

2016 University Diversity Plan Accountability Report

Reporting Unit: School of Public Health

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ABOUT SCHOOLS/COLLEGES OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Public health as a professional discipline incorporates an interdisciplinary approach to protecting populations from health threats. Schools of public health are designed to produce practitioners via professional training (MPH, DrPH) as well as academicians and/or researchers (via MSPH and PhD degrees). The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH; www.ceph.org) accredits schools / colleges of public health; Only CEPH-accredited schools graduates are eligible to sit for the examination leading to the national certification in public health (CPH title). Securing and retaining CEPH accreditation is contingent upon meeting and adhering to detailed criteria, including Diversity and Cultural Competence (Accreditation Criteria, Section G1, pages 42-44; CEPH October 2016). Accredited schools/programs belong to the Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health (ASPPH; www.aspph.org).

Texas A&M School of Public Health (TAMSPH; <https://sph.tamhsc.edu/>) was founded in 1998 as the nation's first to focus on rural populations. TAMSPH has ranked among the top 25 Best Graduate Schools for Public Health since 2008 (US News & World Report). The SPH consists of 5 departments, 6 centers, and a satellite campus in McAllen, Texas. The undergraduate program in public health is new - in its second year- with exponential growth predicted.

ASPIRANT PEER INSTITUTIONS & DATA COLLECTION METHODS

We identified the following institutions as aspirant peers, based on the following criteria: Must be 1) CEPH accredited, 2) relatively similar in size and/or mission, 3) a public institution, and 4) of equal or higher reputation and/or rank. We selected The Ohio State University College of Public Health [OSU-CPH] (<https://cph.osu.edu/>), The University of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health [UNTHSC-SPH] (<https://www.unthsc.edu/school-of-public-health/>), and the University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health [SC-ASPH] (http://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/public_health/index.php).

The methodology applied to generate this report involved interviews and reviews of publically available information. We conducted a systematic analysis of peer institutional data available from their respective websites, including accountability reports, strategic plans as well as any institutional climate survey findings. Interviews were conducted with the unit's chief diversity officer or equivalent (their names included in Table 1).

PEER-COMPARISON DATA

Enrollment data by degree program, and the name of the diversity officer(s) are in Table 1 for our aspirant peers. Table 2 details the available data from our unit, as well as those from our aspirant peers. The state-level data are derived from population estimates obtained from the US Census (www.census.gov). The information is included for context, i.e., the backdrop for the strategies enacted with respect to accountability, climate and equity at each institution.

The structure and format of the diversity committees, officers, etc. are detailed under the climate section, as we concluded that resources (human and other) were tied to strategies impacting climate and equity.

Table 1 Aspirant Peer Units Enrollment Data

	Bachelors		Masters		Doctoral		Total
TAMU School of Public Health Dr. E. Lisako J. McKyer	10	2.5%	340	84.6%	52	12.9%	402
The Ohio State University Ms. Joanne Pearson & Dr. Marcel Yotebieng	70	16.1%	316	72.6%	49	11.3%	435
University of North Texas HSC Dr. Marcy Paul	0	0.0%	390	91.1%	38	8.9%	428
University of South Carolina Dr. David Simmons	1797	71.5%	433	17.2%	282	11.2%	2512

Table 2 Aspirant Peer Faculty, Student and State Data

	Texas A&M School of Public Health			The Ohio State University College of Public Health			Univ. of North Texas HSC School of Public Health			Univ. of S. Carolina Arnold School of Public Health		
	State*	Faculty	Students	State	Faculty	Students	State	Faculty	Students	State	Faculty	Students
Black	12.5%	10.7%	12.6%	12.7%	6.0%	7.6%	12.5%	8.1%	25.6%	27.6%	6.6%	11.4%
White	79.7%	66.1%	44.3%	82.7%	68.0%	72.9%	79.7%	58.1%	39.0%	68.4%	77.4%	76.8%
Hispanic/ Latinx	38.8%	7.1%	27.7%	3.6%	6.0%	3.8%	38.8%	4.8%	4.0%	5.5%	0.7%	3.3%
Asian	4.7%	16.1%	12.6%	2.1%	12.0%	10.0%	4.7%	29.0%	16.3%	1.6%	14.6%	3.7%
Native America/American Indian	1.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	1.0%	NA	0.0%	0.5%	NA	0.1%
Other/ Unknown	NA		0.6%		NA	5.5%	NA	NA	14.8%		7.0%	4.6%
Female	50.4%	53.6%	57.8%	51.0%	50.0%	67.8%	50.4%	50.0%	62.1%	51.4%	50.4%	73.2%
International	NA	NA	26.4%	NA	NA	3.6%	NA	NA	4.5%	NA	NA	56.0%
LGBT	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

