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January 12, 2020

Edith Parker
Dean, College of Public Health
University of Iowa

Dear Edith:

In accordance with University of Iowa policy all colleges are required to undergo a review at least every seven years and the Executive Vice President and Provost is responsible for organizing and directing the process and formulating conclusions.

In FY2020 the College of Public Health underwent an abbreviated collegiate review conducted by a review committee external to the college and included a self-study, a collegiate response, and this letter of recommendations. The College of Public Health was asked to prepare a self-study in accordance with UI Operations Manual guidelines with a focus on enhancing its interdisciplinary research collaborations and identifying opportunities to capitalize on its areas of collective excellence. The review committee met with students, faculty, and staff in small groups and asked faculty and research staff to complete a survey on the two focus areas. Additional documents provided to the review committee include the College of Public Health strategic plan, the CEPH Accreditation self-study and final report from the review, and a spreadsheet showing faculty research [grants] alignment with the collective areas of excellence. The College was provided the review committee's report in September 2019 and submitted a response to the report in November of 2019. The collegiate response overall agreed with the recommendations of the report.

The review committee was charged with identifying areas of strength for the College in its research, teaching, and service missions and charged with suggesting opportunities for better integration of the core research and educational missions. On parallel, the Provost directed the committee to provide suggestions to enhance interdisciplinary research.

The reviewers made the following observations, in the context of the research aspect, with which I agree:

1. The College has clear goals for interdisciplinary collaborations and frequently achieves these goals.
2. The need to use strategies and tools that could identify collaborations outside of the department and college.
3. Most researchers find the three collective areas of excellence to still be relevant, but feel the collective areas of excellence do not have much impact on their research goals or activities.

However, no additional recommendations were provided in relation to the educational mission or in relation to the integration of research and teaching, which was part of the charge.

After reviewing the charge given to the review committee and the recommendations developed by the reviewers and the College of Public Health's response to the review report, I expect the following:

Educational mission:

1. *Continue the strategic enrollment plan to identify areas of strength in curriculum and strategies for recruitment.* The College is developing a plan to align the recruitment efforts with strengths in the different training programs, while establishing a vision for the new undergraduate program. This effort should help set enrollment projections so we can monitor the progress made towards those goals.
2. *Focus on the quality of the programs.* Retention rates for the new undergraduate program are very low and efforts to recruit and support students in that program are needed.
3. *Increase doctoral enrollment.* I would encourage efforts to gain support through training grants and other initiatives for the doctoral and master programs.

Collective excellence:

1. *Evaluate the use of the current areas of collective excellence and develop a plan for communication within and outside of the college.* As the UI goes through its strategic planning process and reviews collegiate strategic plans, it will be important for the college to identify areas of excellence in its research and academic programs and to include these themes in its strategic plan.

Interdisciplinary research:

1. *Continue to track interdisciplinary collaborations and consider how it may affect the new budget model and the new strategic plan priorities.* The College of Public Health has clear metrics and goals for interdisciplinary research collaborations and tracks these collaborations on an annual basis. These metrics and goals should be evaluated to

ensure they are still valid and in sync with the new budget model and funding trends and align with the new strategic plan priorities.

2. *A. Identify strategies and tools that could better identify interdisciplinary research strengths and opportunities.* Some of those strategies are sponsoring seminars and other venues for faculty to present and discuss their own research.
B. Measure and assess collegiate success in interdisciplinary research against other UI colleges and nationally with other schools of public health.
Validate data to guide the strategic plan in regards to interdisciplinary research areas of excellence. Expand comparisons to other UI colleges and other schools of public health.
3. *Continue to contribute to campus-wide efforts to enhance interdisciplinary research.* The College is well-positioned to become a leader on campus for interdisciplinary research by participating in discussions and identifying ways to overcome obstacles, such as investigator resources distribution and shared intellectual and academic credit. I look forward to seeing the results of the review of interdisciplinary research faculty expectations and guidelines and any recommendations the college identifies.
4. *Continue to be innovative in promoting research to increase visibility on- and off-campus and to form strategic partnerships to leverage resources.* With its multi-disciplinary research centers, the college is well-positioned to form partnerships with other centers and units on campus to encourage and offer opportunities for interdisciplinary research, particularly for young investigators.

The College of Public Health has talented faculty, staff, and students and is a highly-respected college on campus, in the community, and nationally. I am pleased to see that the College of Public Health is thinking innovatively towards expanding and promoting their academic training and their research areas of excellence. I am confident that under your leadership, and in consultation with your collegiate leadership team, the recommendations above will be addressed through the College of Public Health's strategic plan and progress will be reported on an annual basis to the provost.

Sincerely,



Montserrat Fuentes, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost
Professor, Statistics and Actuarial Science and Biostatistics

cc: Executive Vice Provost Kevin Kregel
Associate Provost Lois Geist