School of Public Health Task Force Report

Dr. Sheldon Retchin, Vice President for Health Sciences and CEO of VCU Health System appointed Dr. Hermes Kontos, Vice President Emeritus and Dr. David Sarrett, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences to chair a School of Public Health Task Force. The charge for the task force was:

- To explore the mechanism for creation of a School of Public Health at VCU.
- To create a long-term plan for establishment of the school that includes the major steps, budgetary implications, and time line
- To submit a report to Dr. Retchin for review by VCU senior leadership

Dr. Retchin requested that the task force complete its work and submit a report by the end of 2003. Following review by the VCU leadership, a proposal could be developed to present to at the February 2004 Board of Visitors meeting.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Dr. Richard Wenzel submitted a report on initial thoughts for a VCU School of Public Health to Dr. Eugene Trani in May 2002. This report was on the heels of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the anthrax attacks. At this time, there was emphasis on statewide preparation for bioterrorism and Dr. Wenzel's report stressed the importance for a VCU School of Public Health having strong links with state and federal agencies with a mission "To improve the health of citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia." Dr. Wenzel's report estimates a cost of $25 million over five years and an annual recurring budget of $6.6 million. These estimates were based on building a school without consideration to use any existing VCU resources.

Dr. Mary Nettleman prepared a subsequent report that evaluated the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation standards from the perspective of the current resources at VCU. In her report, Dr. Nettleman suggested potential administrative structures for a VCU School of Public Health with five departments, paralleling the five core areas required for accreditation. It was suggested that the existing Departments of Health Administration, Biostatistics, and Preventive Medicine & Community Health be brought into the new school and two new departments would be created. The new departments to be created would be Environmental Health Sciences and Social and Behavioral Health. Dr. Nettleman's report suggests that the Life Sciences program including the Rice Center for Environmental Life Sciences and the Center for the Study of Biological Complexity may offer enrichment for a new department of Environmental Health Sciences. Dr. Nettleman's report identifies some potential problems associated with moving the existing three departments into a new school. The major concern expressed was that the existing departments' educational programs

have a different focus and any moves should be completed carefully to prevent damage to highly successful programs. An estimate of $4.3 million in recurring annual budget would be needed to add to the existing VCU resources to initiate a new school that could obtain accreditation. These funds would add 20 new faculty members, two new department chairs, a dean, staff support, and operating budget. This estimate would not include the costs for physical space to house the school. Dr. Nettleman recommended the following next steps:

- Determine the role of the Departments of Biostatistics, Preventive Medicine & Community Health, and Health Administration.
- Form an executive committee of key stakeholders to outline a plan to create a School of Public Health.
- Once the framework for the school is created, seek legislative support and industry donations
- Bring external consultants to help in structuring the school for successful accreditation.

TASK FORCE PROCESS

As task force members were appointed, they were sent a copy of the Dr. Mary Nettleman report for background information. As information was being gathered by Drs. Kontos and Sarrett, suggestions for additional task force members emerged and were added. In preparation for convening the task force, Drs. Kontos and Sarrett explored administrative structures for establishing an initial School of Public Health using the existing departmental resources available at VCU. One concept explored was to rename the School of Allied Health Professions to the School of Public and Allied Health Professions. This would establish a foothold for VCU in public health education in Virginia. The Departments of Biostatistics and Preventive Medicine and Community Health would be moved from the School of Medicine to the School of Public and Allied Health. The Department of Health Administration already exists in the School of Allied Health. This arrangement would locate departments representing three of the five core education areas required for an accredited school of public health within one school. The involved schools and departments provided both suggestions and concerns.

A meeting was held with the chairs of Biostatistics, Health Administration, and Preventive Medicine and Community Health to discuss their participation in formation of a public health school. All three chairs expressed enthusiasm in favor of creation of a School of Public Health at VCU. The three chairs prepared an outline entitled *Issues for Consideration Regarding the Proposed VCU School of Public Health Initiative*. This document described the pros and cons various administrative structures for a School of Public Health and was distributed to the task force members. Subsequently, Drs. Kontos and Sarrett met individually with the department chairs and the Dean of Allied Health Professions to discuss the public school initiative.

Drs. Kontos and Sarrett met with the Departments of Health Administration, Biostatistics, and Preventive Medicine & Community Health to gather more information from the faculty regarding how to start a School of Public Health. The discussion centered on reasons for establishing a public health initiative, administrative structures for a new school, and incompatibility between the CEPH accreditation standards and current focus of some of the educational programs within the departments. Three common themes emerged from these meetings. First, a VCU School of Public Health was considered an initiative that was right for VCU and that VCU is the logical university in the state to house a school of public health. Second, the school would have to be built in steps as resources are added. Third, the faculty is concerned with university starting a partial VCU School of Public Health and then not following through with completing the process to establish and accredited school. The three department chairs from were added to the task force.

Dr. Sarrett met with Drs. Robert Holsworth, Director of the School of Government and Public Affairs. This is a newly created school whose faculty has interest in and a history of funding in community health policy. The meeting with Dr. Holsworth included Dr. Judy Bradford who directs the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory (SERL) at Virginia Commonwealth University. Because of his support for a school of public health and the potential future collaborations with his faculty, Dr. Holsworth was appointed to the task force.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently published *Who Will Keep the Public Healthy? Educating Public Health Professionals for the 21st Century* (hereafter referred to as the IOM report). This report acknowledges the need for the traditional public health core areas but recommends that future public health curricula include core instruction and specialization in the following eight topics: informatics; genomics; communication; cultural competence; community-based participatory research; global health; policy and law; and public health ethics. This publication was reviewed and VCU has existing strength in most of these areas.

