Fielding School of Public Health
Strategic Plan, 2015-2020

Last updated: December 4, 2015
Letter from the Dean

This is a pivotal time for public health, and our strategic plan is designed to help us remain at the forefront of transforming the local and global public health workforce of the future, produce cutting-edge research, and direct new knowledge into programs and policies that improve our lives and our communities. Guided by this plan, we will work to transform health for all locally, nationally and globally.

I wish to thank all of the members of the Fielding School community who contributed actively to the creation of this plan: our faculty, our students and our staff, our alumni, employers of our students, members of community organizations, our advisory board, and friends and supporters of the school. Over an intensive nine-month period spanning October 2014 to June 2015, you participated in individual and small group interviews, focus groups, input sessions, town hall meetings and an online survey, to provide input that reflects the diverse interests and priorities of our community. We are deeply indebted to the dedicated steering committee who represented the broad stakeholders of our community and met on numerous occasions to turn input and data into a visionary yet realistic strategic plan to guide our initiatives in the coming years. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work with the strategic planning consultants at AMC Strategies, who guided us through a strategic planning process that reflects our collective values of inclusiveness and transparency.

This strategic plan is meant to be a living document. We encourage input and feedback. Moreover, we look forward to working with all members of the community during the implementation and evaluation phases, so that we can collectively create a better future for our students, our school, and the health of all people.
Process

The strategic planning process to date has involved three steps:

- Assessing where FSPH is today (environmental assessment);
- Deciding where FSPH should be in the future (strategic mission); and
- Developing a strategy for getting where we want to be (strategy formulation).

At each of these steps, a broad range of stakeholders were engaged from across FSPH (including faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community members) so that we were able to develop a plan that reflects our collective vision for FSPH and a consensus for how we can work together to achieve these goals.

Environmental Assessment.

To assess where FSPH is today, we gathered a wide range of data on important metrics about the school and benchmarked these data against those for peer institutions. In addition, the strategic planning consultants conducted individual and small-group interviews with a wide range of constituents within our community (faculty, staff, students, alumni), reflecting the five departments within our school. Each of these individuals or small groups were asked questions to help us assess the current state of the school (using a traditional SWOT approach to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) including being asked to describe what the FSPH of the future should look like, what key trends exist in the field of public health, and what big, innovative ideas they would like for FSPH to pursue. Based on the results of these interviews, a list of possible strategic priorities for FSPH was compiled; a survey was sent out to over 6500 members of the FSPH community (including over 5400 alumni, 650 students, 220 staff, and 270 faculty) asking them to rank these possible priorities and to provide additional input on both desired priorities and the planning process. The results of the survey were presented at a school-wide town hall meeting, where additional input into the process was also obtained.

Strategic Mission.

To synthesize this input obtained during the environmental assessment phase into a cohesive, strategic vision of where FSPH wants to be in the future, we relied heavily upon our Strategic Planning Steering Committee. This Steering Committee was made up of 24 individuals who were selected to represent the diverse range of stakeholders that constitute our community. From these meetings emerged draft versions of the mission statement, which were then vetted with stakeholders prior to being finalized (see “Our Mission”). The steering committee also worked collectively to translate the priorities identified through the interviews and surveys into concrete goal statements (see “Goals Within Mission Areas”).

Strategy Formulation.

Finally, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee worked together to develop a list of specific actions that we should take as a school to achieve our collective vision and goals (see “Strategies for Achieving Our Goals”) and to prioritize these activities. The strategies were presented at a second school-wide town hall meeting, where additional input was obtained. Based upon recommendations made at the original town hall meeting, we also convened focus groups with students and staff to obtain further input on tactics that could be used to achieve these strategies.
Our Mission

Creating healthy futures for all, locally, nationally and globally.

Mission Imperatives

**Education:**
Develop leaders who will create transformational change needed for a healthy, multicultural 21st century

**Discovery:**
Cultivate new knowledge, evidence and pioneering solutions to markedly improve the health of all communities.

