

Background

In spring 2012, Dean Barbara Rimer commissioned the Global School Task Force to develop a vision for our School as a truly global *public* school of public health that is in the very top tier of schools. That taskforce developed a model (October 2012), the Gillings Global Gateway, to foster interdisciplinary activities within and beyond the School through four interconnected components: **partnerships, research in action, a learning center, and networks.**

In October 2012, an implementation taskforce (the Global School Implementation Committee, or GSIC) was empanelled to review these recommendations, consider their feasibility, and develop plans for phasing in Gateway components. As part of the committee's work, four focus group sessions were held in February 2013 to better understand faculty and student impressions of what it means to be a global school of public health, current gaps in the School's global outreach, and reactions to a diagram and brief descriptions of the Gillings Global Gateway and its components. A total of twenty-one faculty members representing all departments across the School, plus seven students, participated in one of the four focus groups. A draft report of focus group findings is available upon request. The recommendations below represent an integration of: (1) the vision for a Gillings Global Gateway originally put forth by the Global School task force; (2) input from the four focus groups; (3) deliberations of GSIC committee members; and (4) input from the Dean.

Focus Group Findings

Focus groups voiced strong support for efforts in six major areas that could be mapped to concepts outlined in the Gillings Global Gateway report:

1. **Increase the number of international students at the School, particularly doctoral students.** Focus group participants believed strongly that our faculty, students and staff should come from different countries and represent different cultures for us to be seen as a global school. This theme emerged in all focus groups, with many of the subsequent ideas voiced as action steps that would support such an outcome. To achieve this long-term outcome, participants offered several suggestions including: (a) provide more funding to bring international students to our programs while also developing other creative ways to make such exchange possible (i.e., creating partnerships with countries that would fund the education of students from their own countries at UNC); (b) develop bridging programs to provide some language training and preparation for international students *before* they come to UNC; (c) showcase the School by offering innovative massive open online courses (MOOCs) with a global focus to attract international students; and (d) develop sufficient mentoring mechanisms to provide appropriate support for international students coming to the U.S.
2. **Create centralized support infrastructure for those doing global work.** Participants identified a whole range of problems that in-house expertise, technical help and centralization could resolve, including such issues as complexities around memos of understanding (MOUs), processing visas, getting timely and reliable IRB clearance, and simply navigating UNC and North Carolina bureaucracies.
3. **Create a centralized clearinghouse of existing global opportunities in the School/university.** A common gap or problem area named by all focus groups was the lack of knowledge about the scope and scale of global activity in SPH as well as a deficit of cross-disciplinary collaborations (aka silos). Creating a clearinghouse of such information would provide a starting point for faculty to recruit students to their international opportunities (e.g., TAs, RAs, practica) and for students to identify international learning and research opportunities. The clearinghouse would also maintain an active database of faculty carrying out global work and what their expertise is so other faculty could more easily connect with them. (Using Ramses and NCRReach would be the place to start.) Aspirationally, such a centralized function might also be able to identify new opportunities for funding and collaboration at a school level, beyond the normal individual faculty portfolios. This clearinghouse was thought to particularly benefit more junior faculty and faculty who were interested in doing more transdisciplinary global research.
4. **Increase global learning opportunities.** Focus groups expressed interest in boosting the number of online courses offered by our School, and figuring out a uniform way, across the School, to indicate courses with significant levels of global content, and making sure that information is visible to students looking at departmental course listings. They also expressed interest in increasing distance learning and certificate programs for international students. Increasing online courses and creating certificate programs for international students may support the larger aims of increasing the number of international students at our School, as articulated in item 1.
5. **Increase and support transdisciplinary opportunities with existing partnerships.**
6. **Create and support new global partnerships.** The final two areas (items 5 and 6) were closely related. Focus group participants recognized that strong relationships with global partners over time were likely to result in high levels of exchange, a key goal for becoming recognized as a global school. Yet, they also recognized that efforts to support a few strategic global partnerships to yield this result may require strong faculty incentives to ensure faculty buy-in, chair support and wide faculty participation. Specifically, faculty who are asked to add significantly to their normal

