

University of Washington School of Public Health Strategic Plan 2012–2020

Excellent science, shared passion, enduring impact



LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The School of Public Health Strategic Plan has been developed through countless hours of hard work and thought by hundreds of members of the School of Public Health community—students, staff, faculty, and partners from a wide range of organizations.

This Strategic Plan comes at a dynamic and opportune time. As a field, public health is confronting an ever broader set of challenges: long-standing and recently emerging infectious diseases, rapid increases in non-communicable diseases, a growing epidemic of injuries, and more. Underlying these threats is an equally broad set of root causes: globalization, urbanization, environmental degradation, and persistent social inequities. The global economic recession and resulting cuts in research and social service budgets threaten to shred the fabric of public health and welfare.

At the same time, advances in science and technology offer unprecedented opportunities to advance public health. These range from biomedical advances such as genomics, to innovations in information technology, to “green” technologies such as clean energy and green chemistry. In universities across the country, including University of Washington, study in public health and global health enjoys extraordinary popularity among students.

At the University of Washington School of Public Health, more than 40 years of leadership have built a towering legacy. The School is known worldwide for its excellence in graduate programs,

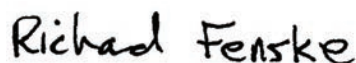
biostatistical and epidemiologic methods, clinical trials, toxicology and exposure science, global health, infectious diseases, cancer epidemiology, health administration, nutritional sciences... the list goes on. UW SPH programs consistently rank among the best in the nation, and our graduates hold leadership positions in government, nongovernmental organizations, and academia. A key theme of this Strategic Plan is to consolidate and sustain these strengths.

The School has a well-earned reputation for innovation, and for addressing emerging challenges with creativity and energy. In recent years, we have launched programs in public health genetics, global medicines, implementation science, ecogenetics, and nanotechnology to name a few, that are already making major contributions to their fields. This Strategic Plan continues that tradition, by identifying six carefully selected areas of emerging public health importance in which the School can build on existing strengths to develop world-class initiatives.

We thank the members of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee; Alisa Jenny, who managed the process; facilitators and strategic planners from BERK; the faculty, staff, and students of the School; and the many external partners who contributed to this Strategic Plan. As we move from planning to implementation, we look forward to building an even stronger institution, and to advancing our vision of “Healthy people in sustainable communities—locally, nationally, and globally” through education, research, and service.



Andy Stergachis, PhD
Co-Chair, Steering Committee



Rich Fenske, PhD
Co-Chair, Steering Committee



Howard Frumkin, MD, DrPH
Dean

Strategic Planning Steering Committee Members

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

Ex-Officio Members

Howie Frumkin, Dean
Mark Oberle, Associate Dean for Public Health Practice
Fred Connell, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Project Manager

Alisa Jenny, Special Assistant to the Dean

Facilitation

Brian Murphy and Fauna Doyle, BERK



Additional information including our situational assessment is available on the web site:
<http://sph.washington.edu/strategicplan>.

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University of Washington School of Public Health

Strategic Plan 2012–2020

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SPH Archives



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

INTRODUCTION

The University of Washington School of Public Health is among the nation's leading schools of public health, with a long track record of outstanding research, teaching excellence, and impact. The School enjoys a unique position of regional, national, and global influence in public health due to the leadership and academic excellence of its Departments of Biostatistics, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Global Health, and Health Services, as well as its many institutes, centers, and programs and collaborative relationships with many organizations. Our contributions to public health through our faculty-driven research, teaching, and practice benefit the health and well-being of the residents of Washington State, the region, and the world.

These are dynamic times. With profound and rapid change around us—demographic, economic, political, scientific, technical, cultural, and environmental—our expertise in research, teaching, and mentoring public health scientists and leaders is more important than ever. However, we face substantial challenges to sustaining our excellence because of the economic downturn, reduced funding for public universities, and keen

competition for research funding. To sustain our excellence, we need to **strengthen our core functions**, while seeking innovative ways of doing our work, new revenue streams, and flexibility, nimbleness, and efficiency. At the same time, to **meet emerging challenges**, we need to grow in carefully targeted ways, pursuing opportunities and building on our existing strengths.

As we create and implement our Strategic Plan: 2012–2020, we remain true to the School's overarching vision of a healthier world. We believe that the health and well-being of current and future generations are directly tied to sustainable natural and built environments and to the economic, political, and social systems that define communities. We also remain true to our mission of **education** (*preparing outstanding public health leaders and scientists*), **research** (*advancing public health knowledge and policies*), and **service** (*promoting the health and well-being of communities*). We do not view these as distinct domains. We honor the intersections of education, research, and service through student research, university-community research collaborations, and field based service-learning opportunities.

