



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Dornsife
School of Public Health



2016 STRATEGIC PLAN



DREXEL UNIVERSITY
Dornsife
School of Public Health

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HEALTHIER
CITIES

HEALTH
IN ALL POLICIES

AS A
HUMAN RIGHT

COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS
FOR **HEALTH**

REDUCING
HEALTH
DISPARITIES





Preamble

The Dornsife School of Public Health was founded on the principle of health as a human right and the recognition of the importance of social justice as a means to achieve health for all. We define health broadly to encompass physical, mental and social well-being and not merely as the absence of disease. We view the focus on the health of populations as a distinguishing feature of public health. Our focus on population health requires us to consider not only the characteristics of individuals but also the broader social, economic, and policy contexts of health. It also implies that a broad range of actions and policies beyond those of the health care system can substantially impact health. Improving population health requires a fundamental commitment to social justice and the elimination of inequities in health. The goal of improving population health also cannot be achieved without meaningful and sustained partnerships. Our school is committed to providing rigorous evidence and training, to building equitable partnerships, and to translating knowledge into actions that improve population health and reduce health inequities.

HEALTH
AS A
HUMAN RIGHT



Mission

The mission of the Dornsife School of Public Health is to provide education, conduct research, and partner with communities and organizations to improve the health of populations. We view health as a human right and have a special commitment to improving health in cities, eliminating health disparities, and promoting health in all policies.

CREATING HEALTHIER CITIES

Urbanization rates are increasing rapidly worldwide: by 2050, 66 percent of the world's people will live in cities. The physical and social environments of cities and their neighborhoods present residents, practitioners and policymakers with challenges and opportunities for health. Our school has a special focus on improving health in cities through science, policy and community partnerships.

Values

REDUCE
**HEALTH
DISPARITIES**

The Dornsife School of Public Health faculty, staff and students are committed to the following:

- Health as a human right and the importance of social justice to health
- Integrity, rigor, critical thinking, and self-reflection in research, scholarship, and education
- Translation of knowledge into actions to improve population health and eliminate health disparities
- Sustainable and equitable community partnerships
- Inclusiveness, diversity, empathy and respect for others regardless of position or status
- Human dignity and open and honest dialogue

Dean's Message

Ana V. Diez Roux, MD, PhD, MPH



The Dornsife School of Public Health is well positioned to grow as a leader in an integrative, policy-relevant, and community-engaged public health.

These are exciting times for public health. There is growing recognition that many things that we do as a society affect our health. We know that in order to improve health, we must apply multisectoral approaches involving not only the proximal actions of the health care system, but also actions that address the distal social and economic drivers of health. We must engage with sectors such as education, housing, urban planning, social services and the economy. We must partner with diverse communities and organizations. We must use novel data and methods to understand the drivers of health and to identify what interventions and policies work. We must grapple with the enormous challenge of disparities in health by social class, race and ethnicity, and place. We must understand and address the health implications of urbanization, migration, social inequalities, globalization, and environmental change.

Fortunately, the Dornsife School of Public Health is well positioned to grow as a leader in an integrative, policy-relevant, and community-engaged public health. As part of the school's strategic plan update, we reviewed and reaffirmed the core foundational principles on which our school was built, and identified new directions to further advance our mission.

ADVANCING
THE HEALTH
OF THE PUBLIC



Our core values reflect the school's historical commitment to health as a human right and to social justice as key to improving population health. They also affirm the historical engagement of both Drexel University and our school with practice-oriented and experiential learning.

The updated plan builds on our school's strong core foundation in several strategic directions, including

- 1 enhancing our ability to generate rigorous evidence on the drivers of population health using state-of-the-art research methods
- 2 expanding our educational programs so that they are responsive to current population health needs
- 3 ensuring that we sustain and enhance our commitment to partnerships and practice; and
- 4 building expertise across a breadth of public health areas with a special emphasis on improving health in cities, eliminating health disparities, and promoting health in all policies.

This 2016-2020 Strategic Plan was developed through a participatory process that engaged faculty, staff and students. The plan is a living document that will evolve and change over time, reflecting our developing priorities, input we receive from others, and changes in the world. As we move ahead with implementation and track our progress, we look forward to continued input from the entire public health community, so that we can be the very best school we can be and, most importantly, so that we make a real contribution to advancing the health of the public – here in Philadelphia and beyond.

Be a leader and innovator in providing an exemplary education to current and future public health leaders, practitioners, scientists, and scholars that (1) emphasizes the multilevel determinants of population health; (2) explicitly links knowledge to problem solving, practice, and policy; (3) emphasizes the core values of health as a human right and health equity; (4) provides state-of-the-art training in relevant theory, methods, and practical skills (including leadership, civic engagement, and science-based advocacy); (5) flexibly responds to an evolving public health context.