The first meeting of the task force was held on November 24, 2003 and the members were provided with the information gathered since the formation of the task force for discussion. The meeting lasted two hours and it was concluded that a VCU School of Public Health should be established, however, questions regarding administrative structures and resources needed further discussion. Members also suggested other people to contact for further information and possible inclusion on the task force.

A draft report was prepared and distributed for discussion prior to the second task force meeting on December 18, 2003. Drs. Trani and Retchin attended the meeting. The discussion at this meeting was focused on the existing resources at VCU and how this should determine the mission focus for a VCU School of

Public Health, potential administrative models, the approval process for a new school, and developing the needed resources to create an accredited school.

Final additional information was requested from task force members and the final draft of this report was distributed to the members for comment prior to completing the report.

RATIONALE FOR A VCU SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Demand for public health graduates

There is a large and growing need for public health professionals. This need exists nationwide, the Commonwealth is not exempt from this need. The August 2002 proposal for VCU's recently approved Ph.D. program in Epidemiology, included a thorough review on the projected enrollment and demand for graduates and documents the need to increase public health training programs. A search on January 9, 2004 of PublicHealthJobs.net found 65 position postings, some dating back to August 2003. This jobs database, maintained by the Association of Schools of Public, contains primarily positions in academic institutions and corporations. A search of the Virgina Department of Health job postings on January 10, 2004 listed 10 open positions requiring or desiring MPH training. There were an additional 6 positions seeking individuals with environmental health training, one the core areas for a school of public health. Included in this report is a letter from Dr. Robert Stroube, State Health Commissioner, stating that a School of Public Health at VCU "would be a great asset to the Virginia Department of Health." (Appendix A) The IOM report documents that only a small percentage of the current public health workforce has graduate degrees in public health. The report goes on to say "Many of those in the public health workforce who do receive formal training in public health do so primarily via alternative pathways, that is, through certificate programs, short courses, and continuing education programs,…"

Recent events are likely to further increase the need for public health professionals markedly, over and above existing levels. Most important of these is the occurrence of bioterrorism and the risk for additional bioterror attacks, possibly including biological and chemical weapons. Emergence of new infectious diseases, such as SARS, increases further the need for public health professionals. These emerging areas of need are additive to existing public health problems in Virginia. The recognition of the serious and growing problem of obesity and the need for public education in this area are important. The demand for effective large-scale interventions to decrease the prevalence of substance abuse problems and interpersonal violence will require additional public health professionals. It is unlikely that this growing need for public health professionals will be met fully by the output of graduates from the existing public health schools and public health programs in this country.

Virginia has four programs for masters of public health (MPH). The oldest program is at Virginia Commonwealth University; it has been in existence for ten years and has gone through two accreditation cycles. Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) and Old Dominion University (ODU) have collaborated in the last two years to create a new MPH program. A third program has just been approved at the University of Virginia. A consortium program between EVMS, ODU, George Mason University, and James Madison University has recently been announced (http://www.commonwealthmph.org/). The current tuition for this program is $600 per credit hour for both in-state and out-of-state students. The program, known as the Commonwealth MPH, is to be offered entirely through distance learning and is 41 credit hours. This equates to $24,600 in tuition over two years.

There are currently 34 accredited schools of public health in the United States. An additional six schools of public health are new established and are seeking CEPH accreditation. The 2003 U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Virginia's population is 7.4 million. There are 12 states with population of 7 million or greater. Of these 12 states, Virginia is the only state without a school of public health. There are 26 states with population greater than 4 million and only five of these states (CO, IN, TN, VA, WI) do not have schools of public health. Lastly, there are eleven states with a population similar to Virginia (plus or minus two million), three of these do not have schools of public health (IN, TN, WI). These data indicate that Virginia's citizens are not receiving the benefits to the public health of many other states of similar population.

A search of the SCHEV database reveals the number or MPH graduates per year from Virginia public institutions ranged from 22 to 31 from 1999 to 2003. The Ph.D. program in Epidemiology at VCU is the first doctoral level public health degree program in Virginia. The public health schools in other states, and especially in the surrounding states, are also unlikely to fulfill the Commonwealth's need for public health professionals. Accordingly, it is necessary to create new programs, preferably in an accredited School of Public Health. Virginia does not have a School of Public Health.

Existing VCU Resources

Virginia Commonwealth University is in the best position of all public universities in the state to create a School of Public Health. VCU has the only comprehensive health sciences campus in Virginia. This campus is an ideal location for a new Public Health School. It provides excellent opportunities for collaboration between a public health school and the other five health sciences schools. The importance of future close cooperation between public health schools and healthcare educational programs was emphasized strongly in the IOM report. The IOM report recommends "that schools of public health actively seek opportunities for collaboration in education, research, and faculty development with other academic schools and departments, to increase the number of graduates in health and related disciplines who have had an introduction to public health content and interdisciplinary practice, and to foster

research across disciplines." The report states that it is of particular importance to incorporate public health training into the medical and nursing school curricula. A VCU School of Public Health would be well positioned to follow this IOM recommendation.