scope of work to support a particular initiative may need incentives such as travel funding or student support. If the time commitment is significant, some salary support may be desirable. [Note, this idea is in tension with the aim of identifying partnerships that are inherently appealing enough, across disciplines, to draw faculty in without major incentives.] Yet, participants felt the pay-offs for such an investment would be high. Such ever-deepening partnerships would promote both learning and research opportunities and, to a lesser extent, service opportunities for faculty and students. Focus groups recognized that achieving meaningful levels of international exchange (a key goal) requires long-term, strategic investments over time, plus representation from multiple disciplines and interest areas. All faculty groups said that faculty members would need some incentives (be that travel support, student support, or even salary support) to increase their involvement in school-level initiatives (as distinct from their own research interests) to promote international work.

All groups discussed the relative advantages of strengthening or expanding existing partnerships and creating new partnerships in strategic ways. They recognized that the School (and larger university) already have strong partnerships in some countries (e.g., Malawi), plus a number of additional partnerships involving more limited numbers of faculty. Indeed, the School currently has active partnerships in Brazil, Canada, Dubai, the Democratic Republic of Congo, England, France, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, Norway, South Africa, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates. Faculty supported the idea that they would continue to have full license to work with in-country partners they were interested in/committed to (i.e., it should always be acceptable to have a continuum of partnerships, and that there were a variety of reasons for initiating and maintaining such relationships. But further developing a few of those relationships (either existing or new) in very strategic ways (i.e., in ways likely to result in high levels of exchange across SPH disciplines) would be desirable. In a related vein, finding ways to provide additional opportunities for faculty and students to work or train in countries where UNC already has a presence was seen as an excellent starting point. In addition, focus group members were supportive of developing new relationships with promising partners. Balancing the resources to both build on existing partnerships and add new partners (if they are likely to help us meet the goal of producing high levels of exchange) was acknowledged as a potential challenge. Faculty and students in the focus groups agreed that increasing global partnerships would likely do much to advance the School's global presence, impact, and reputation *and* increase the numbers of international students at the School.

Recommendations:

GSIC members recognize that the School should make a significant, bold and long-term investment in a Global Gateway to achieve its aim of being a truly global school of public health within a public university. Investing in the Global Gateway is an essential commitment that the school must make if it is to maintain and grow its status as a global school of public health for decades to come.

At the same time, many of the large global initiatives suggested in the task force report and endorsed by participants in the focus groups and other stakeholders are likely to require extensive, long-term financial commitments by the School, requiring buy-in and support from the departments. While the task force report suggested ways in which the Global Gateway might generate revenue and become self-sustaining, it is unlikely that new global initiatives will generate significant amounts of revenue or be self-sustaining in the short term, especially without significant investment in infrastructure such as that owned by the private universities cited in the Global School task force report. Given the highly constrained post-recession financial climate we face, the committee recommends a phased approach to launching the Global Gateway as envisioned by the task force. A phased strategy would help the Gillings Global Gateway be seen immediately as a benefit to faculty and students as well as lay the groundwork for future successful growth.

Phase 1 would focus on (a) near-term needs and concrete deliverables that can help better position the school and assist faculty and students; (b) development of a focused plan to begin implementing key Gateway initiatives, especially partnerships; and (c) initial steps needed to implement those key pieces. For these reasons, we recommend an initial focus on Gateway components that emphasize **partnerships, learning, the communications** necessary to support them and, to a lesser extent, a fourth area of effort, **research to implementation**. For the **Partnership** component, Phase 1 would focus on providing faculty and students with concrete services to facilitate existing global work, and building infrastructure to help the Global Gateway grow. This phase also includes creating a focused plan for leveraging our current and future partnerships. An important activity during this phase will be to specify the dimensions and desired attributes of partnerships, establish priorities and examine our current partnerships against these criteria and priorities.

Phase 1 would also invest in the **Learning** component of the Gateway by phasing in updates to our curriculum offerings as recommended. In addition, Phase 1 will include enhanced efforts to seek funding for international students.

