Criterion I
The School of Public Health
1.1 Mission

CEPH Criterion
The School shall have a clearly formulated and publicly stated mission with supporting goals and objectives. The school shall foster the development of professional public health values, concepts and ethical practice.

CEPH Required Documentation

a. A clear and concise mission statement for the school as a whole.

b. One or more goal statements for each major function by which the school intends to attain its mission, including instruction, research and service.

c. A set of measurable objectives relating to each major function through which the school intends to achieve its goals of instruction, research and service.

d. A description of the manner in which mission, goals and objectives are developed, monitored and periodically revised and the manner in which they are made available to the public.

e. A statement of values that guide the school, with a description of how the values are determined and operationalized.

f. Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.
Introduction

The School of Public Health (SPH) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill) was organized in 1936 as a division within the School of Medicine. Separate status as a school of public health was granted in 1939, and the school awarded its first graduate degrees in 1940. The UNC School of Public Health was the fourth school of public health in the nation and the first such school established within a state university. The University of North Carolina is the oldest public university in the United States, and the school takes the public mission very seriously. The notion of a public university is completely consistent with public health and community engagement, and is a theme that is reflected throughout our work.

In the seven decades since its creation, the school has advanced the public’s health through teaching, research, and service across North Carolina and around the world. The school is perhaps best known for its strong commitment and ability to balance scholarship and leading-edge science with effective public health practice and the application of research to practice. Our excellence in translating research into practice is one of the ways that we make a seamless connection between scholarship and service, and between the school and the multiple communities it serves.

Today, much is changing in public health and in society at large. Rapid scientific breakthroughs are making possible entirely new modalities of prevention and treatment, while sweeping changes are occurring in health care delivery. Yet, as North Carolina and the nation experience major economic challenges, growing disparities between rich and poor and the advancing age of the population are compounding the difficulties of financing and delivering health care. Budgetary and programmatic pressures are forcing public health agencies to modernize, adapt to resource constraints, and become more creative. At an even broader level, new microbial and environmental hazards, exacerbated by global warming, threaten human and animal populations and the larger ecosystem. These social, economic, and environmental trends demand that institutions of higher education carefully take stock of their missions and activities and innovate to remain vital.

Globalization has changed much about the world’s public health threats and how we work across countries and borders. Although this school always has had a strong global presence, since the last CEPH review, the school has dramatically increased the depth and breadth of its global activities. As a concrete sign of this shift in emphasis, we changed our name to the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health in 2008, and have made organizational and other changes to reflect the global nature of public health. These changes include reassessing current and future directions, showing how local and global public health are interrelated, and thinking boldly about new roles for public health and for the school.

In fall 1997, shortly after his arrival as dean, Dr. William Roper initiated a major planning process to critically reexamine the school’s mission, goals, and objectives in the context of a
changing health system. (The resulting report, *An Agenda for the 21st Century*, can be found in the Resource File.) When Barbara Rimer, DrPH, became dean in June 2005, she reviewed the results and recommendations that emerged from Dean Roper’s strategic planning efforts and from several other previous assessments and found that the various planning processes had generated synergistic rather than competing recommendations. Overwhelmingly, the recommendations highlighted a need for greater attention to global health, health disparities, obesity, environmental health, and the translation of research to practice. Over the past few years, the school has taken these recommendations as a point of departure, developing strategic plans for the specific areas of emphasis and adopting a clearer focus on public health solutions.

At the same time, the school decided that it was time to examine the appropriateness and utility of its previous mission statement, and also time to develop a values statement. To involve as many constituencies as possible, the school used in-person methods as well as the Internet to solicit feedback from hundreds of our constituents across NC and around the world. We briefly summarize this process and provide the revised mission, goals, objectives, and values in the remainder of this section.

1.1.a. Mission

*Required Documentation:* A clear and concise mission statement for the school as a whole.

The school’s mission is to improve public health, promote individual well-being, and eliminate health disparities across North Carolina and around the world. We bring about sustainable, positive changes in health by providing an outstanding program of teaching, research, and service to:

- Educate the next generation of public health leaders
- Discover, test, and disseminate solutions to health threats and problems, ultimately translating research into effective practices and sound policies and
- Serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems
1.1.b. Goals

**Required Documentation:** One or more goal statements for each major function by which the school intends to attain its mission, including instruction, research and service.

In pursuit of its mission, the school has established the following goals:

**Education:** Prepare the next generation of leaders who will improve the public’s health through innovations in research, policies, systems, programs, and service.

**Research:** Discover new knowledge that will lead to the creation and improvement of programs, policies, and practices that will have a maximum, positive, sustainable impact on the public’s health.

