

# INFORMATION ITEM #1

## Mission Moment with the College of Veterinary Medicine (D. Borjesson)

**The Public Health (PH) degree had its beginnings in 2020...**the start of the COVID pandemic. Faculty from the health sciences colleges, led by Drs. Bill Davis and Tom Kawula, recognized that many of our STEM and pre-health undergraduate students wanted to “make a difference”.

A working group was formed including faculty from all health sciences colleges, CAHNRS, Communication, CAS, CVM and staff from Native American programs and EAGR. This working group evolved over the next few years to become the **Public Health Collaborative**. This collaborative hosted a retreat, monthly meetings and developed an inventory of WSU strengths and assets in the field of PH.

An **early market analysis** highlighted that our proposed PH program (initially UG, later MPH and potentially PhD) should focus on the niches that build on WSU strengths including: Rural community health and medical access (Behavioral public health; social determinants of health; diseases of despair), Social work/Nursing (adapt Certificate in Nursing), Global health (build on Allen School), One health (build on CVM, animal health), leadership (adapt Certificate in ESFCOM and Nursing) and Health Communication with Murrow College.

Under the guidance of Colleen Kerr and Patti Stauffer from EAGR, faculty drafted a white paper to request funding from state legislature for 2023-2025 regular session which was then approved by WSU leadership and the Regents to be a legislative priority—the timing of which was highly aligned with the state Department of Health strategic priorities and the understanding of the true consequences of not having a robust PH program on the East side of the state.

Initial tracks proposed and funded included an Infectious disease track to leverage WADDL and the School of Global Health in Pullman and a behavioral health track to leverage community health and addiction sciences in Vancouver and Spokane.

The initiative was funded for about \$5 million dollars/year at full funding. Funding included faculty lines and a program director in Pullman (4-5 total faculty), Spokane (3) and Vancouver (2). Importantly, it also included funding for an Assistant Director as well as 3 staff to help with student advising, outreach/recruitment and experiential learning (capstone projects in collaboration with local health jurisdictions).

From 2023- the present, curriculum was developed and revised, the initial 2 faculty were hired who now serve as program directors, based in Pullman and recently Spokane filled their 3 faculty positions with a cohort hire. There are current searches for the final 4 faculty positions underway. The curriculum was approved by the faculty senate, and we worked through appropriate procedures with the accrediting body. In short, a lot of paperwork and engagement so that...we were able to open our first 4-year program in Pullman for Fall, 2024- on time and on budget.

**WSU Public Health Education Design Features** include to 1) ensure people can be employed and earn a living wage, 2) develop and offer stackable modules that allow people to develop on a desired career trajectory using educational threads/certificate programs, 3) utilize interprofessional team-based educational approaches and 4) develop purposeful and meaningful connection between the interrelated professional degrees and the public health program, including formal integration of degree programs, 5) focus on outreach including the development of a public health network, use affiliation agreements- bi-directional flow, giving real-time information back into teaching and curricular development.

**Curriculum Development and Updates:** Two tracks were developed per the legislative proviso (behavioral health and infectious disease). In addition, students can now minor in PH. Our new program directors have developed 10 concentrations including Animal Science, Environmental Justice, Environmental Policy, Gender & Sexuality, Health Communication, Health & Culture, Health & Food, Health Psychology, Health & Society, and One Health. New tracks include Generalist (to facilitate community college transfers with 4 year completion), Pre-Med, Pre-Nursing, Pre-Vet, Pre-Vet 3 + 1.

In Fall, 2024 over 25 students enrolled in "Introduction to Public Health" with no marketing. 10 majors already declared. For Fall, 2025, we will be offering all courses for years 1-3. We have hired 3 staff members and are in the process of hiring the final staff member. Vancouver to open a 4-year program, likely Fall, 2025; Spokane to work towards a 2+2 program, Fall, 2025 or Fall, 2026.

**Program updates:** Co-Directors have developed an internal and external advisory boards. The **internal advisory board** includes members from IREACH, faculty from nursing, CVM, COM, Murrow college, the Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Campus Climate and Community Building, WSU Pullman, Government relations and, ultimately, will include Vancouver faculty once hired. The **external advisory board** includes and alumni/donor to the CVM, the Director of Whitman County Health Department, the Senior Director of Academic Affairs, Office of Strategic Partnerships, WA State Department of Health, the Director, Foundational Public Health Services, WA State Department of Health, the Director, Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, the Associate Dean, School of Public Health, University of Washington, the Executive Director, Tribal Policy, WA State Department of Health and the Managing Director at Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials.

Two donors already identified to support student scholarships, travel, conferences, and student development.

**Moving forward:** Develop more relationships with industry, experiential learning, capstone experience; Enhance marketing, including a video and translation of brochures into Spanish and native languages; microcredentialing with industry input.