SUNY OLD WESTBURY

SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Proposal for Revision of
Bachelor of Science in Health and Society
To
Bachelor of Science in Public Health

Appendix 1: **External Evaluation Report**

and

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April 4, 2022

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APPENDIX 1
External Evaluation Report

SUNY The State University of New York

External Evaluation Report
Form 2D

Version 201-08-02

The External Evaluation Report is an important component of a new academic program proposal. The external evaluator's task is to examine the program proposal and related materials, visit the campus to discuss the proposal with faculty and review related instructional resources and facilities, respond to the questions in this Report form, and submit to the institution a signed report that speaks to the quality of, and need for, the proposed program. The report should aim for completeness, accuracy and objectivity.

The institution is expected to review each External Evaluation Report it receives, prepare a single institutional response to all reports, and, as appropriate, make changes to its program proposal and plan. Each separate External Evaluation Report and the Institutional Response become part of the full program proposal that the institution submits to SUNY for approval. If an external evaluation of the proposed program is required by the New York State Education Department (SED), SUNY includes the External Evaluation Reports and Institutional Response in the full proposal that it submits to SED for registration.

Institution: SUNY Old Westbury

Evaluator Name (Please print.): Martine Hackett

Evaluator Title and Institution: Associate Professor, Department of Population Health, Hofstra University and Director, Public Health Programs

Evaluator Signature: 

Proposed Program Title: Public Health

Degree: Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Date of evaluation: 2/22/2022

I. Program

1. Assess the program's **purpose, structure, and requirements** as well as formal mechanisms for program **administration and evaluation.** Address the program's academic rigor and intellectual coherence.

A. Purpose

This is an evaluation for a proposal of a degree name change. The Public Health Department at SUNY Old Westbury has offered a well-established B.S. degree in Health and Society since 1975. The proposed degree is the identical degree, but with a **name** change to Public Health.

The mission of the program is to educate students with a social determinants perspective on health; identify the economic and social context within which individuals make behavioral choices; examine social and structural forces that shape individuals' destinies; and plan, implement, evaluate and advocate health programs and policies both in the United States and throughout the world.

The program prepares students for graduate school and for entry into a broad range of professions in public health and other health-related disciplines, such as positions in hospitals, local non-profit health agencies, and health professions including medicine and nursing. The Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) nationally accredits the current degree, and its content is congruent with that of Public Health degrees offered by other SUNY and non-SUNY institutions in New York.

B. Structure:

The academic structure of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Public Health is as follows:

- Students take required courses that satisfy the SUNY Statewide Liberal (General) Education Requirements and SUNY Old Westbury College Liberal Education Requirements (minimum 40 credits).
- Students then take seven core public health courses and three public health-related elective courses (40 credits).
- Students also complete one course in biology and/or anatomy and physiology, one course in applied statistics. The balance of credits is used for free electives.

C. Requirements

Required Courses for Major

BS 2100, 2300, 2310, 2400 or 2410	Either Biology for Non-Science Majors, Anatomy & Physiology I plus lab, or Basic Biological Sciences I plus lab.	4
PH 3600	Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health	4
PH 3610	Introduction to the U.S. Health Care System	4
PH 4670	Biostatistics (prerequisite: MA2000, Introduction to Statistics)	4
PH 4800	Epidemiology	4
PH 4900	Field Placement	4
PH 5900	Research Methods (prerequisites: PH 3600 and PH 3610)	4
PH 5920	Senior Seminar (prerequisite: PH 5900)	4
Three Public Health-Related Elective Courses		12

There are no special admission requirements for this program beyond the College's normal admission requirements. The major will accept all students who are in good standing at the College. A C or higher in Basic communication (English 1 and 2) are prerequisites for all core major courses. The program's core courses also require completion with a grade of C or higher.

D. Administration and Evaluation

The BS in Public Health would be administered in the Public Health Department, housed within the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) at the State University of New York (SUNY) Old Westbury . The School of Arts and Sciences includes 12 departments: American Studies/Media & Communications, Biological Sciences, Chemistry/Physics, English, History/Philosophy, Mathematics/Computer & Information Sciences, Modern Languages, Politics, Economics and Law/Industrial & Labor Relations, Psychology, Sociology/Criminology, and Visual Arts as well as Public Health.

The Chair is elected to a three-year term by all full-time tenure-track faculty, and approved by the Office of Academic Affairs, headed by the Provost.

