

Draft Principles
Planning Committee, Gillings MPH Core
May 2015

MPH Planning Committee members developed principles to guide decision-making about the development, process and final outcomes of the new MPH Core based on input from faculty, staff and students at Town Hall Meetings, visits to department meetings, as well as from key ASPPH reports. The overarching goal for the committee is to create a plan for a new Gillings MPH Core that will: help us maintain our position as a leading school of public health; offer a high quality, student-centered curriculum aligned with CEPH guidelines for accredited schools of public health; and meet other critically important characteristics defined below.

Process. The committee commits to a respectful, civil, iterative, inclusive and engaged process of development that:

- **Provides ongoing engagement opportunities** for faculty, staff, student, alumni and employers;
- **Includes regular communication** to and with key stakeholders about progress, processes and ways to provide input.

Curriculum framework: The committee aims to create a curriculum framework that builds on the strengths and tradition of community-engaged excellence that a Carolina education represents and that will be the best possible training for future public health leaders. The committee envisions a Gillings MPH Core that that is:

- **Student-centered.** We will hold student needs, interests and educational outcomes as the chief anchors in guiding decision-making, assessing each element by how it is likely to impact and benefit our students. The committee will also recognize the variation in different students' skills, backgrounds and interests, meaning that we will seek to create a curriculum flexible in design, requirements and content so that students can pursue their specific public health interests (including certificates and dual degrees).
- **High quality and integrated,** as reflected in the breadth, depth, appropriateness and rigor of the content; in the high quality opportunities for skills building and application; and in the adoption of best practices in teaching and learning. The committee views excellent, practical professional preparation as key foundations that guide decision-making about core content and sequencing.
- **Effective,** in that the curriculum will give students an outstanding foundation in public health, meeting or exceeding CEPH competencies, and giving them the core knowledge, skills and experiences needed to optimize population health and solve public health problems. The core curriculum will lay the groundwork of knowledge and skills required to complete coursework, practicum placements and, ultimately, meet or exceed required job responsibilities.
- **Efficient for faculty and students** in that it will not increase credit hour requirements, and, will consider ways to build on faculty strengths. The curriculum will also strive to create efficiencies in teaching and course sequencing.
- **Designed to leverage the strengths of our School and our priorities for the future,** ensuring that our faculty excellence in research and practice is featured throughout core content, and ensuring that faculty can integrate emerging public health issues into courses and modules, as appropriate.

Implementation and Evaluation. The Gillings MPH Core Planning Committee recognizes that an implementation committee will have responsibility for developing specific course curricula as well as plans for implementing the curriculum, including timing and coordination across other departmental requirements, proposed concentrations, certificates, and dual degrees. In addition, an evaluation committee will complete specific course and overall curriculum evaluation efforts.

At the same time, this planning committee recommends that the implementation and evaluation committees consider several principles to guide their work. Note: these will be revised, strengthened and then adopted by the implementation and evaluation committees themselves. Specifically, this committee recommends that the Gillings MPH Core:

- **Provide an enriched learning environment**, including, for example, opportunities for students to work in the kinds of settings and structures they will encounter in their professional lives; mentored opportunities to apply what they learn in real-world situations; and opportunities to work in interdisciplinary teams. The curriculum should also meet students' needs by providing options for online, residential and blended courses.
- **Place a premium on adoption of best practices in teaching and learning.** Strategies could include: identifying and providing incentives to our strongest faculty to teach core courses; providing all faculty and teaching assistants with high quality opportunities for professional development in preparation for their roles in the new MPH Core.
- **Have a global and local focus**, with global content and exercises fully integrated into the core curriculum alongside more local (e.g., NC-specific) content/exercises. Students should emerge with an understanding of the relationship between global and local public health issues and have the foundation needed for practice in global and local settings.
- **Include plans for evaluation and continuous quality improvement (CQI).** The MPH Core should be evaluated before it is launched full-scale. In addition, we are committed to ensure that we can strengthen the curriculum going forward through continuous quality improvement efforts. Any continuous quality improvement plan may wish to begin with the understanding that the curriculum is determined by a committee that includes faculty from each SPH unit, not by individual instructors.