The Planning Process

We initiated strategic planning in Spring 2011 through a process that included extensive participation and input from across the School, the University, and from community partners. The work was guided by a Steering Committee of faculty, staff, students, and community representatives charged with creatively considering the School's strategic position and opportunities and with addressing the School as a whole rather than as its component pieces. The Steering Committee reviewed existing data and gathered input from focus groups, outreach meetings, interviews, and a web-based survey with approximately 800 respondents (see Appendices A and B, <http://sph.washington.edu/strategicplan/Appendices.pdf>). Students, community partners, staff, and faculty also participated in a two-day strategic planning retreat.

Once the first draft of the Strategic Plan was written and approved by the Steering Committee, its members sought review and comment through discussions at faculty meetings, hosted forums, input through electronic communication, and numerous informal discussions with faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. The Steering Committee then revised the Plan, doing its best to consider and accommodate the rich feedback received.

Directions Set by the Plan

This Strategic Plan envisions the School we want to be in 10, 20, or even 50 years. The Plan is grounded in what we do well and commits us to sustaining excellence through strengthening our core functions. Areas of long-standing excellence include biostatistical and epidemiological research methodology, laboratory sciences, translational science, and rigorous education. We have applied these assets successfully to work on cancer, cardiovascular disease, environmental and occupational health, genomics, health systems financing and management, HIV/AIDS, and public health practice.

The Plan is also grounded in an awareness of current difficulties: an uncertain financial climate, faculty time that is stretched to the limit, rising tuition that poses a burden on students, a highly dispersed School community, and insufficient diversity. Elements of the Plan address each of these challenges.

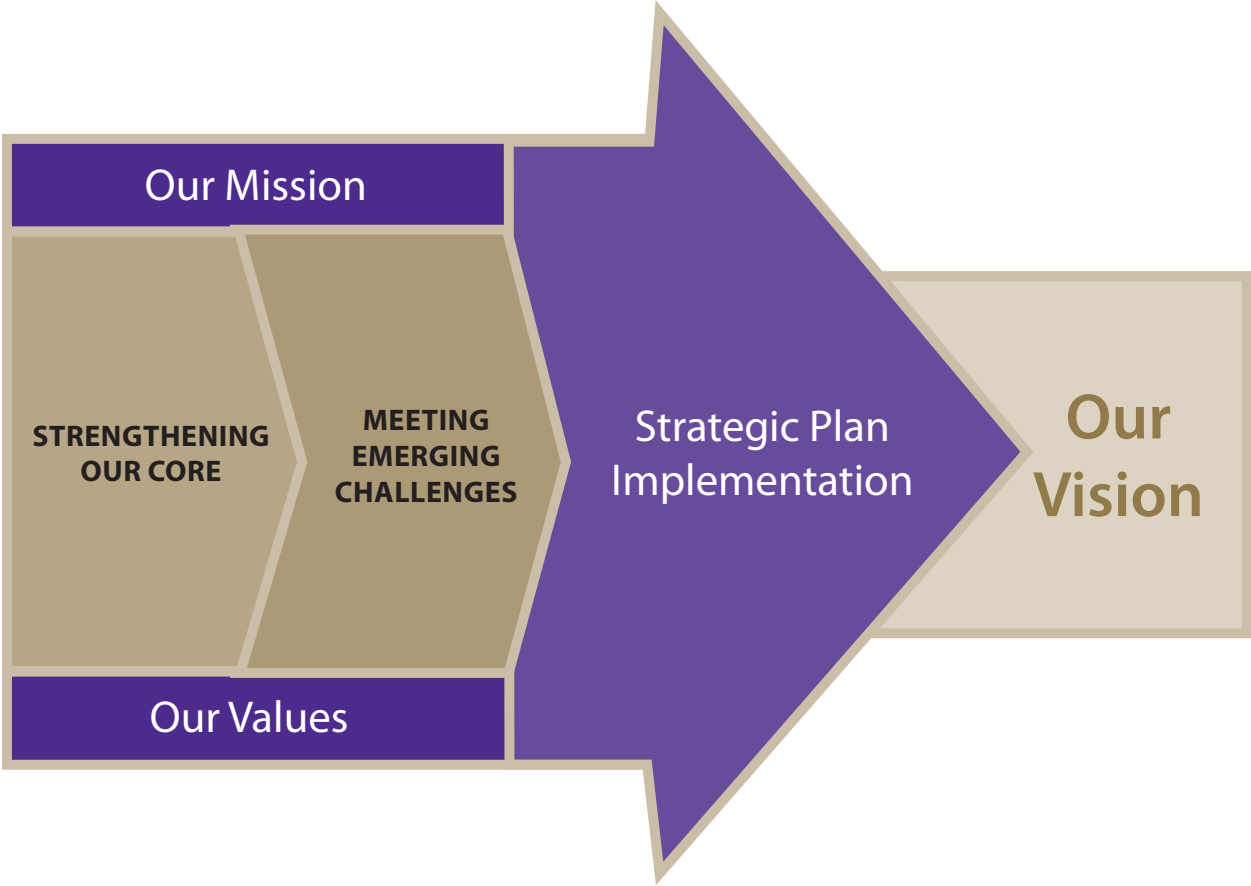
Importantly, the Plan is aspirational and future-oriented. It reflects the interests of the School in its larger context, including its place within the University, the State of Washington, the region, the nation, and the world. It identifies six emerging public health challenges, based on broad support from across the School community, that offer extraordinary opportunities to build on our strengths, innovate and collaborate, advance science, provide state-of-the-art training, and extend our impact on public health. The Plan creates a platform from which we can shape our future, develop new resources, train scientists and public health leaders equipped to serve the needs of a changing world, and continue to lead through coming decades.