Every five years, as part of its Department Review, the faculty consider the need to revise the degree curriculum to maintain its currency based on industry developments, student expectations, and competitor actions.

The primary mode of assessment of student performance for the proposed public health degree will be through evaluation of examinations, written assignments and student presentations in classroom settings.

The program demonstrates academic rigor across the curriculum and is regularly assessed and improved.

Specifically:

- The core faculty are actively engaged in high-quality research projects funded by highly competitive national grants awards, have published their research in the top academic journals, and consistently present their research at academic conferences.

- Interdisciplinary course offerings provide students with perspectives from social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, quantitative reasoning, and the humanities.

- All students are required to produce their own senior thesis research project under the supervision of their instructor that requires students to draw from all of their prior coursework as they carry out primary data collection and analysis.

- The program is accredited by the Council of Education in Public Health and has met their national criteria for baccalaureate public health programs.

The program exhibits its intellectual coherence through the commitment to social justice and the way that social factors affect the health of populations. This approach is present in the program's mission statement, the required courses, and validated by my discussion with current and former students.

2. Comment on the **special focus** of this program, if any, as it relates to the discipline.

The program's focus is reflected in the mission statement: "To educate students with a social determinants perspective on health; identify the economic and social context within which individuals make behavioral choices; examine social forces (e.g. social class, gender, etc.) that shape individuals' destinies; and plan, implement, evaluate and advocate health programs and policies both in the United States and throughout the world." This focus aligns with the current perspective within the discipline of public health.

3. Comment on the plans and expectations for **self-assessment and continuous improvement**.

The program already regularly conducts self-assessment and continuous improvement as is required to maintain accreditation by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH). The Department's five full-time faculty meet annually at a faculty retreat to revisit the program's mission and expected student outcomes. The current plans for program improvement are sufficient.

4. Discuss **the relationship** of this program to other programs of the institution and collaboration with other institutions, and assess available support from related programs.

The Health and Society program is integrated into other programs at SUNY Old Westbury. Some of their courses apply in the new Environmental Studies BA, for example, and in several minors on campus (e.g., Women's and Gender Studies, Neuropsychology, Social Work). Several other departments at SUNY Old Westbury offer courses that are required for the BS in Health and Society (e.g. Biology, Math) or that are offered as electives (e.g. Psychology and Sociology). The Public Health degree will maintain these collaborations.

5. What is the evidence of **need** and **demand** for the program locally, in the State, and in the field at large? What is the extent of occupational demand for graduates? What is the evidence that demand will continue?

The need for the degree name change to Public Health is to allow students to receive a more accurately titled credential, thus allowing them to compete on a more level playing field in a job marketplace.

According to the New York State Department of Labor (NYS Department of Labor, 2018), between 2018 and 2019 statewide employment in community health workers is expected to increase by 33.9% (25.6% on Long Island, 33.5% in New York City) and health care administration is expected to grow by 25.6% (21.8% on Long Island, 24.1% in New York City). Further, these reports were pre-Pandemic. Since the pandemic, the public health workforce demand has increased significantly, with employment across all sectors. Student interest in public health education is also increasing significantly since the pandemic's start, according to the Association for Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH).

Changing the name of the degree to public health will help to satisfy the growing demand for public health professionals and provides an opportunity to attract new students to the major. As of 2022, despite the demand for this major, SUNY Old Westbury is one of only 23 standalone baccalaureate programs nationally accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). There are no other public health programs at the BS level in Long Island, NY.

II. Faculty

6. Evaluate the faculty, individually and collectively, with regard to training, experience, research and publication, professional service, and recognition in the field.

The program has five full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty, one part-time faculty member, and several established adjunct faculty. The public health faculty includes the following members:

Name	Title	Degree	Research Area
Rahwa Haile	Associate Professor	PhD, U of Michigan	Social Epidemiology
Chris Hartmann	Assistant Professor	PhD, Ohio State U	Geography
Shijian Li	Associate Professor	PhD, MSW, U of Michigan	Political Science, Social Work
Martha Livingston	Professor	PhD, Stony Brook U	Social/Health Psychology
Sarah Smith	Assistant Professor and Chair	PhD, MPH, U of South Florida	Medical Anthropology, Public Health
Lisa Chin	Full-time Lecturer	EdD, JD, MPH, Columbia U, New York Law School, Columbia U	Health Education, Health Policy and Management
Simon Sandh	Adjunct Instructor	MPH, CUNY	Community Health Education
Heather Henderson	Adjunct Instructor	MA, U of South Florida	Medical Anthropology
Griselda Chapa	Adjunct Instructor	MPH U Illinois @ Champaign-Urbana, ScD., Tulane U.	Health education, health svc management
Tenya Blackwell	Adjunct Instructor	DrPH, SUNY Downstate, MS, NYIT	Public Health, Environmental Technology

