MEL AND ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MEZCOPH)
WHITE PAPER

Iman Hakim, Dean
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health
1295 N. Martin Ave, PO Box 245163, Tucson, AZ 85724
Phone: 520-626-5664
Email: ihakim@email.arizona.edu

List and Title of Team Members:
Iman Hakim, Dean
Lorraine Varela, Special Assistant to the Dean
Classified Staff
Anita Foley, Administrative Assistant
Charlotte Smith, Senior Accountant
Co-Chairs of Academic/Administrative Professionals
Maia Ingram, Program Director, Community Based Evaluation Projects
Stephen Michael, Director, ASHline
Faculty and Division Directors
Zhao Chen, Associate Professor of Public Health
Gary Hart, Professor and Director, Rural Health Office
Jeff Burgess, Associate Professor and Division Director, Community Environment and Policy
Ron Watson, Professor and Interim Division Director, Health Promotion Sciences
Assistant Deans
Chris Tisch, Student Services and Alumni Affairs
Linda Tumellie, Financial Affairs and Physical Resources
Associate Deans
Douglas Taren, Academic Affairs
Duane Sherrill, Research
Jill Guernsey de Zapien, Community Programs

List of Affected Units by the Proposed Staff Elimination
College Administration
Academic Programs
Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Division of Health Promotion Sciences
Division of Community, Environment and Policy

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This white paper is the only plan approved and submitted by MEZCOPH. This report has been written by the team listed above.
I. Organizational Structure of the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health

The Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH) is the only accredited College of Public Health in the 14 Rocky Mountain State Region. MEZCOPH is one of the newest colleges established within the University of Arizona. In its brief history, the college has attained prominence through proven commitment to diversity, service, and academic excellence. MEZCOPH was established in 2000 with a bare-bones budget. Fortunately, the leadership had the foresight to maximize its limited resources by providing state allocated funds equivalent to its instructional and administrative effort. All tenure track faculty have a base of state support equivalent to 0.50 FTE which maximizes and encourages research productivity. The division directors and associate deans are faculty members with teaching and research loads and receive a modest supplement for their administrative role. Extramural funding is required for most employees to offset effort focusing on research and community service related activities. The college’s budget is comprised of 70% extramural funds that support the college’s teaching, service, scholarship and research mission.

MEZCOPH’s organizational structure is centralized to enhance efficiency. The college is comprised of three divisions, a Rural Health Office supported through a line-item in the state budget, a central business office, an Office of Academic Affairs, including the Office of Student Services and Alumni Affairs, and the Dean’s Office. MEZCOPH is set up in divisions rather than departments which capitalizes on collaboration and collegiality. Each division is composed of T/TE faculty (12-14/division), research track faculty, academic professionals (research/community programs), and research staff. Each division also houses two of the required educational sections. Academic affairs and student services offices are centralized, providing services to students and programs throughout the college, as is the college’s business office, centrally serving the financial needs of all constituents of the college. In fact, the MEZCOPH structure possesses the features that can be used to model a transformation for the University.

The MEZCOPH Office of Financial Affairs and Physical Resources (business office) is currently responsible for personnel and human resource management, space management and planning, grant and contract administration, budget/financial management, and fiscal operations for MEZCOPH. Accounting and human resource management support is necessary to maintain compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies, procedures and regulations. In addition, the business office personnel provide support to college faculty for operational procedures such as grant proposals, procurement, payroll processing, effort reporting, etc. The business office has served as a beta-test college for several important institutional process changes (POPRs, CareerTracks, Effort Reporting). Business office employees have been asked to participate as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for institutional business process evaluation, re-design and development, and testing (MOISAC, etc). The business office currently receives 40% of its funding from sources other than state allocated funds.

The MEZCOPH Office of Student Services and Alumni Affairs (OSSAA) is responsible for student recruitment, admissions, tracking student academic progress, coordinating teaching assistant assignments, coordinating financial/scholarships awards and tracking and engaging alumni. Currently, the office is responsible for 237 graduate students, 130 undergrads, 350-400 applicants, 1025 alumni, and 21 graduate certificate students. With the expansion of the undergraduate, doctoral and global certificate programs, it is anticipated that increased student services will be needed. MEZCOPH anticipates a surge in the number of new international students registering for the online Public Health Certificate program (estimated at 100 new students for Fall 2009). While the certificate program will provide revenue to the college, the increase in student numbers will require extra efforts within OSSAA. OSSAA currently receives approximately 20% of its funding from sources other than state allocated funds. In April 2004, OSSAA received The UA Team Award for Excellence.