Strategic Plan Implementation

The success and ultimate impact of the Strategic Plan will depend on its implementation, requiring a high level of leadership, collaboration, communication, and participation. Successful implementation will require the engagement of all parts of the School community, including the School’s decision-making bodies, notably the School of Public Health Executive Committee and the Faculty Council, as well as faculty, staff, students, alumni, and partner organizations. Committees will likely be appointed to advance each of the Plan’s major components.

Priorities, timelines, and responsible individuals will be identified for each strategy as it is phased into the School’s operations. Importantly, the Strategic Plan is not intended to divert resources from existing programs. Instead, the entire Strategic Plan will guide fundraising and investment of new resources, reinforce efforts to strengthen the School’s core functions, and facilitate collaboration across the School. Annual review of implementation progress, based on defined metrics and re-assessment of priorities and actions, will be critical to mapping our success in reaching our goals. Implementation plans will be reviewed broadly and regularly, and revised accordingly.



OUR FOUNDATION

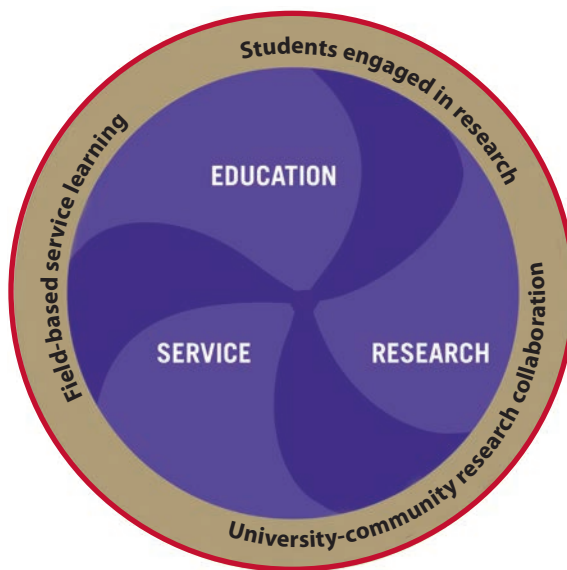
Our Vision

Healthy people in sustainable communities—locally, nationally, and globally.

Our Mission

The University of Washington School of Public Health is dedicated to:

- **education** to prepare outstanding, innovative, and diverse public health leaders and scientists
- **research** to advance public health science and policies
- **service** to promote the health and well-being of communities locally, nationally, and globally



Our Values

Integrity • Collaboration • Impact • Innovation •
Diversity • Equity • Excellence • Stewardship • Courage

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Integrity | Adhere to the highest standards of objectivity, professional integrity, and scientific rigor. |
| Collaboration | Nurture creative, team-based, and interdisciplinary approaches to advancing scientific research and knowledge, and improving population health. |
| Impact | Evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts, assess if we have made a difference, and learn from our experiences. |
| Innovation | Create innovative approaches to educating and inspiring students and to answering important public health questions. |
| Diversity | Embrace and build on diverse perspectives, beliefs, and cultures to promote public health. |
| Equity | Promote equity and social justice in defining and addressing health and health care. |
| Excellence | Recognize our school-wide strengths and the contributions of our faculty, staff, and students. |
| Stewardship | Practice careful stewardship of the trust and resources invested in us. |
| Courage | Bring courage, passion, and perseverance to advance public health principles in policy discourse. |

OUR PLAN: AN OVERVIEW

Strengthening Our Core

1. Strengthen Our Teaching
Review and Revitalize the MPH Curriculum
Invest in Our Ability to Teach, Mentor, and Advise
2. Strengthen Our Research
3. Strengthen Our Collaborations with Community Partners
4. Globalize the School
5. Improve Our Diversity
6. Enhance Our School Community
7. Promote the School
“Tell Our Story” Effectively
Strengthen our Resources through Advancement



