest public health professionals are underemployed.”
- “We’ve had an explosive growth of faculty without a clear idea of how this will work out over the course of a lifespan. It’s ok for some – they thrive – while others struggle. The concept of a triple threat and a powerhouse throughout their career is dangerous. There ought to be mechanisms to allow people to focus the extent of what they do, focus on what they’re good at, especially in the last 10 years of their tenure.”
- “Funding for teaching and mentoring is at a crisis level. Faculty need more time for thinking.”

Discussions highlighted opportunities to improve student services, noting they are decentralized and inconsistent across departments. Career services, financial aid, and planning support for students can be strong at the department or program level, but a lack of School-wide or department cohesion generates some confusion. A stakeholder described an opportunity to provide greater career development services and to encourage graduates to become leaders in their field:

- “We do a pretty good job preparing people to go to work right away. But I’m not convinced where they’ll end up in 10-20 years. Berkeley wants to train people to be leaders of the future – not just good to go, technically sound. They help build ties to their potential mentors in the real world through networking infrastructure, internships, and following up with people. They give them the skills, opportunities, and connections to help them be leaders.”

Investing in Infrastructure: Systems, Technology, and Physical Space

Investment in physical infrastructure may include systems, technology, and classroom or lab space. Of greatest interest is the potential of establishing a dedicated SPH building that would bring more of the School under one roof and offer an upgraded experience for faculty, staff, students, and members of the public. New space could be designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

- “Fragmentation and lack of sense of community across the School is a huge problem. A building would help, but I don’t think the School would fit in one building. The School should focus on supporting faculty and students on research and teaching rather than investing in a building.”
- “I’d love to have a new building, but it’s not high on my list. We’d never fit in one building and get the entire School under a single roof. The concept of a single place is not realistic, setting aside practicalities of funding/building. People who have created their own nest with their own resources may not be favorable to it. Realistically, there are other needs I’d like to focus on.”
- “I have mixed feelings about the building. I’m a complete believer in the concept that having everyone together is good and will benefit teaching and research and provide a better environment and stronger identity for students. However we’ve never had that situation, so research groups have formed all around town in different institutions. They’ve set up infrastructure to do research. If we had a building appear tomorrow, I’m not sure how many people would come to it. It should definitely be explored more in an analytic process to make sure it will accomplish what we’d hope it would. It shouldn’t be a slam-dunk top priority.”
- “SPH needs a new building. They should be more visible and accessible to the community. It’s hard to find your way around their current dismal space. Health is too important to be treated this way.”
Summary of Potential “Big Ideas”

The following list compiles all of the potential “big ideas” listed earlier in this document.

Potential Big Ideas: Aligning the Production, Transmittal, & Application of Knowledge

i. Launch a School-wide curriculum reform effort with a focus on:
   - The linkages between production, transmittal, and application of knowledge
   - Practical skills: social media, communication, policy development, etc.

ii. Establish stronger linkages between research and teaching and encourage research in line with community needs.

iii. Create opportunities for faculty members to compete for dollars that support innovative approaches to the School’s redefined Mission and approach to producing, transmitting, and applying knowledge.

iv. Other?

Potential Big Ideas: Expanding the School’s Educational Models and Audiences

i. Expand the School’s educational offerings and pool of students via more distance learning and lifelong learning.

ii. Develop a 1-year MPH degree for health practitioners, including medical students.

iii. Take a leadership role in developing alliances with West Coast schools of public health.

iv. Other?