Departments of Biostatistics, Preventive Medicine & Community Health, and Health Administration

Five core components are required to establish an accredited School of Public Health: epidemiology; biostatistics; health services administration; behavioral health; and environmental health. VCU has departments in three of the five core areas. The Department of Biostatistics in the School of Medicine has MS and PhD programs and supports funded research in all areas of health sciences. Epidemiology is in the Department of Preventive Medicine & Community Health in the School of Medicine; it has the oldest MPH program in the state, has recently initiated a PhD in Epidemiology. Finally, the Department of Health Administration in the School of Allied Health Professions offers a Master of Health Administration (MHA) and Master of Science in health administration. Health Administration has a doctoral program in Health Services Organization and Research (HSOR) that has existed since 1985 and has nearly 80 degree holding graduates. The US News and World Report rank the MHA and the MSHA programs fifth in the country. Table 1 provides data on the size of the graduate programs in these three departments.

Table 1. Existing academic programs in the Departments of Biostatistics, Health Administration, and Preventive Medicine & Community Health, their current enrollment, and number of graduates in the past five years.

Academic Program	Current Department	Current Enrollment	Number of Graduates in Past Five Years				
			99	00	01	02	03
MS Biostatistics	Biostatistics	2	2		2	2	2
PhD Biostatistics	Biostatistics	20	3	1	1	3	3
MS Clinical Research & Biostatistics	Biostatistics	12			1	2	
PhD Health Related Sciences - Health Services Organization and Research	Health Administration	22	4	7	3	3	2
Master Health Administration	Health Administration	61	27	23	29	28	17
MS Health Administration	Health Administration	46	28	18	12	45	14

MPH	Preventive Medicine & Community Health	35	22	31	22	18	18
PhD Epidemiology	Preventive Medicine & Community Health	1	Program approved in 2003				

The Department of Biostatistics feels a School of Public Health at VCU presents an opportunity for the department. Four Biostatistics faculty members either trained in or were employed by a school of public health. This experience should be utilized in the formation of VCU's School of Public Health. VCU's department of Biostatistics is heavily involved with the Schools of Dentistry and Nursing, the Massey Cancer Center, the General Clinical Research Center, and the Departments of Family Practice, Neurology, and Radiation Oncology. The Department of Biostatistics currently offers the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Biostatistics, an M.S. in Clinical Research and Biostatistics, and supports an M.S. in Quantitative Bioinformatics through VCU Life Sciences. To develop an MPH in Biostatistics, it is likely that it could be fashioned from the MS in Clinical Research and Biostatistics. Some additional resources would be needed to permit Biostatistics faculty to meet their current obligations and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the School of Public Health.

The department feels it is critical to maintain their current collaborations with other medical researchers. Dr. David DeMets, Chair of the Department of Biostatistics at the University of Wisconsin and a member of the Massey Cancer Center Advisory Board stresses the importance of the VCU Department of Biostatistics maintaining their close collaborations with the School of Medicine research faculty. He feels this is best accomplished by keeping the department physically located near the medical researchers and the faculty having joint appointments in the School of Medicine and the School of Public Health. Dr. DeMets is, in general, supportive of the creation of a school of public health because of the benefits for Biostatistics and the current trend is in this direction. To recruit top faculty members, VCU's Biostatistics faculty salaries need to be brought to parity with those received by biostatisticians at other schools of public health. The past decade has been associated with a precipitous decline in the VCU salaries relative to biostatisticians at other universities. Sources of salary figures include the American Association of Medical Colleges and the American Statistical Association.

The Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health (PMCH) enthusiastically support the creation of a VCU School of Public Health. Because of its role as the "Public Health Department" and the extensive knowledge of its faculty about schools of public health, it has served as a key department in providing input to the formation of the proposed school. It is because of this core

knowledge base that some universities reorganize their Department of Preventive Medicine (or the equivalent) in order to create a school of public health. As an example, the Louisiana State University did just that in creating their new school of public health in 2003. PMCH sees a school of public health at VCU not only as an opportunity for the Department but also a complement to the academic programs on the VCU Medical Center Campus, providing new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration in both teaching and research.

The Department currently offers a generalist MPH degree with a specialized track in the discipline of epidemiology to be offered beginning Fall 2004. Together with a track in environmental health that is in the planning stage, these offerings would assist in laying the groundwork for the separate, required MPH degree programs in a school of public health. Dr. Tilahun Adera has prepared a document (Appendix B) that describes a sample curriculum for MPH tracts in the five core areas. This document demonstrates that VCU has many of the courses needed to assemble curricula for the five core public health areas. PMCH has the longest established, accredited MPH Program in the state and in 2003 began accepting students into its new doctoral program in Epidemiology. Currently, PMCH offers a joint MD/MPH degree and is working with School of Nursing faculty to finalize a proposal for a joint degree program in Nursing (M.S.) and Public Health (M.P.H.). Once this program is successfully established, the Department plans to explore other joint degrees (e.g., PharmD/MPH, MSW/MPH, DDS/MPH).