Objectives

- 1 **Maintain high quality MPH and DrPh programs** that ensure solid training in core public health competencies, allow concentration in areas relevant to evolving public health needs, and emphasize a strong connection to community engagement, practice, and policy.
- 2 **Grow and enhance the quality of:**
 - a. master of science (MS) and doctoral of philosophy (PhD) programs with a research orientation in thematic areas of special interest to the school.
 - b. an undergraduate program that provides training in the fundamental principles of population health ensuring integration and synergisms between the undergraduate program and graduate programs within the school.
 - c. joint degree programs that capitalize on strengths at the Dornsife School of Public Health and Drexel University and that respond to the need for intersectoral and interdisciplinary approaches to population health.
- 3 **Provide high quality training opportunities** for the public health workforce and community partners in core public health areas and areas of special strength at the school through online offerings and summer sessions.
- 4 **Grow online courses and programs** in ways that expand the impact and enhance the quality, efficiency, and flexibility of educational offerings.
- 5 **Promote the development of interdisciplinary courses and programs.**
- 6 **Ensure that all educational programs incorporate the principles reflected in our mission** and in the overall educational goal of the school in required competencies.



Education

The right to health was first articulated by the World Health Organization in 1946: "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." Our school was founded on the principle that the right to health is about not only access to care for illness or injury, but also ensuring the conditions that allow us to be healthy: safe working and environmental conditions, access to education and good jobs, adequate shelter, clean air, and more.

HEALTH AS A HUMAN RIGHT





Be a leader in the conduct of research and scholarship aimed at understanding and finding innovative solutions to local, state, national, and global population health problems that is scientifically rigorous, interdisciplinary, considers multiple levels of influence and is relevant to public health practice and policy generally.

- 1 Provide regular opportunities** for intellectual exchange and debate on emerging public health challenges and opportunities.
- 2 Support the growth and development** of PhD programs, postdoctoral fellowships and research faculty linked to research activities and external funding.
- 3 Provide research infrastructure** appropriate to submitting and managing external grants.
- 4 Promote interdisciplinary research collaborations** across units within Drexel and between Drexel and external partners.
- 5 Support the development of faculty at all levels** with a special emphasis on junior faculty.
- 6 Grow and diversify the externally funded research portfolio** in areas including but not limited to urban health, health disparities, translation of evidence into practice and policy, and health and human rights.
- 7 Disseminate research and scholarship widely** and through multiple venues.

Research and Scholarship



REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES

Social inequalities in health remain a major challenge for societies around the globe. Our school is committed to understanding the drivers of health disparities, investigating the possible interventions to reduce those disparities, and working with partners to eliminate them. We view social justice as critical to population health.



Civic Engagement, Practice, and Service



Excel in community and civically engaged public health locally and globally by creating and nurturing mutually beneficial and equitable partnerships with communities and organizations aimed at improving population health, eliminating health disparities and promoting health as a human right.



- 1 **Promote and sustain a range of partnerships** aimed at enhancing the practice and service experience of students.
- 2 **Partner with various community groups and organizations** in the conduct of research and in the translation of knowledge into practice and policies aimed at improving population health and eliminating health disparities locally, nationally and globally.
- 3 **Grow the participation of faculty** in expert committees, boards, and panels related to their area of expertise.
- 4 **Actively participate in the public discussion** on the determinants of population health and the most effective interventions and policies to improve health.
- 5 **Promote the conceptualization of health as a human right** and advocate for actions and policies derived from this conceptualization, including the core goal of eliminating health disparities.
- 6 **Advocate for evidence-based policies to improve population health** and eliminate health disparities with a special focus on health in cities.



COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS
FOR HEALTH

The active engagement of communities is critical to improving population health. That's why our school works to build partnerships with communities. Our curriculum places students in neighborhood, organizational and government settings where they gain real world experience and learn how to work collaboratively to achieve health. Our faculty prioritize community partnerships in their research and practice, both in Philadelphia and across the globe.



Sustain an administrative environment that promotes transparency, participation, fairness, and clear processes in decision making and policy development while ensuring results and accountability.



Governance and Administration

- 1 **Strengthen a governance structure** that ensures participation of faculty, staff and students in key decision-making processes and incorporates input from external stakeholders as appropriate while being responsive to school needs in a timely manner.
- 2 **Implement and periodically evaluate an internal budgetary allocation process** that is responsive to University-wide Responsibility Center Management (RCM) incentives but also supports priorities and strategic initiatives related to the school's mission.
- 3 **Develop and periodically update core school policies** with input from faculty, staff and students as appropriate.
- 4 **Provide opportunities for the career development** of staff at all levels and increase integration between faculty and staff in all school activities.
- 5 **Ensure the diverse faculty and staff necessary** to accomplish the mission and goals of the school.

PROMOTING
HEALTH IN ALL
POLICIES

Science must be translated into practice and policy to have real impact on population health. We generate evidence to support multisectoral approaches to improving health. We promote the consideration of health in all policies through partnerships with government, businesses, and community groups.



Strategic Plan Timeline

2014
DECEMBER

Day-long retreat held with faculty and staff to refresh the strategic plan

2015
WINTER

Dean and faculty, staff and student representatives incorporated feedback from retreat and updated plan

2015
SPRING

Updated plan vetted with faculty, staff and students – feedback incorporated into new draft

2015
APRIL

Faculty adopted strategic plan

2015
SUMMER

Dean and associate deans developed metrics to monitor progress implementing the plan

2015 / 2016
FALL WINTER

Materials developed to promote and widely share plan with external partners and community organizations

