Creating a College of Public Health and Human Sciences for the State of Oregon

1. A bold inspired concept

With inspiration gleaned from Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, "Change is never brought about by a bunch of shrinking violets!" and as part of a larger effort to establish a world-class system of public health in Oregon, aligning with its Strategic Plan Phase II, Oregon State University (OSU) is moving forward with the creation of a College of Public Health and Human Sciences (CPHHS) for the state of Oregon to improve the health and well-being of Oregonians.

Through OSU’s capacity as a Land Grant University and reputation as a leading national research institution, combined with strong political and private foundation backing of this initiative, the CPHHS for the State of Oregon will become a magnet for national and international students, researchers and research teams. These exemplary individuals will serve to both attract and develop future world-class leadership in the field of public health and will be the catalyst for conducting multidisciplinary and translational research at OSU.

The Oregon Health Policy Commission has noted that public health interventions have had a greater effect on health outcomes than any medical interventions. Life expectancy has quadrupled in the last 150 years due to basic measures such as municipal water treatment, hand washing, food safety measures, vaccination programs, and fortification of food staples such as bread and milk with essential vitamins and minerals. Yet for the first time in American history, a child born today has a shorter life span than her parents. Modern technology has created new obstacles to health in our society, and we are again faced with changing our public environment to maintain and improve the public’s health.

One third of deaths in Oregon can be attributed to just three unhealthy behaviors: tobacco use, lack of physical activity and poor eating habits. These behaviors often result in and exacerbate chronic disease. Heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory disease and diabetes account for two of every three deaths on Oregon. Furthermore, one out of every three years of potential life lost before the age of 65 is due to chronic disease. Chronic diseases reduce the quality of life of individuals, burden families and friends, and are responsible for massive health care expenditures.
2. An opportunity to serve and lead

Oregon is the only west coast state without an accredited school or college of public health. A landmark opportunity to address the state’s lack of public health capacity now stands before Oregonians and their state land grant university. A window of opportunity from now until 2013 exists for OSU to provide leadership in establishing an accredited college of public health for Oregon. The proposed CPHHS at OSU is a cornerstone of Oregon’s effort to establish a world-class system of public health through research, teaching, service and strong workforce development. In ongoing cooperation with existing and new programs, the proposed college will improve the conditions of Oregonians. The challenge is clear. The time to act is now, and OSU is prepared to lead.

3. An existing solid foundation

The College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS) embraces a holistic approach to studying health across the lifespan. From first cry to last year, we depend on diet, exercise and mutual care to foster health and quality of life. Science-based medicine provides a second line of defense against illness. We take a holistic approach through mindful living. This approach provides an innovative model for providing health of the public for the 21st century that addresses complex transdisciplinary health issues including obesity, chronic diseases, and environmental safety. The new CPHHS at OSU will be unique in its interdisciplinary nature combining the traditional public health disciplines with the life span approaches of “health/human sciences,” specifically Nutrition, Exercise Sciences, and Human Development and Family Sciences, along with two integrated research centers – Hallie Ford Center for Health Children and Families and Center for Health Aging Research. Although specific foci and approaches differ, each of the disciplines in the proposed CPHHS shares a common commitment to optimizing human health and well-being.

Currently, the Department of Public Health in HHS offers the most comprehensive range of undergraduate through doctoral level degree programs in the Pacific Northwest and OSU is the only institution in the state of Oregon that offers a PhD in Public Health. In addition, OSU is part of the collaborative Oregon Master of Public Health (OMPH) Program; a cooperative statewide MPH program accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health and provides leadership in the field of education, research and service in all aspects of public health.

A CPHHS at OSU would also be uniquely positioned in Oregon to provide public health science and expertise (applied knowledge) to communities through the state’s Cooperative Extension Service – Family and Community health and 4-H. The Extension delivery system already exists to provide public health expertise to local County Health departments in many ways.
4. Transformation of the College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS) into an accredited College of Public Health and Human Sciences (CPHHS):

CHHS is in the process of implementing a phased transition to become an accredited CPHHS. This initiative is part of a larger, statewide effort involving a variety of stakeholders to develop a fully functioning public health system. A CLHO/AOC capacity assessment conducted in 2008 identified local health departments as having only 57% of the capacity of a fully functioning public health system as defined by the National Association of County and City Health Officials. The greatest gaps were in public health policy development, program evaluation, and research; three domains supported by academic institutions. An accredited CPHHS will address these identified gaps and will train the public health workforce Oregon needs now and in the future. Accredited college status will also qualify OSU to apply for a number of new and substantial resources, including prevention research centers, grants and service contracts. When the transformation of CHHS into a new CPHHS is completed, the Division of Health Sciences will feature three accredited professional degree programs, with dual degree programs across the three constituent colleges.