The Department has numerous collaborative relationships both within and outside of the University that lend support he establishment of a school of public health, particularly one with the goal of having strong links with government agencies and serving the citizens of the Commonwealth. Within VCU, PMCH faculty work with those in other University departments/centers key to establishing a school of public health, such as Biostatistics, Health Administration, Psychology, the Center for Environmental Studies, the Survey and Evaluation Research Lab, the Massey Cancer Center, and Internal Medicine. PMCH faculty members hold joint appointments in some of these departments/centers, and a number of VCU faculty from outside the Department have appointments to PMCH and teach courses or lecture regularly in the MPH Program.

Outside of the University, PMCH has established a collaborative relationship with the state and local departments of health. Several local health department directors have faculty appointments in PMCH, as does the current state Health Commissioner, the State Epidemiologist, and a number of other Virginia Department of Health staff. PMCH faculty members have current research contracts with the Virginia Department of Health and work collaboratively with staff in the Office of Family Health Services and the Office of Epidemiology. A PMCH faculty member is the principal investigator on a grant to monitor and ensure the safety of Richmond's water supply. Funding from Virginia

Department of Health currently supports some full-time faculty members, has done so in the past, and will likely continue to do so in the future; the establishment of a Maternal and Child Health Epidemiologist position in PMCH with funds from VDH is currently being planned. Finally, representatives of PMCH have historically been involved in community efforts such as programs to encourage exercise and good nutrition (Rock Richmond!), making healthcare accessible and ensuring the health and safety of Richmond's Youth (Youth Matters and the current Center for the Study and Prevention of Youth Violence Youth Violence Prevention Project).

School of Nursing

The School of Nursing offers a number of courses that MPH students could take as elective, particularly in the social/behavioral health track. The School has three faculty members holding MPH degrees with education and research interests in public health areas. Research examples include projects with HIV infected individuals in the community and adolescent risk behaviors. The School is also interested in expanding the number of public health sites for clinical experiences for nursing students. A current project in VCU's School of Nursing, *Public Health Nurses for Virginia's Future,* is designed to strengthen the public health component of the BS nursing program. Enhancing public health education in schools of nursing is one of the recommendations in the IOM report.

School of Pharmacy

It is expected that pharmacy will play a larger role in public health issues and needs in the future. More community pharmacies are now providing immunization services, expanding public education in drug therapy and general health, establishing wellness centers, and quality assurance programs for medication safety. Hospital pharmacists are extensively involved in medication safety and medication error prevention. A significant public health problem affecting our country is the over prescribing of antibiotics and the sequelae of development of resistant organisms. This is problem that will require collaborations among pharmacist, health care providers, and public health practitioners to solve. The School of Pharmacy is planning a PharmD/MPH joint degree program and desires to increase the teaching of public health topics in the pharmacy curriculum. Current research in the School that is public health related is pharmacoepidemiology, health services and pharmacy services research, patient safety and medication use, and drug abuse. A School of Public Health at VCU would be synergistics with the School of Pharmacy.

School of Government and Public Affairs and Center for Public Policy

The School of Government and Public Affairs' faculty has expertise in and a history of funding in community health policy that can contribute to health services administration core area. The school's director, Dr. Holsworth, is very interested in interfacing with a School of Public Health and this would influence his decision regarding the type of faculty members to recruit in the future. Currently recruitments are underway for faculty with expertise in GIS/community

analysis, homeland security/emergency preparedness, and urban policy. The Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory (SERL) at Virginia Commonwealth University is the applied research arm of the VCU Center for Public Policy. During this semester, the research activities in the Center for Public Policy will be integrated with the School of Government and Public Affairs. The SERL has the largest telephone interview facility in the commonwealth and receives funding from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) that was initiated with an AIDS research project in 1988. Currently SERL has over $4 million in community health grants mostly HIV related. The school offers courses in policy, administration, and planning that may be of interest to MPH students. For more detailed information on contributions from the Center for Public Policy see Appendix C.

Life Sciences

The Life Sciences program at VCU has important components that could enhance a School of Public Health. For example, there are environmental science programs with a master's degree in environmental studies that can provide some of the necessary courses in environmental health. In addition, the presence of strong bio-informatics research and education and within the Life Sciences program provides the opportunity for using these disciplines to enhance the stature of any future public health programs. The Center for Environmental Studies currently collaborates with other units including NIH, DOD, and the City of Richmond on funded research relating to environmental health and waterborne biological and chemical hazards. The Center's spatial data laboratory conducts GIS training and research on environmental health applications for state and county departments of health. The applications of GIS and other new approaches (molecular biology and spectral detection) to rapid identification of waterborne pathogens are foci of the Center's activities that would enhance the capabilities of a school of public health. The Center also directs the Commonwealth's largest professional training program in environmental health.

School of Social Work

The School of Social Work is the oldest in the south (1917) and is nationally ranked (13th by US News & world Report) out of approximately 150 MSW programs nationally. It had the only MSW program in the Commonwealth until the early 1970's when Norfolk State University started an MSW program. In early 1990's Radford University started an MSW program. Last year GMU started an MSW program that is up for accreditation candidacy in 2003 with accreditation hopefully to follow in 1-2 years. University of Virginia does not have any social work education program. Combined MSW/MPH programs exist at University of Michigan, University of North Carolina, University of Pittsburgh, University of Maryland Baltimore, and University of Washington. Examples of employers of public health social workers are the Florida and South Carolina Departments of Health. Therefore, if social work is to be a resource for a public health program, VCU is the best option in the Commonwealth and would create the opportunity to develop another interdisciplinary training program that is the trademark of VCU.

