

## **FUTURE ACTION ITEM #2**

### **Establish a Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health (Elizabeth S. Chilton)**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of a Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health degree for the WSU Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver campuses

**PROPOSED:** That the Board of Regents establish a Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health degree for the WSU Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver campuses

**SUBMITTED BY:** Elizabeth S. Chilton, Provost and Executive Vice President

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION:** The College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) proposes the establishment of the Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health degree for the WSU Pullman, Spokane, and Vancouver campuses.

CVM's mission is to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills essential for excelling in the field of public health and aim to enable WSU's learners to develop a solid foundation for evidence-based decision-making and impactful interventions.

In line with WSU's land-grant mission, CVM is also committed to enhancing equity in Washington by increasing the number of public health professionals dedicated to serving in underserved regions. This dual commitment exemplifies WSU's historical commitment to education, outreach, and community engagement, as we strive to address the unique healthcare challenges faced by underserved communities across our state.

Washington's public health workforce challenges have long been understood and the COVID19 pandemic put a spotlight on deficiencies within the state's public health infrastructure including inequities associated with a maldistribution of human capital resources, particularly in rural and otherwise underserved communities. In its August 2022 Transformational Plan, the state Department of Health calls for a modernized public health system that recognizes the importance of One Health principals in understanding the intersections of critical influences on overall health, including the interactions between animals, the environment and humans. WSU responded to the COVID19 pandemic by utilizing our research and academic expertise in public health from faculty and leaders to provide solutions for the needs of our community stakeholders in rural and remote

Washington areas. In addition, the ongoing opioid crisis and burgeoning stimulant use reflect the need for even more effort in addressing these issues.

In response, this program proposes to build upon those academic strengths applied during the pandemic and leverage the existing university expertise in infectious disease and behavioral health—especially addictions—to prepare graduates to enter a modern public health system at the public, private and nonprofit levels. The program is informed by community directed engagement, which includes feedback from rural, remote and underserved populations.

This proposal was reviewed carefully and has support from the Provost's Office. This recommendation was recommended by the Faculty Senate on April 4, 2024. The Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health degree proposal is available upon request.

The College of Veterinary Medicine proposes the establishment of the Bachelor of Sciences in Public Health degree effective as soon as feasible.