**Service:**
Build partnerships, collaborations and community capacity to identify and address public health issues.

The mission for the Fielding School of Public Health reflects our collective values of building health and equity, and reflects our commitment to driving positive change for all people. We plan to act on this mission with efforts in the three areas that are core to the work of all great research universities: education, discovery, and service. In each of our three core domains, we affirm our commitment to developing leaders, developing evidence based solutions, and working in partnership with communities to promote health and well-being in ways that are innovative, respectful, and inclusive.

Goals and Strategies Within and Across Mission Areas

Within each of the core mission areas (*Education, Discovery, and Service*), we have identified 2-4 specific goals that will allow us to assess our progress in executing our strategic plan; these are:

**In Education:**

1. **Effective Graduates:** Prepare students with skills and expertise to make important contributions to public health.
2. **Bi-Directional Community Learning:** Set the standard in bi-directional learning that leverages the expertise of community partners.
In Discovery:

3. **High-Impact Research**: Advance research with the greatest potential impact on population health and health systems.

4. **Innovative Solutions**: Be a world leader in innovation to advance population health.

In Service:

5. **Health Equity**: Eliminate health disparities and promote health equity.

6. **Healthy Environment**: Engage the expertise of individuals and organizations to create an environment that is conducive to health.

7. **Millions Saving Millions**: Leverage the power of new technology and communication platforms that connect millions of people to learn from and accelerate progress towards health for all.

8. **Policy Impact**: Shape the public policy agenda to impact health.

In addition, we identified four *Cross-Cutting* goals that span across the core mission areas and are central to both our values and our success. These are:

1. **Magnet for Visionaries**: Position FSPH as a magnet for students, faculty, and staff committed to making transformational changes in public health.

2. **Inclusive Culture**: Be a model in creating a community that fosters passion and inclusivity.

3. **Leadership**: Elevate FSPH’s visibility to further our mission, and impact.

4. **State-of-the-Art Infrastructure**: Secure sustainable resources and state of the art infrastructure that fosters excellence in research, education, and service.

We have also developed a suite of strategies that specify the actions that we plan to take to achieve our mission and goals. Although these strategies can be categorized according to the Mission Area that they are most relevant to, each of these strategies address multiple goals, as is shown in the table on the next page.
One of the most rewarding aspects of our planning process was to see the overwhelming consensus amongst our different stakeholder groups about what the top priorities should be for FSPH going forward. In a survey we sent to faculty, staff, students and alumni, we received over 800 responses, with 39% of students, 51% of staff and 44% of faculty providing input. Consistent with our mission as an educational institution, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (83%) listed “prepare students with skills and expertise to make important contributions to public health” as one of the top five strategic priority areas for FSPH; this was the top strategic priority area identified by faculty, staff, students and alumni.
Strategies for Achieving Our Goals

Below, we describe in more detail the twelve of these strategies that were designated by the Steering Committee as top priorities for immediate implementation.

Education

Strategy 1: Create and deliver a cutting-edge, cross-culturally appropriate and ethical curriculum.

Continually designing and improving curricula requires building on the insights of students, faculty, alumni, and employers. We are committed to regularly hearing from those in the classroom, as well as from those using what they learned in the workplace, and seeing the effect of the teaching in their employees. We believe that all schools of public health should seek to use both the best of seminar and problem-solving approaches to teaching that have proven results; and the best of innovations in community-based learning, global learning, and the incorporation of technology. Courses and curriculum will be reviewed on an on-going basis; instructional development opportunity for faculty and graduate students enhanced, and teaching excellence rewarded.

Strategy 2: Position students for careers that leverage their passions and expertise.

Our students are passionate about pursuing careers that will allow them to create healthy futures; our goal is to ensure that we are providing them with the academic preparation, career planning, development and placement services in the public health fields they aspire to work in and maximize their potential.

Strategy 3: Foster lifelong learning and long-term engagement among FSPH alumni.