The School of Social Work has 600 MSW students total and another 200 BSW and 50 PhD students in Richmond. It also has a dual degree program with TC Williams Law at University of Richmond. For almost 30 years, the School of Social Work has offered its MSW program in Northern Virginia. Today almost 200 MSW students are enrolled at the campus site in Alexandria. The school has 27 full time faculty members, and like most VCU schools, has lost several positions in the last few years. The School of Social Work has existing courses that may provide course options for the social/behavioral health component in public health. Some courses are required and, therefore, are offered annually and others are electives that may not be offered every year. While the school's courses are frequently filled to capacity, with increased resources they could be open to students in a public health program. Some courses perhaps would require some revision to better align with a public health perspective but all address public health issues.

Departments of Psychology, Psychiatry, Human Genetics

The Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry could also be key contributors in the area of social/behavioral health. Examples of current public health related work include the following. The Department of Psychology has established a partnership with the Greater Richmond Community dedicated to the promotion of culturally sensitive strategies that effectively interrupt the cycle of violence, contribute to healing, and create safe environments where youth and families can grow and thrive free of violence. The Departments of Psychiatry and Human Genetics are researching problems such as depression, substance abuse, and life choices by adolescents at the Virginia Institute for Psychiatry and Behavioral Genetics. The IOM report endorses the inclusion of genomics in public health curricula and the Department of Human Genetics could play a key role in this area.

Inova Health System Fairfax Hospital

Beginning in 2005, 24 VCU medical students per class will complete their M3 and M4 years at Fairfax Hospital. This agreement created a Northern Virginia medical campus for VCU. This presence near our nation's capital would be an important asset for a VCU School of Public Health.

Linking these existing VCU assets would allow the establishment of a School of Public Health with strong interdisciplinary connections on both VCU campuses and with fewer additional resources compared to other Virginia universities. To create an accredited school, however, it will be necessary to make a commitment to grow the school's resources so that the school will have faculty expertise within the school in all five of the core areas of public health.

Existing Courses and Potential Affiliate Faculty
Appendix D includes a list of courses outside of the existing MPH curriculum that are taught by faculty in other VCU schools that could be of interest to MPH students.

External Resources
Within a short distance from VCU are located other units that can add adjunctive strength to the School of Public Health. No other university in Virginia has comparable external resources to support a school of public health. Accordingly, establishing of School of Public Health in any other university in the state would be considerably more expensive and could not take advantage of the public health related organizations available in the Richmond area.

Virginia Department of Health
The location of VCU in the capital of Virginia in close proximity with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is a strong asset. This proximity provides the opportunity for collaboration and for training of students and graduates. A large number of public health employees in VDH are graduates of programs at VCU, and there is considerable interaction between professionals in the State Health Department and faculty in departments at VCU. Dr. Robert Stroube, State Health Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), supports the establishment of a School of Public Health at VCU (Appendix A). Dr. Stroube is a clinical associate professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health. The following points summarize the benefits to VDH and VCU.

Training people for the public health work force. VDH is very interested in recruiting new public health trainees. There would be any number of opportunities for students to have internships within VDH, either at the state or district health department level. Opportunities would include: environmental health, epidemiology, emergency preparedness and response, women and children's programs, STDs and HIV, Emergency Medical Services, and the Medical Examiner's office.

Providing training to VDH employees in a number of areas. VDH contracts with a number of academic institutions in Virginia to provide training in a number of public health areas including emergency preparedness issues. A School of Public Health would provide expertise in a number of areas of benefit to VDH employees

Research. There are a large number of opportunities for research projects to perform in collaboration with VDH.

Collaboration on public policy initiatives. The School of Public Health would be in a in good position to work with VDH on policy issues that to be brought to the Virginia General Assembly.

Adjunct faculty support. A number of people who work for VDH would be excellent teachers within a public health training program. VDH has people with enormous expertise in public health and could be involved in training students on a range of public health topics.

Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (VDMHMRSAS)

This state agency, located in Richmond, supports services through local community service boards based on data collected on the prevalence of mental health, mental disabilities and substance abuse. Opportunities exist for research collaborations on social and behavioral public health issues between the School of Public Health and VDMHMRSAS.

Department of General Services, Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services

Consolidated Laboratory Services is in close proximity in the Biotechnology Park and could provide important collaborative arrangement, as well as opportunities for training and for research with students, faculty and graduates of potential public health programs at VCU. The following description from their website (http://dcls.dgs.state.va.us) describes the services provided and capabilities.

> Formed in 1972 when laboratories at several Virginia agencies combined to provide more efficient and cost-effective testing, DCLS was the first consolidated laboratory in the nation to offer a wide variety of scientific testing in support of state programs. DGS' consolidated laboratory provides analytical testing services to the Commonwealth of Virginia and other states as requested through state and federal agencies. Laboratory staff conducts over 3 million scientific tests each year to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for Virginians and others. The air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat are all tested by DCLS. Laboratory staff also tests blood samples from all infants born in Virginia as part of the Commonwealth's newborn screening program. Other DCLS services include examination of human specimens for disease control and providing laboratory inspection and certification services as required through the Safe Drinking Water Act and Food and Drug Administration. Testing capabilities have expanded in recent years. DCLS now performs selected testing for the states of West Virginia, North Carolina and New Jersey. In addition to routine testing, DCLS may be called on to respond to various health and environmental emergencies in Virginia.