All of the five full-time faculty in the Public Health Department hold a doctoral degree in a public health-related area. The faculty regularly conducts relevant research that they publish in peer-reviewed journals and present at academic conferences. They also participate in professional service at the University level, within local communities and within the field of public health.

7. **Assess the faculty in terms of number and qualifications** and **plans for future staffing**. Evaluate **faculty responsibilities** for the proposed program, taking into account their other institutional and programmatic commitments. Evaluate faculty **activity in generating funds** for research, training, facilities, equipment, etc. Discuss any **critical gaps and plans for addressing them**.

The number of current faculty are sufficient for the work within the program. According to my interview with the Provost, the Public Health department has one of the lowest full time faculty/adjunct teaching ratios. The faculty are qualified and demonstrated that they are able successfully manage the responsibilities of the program.

The faculty has been able to generate funds for their own research projects; Dr. Rahwa Haile is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support her research on exploring the impact of hyper-policing and the criminal justice system on health inequities faced by Black Brooklynites.

Faculty have also been able to generate funds for students. Dr. Chris Hartmann coordinates opportunities for students to participate in a summer study abroad. He has worked with the University administration to get funding to help to support students so that they could participate in these unique research opportunities.

Based on my evaluation of the program faculty, there are no critical gaps at this time.

8. Evaluate credentials and involvement of **adjunct faculty** and **support personnel**.

When hiring adjunct faculty, the full time faculty review their professional and educational experiences in order to confirm that they are informed and current in their areas. The credentials of the adjunct faculty are sufficient for the courses that they teach. Many of the adjuncts are practitioners in their area, and remain current in their full-time positions.

Part-time faculty meet regularly with the Chair, and are encouraged to provide their perspectives on matters relating to the curriculum. They are welcome to attend Faculty Senate meetings, and to attend and present as appropriate at Faculty Development workshops.

As for support personnel, the Department of Public Health shares an administrative assistant with the Biology Department.

III. Students

9. Comment on the **student population the program seeks to serve**, and assess plans and projections for student recruitment and enrollment.

The Health and Society major currently serves mostly students of color (over 80%), and over 65% of the student population consists of Black and Latinx students. Similarly, 80% of the students are female, 48% of students received Pell grants, and 45% of students received TAP (Tuition Assistance Program; a New York state program provides tuition grants to middle and low-income NY residents). The majority of the students (69.9%) are from Long Island.

The program's projection of a five percent increase per year in the first five years is reasonable considering knowledge of the future growth of public health, and recognizing this is a name change rather than a completely new program.

The Provost stated that he anticipated an increase in enrollment if the name of the degree is changed to Public Health, and current students supported this by saying that more students would be attracted to majoring in Public Health rather than in Health and Society.

10. What are the prospects that recruitment efforts and admissions criteria will supply **a sufficient pool of highly qualified applicants and enrollees**?

The Health and Society major currently has a robust enrollment, with 178 full-time and part-time students in the Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 semesters. Current enrollment patterns, combined with the fact that the necessary resources are already present in an established department, are positive signs that there will be a sufficient pool of qualified students enrolled in the Public Health major. Additionally, changing the program's name to Public Health will likely support a small growth in anticipated enrollment over the next five years as students become more aware of the work that public health professionals do and future job opportunities. The program has positioned itself well to increase exposure to the topic of public health to first and second year students through the new Introduction to Public Health course.

11. Comment on provisions for encouraging participation of **persons from underrepresented groups**. Is there adequate attention to the needs of part-time, minority, or disadvantaged students?

The program makes a strong effort to encourage participation of part-time, minority or underrepresented students. In my interview with current and former students, several of them spoke about the faculty's commitment to their academic and professional success. Current and former students said that the program helps students who are low income and/or first generation to get used to the academic environment. Additionally, many of the required courses in the program are offered each semester in the evening, to better accommodate the schedules of working students.