The GSIC committee suggests changing the Research to Action component as named in the task force report to the **Research to Implementation** component, emphasizing Global Gateway activities around knowledge generation, translation, implementation, evaluation, dollar generation, scale-up, and impact. Phase 1 activities for this component begin with feasibility assessments and a focused plan for ensure that specific actions have the highest impact. They

would dovetail with other implementation science efforts already under way at the School. The **communications and network component** are essential pieces of Phase 1, creating an awareness of early activities, future plans and building a brand around the Gillings Global Gateway.

Phase 1: Initiating in 2013.

Initiate several high priority/high pay-off support services for faculty, students, and staff; do the focused planning and feasibility assessments necessary to implement all 4 components of the Gateway; begin phase-in of early efforts.

Communications/Networks: Coalesce our global resources, increase our ability to foster partnerships, increase visibility and potential impact of the Gateway, and reinforce our global brand through a modern, dynamic web portal.

- To carry out all the functions of the proposed Gillings Global Gateway and to communicate effectively with inward- and outward-facing constituents, we recommend that the School invest resources in developing a modern, comprehensive, attractive and easily navigable portion of the School's website (i.e., a portal) focused on the Global Gateway. Planning for the structure and contents of the web portal should begin as soon as is feasible to support overall Gateway planning and phase-in of its different components.

Partnerships: Support development and sustainability of partnerships with academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations globally as follows:

- Provide additional high priority and potentially high pay-off support services to faculty, staff and students. This will include expert help in creating critical administrative procedures to standardize and facilitate: 1) developing and executing memos of understanding (MOUs); 2) handling faculty and student visas; 3) working with UNC's Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) to execute contracts and grants more efficiently; 4) developing and submitting contracts to agencies that fund international research (e.g., US Agency for International Development, Gates Foundation, President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief); and 5) integrating students and faculty to UNC through bridging programs (i.e., programs designed to strengthen international students' English language skills and other content areas, as needed) or other programs.
- Work with the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Diseases (IGHID) and other entities on campus (as appropriate) to determine the feasibility of developing and maintaining a clearinghouse of information on global work that is currently underway in the school and university, including the faculty involved, types of projects, potential for additional work and calls for needed expertise. (Note: a number of SPH faculty are part of IGHID.) If feasible, develop an easy-to-use mechanism for updating and accessing this information.
- Create additional mechanisms for faculty and students to learn about/connect with each other on global research.
- Develop focused plans to (1) determine key factors and a selection process for identifying, and engaging with current and potential strategic partners that would involve faculty and students from across the School; and, (2) recommend, gain approval for, and begin working to extend current international partnerships and develop new international partnerships (if recommended). The committee recommends using findings of the Global School task force report, together with resources available in the Office of Global Health, as a starting point for determining what partnerships to invest in.
- Work with the School's development office to identify alumni working in promising partners' countries, both countries with which we currently do have partners and those with which we currently lack partners. Consider offering modest incentives to select alumni to support their efforts to (a) attract promising students to our programs and (b) extend our relationships with in country colleagues. With the awareness that in offering incentives, we set a precedent and create expectations, those alumni may ideally be professionals working in very high priority countries.

Some Phase 1 strategic partnership activities will be *inward facing* meaning they will help develop the School's capacity to initiate and sustain high impact global partnerships. Phase 1 strategies around identifying additional partners begin the process for more *outward facing* activities, connecting the School to other partners around the globe. Both inward and outward facing partnership activities will require focused plans to help choose from among competing priorities.

Global Learning: Further develop the School's global teaching and learning opportunities, focusing especially on planning for, and execution of, efforts that can (a) increase the number of international students enrolled in SPH programs (b) increase the number of international faculty and researchers in our ranks and (b) expand SPH students' opportunities to work and learn abroad. Phase 1 activities include the following:

- Identify potential partners for future learning opportunities as a key dimension of our efforts to develop and expand international strategic partnerships. Consider the feasibility of developing a master's program with international partner(s).
- Be poised to develop and promote MOOCs as funding opportunities arise and depending on how MOOCs develop over time. While MOOCs are expensive to create and do not generate income, they may be an excellent platform for promoting the School's brand and for creating a bridge to UNC programs. Simultaneously, the School should also invest in online, for-credit courses that showcase the School's global expertise, attract international

students, serve as the possible foundation for a certificate program, and serve as a bridge for international students who may wish to enroll in an SPH degree program.