Virginia Biotechnology Research Park

The Virginia Biotechnology Research Park is the home to more than 45 biosciences companies, research institutes affiliated with the VCU Medical Center and major state and national medical laboratories. Some potential areas for collaboration with the School of Public Health are forensics, biotoxins, and environmental analyses.

FACULTY SIZE OF VCU SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

To answer the question of what would be the eventual faculty size of an accredited VCU School of Public Health, it is useful to review data from the Council on Education for Public Health publication, *What Does It Take to Have an Accredited School of Public Health?* The data are summarized below in two tables and provide some benchmarks on faculty size.

Table 2. Typical faculty size for five schools of public health granted accreditation status between 1987 and 1999.

Mean FTE	Range FTE
36.6	27-46.3

Table 3. The departmental faculty size for schools of public health that were reviewed for accreditation in 1998 by CEPH. Data are from UCLA, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Pittsburgh, San Diego State University, South Florida, Texas, Washington, and Yale.

Department	Mean FTE	Range FTE	Range FTE with smallest and largest departments excluded from calculation
Biostatistics	11.9	2.5-33.3	5-19.2*
Environmental Health	15.5	5.0-31.3	9.5-25.5*
Epidemiology	18.2	4.4-50.3	5-33.2*
Health Services Administration	16.9	5.1-53.4	7-22.1*
Social and Behavioral Health	11.5	4.4-23	6-18**

* The top and bottom of the ranges are all from the same two respective institutions.

** Eliminates the top and bottom institutions.

The department chairs for Biostatistics, Health Administration, and Preventive Medicine & Community Health have provided an estimate of the number of additional faculty FTE that would be needed to maintain all existing degree programs and other teaching responsibilities outside their departments and to establish MPH degree tracks in the five core areas of public health. It is likely that some of the additional faculty resources could be achieved through collaborations with the existing VCU resources describe above. The estimates in Table 4 are not based on a specific student enrollment projection and would include FTE for funded research faculty. These provide an estimate of the eventual size of a mature VCU School of Public Health. These data also assume that the Department of Health Administration is included in the School of Public Health. The recommended administrative models for the school leave the Department of Health Administration in the School of Allied Health Professions. The eight additional faculty members in Table 4 for Health Services Administration is expected to be divided (by a formula based on teaching effort) between the Department of Health Administration and the department in the School of Public Health responsible for this core area.

Table 4. Estimates provided by the Departments of Biostatistics, Health Administration, and Preventive Medicine & Community Health for the faculty FTE's needed to establish a mature, accredited VCU School of Public Health.

Department	Current FTE	Additional FTE	Total FTE
Biostatistics	6*	5	11
Social & Behavioral Health	-	8	8
Environmental Health Science	-	8	8
Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine	5	5	10
Health Services Administration	11	8	19
Totals	22	34	56

*Biostatistics has 6 additional faculty supported on soft money from research grants and teaching in other schools

The ultimate size of the faculty would depend on enrollment demands and funded research, however it is clear that the school will need additions faculty FTE to achieve accreditation status.

ADMINISTRATIVE MODELS

A number of potential approaches are possible to establishing a School of Public Health at VCU. The choice would depend on an evaluation by the leadership of the available resources and the potential obstacles in the establishment and accreditation of the school. The accrediting organization for schools of public health is the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). It is important to understand the distinction between the accreditation of an MPH program and a school of public health. As VCU begins to make the transition from having an accredited MPH program to establishment of an accredited school of public health, the administrative structure that houses the school becomes very important and critical to meeting CEPH standards. The following characteristics of a school of public health are provided by CEPH:

1. The school and its faculty shall have the same rights, privileges and status as other professional schools that are components of its parent institution. The position of the school of public health should carry the same prestige, prominence and primacy as do schools of dentistry, nursing, medicine, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine.

2. The school shall function as a consortium of disciplines that addresses the health of the community and focuses on instruction, research, and community service. A school of public health should be a multidimensional university center on community health. The special learning environment of a school of public health shall provide for interdisciplinary communication, development of professional public health concepts and values, and stress problem-solving.

3. The school shall provide the focus for a wide array of both academic and professional interests and activities that relate to the health of the public. The school should provide a rich intellectual climate that stimulates and facilitates multidisciplinary exchanges of ideas between academics and professionals. The school should facilitate an environment that stimulates both individual creativity and initiatives and collaborative and cooperative activity among its faculty.

4. The school shall have faculty and other human, physical, financial and learning resources to provide both breadth and depth of educational opportunity in the five core areas (biostatistics, epidemiology, health services administration, environmental health, social and behavioral health) and must offer education at the masters level sufficient to provide a concentration in each of the five specified areas. The school shall offer the Master of Public Health degree (MPH) and at least one doctoral degree, which is relevant to one of the five specified areas of public health. Schools may use faculty expertise throughout the university and beyond in the public health practice community, however a school must

have a critical mass of faculty whose primary commitment is to the mission of the school of public health.

5. The school shall plan, develop and evaluate its instructional, research, and service programs in such a way as to assure sensitivity to the perceptions and needs of its students and to combine educational excellence with applicability to the world of public health practice.