The majority of TAMSPH students are Caucasian with women slightly outnumbering men. Peer institutions seem to experience a similar trend for gender. Data reveal tremendous variation in terms of racial/ethnicity of students by location of the institution.

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However, TAMSPH is closer to having students and faculty reflect statewide race/ethnic demographics in most categories than our aspirant peers. Indeed, 2014, the TAMSPH was designated a minority-serving institution via membership with the Hispanic-Serving Health Professions Schools (HSHPS; www.hshps.org). Data for faculty reveal little variation and very little change over time for TAMSPH, until the past 3 years with a notable increase of Black and Hispanic faculty (from 0 Black faculty in 2012, to 4 in 2015).

CONTEXT FOR DIVERSITY, CLIMATE & INCLUSION EFFORTS

Texas A&M School of Public Health has had a Diversity and Climate Council in place for several years. In May 2016, an Associate Dean for Climate & Diversity position was created, to coordinate activities of the new Office of Cultural Competence, Diversity & Inclusion (O-CCDI). Dr. Lisako McKyer, whose expertise include public health disparities, cultural competence, fills this position with a 50% administrative appointment of her time. She represents the O-CCDI with voting privileges on the dean's Executive Committee, and the O-CCDI has autonomy from the dean's office including its own budget. SPH constituents including students, faculty and staff are represented by the SPH Diversity & Climate Council which is co-chaired by Dr. Camille Peres and Dr. McKyer.

The Ohio State Univ. College of Public Health operates its diversity, climate and inclusion efforts under the direction of the CPH Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Its mission is "to create awareness of and response to issues of diversity and inclusion through education and experience." (CPH website, 2016). The committee serves in an advisory function to the college's executive committee and to the dean. Effort on this committee is considered part of college-level "service." They are represented at the EC level via the Associate Dean for Community Outreach and Engagement. A staff member (Ms. Joanne Pearsol) was initially the committee chair for a 3 year rotation. The CPH recognized the importance of having faculty buy-in and participation. Thus a faculty member was added (Dr. Marcel Yotebient) and Ms. Pearsol's tenure as chair extended. There is discussion of changing the format of diversity operations.

Univ. of North Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health does not have a diversity officer nor committee in place at this time. The Health Science Center (HSC) recently established the Diversity Council, a new entity formed specifically to improve climate and diversity (per UNTHSC website, 2016). The council falls under the auspices of the HSC's Academic Affairs' Center for Diversity and International Programs (<https://www.unthsc.edu/academic-affairs/center-for-diversity-and-international-programs/>). The council is responsible for coordinating of various diversity and climate-related activities for units across the HSC. Dr. Marcy L. Paul, a SPH Assistant Professor of Behavioral & Community Health, is a member of the HSC-wide Diversity Council. According to Dr. Paul, no SPH-specific initiatives are in place yet as the council is in the early stages of diversity and climate data collection.