Meeting Emerging Challenges

- A. Global Environmental Change and Human Health
- B. Genomics and Public Health
- C. Obesity, Food, Physical Activity, and Health
- D. Health Policy and Health Systems
- E. Public Health Implementation Science
- F. Social Determinants of Health



STRENGTHENING OUR CORE

The University of Washington School of Public Health has a long and proud history of excellence. The faculty, staff, and trainees in the Departments of Biostatistics, Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, Epidemiology, Global Health, and Health Services, and in the School's many institutes, centers, and programs, have outstanding reputations and approach their teaching, research, and service collaboratively. The School is a major contributor to improving the health of populations in Washington State, the Pacific Northwest, and across the globe, building on strong and complementary partnerships with individuals and organizations on the UW campus, regionally, nationally, and around the world.

These are dynamic times. State support for higher education has fallen dramatically, creating uncertainty about funding for instruction, and shifting the burden to faculty members who must seek financial support for their work and to students who face painful tuition increases. Federal support for biomedical research is stagnant or, in some cases, falling. A substantial cohort of School faculty, hired during the 1970s and 1980s, is approaching retirement. Demand for public health education has never been higher and the format for instructional delivery is shifting with advances in technology and pedagogical methods. The School will undergo its seventh accreditation during 2012–2013, a time-consuming process that requires careful self-study. The School's commitment to diversity needs to be re-emphasized and operationalized. On top of all this, public health challenges continue to evolve at incredible speeds.

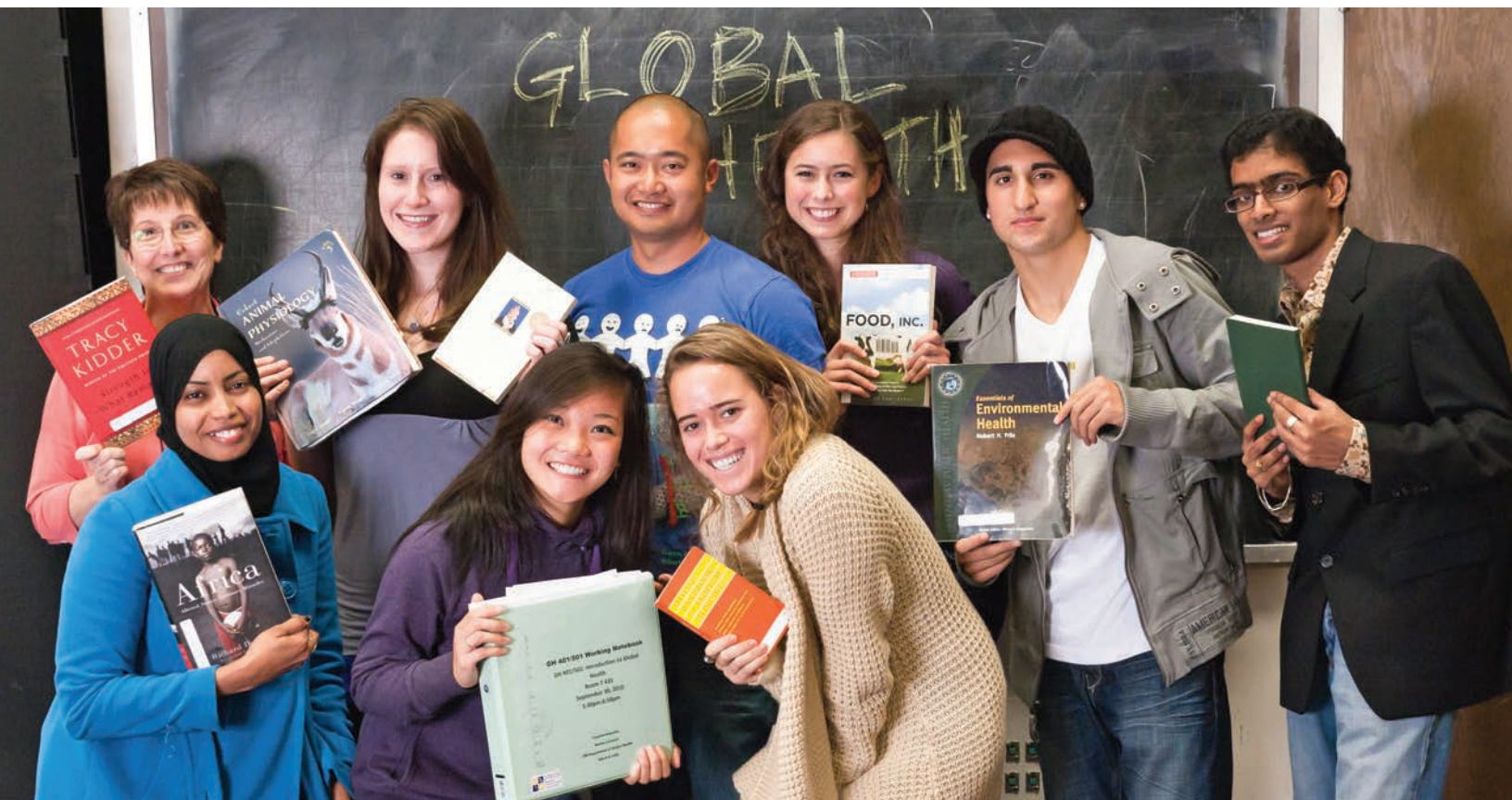
These and other factors call for thoughtful, intentional planning for the future. Strategies designed to preserve and promote the ability of our School to carry out its mission are established on the following pages. While no specific timelines are included, strengthening our core will require a phased approach. Successful implementation will be carried out through consultation and collaboration across the School, the UW campus, and with community partners.



