

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

Kent State University PhD Public Health with a Specialization in Prevention Science

Recommendation

Kent State University's PhD in Public Health with a Specialization in Prevention Science meets the Chancellor's standards for graduate degree programs. The Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS) voted to endorse the program after reviewing the concerns of some RACGS members regarding the degree title, the credentials of the faculty, and the need for additional Public Health PhD programs in the state.

Request: Kent State University seeks approval to offer a PhD in Public Health with a Specialization in Prevention Science.

Program Background and Purpose: In the fall of 2009, Kent State University (KSU) established a College of Public Health "to develop and promote sustainable public health solutions, in collaboration with community organizations, through education, research and service for populations served by Kent State University campuses and beyond." Over the past year, KSU sought and received the Chancellor's approval to offer a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a Master of Public Health in five specialization areas.

The College of Public Health is planning to seek accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Approval for the proposed PhD degree program is a necessary step toward gaining that accreditation for the college. In order to become an accredited college, KSU will need PhD programs in three different specialization areas. The proposed specialization in Prevention Science is the first of the three areas, and KSU will seek RACGS endorsement for specializations in Health Policy and Management, and Epidemiology, in the future.

Prevention Science is an interdisciplinary program aimed at promoting adaptive health behavior in populations across the life course. Graduates of this program will be able to design and evaluate public health interventions and have expertise in a variety of theoretical and substantive perspectives for the purpose of conducting research within systems of the family, health and education, workplace, community, law enforcement/criminal justice settings, and social welfare. The active research of Kent State University's College of Public Health faculty, particularly in the area of violence and substance abuse prevention, will provide students the opportunity to work on large-scale externally funded prevention research.

Curriculum: The proposed PhD is a 90-semester credit hour program that consists of 12 credit hours of prerequisite coursework and courses in three additional categories. The 12 credit hours of public health prerequisites include courses in global health, biostatistics, public health administration and public health epidemiology. The three additional categories are made up of: 1) 12 credits of core research

courses; 2) 24 credits of core prevention science courses and 12 credits of content-related electives; and 3) 30 credits of dissertation work.

Enrollments: KSU evaluated the need for the PhD program and the capacity of current faculty members. The university estimates an initial enrollment of no more than 6 full-time students in the Fall of 2010. KSU plans to limit the Prevention Science program to a capacity of 10 full-time students and 5 part-time students through 2012.

Faculty, Facilities and Resources: Start-up funding of five million dollars has been pledged by the KSU administration to support the establishment of the new College of Public Health and its academic programs. The college currently has identified 18 tenure-track faculty members who will participate in the program and is actively recruiting additional tenure-track faculty members. KSU has identified initial space sufficient to house the college in three existing buildings. Efforts are underway to secure funding to construct a new building for the College of Public Health, but funding for the construction of the new building is separate from the five million dollars in pledged start-up funds. The College of Public Health will designate resources for the development of a dedicated labs and computers, but immediate student needs can be met utilizing currently available labs and computer classrooms. The College of Public Health has allocated an annual budget of \$40,000 (along with existing resources) to meet the needs of library resources for the college.

Evidence of Need: Organizations such as the Association of Schools of Public Health and the Bureau of Labor Statistics have documented the shortage of public health professionals globally and nationally. In Ohio, the United Health Foundation projects that by the year 2020 the public health workforce shortages for the state of Ohio will be in excess of 10,000 workers. The foundation also indicates that Ohio is one of 14 states with the highest projected public health workforce shortage. The public health capacity from all the current Ohio programs is not expected to meet the workforce needs, given current graduation rates.

Current related Ohio PhD programs are offered at Case Western Reserve University (Epidemiology and Biostatistics) and The Ohio State University (PhD in Public Health with five specialty tracks—biostatistics, environmental health sciences, health behavior and health promotion, epidemiology, and health services management and policy. KSU's proposed PhD program would be the first with a specific focus in prevention science.