Healthy People 2020 and Education For Health
Successful Practices in Undergraduate Public Health Programs

Howard Community College
Columbia, Maryland
Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts Transfer Degree Program in Public Health
Associate of Arts Degree
http://www.howardcc.edu/academics/program_information/catalog/web/programs/healthsosciences/PublicHealth.html
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INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
Howard Community College (HCC) is a two-year public college where more than 9,500 students pursue studies in a variety of academic programs leading to transfer to four-year colleges or immediate employment upon graduation. An additional 17,000 students take courses for personal or professional development. HCC is located in Howard County, Maryland positioned between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. HCC’s mission is Providing pathways to success.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
HCC’s Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts transfer degree program in Public Health was initially launched fall 2009. Due to a college-wide change in the general education core requirements the public health program immediately underwent a revision and was re-launched fall 2010.

Faculty interest and the 2002 Institute of Medicine report “Who Will Keep the Public Healthy?” served as the impetus for launching the public health program at HCC. Additional incentive was provided from a visiting Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) Professor who co-taught the first Global Health course at HCC with the course developer. Mentorship provided through this collaboration led to a one-year sabbatical for HCC’s public health program developer culminating in the completion of a Master of Public Health (MPH ’08) degree from JHSPH. The development of HCC’s Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts transfer degree program in Public Health served as the MPH capstone project. The Johns Hopkins University director of undergraduate public health program served as the capstone advisor. The publication The Educated Citizen and Public Health: A Consensus Report on Public Health: A Consensus Report on Public Health and Undergraduate Education (Riegelman, Albertine, and Persily 2007) served as an invaluable guide in the development of HCC’s public health program.

 Concurrent to HCC’s public health program development was the development of University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Health Administration and Policy Program (HAPP) public health track. A strong collegial bond was established, developed and maintained between HCC’s developer of the public health program and UMBC’s Director and Associate Director of the Health Administration and Policy Program culminating in an articulation agreement between the two institutions. Mutual respect and an appreciation for the value of the advancement of undergraduate public health led to a very productive work climate.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION
The Public Health program at HCC is housed under the Health Sciences Division which includes, among others, programs in nursing, cardiovascular technology, emergency medical services, radiologic technology, and nutrition.
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Three adjunct faculty have been hired to teach courses in the public health program. To date, no special faculty preparation in public health is provided. Adjuncts are hired for their content expertise (i.e. epidemiology, environmental health, etc.).

HCC and UMBC signed an articulation agreement spring 2011. HCC’s Public Health transfer degree program articulates to UMBC’s Health Administration and Policy Program Public Health track. Upon transfer, HCC students earn six upper-division level credits toward graduation requirements at UMBC for public health coursework completed at HCC.

CURRICULUM
Howard Community College’s Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts transfer degree program in Public Health was developed to articulate to University of Maryland Baltimore County’s (UMBC) Health Administration and Policy Program, Public Health track, bachelor of arts degree program. HCC’s program goal is to provide a solid foundation in public health enabling students to successfully articulate to a 4-year degree program in public health.

HCC’s mission: A place to discover greatness in yourself and others. HCC’s eight core values: innovation, nurturing, sustainability, partnership, integrity, respect, excellence and service. Each of these core values can be found incorporated into HCC’s public health program.

A needs assessment was not undertaken as part of the planning process.

The precursor to HCC’s public health program was an option under the pre-existing Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts Health Education transfer degree program. This option, offered in 2005, was entitled Cross-Cultural and International Health. In fall 2009, the Arts and Sciences Associate of Arts Transfer Degree program in Public Health was established. Due to a college-wide change in the general education core requirements, the public health program immediately underwent a revision. Fall 2010, the existing Public Health transfer program at HCC was launched.

Required public health courses:
- Personal and Community Health
- Introduction to Sociology
- Nutrition
- Introduction to Public Health
- Epidemiology
- Health and the Disease Process
- Introduction to Environmental Health
- Community Advocacy in Public Health
- Global Health

There are no electives in this program.

An experiential learning component, in the form of Service Learning, is incorporated into various courses within the public health program. Dependent upon the course, Service Learning may be an option or a requirement. Through HCC’s Center for Service Learning, HCC public health students may choose from over 80 partnering sites. The goal is to extend classroom learning while encouraging civic engagement,
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community awareness and personal development. Examples of partnering agencies include: American Cancer Society – Hope Lodge; American Diabetes Association; American Red Cross, Howard County Good Bank, Howard County Health Department, Howard County NAACP, Movable Feast, Our Daily Bread, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. No off-site preceptor preparation is provided. Students work directly with organization personnel.

There is no capstone project requirement.

Public Health courses are open to all students. They are not exclusive to those within the major.

STUDENTS
The program was not designed with a set number of students in mind. Currently there are 70 declared Public Health majors at HCC. This number reflects the growth of the program within one year. At present the demand for the public health program/courses is manageable.

LESSONS LEARNED
During the development phase of the public health program at HCC great support and encouragement was provided from both the Health Science Division Chair and the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). This support was truly a leap of faith since, at that point, no other community college in the country had established a transfer degree program in Public Health nor was there a Maryland State college or university to which HCC’s public health program could articulate.

Additional administrative support was granted through a one-year sabbatical provided to the public health program developer culminating in a MPH degree from The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Newly developed courses were promoted and grant funding for conference attendance was generously provided. The VPAA and the division chair encouraged autonomy and creativity.

As previously stated, a strong collegial bond was established, developed and maintained between HCC’s developer of the public health program and UMBC’s Director and Associate Director of the Health Administration and Policy Program. HCC’s program developer has served as an adjunct instructor at UMBC in the HAPP department since 1999. This enduring relationship is based upon mutual respect, shared philosophy and an appreciation on the part of UMBC’s HAPP faculty for the work and ideas contributed by HCC’s public health program developer.

No major challenges were encountered during the development, implementation and maintenance of the program. Throughout the process HCC has undergone a change in key administrative positions, namely, the President, VPAA, and Health Science division chair. Each position was filled with an internal candidate enabling the program to continue with little to no disruption.

Future plans for the program include the development of additional articulation agreements with 4-year institutions, securing student scholarships, hiring of full-time faculty, tracking of HCC public health graduates, and continued marketing of the public health program.

A successful program initiative requires a public health champion at the community college who is passionate in their desire to advance the teaching of public health at the undergraduate level. Workload of a community college instructor differs greatly than that of a college/university instructor. At HCC,
typical teaching load is 15 credits/semester. Instructors are also required to sit on campus committees, serve as faculty advisors, participate in professional development workshops, and must annually submit a Learning Improvement Project to their Chair outlining how they will improve teaching and learning in the classroom, the outcome of which must be measurable.

Key to sustaining a community college public health program is establishing an articulation agreement with a 4-year institution(s). Due to partial community college funding provided by the State, it is often necessary to form an articulation agreement with a State college/university. Community college graduates may also find this option more financially feasible.

In 2010, over 50% of all college students, nationally, chose the community college as their higher education institution. In developing a transfer program, community colleges should seek to align themselves with their intended transfer institutions in terms of departmental hierarchy. Designation of title should reflect that of 4-year institutions where workload and responsibility is equivalent.

Community college transfer students are vital to the strength of four-year colleges and universities. Collaborative ties between 2-year and 4-year institutions benefit not only the students they serve but more importantly the future of global health through the advancement of the teaching of public health at the undergraduate level.