GOAL 1 | STRENGTHEN OUR TEACHING

Review and Revitalize the MPH Curriculum

- 1.1 Review the current MPH curriculum to ensure that graduates have the skills and practical competencies necessary to be productive, effective, and transformational public health leaders, scientists, and practitioners.
- 1.2 Evaluate establishing an abbreviated degree program for clinical professionals, including medical students.
- 1.3 Regularly review and modify programs so they do not become outdated.
- 1.4 Identify best practices and improve efficiencies in teaching and course offerings.



Philip Lam

More on Reviewing and Revitalizing the MPH Curriculum

The MPH curriculum should align with the future needs of the world's population and what will be needed from the public health workforce. It should use effective pedagogical methods, including modern instructional technologies, problem-based learning, field experience, and interdisciplinary opportunities, and it should include:

A focus on the core discipline-specific public health competencies, including:

- Biostatistics, environmental and occupational health sciences, epidemiology, health policy and management, global health, and social and behavioral sciences.
- Methodologies such as biostatistical analysis and modeling, cost-effectiveness and other economic assessments, exposure science, and epidemiologic study design.

A focus on the foundational determinants of health, including:

- Biological: Knowledge of the influence of environmental factors on population health, and the interaction of genetic characteristics and environmental factors that affect health risks, including a consideration of the ethical, legal, social, and political implications of using genomic information and technologies.
- Social: Knowledge of the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and the social structure and health systems that are shaped by the distribution of resources, money, and power at local, national, and global levels that influence health inequities.

The ability to contribute effectively to improving population health, including:

- Public health biology: Incorporate public health biology issues into public health, including informing the development and implementation of public health interventions, laws, policies, and regulations in areas such as food, nutrition, growth, and development.
- Implementation science and program planning and evaluation: Skills to ensure public health science is applied in effective ways that improve population health.
- Global public health: Knowledge of the public health needs of different cultures and communities globally and of the challenges posed by global health disparities.
- Public policy: A fundamental understanding of how policy is made and how it shapes population health.
- Collaborative and interpersonal skills: Development of strong written and verbal communication, advocacy, and management skills.
- Lifelong learning: Preparation to adapt and change throughout one's career.
- Cultural competency: Skills to work effectively with peers and populations from diverse backgrounds.
- Coalition building: Skills to collaborate across sectors, and gather and assess evidence for best practices.

Rigorous practical experience prior to entering the workforce:

- Increase field research or practicum opportunities.
- Increase opportunities for students to study or work abroad.



Invest in Our Ability to Teach, Mentor, and Advise

- 1.5** Strengthen the delivery of high-quality education in our undergraduate, MPH, MS, and PhD programs.
- Establish mechanisms, such as hiring criteria and faculty incentives, to improve the quality of our teaching, advising, and mentoring.
 - Improve our pedagogical models and increase the use of adult learning methods, such as greater use of problem-based learning, as appropriate, through professional development and by bringing practitioners in as instructors and mentors.
- 1.6** Improve the quality and consistency of written and on-line curriculum materials.
- Develop standardized teaching tools for use across departments.
 - Provide information and support to faculty to create and maintain comprehensive course websites.
- 1.7** Extend our teaching beyond the classroom.
- Convene forums for community, workforce, and business partners to explore how to optimize limited resources to improve community and workplace health.
 - Provide opportunities for our students to teach public health to K–12 students, undergraduates, workers, and the general public.
- 1.8** Enhance our ability to advise and mentor students effectively.
- Improve support for staff and faculty advising and mentoring of students.
 - Strengthen School-wide student services.
- 1.9** Seek financial support for students through scholarships, training grants, and other mechanisms.
- 1.10** Expand the public health undergraduate program.
- Create a pedagogically sound, high-quality undergraduate public health curriculum with elective areas of focus.
- 1.11** Broaden opportunities for public health training.
- Offer additional and varied educational opportunities to public health practitioners, such as short-courses and certification programs.
 - Explore opportunities to use distance learning technologies effectively.
 - Consider developing public health content modules for use in other UW schools and colleges.