The task force examined several possible administrative structures with the long-term goal of establishing an independent School of Public Health. The most direct and obvious one is to put all the components that are needed for the establishment of the School of Public Health under unified leadership in one location. The necessary approvals for the School of Public Health within the University and the Board of Visitor's may then be secured. VCU would then seek approval by the State Council of Higher Education and request accreditation by the appropriate external agencies. This approach has the advantage of firmly establishing the intent of the University to create a School of Public Health. It gives a clear message to faculty and leaves no doubt about the will and support for the School of Public Health amongst the leadership of the University. This approach would clearly meet CEPH standards regarding independence of the school. The drawback to this approach is that it would be the most costly approach and would create the greatest statewide debate among Virginia's public institutions of higher education. The political debate could create the need for legislative action to establish the school.

The task force also considered a matrix model following the VCU Life Sciences approach. The model has great appeal in that existing departments remain within their academic schools with their existing faculty and budgets. This would be the quickest, and possibly the least expensive way to create a Public Health initiative at VCU, however, this structure would not meet the CEPH standards for accreditation and only postpones the difficult work of administrative restructuring to take advantage of the existing departmental resources. This approach would create less political debate then creating school directly.

A number of other approaches can proceed in a two-step process. In an initial step, for example, the existing components for a School of Public Health, mainly preventive medicine, health administration and biostatistics, could be placed under unified leadership. Transferring the Departments of Biostatistics and Preventive Medicine to the School of Allied Health and renaming that school as the School of Public and Allied Health could accomplish this. Eventually, the two additional departments needed for a complete School of Public Health could be established and the choice would be available of either maintaining a combined school or splitting the two components in the future. Another approach is to elevate the School of Medicine to college status and create within the umbrella of the college two schools, School of Medicine and the School of Public Health. Eventually the additional components needed for the creation of an accredited

School of Public Health could be added to the public health component of the college. A third approach is to create a School of Public Health within the School of Medicine without elevating it to college status. The two-step process has the advantage of making possible early approval of a School of Public Health or program through the state process easier than if a School of Public Health were created outright. SCHEV has indicated this would be viewed as a name change rather than creation of a new school. The main disadvantage of the two-step process is that it may create uncertainty among faculty as to the ultimate intent of the University and the availability of resources for achieving the goal of creating an accredited School of Public Health. To counter this, a five-year plan to complete the establishment of the school and obtain accreditation would dispel the uncertainty of using the two-step process.

There are currently 33 accredited schools of public health and only two are within a school or college of medicine. Both of these schools are currently undergoing reorganization and one is becoming a stand-alone school. Several newly established but not yet accredited schools are located within other units, one of which is a school of medicine. It appears from these data that using a two-step approach is not uncommon and has been used by other institutions to eventually establish independent accredited schools of public health. For further details see Appendix E.

A significant concern is duplication of accreditation for programs in Health Administration. Currently, the Accreditation Commission on Education in Health Services Administration (ACEHSA) accredits the educational programs in the Department of Health Administration. Establishment of an accredited School of Public Health will require that the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) also accredit the programs in Health Administration. The focus for the two accrediting agencies is different. CEPH is concerned with education on health care policy and public need whereas ACEHSA is interested in education on the business aspects of health care. Ms. Patricia Evans, Executive Director of CEPH was contacted to discuss the incompatibilities with ACEHSA and CEPH accreditation standards. The question posed to Ms. Evans was, from the CEPH point of view, can these two accreditation processes coexist within a school of public health. According to Evans, 50% of all schools of public health have degrees accredited by both organizations. She did indicate this was often an area of “tension” in the accreditation process because CEPH is interested in research oriented graduate programs and programs accredited by ACEHSA are professional degree programs. The Department of Health Administration feels Evans is understating the problem and that it is critical that Health Administration degree programs not be subjected to CEPH requirements. Otherwise, one semester’s worth of courses would need to be devoted to public health content. This would dilute the management-oriented aspect of the curriculum in which the program’s strength lies. Regarding Biostatistics, since the existing degree programs in this department are not accredited, there is generally not an issue with maintaining the existing degrees together with a MPH in Biostatistics.

VCU's existing MPH in Preventive Medicine and Community Health is already accredited by CEPH and would become the foundation for MPH degrees in the five public health core areas.

FINANCES

Budget projections for the School of Public Health over a five-year period of time based on enrollment growth are located in Appendix F. To make enrollment projections, data from the Association of Schools of Public Health were reviewed. The mean student enrollment for all US schools of public health in 2002 is 532 with a range of 207 to 1,281. For schools accredited between 1992 and 2002, the mean is 321 with a range of 207 to 667. Current enrollment in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health MPH program is 30 students with 10% non-residents. For this budget projection it was assumed an enrollment growth of 150 new students over five years and a gradual shift to 30% out-of-state. Other assumptions were made and are describe on the spreadsheets in Appendix G. This projection indicates new resources of three million dollars per year will be needed in year five to sustain existing programs and establish the new school.

FACILITIES

It will be important to establish a physical identity for the VCU School of Public health at the outset. This will demonstrate a commitment to building the school and facilitate the faculty interactions required to organize the individual units into a functioning school. The table below summarizes the total assignable square feet (ASF) currently occupied by Biostatistics, Health Administration, and Preventive Medicine and Community Health.