12. Assess the system for monitoring **students' progress and performance** and for **advising students** regarding academic and career matters.

The College's Advising Center works with students once they have completed their required courses to choose a major. Academic advisors for social science actively works with the program to help students to learn about the major. Once a student has declared a major in Health and Society, he or she meets with one of their five full-time tenure-track faculty. Unlike some departments, they do not require that a student see one particular advisor; rather, all faculty are available to all of the students on an as-needed basis. During the initial advising session upon declaring the major, advisors discuss career goals and possibilities for experiential learning toward those goals. In addition to being able to reach out to any and all of their faculty at any time during the semester, several open advising days are scheduled just prior to the new semester, and faculty are available on each of these days. Advisors discuss major requirements and course sequencing, and make a course plan with students for the rest of their time at Old Westbury. The faculty often also discuss future career goals, a discussion that continues in individual meetings during PH 4900, the field placement (internship) course.

Students and former students I interviewed said that faculty advisors are helpful to get students to complete the degree on time. They also said that the faculty provide individually tailored

advisement sessions that consider each student's job responsibilities, other commitments and course load. They mentioned that the faculty shares information about job prospects and provides support as students apply. The students also mentioned the faculty provides support for students even after they graduate by assisting with graduate school applications and providing letters of recommendation.

13. Discuss prospects for graduates' post-completion success, whether **employment, job advancement, future study, or other outcomes related to the program's goals.**

Since the program is not new, they can demonstrate the success of students in Health and Society. The program collects data on alumni outcomes every year. In the most recent year, of 71 students who earned this degree, 35 students responded to our survey (49.3% response rate). Of those students, 51.4% were employed (n=18) and 34.3% continued their education and training after our program. That is an 88.6% placement rate. Faculty, the Provost and the Dean all believe this rate will increase and reflect greater success once the name of their degree reflects the industry standard name of public health.

The program prepares students for graduate school and for entry into a broad range of professions in public health and other health-related disciplines, such as positions in hospitals, local non-profit health agencies, and health professions including medicine and nursing.

IV. Resources

14. Comment on the adequacy of physical **resources** and **facilities**, e.g., library, computer, and laboratory facilities; practica and internship sites or other experiential learning opportunities, such as co-ops or service learning; and support services for the program, including use of resources outside the institution.

SUNY Old Westbury has established facilities, equipment, faculty and academic resources available for this program, including, but not limited to, computing and technology services; library services; distance education support, as applicable; public health-related career counseling services, an Academic Advising Center; an Office of Services for Students with Disabilities; a writing center; a Student Success Center, a First Year Experience program, and a general tutoring center. Our program is established with five full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty, one part-time faculty member, and several established adjunct faculty. The Department of Public Health is housed in Old Westbury's Natural Sciences Building, where faculty offices and a dedicated STEM computer lab plus classrooms are available.

15. What is the **institution's commitment** to the program as demonstrated by the operating budget, faculty salaries, the number of faculty lines relative to student numbers and workload, and discussions about administrative support with faculty and administrators?

Based on my interviews, there is strong institutional support for the Public Health degree. SUNY Old Westbury has been committed to the current Health and Society degree since 1975, and expenditures are not new. The operating budget, faculty salaries and faculty lines will continue upon the transition of the Health and Society degree to the Public Health degree.

V. Summary Comments and Additional Observations

16. Summarize the **major strengths and weaknesses** of the program as proposed with particular attention to feasibility of implementation and appropriateness of objectives for the degree offered.

Overall, this evaluation report is to support the change of the name of the major from Health and Society to Public Health at SUNY Old Westbury. *In my view, this carefully considered and necessary change is likely to be successful in clarifying the focus of the major and job prospects for graduates.*

Strengths:

1. **National Accreditation**: As one of only 23 standalone baccalaureate programs that is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health in the United States and the only one on Long Island, the Health and Society program has undergone a rigorous self-study and evaluation process. Maintaining accreditation status requires consistent quality improvement and monitoring.
2. **Strong interest in public health**: Applications to public health programs have grown considerably since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and show no signs of abating. Changing the name of the degree to Public Health can increase the success of graduates to get the jobs in which they are qualified.
3. **Committed faculty**: The full time faculty are highly qualified for instructing students in public health. The faculty regularly engages in social justice informed research, service, and collaborate with students as mentors. The faculty provides outstanding support to students so that they can succeed.
4. **Institutional support:** In my discussions and interviews, Acting Dean Lilly and Provost Quarless expressed enthusiasm for the proposed program, and demonstrate a clear sense of the supports needed for the program to thrive.