GOAL 2 | STRENGTHEN OUR RESEARCH

- 2.1 Develop and strengthen robust research support, both methodological (such as biostatistical collaborations) and procedural (such as assistance with grant proposal processing) to optimize the research experience for faculty.
- 2.2 Develop mechanisms (such as pilot grants) to assist junior faculty in initiating research programs.
- 2.3 Develop mechanisms to facilitate cross-disciplinary research, including mutually beneficial arrangements between departments and with other schools and colleges at UW.
- 2.4 Develop equitable, transparent, and predictable ways of recovering and allocating indirect costs.



right to left: Jennifer Earle, DEOHS Archives



GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN OUR COLLABORATIONS WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- 3.1** Become the go-to academic public health resource for the Pacific Northwest.
- Increase the School's collaboration with public health practitioners on issues that affect the Pacific Northwest region.
 - Actively participate in promoting health through student practicums, internships, publications, and appearances in popular media; presentations to and participation on advisory and decision-making bodies; and providing evidence-based information.
- 3.2** Strengthen connections between research programs and the needs of communities and practitioners.
- Promote community research links through outreach, consultative activities, support of translational and community-based participatory research, and rewarding faculty, staff, and students who collaborate effectively with community partners.



Northwest Center for Public Health Practice

GOAL 4 | GLOBALIZE THE SCHOOL

- 4.1 Increase our engagement and formalize ties with key global health organizations, the private sector, advocacy organizations, and immigrant populations.
- 4.2 Globalize the curriculum, ensuring that the majority of courses at the School contain material relevant to global health concerns and provide a global context for national and local issues.
- 4.3 Recruit innovative faculty and students from around the globe.
- 4.4 Secure funding for junior faculty, fellows, and students to support career development and innovative global research and projects.



left to right: Yuh-Chi Niou, © 2009 I-TECH/Julia Sherburne



GOAL 5 | IMPROVE OUR DIVERSITY

- 5.1** Establish a standing diversity committee in consultation with the School community.
 - Promulgate policies and communications designed to improve diversity.
- 5.2** Strengthen diversity within the curriculum.
 - Review the current curriculum to assure that core requirements for students in all programs include material and methodologies for understanding and addressing socioeconomic status, class, race, and other social determinants of health.
- 5.3** Diversify the School's faculty and staff.
 - Develop School-wide recruitment policies with guidelines and measurable goals that build on existing guidelines and draw on successful models. These policies should hold search committees, chairs, and the dean accountable for taking actions that ensure searches produce a diverse pool of applicants.
 - Design and disseminate SPH guidelines for mentoring and retention programs for underrepresented minority faculty and staff.
 - Establish a program to invite talented underrepresented minority faculty in public health disciplines to spend a half-year or a year at the School.
- 5.4** Strengthen recruitment and mentoring of students from underrepresented populations.
 - Develop and implement a robust student recruitment policy, including establishing the criteria for admission to SPH degree programs that promote diverse applicants.
 - Establish "pipelines" through connections to middle schools, high schools, and traditionally minority serving colleges.
 - Invest in community-building events and professional development activities for students from underrepresented populations.

The Importance of Diversity

Diversity is a core element of educational quality that must be addressed systematically and proactively. Our training, teaching, and research must reflect our society's increasing cultural and racial diversity for our students to be prepared and productive. Greater diversity is not simply an end in itself, but a means to improving the health of the public and the richness and breadth of our educational experience and work environment.



GOAL 6

ENHANCE OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- 6.1 Provide space and technological infrastructure to support educational and research goals.
- 6.2 Invest in School-wide events that bring our broad community together for rich interactions.
 - Celebrate academic life-cycle events, such as orientation and graduation.
 - Initiate collaborative, problem-solving exercises.
 - Enhance activities aimed at socializing and celebration.
- 6.3 Strengthen mechanisms for sharing information and collaborating across the School.
- 6.4 Invest in faculty and staff professional development, innovation, and leadership skill-building.



left to right: Red Fish Blue Fish/Toni Pinto, Lawrie Robertson



“Tell Our Story” Effectively

- 7.1 Present a strong, cohesive, School-level voice, articulating our Vision and Mission, and documenting the School’s contributions to the general public; University of Washington community; local and state leaders; colleagues regionally, nationally, and globally; and potential funders.
- 7.2 Develop and propagate key messages for use by faculty and staff—on the website, in printed materials, and via other communication media.
- 7.3 Build on existing strengths and highlight new areas of focus. For example, the UW SPH is the place to be if you want to:
 - Establish a strong foundation in the basic sciences of public health.
 - Address health concerns from a global perspective and play an active role in solving the health challenges of the Pacific Northwest region.
- 7.4 Revisit the School’s external image to align it with the directions set by this plan.