**Service:** Serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems.

In addition, the school pursues a fourth goal, which is critical to its ability to achieve the first three goals:

**Faculty/Staff:** Sustain the highest quality faculty and staff and their ability to contribute to public health.

1.1.c. Objectives

**Required Documentation:** A set of measurable objectives relating to each major function through which the school intends to achieve its goals of instruction, research and service.

The objectives related to each of the school’s four goals are described below. Measurable outcomes, targets, and performance data are provided in table 1.2.c.

**Education:** Prepare the next generation of leaders who will improve the public’s health through innovations in research, policies, systems, programs, and service.

- **Objective 1:** Recruit and retain a diverse, accomplished student body.
- **Objective 2:** Provide world-class, innovative educational opportunities, grounded in evidence-based practices and the school's mission.
- **Objective 3:** Sustain a supportive, active learning environment.
- **Objective 4:** Produce graduates who contribute to individual well-being and the health of the public through application of evidence-based practices, innovations, and leadership in research, policies, systems, programs, and service.

**Research:** Discover new knowledge that will lead to the creation and improvement of programs, policies, and practices that will have a maximum, positive, sustainable impact on the public’s health.
Objective 1: Maintain the school’s strong productivity in research grants and contracts.
Objective 2: Strengthen research productivity and research training experience among emerging faculty and student scholars.
Objective 3: Facilitate innovative, interdisciplinary research that contributes to public health improvements in North Carolina and worldwide.
Objective 4: Disseminate research findings to research and practice communities to enhance scientific knowledge and translate research to practice.

Service: Serve North Carolina and beyond through outreach, engagement, education of citizens and health professionals, and application of solutions to health threats and problems.

Objective 1: Maintain or increase the overall service outreach effort of faculty and staff, with a focus on reducing health threats and problems.
Objective 2: Improve the measurement and documentation of the school’s service outreach efforts in applying solutions to health threats and problems.
Objective 3: Increase opportunities for health professionals and citizens to contribute to the school’s work and service.
Objective 4: Offer an outstanding program of lifelong learning that enhances the knowledge, skills, and practices of public health workers and their capacity to apply solutions to health threats and problems.

Faculty/Staff: Sustain the highest quality faculty and staff and their ability to contribute to public health.

Objective 1: Recruit and retain a diverse faculty who are leaders in research, scholarship, education, service, and the global application of public health to human welfare.
Objective 2: Recruit and retain a diverse staff that can support the mission, goals, and values of the school.
Objective 3: Balance the ratio of tenure-and tenure-track faculty to fixed-term faculty
Objective 4: Maintain faculty with public health practice experience
Objective 5: Increase the number of Professors of the Practice
Objective 6: Increase the number of distinguished/named professors
Objective 7: Cultivate the School of Public Health as an environment conducive to outstanding productivity, and discovery and the application of discovery, within a collegial and collaborative context
Objective 8: Mentor faculty to optimize their success and promote excellence
1.1.d. Maintaining a “Living” Mission Statement

**Required Documentation:** A description of the manner in which mission, goals and objectives are developed, monitored and periodically revised and the manner in which they are made available to the public.

**Conceptualizing the Mission and Goals**

The development of the school's mission, goals, and objectives has been an evolutionary process that has reflected the style of the school's leaders. Under Dean Michel Ibrahim, the school completed a strategic planning process and a comprehensive examination of mission, goals, and objectives in 1991, and a major reformulation of learning objectives and core requirements in 1995. Dean William Roper led a variety of information-gathering activities (e.g., meetings, task forces, white paper, expert panel) on his arrival in 1997. The process culminated in a new set of goals and objectives and an agenda for the 21st century (revised in 1999).

In 2005, Dean Rimer sought advice from the Dean's Council (described in Criterion 1.5.a.), from an organizational consultant who is an alumnus of the school, and from others and with concurrence of the Dean's Council, decided to build upon past planning efforts rather than again starting from scratch. In February 2006, less than a year after she assumed her position, Dean Rimer launched a 16-month process to articulate mission, goals, and values that better reflected the school's aspirations and the current historical and global context for public health (see table 1.1.d, at the end of this section).

Dean Rimer drafted a revised mission, goals, and values statement to begin conversations. She presented this to the Dean's Council, which designated a small group of department chairs and faculty to review the statement. The Dean's Council provided feedback after each subsequent round of revisions until the document was presented at the spring 2006 schoolwide Faculty and Staff Meeting. Comments were sought and integrated into the document, after which online input was solicited from a wide variety of stakeholders, including students, adjunct faculty, alumni, and members of the school's Public Health Foundation Board and its Advisory Council. Drafts were also presented and reviewed at in-person meetings with the school's Public Health Foundation Board and Advisory Council, as well as to the school’s External Advisory Committee. The process was iterative and democratic, with multiple versions circulated, and comments received, considered, and integrated, as appropriate.

