

April 29, 2010

Dr. Gail M. Morrison, Deputy Director  
Academic Affairs and Licensing Division  
South Carolina Commission on Higher Education  
1333 Main Street, Suite 200  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Dr. Morrison,

Please find enclosed for your review a program planning summary for the Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and the Bachelor of Science in Public Health AB/BA/BS. The public health field is interdisciplinary in nature and function, and this proposal merges the resources and faculty from multiple departments to create an interdisciplinary major that will prepare students for work in this field.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "P. George Benson" in a cursive script.

/PGB

## Program Planning Summary

Public Health Major  
AB/BA/BS

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "P. George Benson" in a cursive script.

---

P. George Benson, President  
April 29, 2010

Contact Information:

Deborah A. Miller, Ph.D., CHES, Professor and Health Coordinator,  
Department of Health and Human Performance,  
School of Education, Health, and Human Performance  
843.953.8248  
[millerd@cofc.edu](mailto:millerd@cofc.edu)

Jenifer E. Kopfman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor  
Department of Communication  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
843-953-5775  
[kopfmanj@cofc.edu](mailto:kopfmanj@cofc.edu)

<b>Designation of New Program:</b>	Bachelor of Arts in Public Health and Bachelor of Science in Public Health AB/BA/BS
<b>Proposed date of implementation:</b>	Fall 2011
<b>Credit hours:</b>	BA in Public Health: 36-42 hours; BS in Public Health: 36-52 hours (depending upon elective choices of students) in a four-year program
<b>Academic Unit:</b>	Program to be housed jointly in: The School of Humanities and Social Sciences and The School of Education, Health and Human Performance College of Charleston 66 George Street Charleston, SC 29424

**STEM program designation:** Students will qualify for Supplemental Palmetto and Life Awards. (CIP# 51.2200, 51.2207, 51.2299)

**Justification of need for the proposed program:**

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the School of Education, Health and Human Performance at the College of Charleston propose to develop a jointly-housed major in Public Health. The field of public health is interdisciplinary in nature and function, and this proposal merges the resources and faculty from multiple departments to create an interdisciplinary major that will prepare students for work in this field.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 80% of the public health workforce lacks specific training in public health. Recent surveys by the ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officials) confirm that public health agencies continue to face workforce crises in the form of ill-prepared employees, a shortage of workers, and an impending wave of retirements with 50% of state health agency workforces able to retire by 2012. Additionally, 76% of state health departments reported budget reductions in FY09 with smaller budgets than previous years. The ASTHO finds that, “These trends combine to create critical challenges to the ability of states to effectively respond to threats to the public’s health.” And while there is obvious need, the US Department of Health and Human Services has issued a call to action with the “Healthy People 2010 and 2020” initiatives which list as one of their objectives to, “Increase the proportion of 4-year colleges and universities that offer public health or related majors and/or minors” (Healthy People 2020 goal # PHI HP2020–14).

The goals of the Healthy People 2010 and 2020 initiatives are to increase the quality and years of healthy life for individuals and to reduce health disparities among Americans. This program evaluated various health-related concerns including omit colon/no punctuation needed: physical activity, obesity, tobacco use, environmental quality, and access to health care. With the attention of the nation and the world turned to issues of health policy, care and costs, there is an urgency to educate students to think critically about these issues.

Students with degrees in public health will be well situated to make significant contributions to health policy and initiatives. Graduates with this degree will work in a variety of settings, including; non-profit or for-profit agencies, local, state and national organizations, health care environments, as well as worksite health promotion programs. Perhaps more fundamentally, public health is an important

component in the reduction of modifiable health risks, which will in turn improve health status and ultimately reduce the demand for health care.

Currently, there is no undergraduate/interdisciplinary public health program offered at a state supported institution in the S. C. Lowcountry. This program will serve the needs of this community by providing a cadre of well-trained public health professionals.

### **Anticipated program demand and productivity:**

In 2005, SC passed the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) to help students learn about careers and create an individual graduation plan (IGP) based on their interests and strengths. At the completion of eighth grade, students select a preferred cluster of study to pursue in high school. By the end of the sophomore year, students within a cluster declare an area of academic focus or major. According to the Annual Survey for Graduating Seniors from May 2007, 29% of students were enrolled in a health-related cluster of study. It is anticipated that some of these students will be interested in this new public health degree and will choose to attend the College of Charleston to pursue this degree.

A College of Charleston survey was administered in English 101 and 102 classes in spring 2007 to determine interest in a health/public health degree. Of the 695 students responding (representing 37% of the freshmen class), 61% indicated that they would be interested in a health/public health degree. A follow-up survey was administered fall 2009 to students in elective introductory health and physical education courses. Out of the 439 students completing the survey, 57% indicated that they would be interested if the College of Charleston offered a health/public health degree.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of this program, we also anticipate additional interest from students in the social sciences, including students currently studying in the departments of Communication, Psychology, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology. Approximately 100 students from these majors currently pursue the health minor each year.

### **Assessment of extent to which the proposed program duplicates existing programs in the state:**

Public Health programs exist at the University of South Carolina-Columbia and Benedict College. Coastal Carolina offers a degree in Health Promotion. The College of Charleston Public Health degrees will be similar to the programs at USC and Benedict College insofar as curricular fundamentals are concerned. We will offer the foundational courses (public health, epidemiology, global health) as prescribed by the accrediting organization (American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)) and advisory (Association for Prevention: Teaching and Research [APTR]) bodies.

### **Relationship of proposed program to existing programs at proposing institution:**

The College of Charleston has a strong commitment to interdisciplinarity and collaborative teaching, as well as robust student-research programs, and a well-developed internship infrastructure. All of these will serve the AB/BA/BS in Public Health quite well. Further, we anticipate curricular and programmatic connections among the Masters of Public Administration, the Masters of Environmental Sciences, Urban Studies, and the departments of Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Communication, and Psychology. We also intend to build upon the existing curriculum in the Department of Health and Human Performance (HHP).

*The Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Center for Livable Communities* plans to develop expertise in public health. The *Center* uses College of Charleston faculty and students to provide research, grant work, and other expertise to community partners on issues surrounding livable communities. The College of Charleston Public Health program will work closely with the *Riley Center* in addressing various community needs.

**Relationship of the proposed program to other institutions via inter-institutional cooperation:**

The HHP Department currently has strong internship programs with the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and many public health agencies (e.g. the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), Lowcountry AIDS Services, American Lung Association, etc.). These linkages will be strengthened with a public health degree that provides knowledge, skills, and the potential for its graduates to become CHES (Certified Health Education Specialist) certified, a recent requirement for most entry-level public health professionals.

**Total new costs associated with implementing the proposed program:**

Because the AB/BA/BS programs will be housed jointly in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and the School of Education, Health and Human Performance (EHHP), existing resources are available to support the program, and no new administrative overhead is needed. Within the next three years, we anticipate that three health educators within the Department of HHP will be retiring. This will enable the department to hire new faculty members with specialized training in public health to assist with curriculum development and delivery. These new hires will replace existing lines. Therefore, immediate costs would be minimal until the major grows beyond its staffing capabilities. At that time, new lines will be requested. Immediate costs would include a modest stipend for a director (consistent with other interdisciplinary programs), a recurring library fund for journals and books, and an operating budget for student research. These costs will be split evenly between HSS and EHHP, allocated from budgets as appropriate by each school's dean.

Director stipend: \$5,000

Library funds: \$2,000

Operating budget: \$5,000

Total immediate new costs: \$12,000