Univ. of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health (SC-ASPH) is the only aspirant peer with a \$10 million endowment (create in 2000 by the Norman and Gerry Sue Arnold Foundation) to support their activities. The ASPH has an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (Dr. David Simmons) who leads one of SPH's 6 administrative departments He is a tenured associate professor in SPH, with a joint appointment in Anthropology. He chairs the university-wide Diversity Committee, housed in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). The university-wide office is new (approximately 1 ½ years), as is the associate dean position at the School of Public Health (since summer). His appointment is for 20% effort, which Dr. Simmons finds challenging in terms of the demands on his time and the cost to his other faculty responsibilities and productivity.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RECRUITMENT & RETENTION AMONG UNIT LEADERS

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Student Recruitment & Retention Efforts: Information regarding specific initiatives were obtained from the OSUCPH website, and from interviews with their two diversity council representatives. The CPH's strategic plan requires student demographics to be representative of Ohio demographics by 2017.⁶ Strategies include a "Diversity in Public Health" photo contest used in public recruitment materials⁵ as well as "Diversity in Health Sciences Recruitment Flipbook" which highlights specific multicultural and diversity programs for prospective students.⁵ These new strategies are premature to yield results. The strategic plan also includes strategies for resource management to fund student assistantships, fellowships, scholarships, as well as enrollment in new academic programs and better utilization of instructional technology and distance learning materials. Implementation progress varied, ranging from none to fully in place. While there are no strategies targeting student retention, OSUCPH does engage in activities designed to improve overall climate for students as an indirect means to retain their students (described in the climate section of this report).

Faculty Recruitment & Retention Efforts: The OSUCPH strategic plan requires faculty demographics to be representative of Ohio demographics by 2017. Currently the CPH is piloting a faculty recruitment "checklist" designed by the Diversity Committee for all faculty searches. Innovative recruitment protocols (e.g., announcement placement, networking), language of position descriptions, etc. are some of the topics covered by the checklist. Further, recent faculty recruitment efforts have explicitly focused on attracting diverse applicants, particularly those with experience in global or multi-cultural health. The CPH also recently initiated the Discovery Themes program, designed to attract new faculty from variety of disciplines to participate in transdisciplinary research to tackle issues such as food stability and security. The same level of attention has not been paid to faculty retention efforts. The OSU has a faculty mentoring program in which CPH faculty participate. It is currently undergoing redesign, thus too early to determine the program's impact.

Staff Recruitment & Retention Efforts: While OSUCPH's Strategic plan includes wording specific to recruitment and retention of staff who represent "College's efforts to achieve and sustain racially and ethnically diverse and culturally aware/sensitive faculty, staff

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and student populations" there was no data available on activities explicitly designed to deal with staff issues. Interviewees confirmed that while a priority, little action has taken place specific to staff recruitment and retention.

Accountability for Recruitment & Retention: The OSUCPH does not have accountability measures implemented at the college-level, according to interviewees. In other words, evaluation of unit leaders' performances does not include an assessment of how well recruitment and retention goals specific to diversity have been met.

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Student Recruitment & Retention Efforts: The UNTHSC-SPH offers graduate and certificate programs (no undergraduate). Their website lacks diversity statistics, nor information on notable climate or inclusion strategies. We utilized ASPPH and interviews to collect data. The SPH lacks school-specific initiatives or strategies because, per Dr. Marcy Paul, they are under the auspices of the HSC's activities/initiatives. HSC-wide recruitment activities include The McNair program, and leveraging a National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) funded Summer Multicultural Advancement Research Training (SMART) program to increase graduate student enrollment. The SMART program is also used to build graduate assistantship opportunities for under-represented minority students. While HSC utilizes these opportunities as a way to attract students into the programs, it is unknown to what extent these programs contribute to overall diversity outcomes at the SPH-level. Student retention efforts are not specified for the SPH, but occur at the HSC level via participation in the Center for Diversity and International Programs and a Diversity Council, represented by Dr. Paul. The HSC-level council provides programs to enhance graduate student attainment and retention, such as short-term training for Minority Health Professional Students, mentoring and professional development, and academic partnerships.

Faculty Recruitment & Retention Efforts: The UNTSPH identifies ways faculty will be able to collaborate across disciplines through support from NIMHD programs. While the SPH emphasizes diversity through hiring practices, there are no SPH-specific. The HSC-level Diversity Council coordinates seminar series in effective mentoring, diversity focused practices, sponsorship skills, and other strategic professional development practices for faculty. It also supports faculty research in health disparities and under-represented populations via funding from the Center for Health Disparities, the NIH-funded Steps Toward Academic Research (STAR) program. Finally, the HSC offers technical assistance and mentoring programs to as professional development strategies.

