

## **UNIT NAME: The School of Public Health**

**UNIT SUMMARY AND RESPONSIBILITY:** The West Virginia University (WVU) School of Public Health (SPH) is an accredited school by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). The WVU SPH is the only CEPH accredited school in the state of West Virginia. The focus of this administrative review though is to focus on the scope of activity that the dean's office oversees including number of faculty and staff, number of departments, number of academic programs, number of students, research activity, non-academic programs, other relevant activities/initiatives.

**UNIT HEAD COUNT COMPARISON:** SPH FTE count has decreased from 28 in 2018 to 14.56 in 2024. This number will be reduced again on June 30, 2024, and the result will be a total of 13.31 FTEs. These changes have dramatically reduced SPH staff support in all areas of the school. SHP leadership have made a concerted effort over the last 6 years to reduce our expenses and to achieve economies of scale with administrative support positions.

**UNIT ADMINISTRATOR-LEVEL OR ABOVE POSITION COUNT COMPARISON:** In February 2021, the WV BOG approved the merger of the departments of epidemiology and biostatistics, moving the number of departments in the SPH from five down to four. One of the goals of this merger was to gain efficiency by having one chairperson oversee both units. In July 2023, the Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences chair position was eliminated. No new chair will be appointed, and this department will be officially dissolved after all current doctoral students have finished the program. The number of department chairs has now been reduced to three FTEs.

At the dean level, SPH has the same number of assistant/associate deans in 2023 as in 2018 – a total of five. Over time, positions have been revised to make them more efficient and effective. For example, in 2018, the deans primarily performed administrative work and occasionally taught a course. Currently, almost every dean has a busy teaching load except for our assistant dean for business operations who spends 33% of her time within SPH and the remaining time supporting two other units within the Health Sciences Center.

**UNIT BUDGET COMPARISON:** Overall, SPH had a 13.44% decrease in salary spend over the six years, which equates to a savings of \$1,341,107. This is drastic and has affected our ability to build and maintain an infrastructure to recruit and retain students. Additionally, because the SPH is a relatively new school and has a limited alumni and donor base, there are minimal foundation funds available to bridge the gaps for necessary operating expenses when state funds are reduced or restricted. In addition, the operating budget for supplies and other services has decreased significantly over recent years. The supplies and other services budget of \$421k in FY24 decreased by \$110k, or 20.8%, from FY18 and decreased \$264k, or 38.6% from the most recent fiscal year.

**UNIT BENCHMARKS:** The benchmarks used in Schools of Public Health are obtained from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) benchmarks. The most recent data is from the 2022 report which is used for reference in this analysis. Salary data is reported for administrators and faculty. Staff compensation is determined by the market values derived by the state of West Virginia. We also reviewed the structure of peer institutions. This analysis shows that our school salaries are in line with our peer schools as demonstrated by the ASPPH

benchmarks. We have worked very hard over the last 6 years to get all faculty and staff to the relevant benchmark. When compared to four other peer schools, WVU SPH has a similar compliment of department chairs and assistant/associate deans.

**CONCLUSION STATEMENT / REVIEW OUTCOME:** While we have achieved significant savings through administrative reductions and other personnel changes to the school, the importance of strategic re-investment in the school cannot be overstated. This would include hiring to refill voluntarily vacated faculty positions, a renewed approach to foundation/development to help grow donor support for the school and its academic programs and research, and enhancements to outreach and recruitment staff to help actively and rapidly grow academic programs. As the school continues to grow and establish itself financially, additional investments in personnel should be made.