II. Keeping MEZCOPH’s Current Organizational Structure is our Strength

MEZCOPH’s current structure is the result of a series of transformation plans that have taken place over the last eight years, ultimately arriving at our current organizational structure. This structure proves to be cost-effective, fosters productivity and collegiality, and allows for innovative ideas in addressing future changes and challenges by keeping and maintaining a highly skilled and efficient central infrastructure that supports the education, research, community outreach, and global activities of the college. As clearly documented, MEZCOPH’s structure has the features that can be used as a model of transformation for UA.

The following criteria were deemed of paramount importance when we considered a reorganization of the infrastructure support for the College. We must:
1. Continue to fulfill accreditation criteria of the Council on Education for Public Health. The college’s status as an accredited college of public health allows it to compete for federal funds that are restricted to accredited schools of public health. Examples of such projects that the college has been awarded include the Arizona Center for Public Health Preparedness ($3.0M) and the Maternal and Child Health Program ($1.8M). Students from accredited schools are also eligible to compete for fellowship and training funding.

2. Continue to maintain commitment to diversity in our undergraduate and graduate programs.

3. Continue to expand enrollment in undergraduate and graduate programs.

4. Continue to engage with Arizona’s communities in meeting their critical public health needs.

5. Continue to expand the global presence of MEZCOPH in education and research (currently MEZCOPH has several MOAs in different stages of development).

6. Maintain business support to the large number of projects that would allow faculty and academic professionals to remain effective with obtaining extramural funds.

7. Remain flexible to respond to future changes and challenges.

8. Maintain the external and institutional criteria for financial and personnel management within the College.

MEZCOPH views the UA transformation process as an opportunity to attract talented UA faculty interested in working in public health related activities to join MEZCOPH and contribute to its mission and its educational and research programs in the areas of public health policy, management & administration, environmental health, epidemiology & biostatistics, health behavior & health promotion, health disparities, maternal & child health, and global and border health.

We conducted an analysis of the impact of various combinations of units within MEZCOPH and the AHSC. The team concluded that any reorganization would greatly reduce the already minimal organizational structure within MEZCOPH, which would jeopardize the college’s accreditation and would significantly decrease the ability to meet compliance requirements within the college’s business office, leaving the University at risk for a negative audit. Thus, the result of this analysis was to preserve our current structure. However, to respond to the current budget deficits, MEZCOPH has devised a plan that will decrease the number of state supported employees who provide administrative support to the college and the business office, as described in the budget page. This will be accomplished by funding staff with additional extramural monies whenever appropriate and with additional cross-training of staff so they can work efficiently between the divisions.

The Rural Health Office (RHO) within MEZCOPH helps address health inequities in rural Arizona. Discussions of the transformation plan and potential budget cuts were conducted between the director of the RHO and the RHO leadership committee. The RHO is small enough that each of the core team is responsible for one or more of the RHO’s activities. If further cuts are necessary, the strategy will be to make a tough decision by reducing the scope of what the RHO does for the rural Arizona population. Depending on the size of a further cut, decisions will be made to cut one or more of these activities.

III. Effect on National Ranking and Reputation

Despite the reduction in state funding associated with the proposed reorganization, MEZCOPH will continue its efforts to expand its academic programs and collaborations within and outside the University. This will allow the college to continue significant research of local, national and global importance and have academic degree programs that attract a diverse student body with courses that reach into the community. Thus, the college should be able to advance its current national and international reputation as an accredited college of public health and maximize the use of future increases in extramural and eventually intramural funds.

In just our eighth year as a college, we are among the nation’s leaders in student diversity. We plan to continue to lead efforts to further expand the diversity of the student body and to remain in the top 5 among accredited schools and colleges of public health for Native American and Hispanic student enrollment.