Strengthen Our Resources through Advancement

- 7.5 Develop a program to identify potential funders that includes experienced School-level professional staff and close coordination with faculty.
- 7.6 Emphasize support for faculty, staff, students, and facilities.
- 7.7 Build fundraising approaches around the priorities stated in this Strategic Plan.

MEETING EMERGING CHALLENGES

Public health is a dynamic field, with constantly emerging and re-emerging health threats and challenges. Six topical areas, chosen through a deliberative process, are identified as strategic priorities for growth. The areas address pressing public health challenges and are based on strategic advantages, such as existing strengths at the School, strength elsewhere at UW, and our potential to contribute to science and make a positive impact on the health of populations. Each topic has the potential to engage the entire School and build new bridges across departments and UW schools and colleges and affiliated community-based organizations. Growth in these

areas will include each part of the School's Mission: education—preparing outstanding, innovative, and diverse public health leaders; research—advancing public health science and policies; and service—promoting the health and well-being of communities locally, nationally, and globally.

While no specific timelines are included in this Strategic Plan, addressing these emerging public health areas will require a phased approach, including fundraising. Successful implementation will be carried out through consultation and collaboration across the School, the UW campus, and with community partners.



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A

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND HUMAN HEALTH

Accelerated changes in natural and built environments have unprecedented implications for human health and well-being on a global scale. Health can no longer be viewed solely through the lenses of medical care or public health. Long-term human security requires that gains in human health be accompanied by corresponding gains in the health and sustainability of ecosystems and built environments. There is a need for a systems approach that blends biomedical, social, and physical sciences; includes adaptive learning; and addresses decision-making in the face of uncertainty.

Our strengths in this area include a robust Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, methodological expertise

in biostatistics and epidemiology necessary for methods development, and a global health orientation that corresponds to the scale of many environmental changes. There is extensive expertise in UW's Colleges and Schools of Environment, Built Environments, and Engineering. The "Climate Change and Global Health" initiative, launched by the Department of Global Health, has engaged faculty from ten UW schools and colleges, focusing on food and water security under climate change. Moreover, there are strong funding prospects from private donors, foundations, and federal agencies. The UW has the opportunity to form a community of scholars across disciplines to become a leading academic center at the nexus of global environmental change and health.



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B

GENOMICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Advances in genomics will increasingly help guide public health practice. Understanding genetic differences in disease susceptibility holds great promise in prevention research, as a full understanding of the etiology of multifactorial diseases will be essential in identifying effective prevention strategies to reduce the burden of diseases. It is becoming the case that nearly every epidemiological study has a genomic component. Virtually every component of public health will be substantially impacted by changes in science and technology that relate directly to genomics. Genomic profiles may also determine how individuals respond to environmental exposures and so affect public health responses.

At the individual level, rapid advances in molecular technology have led to the new omics fields of genomics, epigenomics, proteomics, metabolomics, transcriptomics, and lipidomics. At the population level, similarly vast arrays of detailed medical records allow the detection of subtle patterns to aid the formulation of mechanisms for the prevention and treatment of diseases that have previously been impossible with limited study populations. The enormous challenges to managing and interpreting these data are

matched by equally enormous potential benefits for public health. There is a particularly pressing need for the development of new statistical methodologies. Research and training are needed to address problems of design and interpretation of studies of -omic and medical record data.

The UW is poised to be a national and global leader in this area. Within the School, faculty members in the Department of Biostatistics are leaders in developing and applying statistical methodologies for high-throughput -omic data in collaboration with researchers across UW and beyond. Existing strengths also include the Institute for Public Health Genetics, the Center for Genomics&PublicHealth—one of only two centers in the nation focused on integrating genomic advances into public health practice—and the Center for Ecogenetics and Environmental Health. The School houses coordinating centers for the multi-site GENEVA and GARNET whole-genome association study consortia. Additionally, there are relevant collaborations with UW Departments of Computer Science, Genome Sciences and Statistics; the new Northwest Institute of Genetic Medicine; and the Northwest Genomics Center in the School of Medicine.



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C

OBESITY, FOOD, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND HEALTH

Obesity is a public health issue of growing importance. About two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese, with the disease burden falling disproportionately on disadvantaged minorities and groups. The consequences on morbidity and mortality as well as the associated medical, social, economic, and psychological costs demand speedy and effective solutions. Both food intake and physical activity play important roles. An understanding of food intake requires a multidisciplinary approach, ranging from dietetics and nutritional science to agricultural economics to the sociology and anthropology of food. An understanding of physical activity also requires a multidisciplinary approach, ranging from the design of buildings, neighborhoods, and cities to the economic and social factors that determine health behaviors.

