

APPENDIX H

Request for Authorization to Establish a Master's Degree in Public Health at East Carolina University

Introduction

The Board of Governors gave ECU authorization to plan a master's degree in Public Health (CIP# 51.2201) in Long-Range Planning 2000-2005. The university requests authorization to establish the program in August 2003.

Program Description

The proposed interdisciplinary Master of Public Health (MPH) degree program, to be located in the Brody School of Medicine, will prepare professionals to provide public health leadership in health and human service settings. Consistent with the regional characteristics of eastern North Carolina, the MPH program will focus on public health needs of rural and minority populations. Core knowledge areas will include epidemiology, health services administration, social and behavioral sciences, environmental health sciences, and research interpretation and methodology. Professional concentrations, research, and service will be directed toward solutions to health problems in North Carolina's rural and minority communities and the state's persistent regional and racial health disparities. The program will be inter-institutional, drawing on collaboration with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Public Health, and interdisciplinary, promoting cooperation between medicine and public health programs.

Program Need

Health status indicators in eastern North Carolina are among the worst in the nation. The region's diverse population is disproportionately rural and poor, requiring a comprehensive approach that emphasizes prevention, health promotion, strategic partnerships, and greater efficiency. ECU lacks a public health program typically found in similar academic health science centers and required by the exceptional health needs of the region it serves. The focus of the program is consistent with the 2001-2004 strategic plan of University Health Systems, a collaboration of the Brody School of Medicine and hospitals and private physician practices in eastern North Carolina. ECU's market analysis indicates that employment opportunities would be numerous in eastern North Carolina, and field training experiences will be in health departments and community-based organizations in that region. ECU estimates that by the fourth year of the program, 48 full-time and 44 part-time students will be enrolled.

Resources

Salaries will be funded from ECU's doctoral II funds, the Medical Family Practice Plan, enrollment increase funds, and internal reallocations. Courses taught by the UNC Chapel Hill School of Public Health will provide up to one quarter of all course work, with as many as possible taught in a distance-learning format. The North Carolina AHEC Program will also help fund travel of UNC Chapel Hill faculty to ECU.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the request to establish a Master of Public Health degree at East Carolina University effective August 1, 2003.