Community engagement and outreach defines the core of public health. The health status of Arizona’s most vulnerable populations speak to the obvious and continued need for strengthening this aspect of our college. Our success in building and strengthening these community-based partnerships is directly related to those resources which are devoted to supporting college endeavors in the elimination of health disparities, building and strengthening collaboration, targeting healthy Arizona goals and strengthening public health preparedness. We will continue to remain nationally ranked among the top colleges of public health in community practice.
IV. Process
A series of meetings were held with the management team for reorganization along with forums that the Dean held with various constituents within the college. These meetings included 1) the Dean’s Executive Council (associate deans, division directors, academic and financial affairs, representation from academic professional, staff, and student assemblies), 2) Faculty Assembly, 3) Staff Assembly. 4) Supervisors of the offices of student services, financial affairs, and administrative support, 5) College-wide meeting, and the 6) Director of the Rural Health Office (RHO). The director of the RHO conducted meetings with RHO personnel. He sent emails to all RHO staff, faculty, and collaborating partners asking them for their suggestions for making the RHO more effective and efficient. An all RHO personnel meeting took place to further discuss the suggestions and to formulate a plan. The white paper was circulated to the entire College for feedback prior to submission.

V. MEZCOPH and the UA Academic Program Prioritization Guidelines

Centrality to the UA Mission, Vision or Priorities: The College addresses the central mission of the University by providing undergraduate and graduate degrees that contribute to having an educated citizenry and directly providing graduates who are able to support the health care workforce. MEZCOPH by definition has a mission, vision and priorities that are in accordance with the UA strategic plan. We work closely with the Arizona Department of Health Services, the county health departments, and Arizona industries through contracts, service and by having our students conduct public health applied internships with these partners.

External Demand: MEZCOPH provides degrees, conducts research and provides services that directly impact the economy of Arizona. For example, MEZCOPH’s Office of Rural Health works with rural hospitals to further develop cost-effective care to Arizonans. MEZCOPH is training the current and next generation of professionals for the public health workforce. These individuals work in a variety of areas ranging from environmental health, programs that decrease health disparities and maternal & child health to health care systems and public health preparedness.

Internal Demand: MEZCOPH is consistently working across colleges to deliver education and research programs. Several programs outside of MEZCOPH rely heavily on our courses in areas of biostatistics, epidemiology, global health, health behavior, and environmental health. Several of the faculty members have joint appointments in Nutrition, Geology, Family and Community Medicine and participate in the GIDP in Statistics. Research projects by MEZCOPH faculty involve collaborations with investigators from colleges throughout the University such as Medicine, Pharmacy, CALS, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Engineering and Architecture. MEZCOPH also has developed five dual degree programs. Similarly, MEZCOPH faculty are collaborators and key investigators on research projects at the Arizona Cancer Center, Arizona Respiratory Center, Sarver Heart Center, Arizona Center on Aging, Telemedicine, and Arizona Health Education Centers.

Productivity: MEZCOPH graduates are in high demand as evidenced by the level and range of career positions they obtain post graduation. At one year post graduation, 96% of 2006/07 MPH graduates are employed or are continuing their education. Job titles for this group include County Epidemiologist, Program Manager, Statistician, Evaluator, Science and Policy Analyst, faculty members, Education Program Managers, and Assistant Professor. Last year the average number of peer reviewed publications was 5.16 per faculty, 78% of the faculty were PI on at least one grant, 68% of MEZCOPH grants included student participation, and 42% of the published papers included a student author. In addition MEZCOPH received its first patent.

Quality: MEZCOPH faculty are very productive and engaged at the national and international level. For example, they 1) direct CDC funded prevention research and preparedness centers, 2) sit on the US-Mexico Health Commission, 3) are involved in NIH study sections, 4) have served as chairs of international conferences, 5) are invited keynote speakers in national and international conferences, 6) serve as editors on scientific journals, 7) publish in peer reviewed journals, and 8) have had their research highlighted in different national and international news and media. MEZCOPH faculty and students received several national prestigious competitive awards (3 faculty and 3 students this past year).

Appropriate Size: With the great demand to increase the public health workforce, MEZCOPH is one of the relatively smaller schools at UA. MEZCOPH needs to continue to grow to remain competitive and to meet the local, national and global demand for public health education and training.

Cost Effectiveness: MEZCOPH is a very cost effective investment for the University. For every state dollar input to MEZCOPH faculty, there is a three dollar return in extramural revenue to the University.
Budget Page

The reorganization of the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health’s administrative and business staff will result in the following changes over the course of the current and coming fiscal periods:

- Lay off and elimination of 1.0 FTE business support staff
- Lay off and elimination of 1.0 FTE administrative support staff
- Retirement of 1.0 FTE administrative support staff in August/September, 2009

Lay off and elimination of support staff resulting in a cost savings of $76,305 in state permanent base dollars.

Cost savings resulting from attrition will allow for an additional $39,679 in state permanent base dollars during the upcoming fiscal period (FY0910).