Staff Recruitment & Retention Efforts: There is a lack of data specific to UNTSPH efforts to address staff diversity other than hiring practices. Further, given these are delineated at the HSC-level, it will be difficult to modify other than to develop more progressive ones at the SPH level to enhance HSC-level efforts.

Accountability for Recruitment & Retention: The UNTHSC does not yet have accountability measures for school-level unit leaders at this time. However, the SPH is under new leadership with a dean (Dennis Thombs) appointed in August 2016. Thus, changes may be forthcoming. Further, the HSC-level Diversity Council is in its preliminary stages of collecting data on constituent demographics, beginning with faculty. Thus, we expect changes as UNTSPH moves forward under these new conditions.

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Student Recruitment & Retention Efforts: The ASPH retention efforts include well-defined and coordinated strategies, including identifying and implementing best advisement practices, enhancing partnerships with campus support services, standardizing and coordinating services across departments, and engaging in continuous assessment and data-informed process improvements. Currently, they lack strategies specifically targeting retention for under-represented students.

Faculty Recruitment & Retention Efforts: Faculty recruitment strategies include requiring all members of faculty search committees to successfully complete an affirmative action policies training, provided by university-level human resources and augmented by material from the SPH's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (O-CCDI). The Institute for Partnerships to Eliminate Health Disparities is highlighted as a recruitment tool via leveraging their partners to help with identifying promising candidates. Dr. Simmons noted that SPH is relatively successful in graduating doctoral-level racial/ethnic minorities. However, because the SPH will not recruit their own alumni, these well-trained rising stars are hired by competing institutions.

Staff Recruitment & Retention Efforts: Consistent with other peers, staff recruitment and retention has not been targeted to address albeit recognized as an issue requiring attention.

Accountability for Recruitment & Retention: Among Dr. Simmons' charges since his recent appointment is to facilitate an accountability strategy for diversity, climate and equity issues in the school. Given the recency of his appointment, the SPH is yet have accountability measures in place for unit leaders/administrators. Still, it has identified as a priority to address in the upcoming year.

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Student Recruitment & Retention: The TAMSPH has new director (appointed 1 year ago) for the Office of Student Affairs, the unit primarily responsible for undergraduate and masters-level student recruiting; Doctoral-level recruitment occurs primarily at the department level through faculty. Since establishing the O-CCDI, the following initiatives and strategies are taking place.

1. **Recruitment** – The O-CCDI reviews dossiers of applicants who fall below the preferred admission criteria threshold yet were admitted, AND those who met/exceeded the criteria but were rejected. This process is to identify if the current admissions protocol is biased, and to make the decision-making process and outcomes more transparent. Also, Dr. McKyer has been actively seeking

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means to improve funding for graduate students, including exploring ways to offer Graduate Diversity Fellowships or equivalents given the SPH is currently not eligible to participate (as an HSC component). The O-CCDI is working with the Office of Communications to develop a website, as well as highlighting the office on the school's webpage.

2. *Retention* – O-CCDI has initiated two activities designed to improve students' experiences contributing to retention. First, a research study to capture the experiences of students from the African diaspora at predominantly white institutions, including perceptions of race-based discrimination and bias, is underway. Second, a seminar for international students on "American Culture" is offered to facilitate a smoother transition and adjustment to idiosyncrasies of US cultures. Both are meant to help with adjustment (which is also a climate issue) so that students can focus on their academic performances.

Faculty Recruitment & Retention: One department's most recent position faculty position announcement incorporated language recommended by O-CCDI. In addition to providing more detail specific the department's and SPH's values and missions specific to climate, diversity and inclusion, prospective applicants are required to include a diversity statement with their packet. Inspired by this, faculty in other departments submitted a proposal to the SPH faculty senate to have all departments include these statements and require similar components as part of faculty recruitment materials.