The UW is well positioned to consolidate existing strengths, and build selectively, to become a leader in addressing these complex issues. Strengths at the School include the Center for Public Health Nutrition, the Health Promotion

Research Center, the Center for Obesity Research, and the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Nutritional Sciences. Methodological strength in biostatistics and epidemiology will help advance the multilevel analyses and complex models needed in this field. Colleagues in the UW College of Built Environments have strong interests in the intersection of their work with health, and colleagues in the College of the Environment are leading researchers in agriculture. There are strong collaborative links with both schools. SPH researchers also collaborate with partners at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Group Health Research Institute, and other partner institutions on investigations of obesity etiology and prevention, dietary and physical activity behavior change at worksites and in communities, and evaluation of health promotion programs and policies. In addition to such research activities, the School can assist with policy development and evaluation in the area of obesity prevention, healthy eating, and physical activity promotion by collaborating with local and state health agencies.



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D

HEALTH POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The U.S. health care system is the most expensive in the world. Yet the health of the U.S. population overall is demonstrably worse than that of most wealthy countries. The structure and incentives in our system have engendered fiscal inefficiencies and an inequitable and unpredictable distribution of care. And as the health care system continues to consume an ever greater share of our country's economy, health inequities in the system also continue to grow. A major impediment to achieving good outcomes, fairness, and fiscal efficiency in our system is the failure to infuse policy discussions with evidence and sound analysis.

The UW can offer a meaningful contribution to the health policy dialogue locally, nationally, and globally. The School has a history of health policy research, analysis, and service. This foundation will be expanded by applying the many strengths offered across our departments, including outcomes research and comparative effectiveness research (Health Services); population risk assessment (Biostatistics and Epidemiology);

environmental toxicants and occupational health services and outcomes research (Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences); and global health metrics and evaluation (Global Health). The School will foster policy research, teaching, and service linkages across departments and research centers, such as the Centers for Comparative and Health System Effectiveness and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, and with other UW schools and colleges, such as the School of Law and the College of Built Environments. The School will leverage existing collaborative relationships in the community, for example, with public health and social services agencies, executive-branch leaders, health care providers and purchasers, and community organizations. Growth in the policy area will allow the School to bring evidence and sound analysis to policy discussions in an environment of rapidly evolving health care system changes. This contribution also will help position the School as a highly successful competitor for federal, state, and foundation support for both applied and translational research.



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E

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Implementation science is the study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices into routine practice to improve the quality and effectiveness of health services and care. Implementation science is an emerging field, both domestically and globally, and an essential component of translating effective public health programs from evidence to action. Implementation Science uses rigorous methods in practical field settings to improve health and well-being locally, nationally, and globally.

Many public health professionals trained in the classical scientific disciplines of public health (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health services) will go on to lead interdisciplinary public health programs. Future public health scientists and leaders therefore must understand not only delivery of innovation,

but also innovation of delivery. For example, several exciting developments, some led by UW faculty or graduates, will lead to new multicomponent HIV/AIDS prevention programs. Interdisciplinary training and field experience in public health program science will enable future public health leaders to understand and undertake such efforts along a program science continuum, from new evidence to monitoring impact.

In a city rich with global health organizations and health agencies and with a faculty deeply experienced in implementing health programs, the University of Washington is well positioned to be a global leader in implementation science. The PhD in Metrics and Implementation Science, scheduled for launch in 2012, will be the first program of its kind in the United States, and will pave the way for further innovation in research, teaching, and service at the School and the University.



Courtesy UW Department of Global Health

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SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Health is influenced by the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, and work, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. The social determinants of health are a major contributor to health inequities and the differences in health status seen within and between countries. The World Health Organization identifies health as a key contributor to a wide range of societal goals. Health inequities constitute a clear indicator of the failure of a society's policies across many domains, including education, housing, justice, and security. In the words of *Lancet* editor Richard Horton, "Public health is the science of social justice, overcoming the forces that undermine the future security of families, communities, and peoples."

Research and education about the social determinants of health are occurring at the School in various centers and institutes, including the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, the Health Promotion Research Center, and the Center for Disability Policy and Research. There are methodological challenges to building the evidence base, requiring statistical and epidemiologic expertise. The emphasis is on creating synergies around current work and developing new ideas that will advance the field of social determinants. Within the University of Washington there are opportunities to partner with the schools and colleges.



left to right: Gerry Croteau, © 2012 www.photos.com



Contact Info

School of Public Health
University of Washington
F-350 Health Sciences, Box 357230
Seattle, WA 98195-7230
Phone: 206-543-1144
Fax: 206-543-3813
<http://sph.washington.edu/>

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