- Work with the External Affairs to assess feasibility of raising funds to sponsor visiting international scholars for two-year appointments. The Department of Biostatistics has developed a model for such efforts.
- Develop and maintain a clearinghouse of international opportunities for students (including training, research and service opportunities) and a mechanism for matching opportunities to those students.
- Cross-list SPH courses with significant global health content by home department and by Global Health (GH). Marking courses with GH may not be feasible through UNC's online system. Nevertheless, all SPH departments currently maintain tables on their websites featuring courses offered by their units. Appropriate courses on these websites could be marked with a global health icon, as could program guidelines, online syllabi, etc. Note: the Office of Global Health currently maintains a list of SPH courses approved for the Global Health Certificate.
- Continue funding initiatives that support globalization of the curriculum.

Phase 1 activities in this area are both *inward and outward* facing. Activities focusing on modifications to the school's curriculum are inward facing while the other activities involving international students are more outward facing.

Research to Implementation: Extend our global impact by strengthening our research to implementation capacity.

- Continue the planning process to strategically develop the School's research strengths in, and partnerships around, global implementation science, focusing on the entire interdisciplinary research-to-implementation pipeline of knowledge generation, translation, implementation, evaluation, dollar generation, scale-up, and impact. A recent commitment to form a partnership with RTI can be complementary to the GGG.
- Conduct a feasibility assessment to determine viability of conducting workshops, trainings and summer institutes to educate stakeholders on doing global research and implementation, including options that make business sense; if such initiatives are feasible, identify topics that draw on our strengths *and* engage stakeholders.

In Phase 1, all activities in this component are *inward* facing, involving internal planning and feasibility testing.

Phase 2. Phase 2: Further roll-out of plans developed in Phase 1; extend and refine Gateway components already begun. Elements to be phased in include:

Network Component

- Continue to build vibrant web-based community and online resources that connect faculty, students, local and global ambassadors and supporters

Partnership Component

- Continue process of deepening and/or developing school-wide, long-term relationship(s) with partners identified and cultivated in Phase 1.
- Create incentives for faculty to collaborate with other faculty in the School and university-wide on transdisciplinary global research.
- Create teams (faculty/staff from across UNC) to build new global partnerships with adequate resources (money/staff) to support their work
- Find donors who are willing to fund "quick response teams" for opportunities that come up to build or be involved with international partnership development opportunities.

Research-to-Implementation Component

- Create teams (faculty, students and research staff from across UNC) to develop research-tested products and services to address global health and development issues. Work with select global and domestic partners (recognizing that local is global and global is local) to strengthen the research-to-implementation and scale-up pipeline.
- Based on findings of feasibility analysis conducted in Phase 1, develop and offer workshops, trainings and summer institutes to educate stakeholders on doing global research. If feasibility analysis does not support the idea of workshops, training or institutes, adapt plans as appropriate.

Learning Component

- Create global challenge grants for which students can apply.
- Fund international doctoral students each year from across the departments, creating a cohort of international students that are supported and mentored before coming on campus with continued mentoring and support once on campus. These cohorts of international students enhance our international community at UNC, build our reputation globally, and plant the seeds of more global partnerships.

Resources needed

Financial resources needed for **Phase 1** and **Phase 2** are estimated to be between \$900,000-one million dollars in annual recurring funds. Additional assistance from the Dean's office will be needed to estimate the costs of phasing in elements of the Global Gateway and the best organizational structure for the Global Gateway.

Committee members discussed the desirability of hiring an executive director to help spearhead and lead the Global Gateway. Attached is a draft position description that captures salient attributes for such a leader.