Potential Big Ideas: Focus on Specific Public Health Topics

i. Orient the School around addressing the local, regional, and global disease burden transition from infectious disease to chronic disease.

ii. Expand the School’s focus to incorporate the full continuum of health from prevention to early detection to treatment to palliation and from public health to medicine.

iii. Be the school of public health focused on the social determinants of health.

iv. Become the premier school of global public health, interweaving global to local and local to global.

v. Be the national leader in addressing environmental issues such as the urban and built environment or climate change.

vi. Focus on addressing the needs and health of Pacific Northwest communities.

vii. Be the national leader in addressing particular public health challenges that are emerging, such as obesity or the health of an aging population.

viii. Be a national leader in addressing health care reform.

ix. Establish a School-wide foundational focus on public health informatics

x. Other topical areas of focus, drawing on the full list from the chart on page 13 or other ideas.
# UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## Strategic Plan

### 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH</th>
<th>APRIL</th>
<th>MAY</th>
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### Steering Committee Meetings

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<td>• Charge/Operating Principles</td>
<td>• Discuss Vision &amp; Role of School</td>
<td>• Review Key Findings</td>
<td>• Review Draft Plan #1</td>
<td>• Finalize Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>• Communications Plan</td>
<td>• Review Draft Survey</td>
<td>• Discuss Strategic Situation Assessment</td>
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<td>• SWOT Discussion</td>
<td>• Identify Goal Areas</td>
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<td>• Brownbag/Coffee Preparations</td>
<td>• Prepare for Retreat</td>
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Updated 5/26/2011
## Steering Committee Roster

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rich Fenske (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Professor and Associate Chair, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Stergachis (Co-Chair)</td>
<td>Professor, Epidemiology and Global Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Bell</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Camp</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Cohen</td>
<td>Executive Director, Washington Global Health Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janessa Graves</td>
<td>PhD Student, Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Holt</td>
<td>Professor, Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grace John-Stewart</td>
<td>Professor, Global Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Huang</td>
<td>PhD Student, Epidemiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Katz</td>
<td>Principal Lecturer of Health Services and Global Health (adjunct)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Krieger</td>
<td>Chief, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Section Public Health - Seattle and King County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Mayer</td>
<td>Professor, Epidemiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rory Murphy</td>
<td>Manager, Graduate Student Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Pfeiffer</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Global Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Rajaratnam</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, Global Health; Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheryl Schwartz</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Health Promotion Research Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Walker</td>
<td>Professor, Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Weir</td>
<td>Professor and Chair, Biostatistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily White</td>
<td>Professor, Epidemiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Yanez</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Biostatistics</td>
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### Ex-Officio Members

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howie Frumkin</td>
<td>Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Oberle</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Public Health Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Connell</td>
<td>Associate Dean for Academic Affairs</td>
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### Project Support

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alisa Jenny</td>
<td>Special Assistant to the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Murphy</td>
<td>BERK, Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauna Doyle</td>
<td>BERK, Lead Analyst and Facilitator</td>
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</tbody>
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Phone interviews have been conducted with the following individuals to gain their input in the development of this document. Not all targeted individuals were available for interviews during this part of the planning. Additional interviews are planned for later phases of this planning project to round out the perspectives reflected here and gain feedback on draft directions that emerge from the Retreat.

**UW SPH**
- Bruce Weir, Chair, Department of Biostatistics
- David Kalman, Chair, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences
- Scott Davis, Chair, Department of Epidemiology
- King Holmes, Chair, Department of Global Health
- Larry Kessler, Chair, Department of Health Services
- Michael Yost, Chair, School of Public Health Faculty Council

**Partners**
- Larry Corey, President and Director, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Chris Elias, President and CEO, PATH
- Jack Faris, Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Northwest Diabetes Research Institute
- David Fleming, Director and Health Officer for Public Health, Public Health Seattle/King County
- Daniel Friedman, Dean, College of Built Environments
- Gary Goldbaum, Health Officer, Snohomish Health
- Lisa Graumlich, Dean, College of the Environment
- Eric Larson, Executive Director, Group Health Research Institute
- Gil Omenn, Professor of Internal Medicine, Human Genetics, and Public Health at the University of Michigan
- Ross Prentice, Director, Public Health Sciences Division, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Marla Salmon, Dean, School of Nursing
- Mary Selecky, Secretary, Washington State Department of Health
- Ken Stuart, President, Seattle BioMed