Specific initiatives:

1. Establish an accredited CPHHS (see Figure 1 below).
   The process of transforming CHHS into an accredited CPHHS is well underway. Initial steps involved redesign of the organizational structure of CHHS and creation of MPH program tracks in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Thereafter, the focus shifted to capacity development, including targeted faculty recruitment, growth in extramurally funded grants and contracts, and development of legislative support. The final step in the process will involve formal submission of an application for accreditation in July 2011, with approval of accreditation expected in 2014. The proposed model of CPHHS is depicted in Figure 1.

2. Creation of dual degree programs (DVM-MPH and PharmD-MPH).
   Development of dual degree programs is necessary to realize the vision of employing a one medicine-one health approach to public health. Such an approach recognizes the importance of controlling the spread of disease between animals and people, and the imperative that translational research be conducted to facilitate the “bench-top to bedside” development of therapeutic modalities and products.
   To accomplish this objective, it is necessary that:
   • policy be approved to allow dual use of graduate and professional degree courses;
   • dual degree curricula be developed and approved by the Graduate Council; and
   • program expansion be funded and advertised in preparation for recruitment and admission of students.
4. Integration of 4-H into College of (Public) Health and Human Sciences and Division of Health Sciences:

On October 8, President Ed Ray accepted the recommendation of the Strategic Alignment and Budget Review Committee to realign the Department of Youth Development Education from the College of Education to the College of Health and Human Sciences. Following initial discussion by the Administrative Team of HHS, Dean Tammy Bray appointed a work group to explore possible structures that achieve appropriate integration of both the Department of Youth Development Education and Oregon 4-H Program into the College. Preferred and alternative structures were identified and evaluated.

HHS will likely align itself into academic units that will be larger and more diverse than previous departments. Disciplinary identities will become less pronounced. Functional affinities will exist within a transdisciplinary environment. It is likely that one of these units will include human development and be a logical academic home for youth development faculty. While faculty will have tenure homes in academic units, many will also have an appointment to a center, institute, or program. 4-H and FCH Extension Faculty will have tenure homes in the academic units of their choice. It is anticipated
that most 4-H faculty will choose to align themselves with the unit that includes human development and the social sciences. A unit-level promotion and tenure committee would be structured in a way to ensure appropriate representation from both on-campus and off-campus faculty.

The Hallie Ford Center for Healthy Children and Families and the Center for Healthy Aging Research will operate primarily as research centers with a secondary focus on outreach and engagement. An Institute for Applied Human Development and Public Health Practice would house Extension’s FCH and 4-H Programs, Team Oregon, Kidspirit, and other outreach and engagement programs. In addition, an Office of Public Health practice will be created and housed in this Institute. The institute would have a primary focus on outreach and engagement but also conduct applied research and program evaluation.

The Institute will model excellence in University outreach and engagement by helping Oregonians develop skills and build community contexts that enhance public health and support optimal development across the life span. The Institute will help build linkages between the University and Oregon communities, opening doors for engaged scholarship and application of research-based knowledge. Figure 2 depicts the possible administrative structure of the Institute.

Goals of the Institute include:

• Accentuate the position of Extension FCH and 4-H Programs as important forces for improving public health and optimizing human development.
• Become a recognized leader in the evaluation and assessment of health and human development programming and public health practice.
• Serve as the outreach instrument of an accredited College Public Health and Human Sciences.
• Provide students in the human sciences with a real-life laboratory for applying what they learn in the classroom.
• Provide faculty who hold research grants that include expectations for demonstrating broader impacts with automatic linkages to outreach and engagement programs that can incorporate their findings.
• Produce administrative efficiencies through consolidated budget and HR support.
• Strengthen the viability of grant and gift proposals by supporting collaborative proposal development across affiliated programs and units.

Governance and Leadership

Academic units, institutes, and centers will each need to create governance structures that allow faculty, staff, and students to have voice on issues of relevance to them. Numerous standing and ad hoc committees will be required to transact business related to curricula, promotion, financial affairs, research activity, Extension, and specific programs.
5. Establishment of an independent School of Design and Human Environment: (see Figure 1 as model)

The Department of Design and Human Environment (DHE) was established in 1908 as the Department of Domestic Arts. Over the past 102 years, the Department has evolved, adapted, and changed to meet the needs of society, industries, and students in Oregon and beyond. This has resulted in several mergers of related programs and subsequent name changes, changes in undergraduate majors, the establishment of a master’s program in 1931, the creation of an Industry Advisory Board in 1986, and the establishment of a doctoral program in 1993. Currently, the Department is within the College of Health and Human Sciences. The name Design and Human Environment (DHE) was approved in 2004 and over the past six years, DHE has focused on building strategic research areas (and hired accordingly), investing in research infrastructure, building collaborations across campus, and enhancing already strong industry connections. During the past six years, undergraduate and graduate enrollments increased 40% from 480 to 730. As such, the Department is now ready to “move to the
next level”. During this same time, the College of Health and Human Sciences embarked on a process for becoming an accredited College of Public Health and Human Sciences. Whereas there was a desire for continued collaborations among faculty in DHE and other units in HHS related to health and the built environment, the exploration of alternative organizational alignments for DHE was supported. Therefore, it was timely that the Administrative System Guidelines and current context of reorganization at OSU provided a positive environment for faculty in DHE to find other academic partner(s) to come together to propose a School of Design and Human Environment that will effectively align with OSU’s strategic initiatives and with Portland’s economic development initiatives. It is proposed that faculty from Graphic Design will partner in this endeavor. In addition, faculty members from across campus could be collaborators in the creation of a center for consumer behavior and design research.

