

**Project Plan**  
(as of November 1, 2010)

**Undergraduate**  
Public Health  
**Learning Outcomes**  
**DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**Consensus Statement**

A growing number of institutions have been seeking guidance on the optimal format and content of undergraduate public health education, especially at universities without accredited schools of public health or accredited programs. The rising interest comes from the Institute of Medicine's recommendation for an educated citizenry, based on access to public health education by all undergraduates, and a number of key trends and issues in the field. These include, among many others:

- The growth in interest across campuses and across the undergraduate curriculum in topics related to public health.
- The rise of public health majors and minors in both two- and four-year institutions.
- University academic and financial interest in responding to the students' growing demand.
- A growing interest in clarifying the distinctions between undergraduate study in public health and the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree.
- The Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) development of a proposal to accredit professional undergraduate community health education and launching of a process to solicit input on the proposal from various constituent groups.
- The public health workforce remains largely unprepared through public health education; over 80% of workers in the public health workforce lack formal educational training in public health.

Consequently, academic leaders drawn from schools of public health, public health programs, and the liberal arts and sciences have assembled to identify key public health learning outcomes necessary for all graduates of institutions of higher education. The vision for this endeavor will be the development of an educated citizenry for: 1) promoting and protecting population health, safety, and well-being at local and global levels, and 2) eliminating health and social disparities worldwide.

This initial broad-based effort (Phase 1: Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes Development Project) will provide support for later efforts to define specific competencies for undergraduate degree programs, both majors and minors, in public health (Phase 2: Undergraduate Public Health Degree Competency Model Development).

**Tenets**

The project is guided by the tenets below:

- Focus in Phase 1 on undergraduate public health learning outcomes and in Phase 2 on defining specific competencies for undergraduate public health degree programs.
- Build upon the Association of American Colleges & University's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative framework tailoring it to the public health profession.
- Ensure balanced representation between public health and liberal arts and sciences in the project.
- Consider the need for formal faculty development for implementing the model.
- Emphasize student-centered learning versus traditional faculty-focused teaching and assessment.

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### **Goals**

The goals of the project are:

1. To define what every undergraduate should know and be able to do to promote population health both locally and globally.
2. To outline other essential student attributes and characteristics for improving health and eliminating health disparities in populations around the world.

### **Target Audiences**

Phase 1: Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes Development Project--All graduates of institutions of higher education.

Phase 2: Undergraduate Public Health Degree Competency Model Development--Undergraduates in public health degree programs, both majors and minors.

### **Framework and Domains**

The Leadership Group decided to draw on the Association of American Colleges & University's Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) framework to guide the development of learning outcome domains, refining them to align with the field of public health, per below:

1. Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World as it Relates to Individual and Population Health
2. Intellectual and Practical Skills
3. Personal and Social Responsibility

Workgroups were created to identify and specify learning outcomes for each domain. The workgroups are comprised of faculty representing both public health and the liberal arts and sciences from universities across the United States. Co-chairs--one from public health and one from the liberal arts and sciences--oversee all workgroup activities. A consultant guided the workgroups in using an online modified-Delphi process to come to consensus on the learning outcomes.

The fourth domain, Integrative and Applied Learning, focusing on methods and best instructional and learning practices is being considered by all the workgroups after they complete identification of their domain-specific learning outcomes.

### **ASPH Leadership, Staffing, and Consultant Expertise**

Dean Donna Petersen (USF), chair of the ASPH Undergraduate Public Health Education Taskforce, chairs the learning outcomes development project along with a leadership group composed of 11 individuals.

ASPH staff work with Judith Calhoun (University of Michigan), an expert in competency-based education, to organize and implement the project under the leadership group's oversight.

### **Contact Information and Website**

For more information about the Undergraduate Public Health Learning Outcomes Development Project, contact Christine Plepys at [cplepys@asph.org](mailto:cplepys@asph.org) or (202) 296-1099.

Please visit the project website at [www.asph.org/competency](http://www.asph.org/competency) for project information and updates.