COMMUNICATION FROM THE SUBCOMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PLANNING AND BUDGET

Jack Rodnick, MD, Chair

April 3, 2007

Deborah Greenspan, DSc, BDS
UCSF Academic Senate Chair
Office of the Academic Senate, Box 0764

Re: Comments to the Proposed Master’s Degree in Global Health Sciences

Dear Chair Greenspan,

Jack Rodnick, Norman Oppenheimer, and Patricia Robertson comprised the Subcommittee of the Committee on Academic Planning and Budget Reviewing the Proposed Master’s Degree Program in Global Health Sciences. The Subcommittee reviewed the documents provided and offers these observations and comments to the Executive Committee:

Budgetary Concerns

1. The budget outlined in the spreadsheet is optimistic but reasonable and the Subcommittee believes it could support the program as described (20 to 30 students for one year in a 36 unit course of study). The core courses do not depend on donated/volunteer time of faculty coordinators. The paid “mentorship” director is unique and appreciated.

2. The financial issue of start-up funds is not adequately presented. While the program is designed to be self-supporting once started, there is a clear need for significant funding beforehand to begin operations. The amount and source of these funds need to be addressed as well as the schedule for their payback. This repayment should be listed as an operating expense of the program.

3. The cost to the student of approximately $30,000 arises from the cost analysis in the spreadsheet, however, this fee is more than double that of comparable programs; e.g., Master’s of Public Health at $13,000. Have there been any surveys to establish that students will be attracted to such a program at this price? It is not a trivial concern to ask if this program will attract students at this level of education who already carry a significant debt burden. Has there been any analysis as to the market for the students who graduate from this program? The utility of the program for students from developing nations is obvious; however, the fee structure is not conducive for their participation, especially when factoring in the living expenses for one year in the Bay Area. In order to lower their costs, further fund-raising will be required.

4. The program does not depend on state support. The proposal notes that “it would be prudent to allow for the possibility of proposing state support for the MS program some time in the future.” However it is unclear why the proposal does not explicitly state why it would or would not aggressively pursue state support or FTEs. There may be some financial or contractual reasons against seeking FTEs, but these are
not explained. A formal plan to request state faculty FTE might be prudent as it is questionable if such a world-class program can be sustainable at this tuition level and without core UC funds.

**Fundraising and Financial Aid**

1. The program will require outside funds (1) to provide educational opportunities to a more diverse group of students and (2) to eventually expand to include a graduate program. While the “catch-22” of soliciting funds for a new program is appreciated, one can gauge the potential for fundraising by looking at the fundraising experience of the current programs in Global Health Sciences. What has been the success of the GHS in attracting these kinds of funds? In order for the Master’s program to decrease its expenses it must provide endowed chairs and income from funds to support students. The Subcommittee estimates a minimum of $3 to 5 million as a reasonable goal.

2. In lieu of fundraising, the spreadsheet analysis does not appear to contain any “return-to-aid” funding in the fees being charged to the students. The absence of any financial aid will greatly limit the diversity of participating students.

**Enrollment**

1. At least initially, the program appears to rely on recruiting from the local student pool. As such it represents an add-on to the existing medical education at UCSF. It is hoped that in the long-run the program can compete with other programs and attract new students to participate.

2. However, the application does not fully elaborate on the difference between this program and a MPH with an international health emphasis. How will it recruit the best and the brightest against other top international health programs located at the University of Washington, Johns Hopkins, Harvard, or the London School of Tropical Medicine? Why would students want to come to UCSF’s program?

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On a separate but related issue, the Subcommittee notes that in recent years there has been a proliferation of Self-Supporting Programs (SSPs) on campus. The Subcommittee suggests that the time has come to set guidelines for their development. The Academic Senate may want to consider this issue in the Committee on Educational Policy, or the Chancellor may want to consider charging a task force with this issue next year.

This Subcommittee of Academic Planning and Budget appreciates the opportunity to review this proposal and hopes that its opinions and observations are beneficial to the deliberations of the Executive Committee.

Sincerely,

**The Subcommittee of the Committee on Academic Planning and Budget Reviewing the Proposed Master’s Degree Program in Global Health Sciences**

Patricia Robertson, MD, Chair, Committee Academic Planning and Budget
Jack Rodnick, MD, Vice Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Budget
Norman Oppenheimer, PhD, Member, Committee on Academic Planning and Budget