In all, over 200 comments, mostly received through email (in addition to feedback from Dean's Council members and from people during in-person meetings), were considered as the document was refined. After multiple iterations, it became clear that there was consensus on the overall mission, goals, and values statement, and the dean opened the 2007-2008 academic year with a presentation of the new mission to incoming students.
The current mission statement departs from past mission statements in several ways. It explicitly recognizes that the school’s focus and self-definition are both local and global in scope. It calls direct attention to the school’s dedication to overcoming health disparities so that this commitment can be infused into every aspect of the school’s organization and practices. And it acknowledges the dual importance of the health of the public and individual well-being, understanding that the public comprises individuals.

The mission statement also responds to a worldwide shift in emphasis towards finding solutions that are sustainable for a wide range of problems, and reflects the school’s determination to identify and disseminate public health solutions that actually make a difference. (See http://tinyurl.com/sphmission for the school’s mission and values statements.)

Operationalizing the Mission and Goals: Defining Objectives

The development of objectives for the school began with a comprehensive evaluation of the school’s strategic planning efforts over the past decade, namely, the products of the efforts of both Deans Ibrahim and Roper. The result was identification of four areas of focus, or strategic initiatives—water quality, obesity, health disparities, and global health, (most recently supplemented by the focus area of cancer); available strategic initiative statements are in the Resource File. Each of these areas is crosscutting and can include the interests of people from different disciplines and perspectives. Under Dean Rimer’s leadership, these strategic initiatives helped define the intellectual climate as the school began to re-examine its overall mission and develop objectives to fulfill it.

In fall 2007, specific emphases within these areas of focus, e.g., aggressively recruiting underrepresented minority students, and increasing engagement with external communities, were shared with external groups such as the school’s Advisory Council, External Advisory Committee, and the Public Health Foundation Board, for their feedback. These groups include, respectively, business leaders, public health and political leaders, academic leaders outside the school, and leading SPH alumni.

The CEPH Self-Study Committee, representing every unit and group across the school, became active at the same time and joined in the work of developing specific objectives, in consultation with the Dean’s Council and, particularly, department chairs, who took a leading role in reviewing and refining objectives. In this way, the self-study process merged with the process of redeveloping the mission, goals, objectives (and metrics), begun by Dean Rimer.

The Dean’s Council and Chairs’ Committee (described in Criterion 1.5.a.) considered mission, goals, and objectives at more than half their meetings in fall 2007, supplemented by parallel consideration of goals and objectives by the multiple work groups of the CEPH
Self-Study Committee. Their approach was to develop objectives as well as to receive periodic reports of data to inform progress. The Dean’s Council regularly received updates on enrollment data, financial metrics, and fundraising. Data from surveys of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and employers (several of which were conducted as part of the CEPH self-assessment process) were reviewed by department chairs, who paid particular attention to feedback that would inform the selection of educational metrics and issues of faculty retention. Including reference to global health and health disparities within the mission statement draws us back continually to issues of diversity. At the most recent (September 9, 2009) Faculty and Staff Meeting, Dean Rimer summarized our status regarding diversity, urging faculty and staff to try harder and smarter in this area.

The development of goals and objectives at this stage of the strategic planning process that has spanned three deans has been an organic process. Key stakeholders have been involved as participants in a wide range of internal and external decision-making groups, rather than as isolated constituency silos. In fact, our philosophy is that people should not be siloed by interest (e.g., global health) but should be brought together in interdisciplinary forums for give and take, reflecting multiple interests and foci. The key to the success of this effort will be where the school takes this effort and how.

Keeping the Mission, Goals, and Objectives Viable and Vital

The school and its various leaders have been proactive and forward thinking in conceptualizing mission, goals, and objectives. The school has until now placed less emphasis on the less visible, but equally important, activities needed to define outcomes, collect data, monitor success, review mission, goals, objectives, outcomes, targets, and metrics, and make evidence-based change in these elements. Activities that have been ad hoc must be integrated and institutionalized. This is the path down which the school now is heading, driven by integration between the strategic planning review and evolution and the accreditation self-assessment process.

In making choices about the kinds of people to hire in areas of the school such as business and finance, IT, and research, we have sought people who understand the value of timely data in planning, evaluation, and quality control. Instructional and Information Systems staff are conceptualizing, developing, and implementing mechanisms and infrastructure for wide-scale and aggregate-level data collection and analysis that have not previously been available. At the same time, faculty and staff are becoming increasingly aware of the value of this information and their role and responsibility in providing and using good data. At the August 2009 Dean’s Council meeting, each department reported on its examination of student data provided by the Office of Student Affairs, sharing brief reports of the insights gained about issues of student recruitment and diversity. They were both accountable and were able to ground their ideas not just in anecdotes but in data. This approach will help the school generate better teaching, research, and service data that will, in turn, allow us to determine whether the school is achieving desired outcomes.
As the school begins systematically and regularly to produce better information, it must also implement and maintain a formal system of reviewing, monitoring, and changing—as necessary—our mission, goals, and objectives. Over the last two years, we have increased quite dramatically the speed with which we can provide relevant data to members of the Dean’s Council. We share variations of these data with our boards and at twice-yearly Faculty and Staff Meetings. We also will regularly bring to our entire constituency groups (see Criterion 1.5.a.) the data they need to continue to provide effective advice to us.