Careers at the beginning of the 21st Century look markedly different than careers in the mid-20th Century when many schools of public health were founded. Most graduates will work in a series of organizations in different roles throughout their careers. Given both the dramatic speed of change in the strength of our tools and the opportunities individuals will have to play a variety of roles, lifelong learning becomes essential for all of our alumni. We are committed to creating opportunities for alumni to renew and expand their skillset throughout their careers as well as have opportunities to mentor and enrich the experiences of each other and of students.

Discovery

Strategy 4: Strengthen existing FSPH research programs and develop new programs for maximum impact.

Faculty innovation designs and leads research efforts. At the same time, schoolwide efforts can help support their success. We seek to increase support across the school to faculty seeking external funding to launch and further research. We will also develop special initiatives to support research programs on a growth trajectory, those with the most promise of achieving impact, those addressing public health problems with substantial effect on populations, those that advance health equity and reduce disparities, and those that increase our ability to design, enact, and implement policies and programs at scale.
Strategy 5: Facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations designed to target the most challenging problems in public health.

Developing and implementing tractable solutions to the most challenging problems in public health today and in the future will require the efforts and perspectives of interdisciplinary teams. Our goal is to build upon our existing interdisciplinary strengths by increasing training and collaborations across departments in FSPH, with other units at UCLA, and with external partners.

Strategy 6: Develop new high-impact data tools.

Increasingly, large data sets are required to provide evidence-based solutions to thorny problems in public health and at the interface of public health and other fields. Our goal is to be a leader in building the data tools needed and to ensure that researchers and leaders around the world have access to the data, infrastructure, training and support needed to successfully address social, environmental, health care and other determinants of population health.

Service

Strategy 7: Advocate for evidence-based programs and policies to improve health.

As a community, we are committed to developing an evidence base that will enable decision-makers to make decisions that benefit the health of the populations they serve. As part of this, we are striving to become a leader in developing policy tools that are available globally by leveraging School centers engaged in policy-related work, and by encouraging and rewarding faculty and students who are actively engaged in translating research to policy.

Strategy 8: Play a leadership role in improving the health of Los Angeles and communities around the world through partnerships, problem-solving, and novel solutions; disseminate successful approaches.

We have the greatest potential for impact when we engage in genuine, bi-directional partnerships with communities. Our goal is to ensure that our students, faculty and staff have the training and support that they need to create successful high-impact partnerships and that we are effectively engaging networks of alumni, professionals, and community leaders in these efforts.

Cross-Cutting Goals: Priority Strategies

Magnet for Visionaries

Strategy 9: Attract students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and build on their experiences and perspectives to enrich the learning environment at FSPH.

Our school, our work, and our lives are enriched by the diverse members of our community. Our goals are to continue to build on FSPH’s success in attracting diverse students, faculty, and staff; to leverage the strengths that
all of these individuals bring to our school; and to ensure that we are providing the support and mentoring that all members of the community need to achieve their full potential.

**Strategy 10: Support the achievement of transformational change.**

We want to ensure that FSPH continues to attract individuals who want to pursue high-impact ideas. Our goal is to ensure that we align our resources, training programs, and operating procedures to support these individuals and promote the achievement of transformational change.

**Resources and Infrastructure**

**Strategy 11: Update and expand facilities and infrastructure to support all mission areas.**

The tools the world has available for teaching are dramatically changing with the ICT revolution. Classes can be offered simultaneously across the country and around the world. Flipped classrooms allow students to spend more time with faculty problem-solving. Similarly, the facilities that allow cutting edge research in the community, data sciences, laboratories, and elsewhere are markedly different today. Expanding and transforming our facilities to support innovation in teaching and research is a top priority.

**Strategy 12: Expand fundraising and build an endowment for scholarships, infrastructure and programs.**

Affordability and accessibility of graduate education to all students, regardless of their background, is a top priority. We need to do everything we can to minimize the debt load our students bear when they graduate to ensure they can achieve their aspirations of improving health for all, without barriers created by debt. Achieving this and our other goals will require expanding our fundraising so that we can achieve our collective vision.

**Next Steps**

We look forward to active engagement from all members of the FSPH community as we move forward with implementing this plan and assessing our progress towards these goals.