Department	Location	Assignable Sq. Feet
Biostatistics	Sanger B1	4283
	B1-064 classroom	498
Health Administration	Grant House	10980
Preventive Medicine & Community Health	Grant House	1381
	McGuire Annex	3899
		21041

The total ASF in Leigh House is 4,570 and in Grant House 15, 778 including basements for a total of 20,348 ASF. The basements are not in good condition and/or are currently used for storage only so these areas would require renovation, however, it seems feasible that Biostatistics could be moved from Sanger to Grant/Leigh Houses based on square footage analyses to establish the School of Public Health. The faculty has expressed concern regarding adequacy of renovated space to permit the department to achieve its mission.

Other questions regarding computer network connections, computer lab, and classroom space would need to be addressed. The Department of Biostatistics is concerned with how their physical location will effect current interactions with medical researchers. Since the Department of Biostatistics provides support for many researchers at the VCU Medical Center, it is important for them to be located centrally on the campus. There current location in Sanger Hall meets this requirement. Utilizing the Grant/Leigh house will require relocating VCU Parking & Transportation, Physical Plant offices, Renovations (Centennial), and VCUHS Capital Programs units of VCU Facilities Management Division. Any growth beyond this would require adding to Grant/Leigh Houses or new construction. There is a parking area behind Grant/Leigh that could be used to place construct additional contiguous space for the school.

The Department of Health Administration has raised the over $1 million from its alumni to renovate the Grant House building and wishes to remain in their current space. There current location will provide opportunity for collaborations with the Department of Health Administration and the School of Public Health.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Virginia does not have a comprehensive program in public health and VCU should establish an independent, accredited School of Public Health.

II. The mission and focus for the school should be something special, unique, and innovative to set us apart from the other schools that are within easy driving distance of Richmond. We should consider informatics, information systems, and technology as one key area where we can shine. We could consider partnerships with the state and local health departments and make the Richmond area a genuine public health laboratory, covering the gamut of public health/health services issues. Such efforts have been tried before, but have not had the necessary support and resources. Practice and research could be combined nicely in this “community oriented public health” model. The IOM report recommended genomics and cultural competence as areas of specialization for Schools of Public Health. These are also areas of strength for VCU. The new school should focus on key cutting-edge public health areas including: bioinformatics; public health forensics and forensic epidemiology; pharmacogenomics and public health (genetic epidemiology); and terrorism and public health preparedness.

III. The University should commit to a five-year time line to build the resources for the school. During this five year period, the School will be expected increase its enrollment to meet the projected target. The School will also be expected to increase its funded research and service contracts to meet projected targets.

IV. The School will be expected to establish all five core areas and become accredited within three to five years depending on the administrative pathway selected.

V. The task force recommends two administrative pathways to establish an independent school. The path that is selected should be based on financial and political considerations. The two recommended pathways are:

A. Establish the School as the sixth health sciences school at the VCU Medical Center directly through the following steps.

1. Appoint an interim Director for the School to work with the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences, the Provost, and the President to develop the proposal for creation of the school and to carry the proposal through University and SCHEV approval processes.

2. Appoint an interim dean for the new school.

3. Move the Departments of Biostatistics and Preventive Medicine and Community Health into the new school.

4. Leave the Department of Health Administration in the School of Allied Health Professions, however, this department will have faculty who are affiliate faculty in the School of Public Health.

5. Recruit a permanent dean.

6. Recruit chairs or program directors for the Health Policy Administration, Environmental Health, and Social/Behavioral Health core areas. It would be expected that some flexibility would be required in establishing the initial departmental structure and that the new school may not necessarily have five departments with each one designated toward only one core area. Begin recruitment of full-time and affiliate faculty for the core areas.

7. Construct additional space for the growing school behind Leigh/Grant House.

8. Apply for and achieve accreditation during year five.

9. Continue to add faculty and support staff as the school's enrollment and funded research budget grows.

B. Establish the School of Public Health within the School of Medicine or within a College of Medicine as a two-step process to an independent school.

1. Appoint an Interim Dean for Public Health for the new school to work with the Dean of Medicine, the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences, the Provost, and the President to develop the proposal for creation of the school and to carry the proposal through University and SCHEV approval processes.

2. Move the Departments of Biostatistics and Preventive Medicine and Community Health into the new school under the leadership of the interim dean.

3. Leave the Department of Health Administration in the School of Allied Health Professions, however, this department will have faculty who are affiliate faculty in the School of Public Health.

4. Recruit chairs for the Health Management and Policy, Environmental Health, and Social/Behavioral Health core areas. It would be expected that some flexibility would be required in establishing the initial departmental structure and that the new school may not necessarily have five departments with each one designated toward only one core area. Begin recruitment of full-time and affiliate faculty for the core areas.

5. Construct additional space for the growing school behind Leigh/Grant House

6. Seek and gain the necessary approvals to separate the School of Public Health from the School of Medicine.

7. Apply for and achieve accreditation.

8. Continue to add faculty and support staff as the school's enrollment and funded research budget grows.

9. Recruit a permanent dean.

VI. The appointed interim dean or director in A.1. or B.1. should be provided money for release time and expenses to complete their assigned tasks.

Submitted Feb 2004