**1.1.e. Values**

*Required Documentation:* A statement of values that guide the school, with a description of how the values are determined and operationalized.

Revision of the school’s values statement was an integral part of the process of revising the school’s mission and goals. The school’s fundamental values (listed below) are consistent with the revised mission statement and embrace two core aspects of public health: diversity and accountability to communities. The statement of values also explicitly articulates the central importance of students, and reaffirms the school’s commitment to the highest standards of excellence and integrity. The school’s values are as follows:

- Our work is guided by strong values.
- We are committed to diversity in our faculty, staff, and students.
- We believe that public health is accountable and responsible to communities and should work collaboratively with them.
- We believe that all people should be treated with dignity and respect.
- We are committed to high standards of excellence, professional ethics, and personal integrity in all that we do.
- Students are the foundation for the school. We pride ourselves in having created a student-centered environment that gives students an unsurpassed educational experience with accessible, top quality faculty and staff.
- Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni are known for their leadership and dynamism as problem-solvers and their passion and enthusiasm for helping people live healthier lives.
- Our experience tells us that most public health solutions require interdisciplinary inquiry, broad partnerships, and public engagement for constructive action.
- At the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, we believe we can make a world of difference, and we live that every day.
Table 1.1.d. Revising the School of Public Health Mission, Goals, and Values Statement: An Iterative Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean drafts revised mission statement</td>
<td>(Feb 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working group of chairs and faculty revises mission</td>
<td>(March 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean's Council reviews comments and makes recommendations</td>
<td>(April 2006 and at each stage in the process).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send revised mission statement to faculty and staff for additional</td>
<td>present at spring Faculty and Staff Meeting (April/May 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comments and present at spring faculty and staff meeting</td>
<td>(April/May 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive and integrate comments</td>
<td>(May 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send mission draft to students, advisory groups, and alumni and</td>
<td>present to spring board meeting (May/June 2006). Update statement to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present to spring board meeting</td>
<td>reflect additional input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and categorize over 200 comments, conduct an environmental</td>
<td>scan of other schools, obtain consultation from an external company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scan of other schools, obtain consultation from an external company</td>
<td>with experience in this area, analyze words used to describe the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on its website, and continue process of revisions</td>
<td>(Aug – Sept 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide revised mission statement to Dean’s Council for feedback</td>
<td>(Oct 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present revised draft at fall Faculty and Staff Meeting and October</td>
<td>Chairs begin consideration of goals to fulfill mission statement (Jan/Mar 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs begin consideration of goals to fulfill mission statement</td>
<td>(Jan/Mar 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate revised mission, goals, and values statement to key</td>
<td>(Oct/Nov 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>audiences via the school website and invite comments</td>
<td>(Oct/Nov 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission presented at Alumni Reception during APHA meeting and at</td>
<td>(Nov 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Foundation Board meeting, requesting feedback</td>
<td>(Nov 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPH self-study assessment merges with MGO development process</td>
<td>(fall 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active integration of revised mission, goals, and values into all</td>
<td>(Aug 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school communication channels.</td>
<td>(Aug 2007).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://tinyurl.com/sphmission
1.1.f. Assessment of Mission

**Required Documentation:** *Assessment of the extent to which this criterion is met.*

**Strengths**

- A transparent, participatory process to revise the school’s mission, goals, and values for the 21st century
- Wide involvement in, and buy-in of, the revised mission, goals, and values statements
- Mission, goals, and values statements reflect the school’s strengths and commitment to excellence
- Mission, goals, and values statements reflect and model the school’s commitment to overcoming health disparities
- Mission, goals, and objectives have been integrated into planning processes for the school, e.g., annual budget requests and priorities for investments funded through the Gillings gift

**Challenges**

- Maintaining a healthy balance between our dual commitment to be both local and global
- Meeting our own expectations for focus and achievements in reducing health disparities
- Instituting a process for reexamining MGOs on a regular basis without making this too frequent; i.e., constituents feeling ownership of the mission

**Future Directions**

- Institute a plan to systematically reexamine the mission and values on a regular basis, using the inclusive process already in place
- Build on the quantitative and qualitative data collection processes now in place that permit us to assess the extent to which our key constituencies believe our actions are consistent with our stated values and expectations, and that we are achieving an appropriate local-global balance
- Use this feedback to fine tune our plans and activities

**This Criterion is met.**