Staff Recruitment & Retention: Consistent with other peers, staff recruitment and retention has not been targeted to address albeit recognized as an issue requiring attention.

Accountability for Recruitment & Retention: While the SPH currently lacks specific accountability measures related to recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty and staff, steps have been initiated to change this. The school is undergoing revision of annual performance measures – including school-level post-tenure review assessments - in order to align with TAMU criteria rather than HSC. As part of the process, Dr. McKyer has recommended including diversity-specific accountability criteria to reflect the school's commitment to diversity, climate and equity. We expect these documents to be completed in the upcoming academic year.

Section Summary: Our aspirant peer institutions are located in major metropolitan areas, which present recruitment opportunities via access to large populations. In spite of not being in a major urban setting, the Texas A&M School of Public Health has done remarkably well in terms of diverse faculty and student recruitment. More attention needs to be paid to staff recruitment and retention, particularly since staff members are tremendously important contributors to our workplace climate.

CLIMATE & EQUITY STRATEGIES AT ASPIRANT PEER INSTITUTIONS

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Climate. According to interview data, OSUCPH conducts climate surveys of their students every three years. The recently conducted a faculty climate survey for the first time in a few years. Results from the student climate survey revealed some issues of concerns, specifically a need to improve students' sense of belonging. Focus groups are currently underway to examine this issue in depth. Faculty climate survey data results are not yet available. Staff climate data have not been collected. However, Pearsol and Yotebieng were encouraged by the discussion of staff surveys and plan to recommend commensurate effort be made to assess and address staff climate issues. As for current strategies in place, all faculty and staff are required to complete relevant diversity training as specified by the institutional human resources department. Interviewees indicated their annual Diversity in Public Health Summit, an all-day campus-wide event, improves moral and thus climate.

Equity. The CPH website and other publicly available resources yielded no information on strategies to address equity issues among their constituents. Interviews confirmed that no strategies are in place yet. Both Pearsol and Yotebieng indicated their beliefs that equity issues are important and need to be addressed; However much of it may be resolved by improving climate. It is a priority to them, and one which they will continue to monitor.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Climate. The SPH does not yet have strategies to address climate issues for students, faculty nor staff. However, they are currently actively engaged in reorganizing, reassessing and re-evaluating their priorities and strategies related to climate for all constituent groups as part of their overall overhaul of all of their initiatives related to climate, diversity and equity. As stated earlier, the SPH is not conducting any unit-level specific activity, but rather as part of the UNTHSC. Data from faculty are being collected now, per Dr. Marcy Paul.

Equity. Dr. Paul did not indicate equity issues for students, faculty or staff were being assessed or targeted. However the UNTHSC's Diversity Council is in the midst of several changes and ongoing activities. Further, the SPH has a new dean. Thus progress and positive changes are expected as the HSC-level Diversity Council more clearly delineates their roles and responsibilities, and the SPH's new dean establishes his priorities and agenda.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA ARNOLD SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Climate. The USC-ASPH does not have any school-specific strategies directly related to assessing or addressing any climate issues, per Dr. Simmons. Campus-wide, climate issues fall under the purview of the university-level Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Dr. John Dozier is the university's chief diversity officer, and is also very new in the role. Thus, while no initiatives to address climate issues are currently underway, the university is actively conducting campus-wide assessments of climate from the perspectives of

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students, faculty and staff. Faculty and staff data collection was planned for Fall 2016, the faculty survey was postponed to Spring 2017 with the staff survey to follow shortly thereafter. Thus there are no findings to report at this time.

Equity. Of our aspirant peer institutions, the ASPH appears to be furthest along in terms of equity-related strategies for their constituents. Dr. Simmons indicated the SPH places priorities on setting up a system of checks and balances specific to processes for faculty and staff. Further, department heads are aware of the expectation to adhere to protocols that would ensure these checks and balances can be activated. One example is the utilization of an affirmative action advocate (AAA) throughout the search and hiring process for faculty and staff. The AAA's role is to monitor fidelity to the recruitment/hiring plan with specific attention paid to actively encouraging innovative means to go beyond the minimum required for affirmative action policies. Like many institutions, the SPH is struggling with salary compression issues. Interviews did not yield details on how these are being addressed, other than the knowledge that school administrators and department heads are working on it.