Weaknesses:

None identified

Program Feasibility and Appropriate Objectives:

The proposal to change the name of the degree to Public Health is already feasible and meets all of the required objectives for student learning outcomes and career preparation.

17. If applicable, particularly for graduate programs, comment on the ways that this program will make a **unique contribution** to the field, and its likelihood of achieving State, regional and/or national **prominence**.

As an undergraduate degree, Public Health at SUNY Old Westbury will be able to draw positive attention and regional prominence by promoting the national CEPH accreditation, one of only 23 standalone Baccalaureate programs in the United States, and the only such program in the region.

18. Include any **further observations** important to the evaluation of this program proposal and provide any **recommendations** for the proposed program.

After meeting with the faculty, Provost, Acting Dean, current and former students, as well as reviewing the program materials, my strong recommendation that changing the name of the Health and Society degree to reflect the name it should have, Public Health, is appropriate, necessary and essential. All stakeholders will benefit from this change.

External Reviewer Conflict of Interest Statement

I am providing an external review of the application submitted to the State University of New York by:

SUNY Old Westbury (Name of Institution or Applicant)

The application is for (circle A or B below)

A) New Degree Authority

B) Registration of a new academic program by an existing institution of higher education:

Public Health

(Title of Proposed Program)

I affirm that I:

1. am not a present or former employee, student, member of the governing board, owner or shareholder of, or consultant to the institution that is seeking approval for the proposed program or the entity seeking approval for new degree authority, and that I did not consult on, or help to develop, the application;
2. am not a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any of the individuals listed above;
3. am not seeking or being sought for employment or other relationship with the institution/entity submitting the application?
4. do not have now, nor have had in the past, a relationship with the institution/entity submitting the application that might compromise my objectivity.

Name of External Reviewer (please print):

Martine Hackett

Signature:

Martine Hackett

APPENDIX 2

Institutional Response to External Evaluation Report

Institutional Response to External Evaluation Report

SUNY Old Westbury Proposed Revision of BS in Health and Society to BS in Public Health

On December 7, 2021, we received notice from Vice Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Elizabeth L. Bringsjord, that we were approved to move forward with our program announcement in the form of a proposed revision form 3A and a master plan amendment supplement form, with one external evaluation. We completed form 3A and the MPA supplement as instructed, and scheduled our evaluation. Our external evaluator was Dr. Martine Hackett, Associate Professor of Health Professions and Director of Public Health Programs at Hofstra University. Dr. Hackett has established expertise in the field of public health research and practice, and in teaching public health at undergraduate and graduate levels in the NYC-metro area. Her work is centered on health inequities in suburban communities. Dr. Hackett visited our campus virtually on February 22, 2022, meeting with the core faculty and chair of the program, the Acting Dean, the Provost, and current and former students. Dr. Hackett submitted the final report March 28, 2022.

Dr. Hackett strongly recommended our program revision name change to public health be approved. She concluded her evaluation with the following statement:

After meeting with the faculty, Provost, Acting Dean, current and former students, as well as reviewing the program materials, my strong recommendation that changing the name of the Health and Society degree to reflect the name it should have, Public Health, is appropriate, necessary and essential. All stakeholders will benefit from this change.

Dr. Hackett described our program as "exhibiting its intellectual coherence through the commitment to social justice" recognized through our mission statement, core courses, and discussions with students and alumni. Further, Dr. Hackett argued that:

Changing the name of the degree to public health will help to satisfy the growing demand for public health professionals and provides an opportunity to attract new students to the major. As of 2022, despite the demand for this major, SUNY Old Westbury is one of only 23 standalone baccalaureate programs nationally accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). There are no other public health programs at the BS level in Long Island, NY.

Finally, Dr. Hackett noted the established strengths of the program as further evidence of her confidence in the name and HEGIS-code change. She noted these strengths to include the active engagement of core faculty, our interdisciplinary collaborations, our established assessment, our high-quality advising practices, and the clear institutional support we have for this change.

We agree with the findings of Dr. Hackett's report, and are pleased Dr. Hackett was able to evaluate the benefits of appropriately naming our program.