Decision Making Process

The department has been aspiring to create a School of Design and Human Environment since 2004, conditional on funding. The College of Health and Human Sciences has been assisting the department significantly in financial support as well as centralized administrative support to increase targeted faculty hires, increased research infrastructure, and grow instructional capacity. The funding to the department was outside the normal productivity model of the department in line with supporting the department to be successful.

When the Administrative System Guidelines were announced in Summer 2009, Leslie Burns (Chair, DHE) initiated conversations with administrators/faculty in CLA (Art/Graphic Design, New Media Communications) and Business to determine interest in being part of creating a new School. Starting Fall 2009, faculty in Graphic Design and Design and Human Environment started meeting on a regular basis to develop a plan for creating a School; during Winter Term 2010, faculty have met weekly for this purpose. In November 2009, a Task Force of faculty in DHE, Graphic Design, and Business was created to explore merging a School of Design and Merchandising with the College of Business. A final report was submitted to Deans Kleinsorge and Bray in January 2010. Faculty in DHE and Graphic Design met with Dean Tammy Bray (HHS) on December 4, 2009; with Dean Ilene Kleinsorge (COB) on January 15, 2010; and with Dean Larry Rodgers (CLA) on February 26, 2010. On February 10, 2010, Leslie Burns met with Chairs in CLA who are initiating the creation of a School of Performing and Interactive Communications in CLA to explore opportunities for collaboration. In addition, DHE faculty met with members of the DHE Industry Advisory Board and student leaders on February 4, 2010 to discuss merging with Graphic Design, creating a School, and external support needed for the School. Leslie Burns has met with Shawn Scoville, Kevin Heaney, and Julie Brandis from the OSU Foundation regarding a fund-raising/development plan for the School. Faculty in DHE and Graphic Design have reviewed and provided input on several drafts of the proposal and are in unanimous support of the proposal. The proposal is in the hands of Deans Bray and Rodgers. The deans of two colleges, Bray and Rodgers need to work together to resolve many questions and issues before the deans would approve the proposal and forward it to SABR committee and central administration for review and approval.
6. Summary of alignment with academic and administrative guidelines.

- The College of Health and Human Sciences currently has four departments, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences, Human Development and Family Sciences, Design and Human Environment and Public Health. Chairs of all four departments have been working with their faculty on curricular revision designed to align with Academic System Guidelines. They reviewed the enrollments of all undergraduate and graduate courses in relation to the academic system (class size) guidelines. Whereas, we have very few courses that do not meet the guidelines, several changes have been made to reduce the number of small classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, we are proposing to streamline our degree requirements to increase our efficiency and to manage our large undergraduate enrollments with a shrinking faculty. We have also modified the requirements for our master’s and doctoral degrees and proposed a schedule for offering courses that will ensure full enrolment in our graduate courses (i.e., a minimum of 6 students).

- Including all tenure/tenure tracked, instructors, clinical faculty, extension faculty, and professional faculty, three out of four departments in the college have more than 20 FTE funded faculty positions. Department of Design and Human Environment is the only department that has less than 20 faculty members. Therefore, we have been in conversations with Graphic Design to possibly merge. In addition, we have been working with the Dean of College of Liberal Arts to create a proposal for a new school, which includes a business plan to increase the number of faculty in the unit over the next five years. Many conversations among faculty are going on, but no specific proposal is confirmed at this time.

- The College of Health and Human Sciences is on its pathway to become an accredited College of Public Health and Human Sciences. Three departments, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences, Human Development and Family Sciences and Public Health will be restructured and realigned to form 3 larger units to be the foundation of this new College for accreditation. Tentatively, we named the three larger units as Schools, i.e. School of Nutrition, Exercise and Preventive Health, School of Human Development, Health Behavior, and Health Policy, and School of Population and Environmental Health. We will develop the core MPH programs required for accreditation and the unique crosscutting and double degree programs that differentiate us from other Schools of Public Health.

- The Dean, Associate Deans, Department Chairs all have at least 6 direct reports including OS-1 or OS-2 and student workers. With the exception of the Dean, all professorial ranked administrators who have supervisory duties also have substantive assignments to professorial duties involving teaching, research or professional service.