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Climate. The SPH did not participate in the TAMU-campus wide climate assessment, as it was still distinct from main campus at the time. However, climate data were collected via and HSC survey. Dr. McKyer was provided the data upon her appointment, and found the sample size too small to utilize for quantitative analyses. However, the qualitative data – comments – appear to be relatively rich. Given concerns with the small sample size and concerns regarding confidentiality, data were given to a qualitative researcher outside of the SPH to analyze. We expect results by the end of the calendar year.

Equity. Current strategies to address equity issues provide the department heads and other unit leaders with the responsibility and ability to present potential inequities to the dean, and provide recommendations for redress. The merger with TAMU has resulted in several changes with respect to faculty and staff workload (thus evaluation). We expect to revisit the school's protocol to identify and address equity issues soon after the other matters have been resolved.

The SPH is represented on the HSC's Diversity Leadership Team by Dr. McKyer and Dr. Peres. In this group, the HSC unit reps exchange ideas, best practices, and provide support to one another and their respective units as they address diversity, climate, inclusion and equity issues.

SUMMARY OF CLIMATE AND EQUITY ISSUES

The data, in particular the interviews confirmed that promoting and maintaining an inclusive and supportive climate is a priority for all four schools/colleges of public health, and is a reflection of their respective institutional priorities. While those interviewed indicated the importance of climate, none reported any strategies specific to improving climate. Indeed it appears for our aspirant peers as well as for ourselves, the default approach is to address climate through diversifying students, faculty and staff. While improved climate is likely to be an outcome of increased sociodemographic diversity, it is not likely to be sufficient. Thus, what we have identified from the process of preparing this report is a need to better articulate what our climate goals are, and to prepare and implement strategies purposefully directed toward addressing climate issues.

CONCLUSION

Challenges to TAMSPH in the upcoming years will be in terms of student recruitment. In this area, the lack of funding opportunities or even eligibility for TAMU fellowships has resulted in low enrollment of highly qualified racial/ethnic minority students who receive financial packages that far exceed what we can provide. Thus, this area will remain a priority for the O-CCDI.

Climate, equity, recruitment and retention of staff at all institutions appear to be low on the list of priorities, based on the lack of school-level strategies in place. The lack of data on staff demographics, and turn-over (retention) is a shortcoming for all four institutions and indicates an area ripe for improvement. Staff are an integral part of the climate and culture at universities, and interact extensively with students and with faculty. Indeed, staff may arguably interface more with students than faculty do (and vice versa). Therefore, it is evident the staff require our attention. The O-CCDI recognizes this and will spend the upcoming year identifying priorities based upon the results of the qualitative analysis currently in process.

Structural Changes Needed To Be National Leader in Diversity. All aspirant peer schools/colleges of public health in addition to Texas A&M appear to be in stages of transition with regard to their structures and with strategies to address diversity, climate, inclusion and equity issues. The people at all four institutions are new in their positions, with the most senior having three years of experience. The remaining have less than 1 ½ years as diversity officers. The diversity officers for the public health units at Ohio State University and the University of North Texas Health Science provide their time as part of the service component of their workload. On the contrary, the University of South Carolina and Texas A&M SPH have diversity officers whose workload is considered administrative in nature and are compensated for the time spent on these specific responsibilities. In addition, SC-ASPH and our unit is organized such that the chief diversity officers hold positions and rights equivalent to the other administrative offices, and thereby have a voice and more influence than volunteers or committees where responsibilities are diffused). TAMSPH goes further and provide additional autonomy by providing the O-CCDI with its own budget and staff support. Thus we believe our structure is the gold standard for other schools of public health, and that over time the O-CCDI's effect will be fully integrated across departments and administrative units and will demonstrate even more profound changes over time.

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