



MHEC

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Secretary

February 21, 2020

Wallace D. Loh, Ph.D.
President
University of Maryland, College Park
Main Administration Building
College Park, MD 20742

Dear President Loh:

The Maryland Higher Education Commission has reviewed a request from University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) to offer a Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) program.

I am writing to inform you that the program proposal is denied. This decision is based on an analysis of the program proposal in conjunction with the law and regulations governing academic program approval, in particular Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13B.02.03. As required by COMAR, the Commission circulated the proposal to the Maryland higher education community for comment and objection. As you are aware, Morgan State University (MSU) submitted a letter of objection. We shared that letter with you and you responded. I appreciate the time your team spent with me, my staff, and representatives from MSU to discuss the proposal and consider potential collaborations.

Based upon careful analysis of the proposal, objection, response, and information shared at various meetings regarding UMDs program proposal, we have determined that at this time the proposed DrPH program would unnecessarily duplicate MSUs existing DrPH program. While UMD proposes a new DrPH program in leadership, the evidence submitted in support of the program did not demonstrate that the content of the two programs are substantively different enough to provide a sound educational justification for the duplication of MSU's DrPH program. Per the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body for programs in and schools of public health, "*The DrPH is the professional doctoral degree in public health, designed to produce transformative academic and practice leaders with expertise in evidence-based public health practice and research* (pp. 18-19, Accreditation Criteria¹)." DrPH programs inherently are designed to produce "leaders" in the field of public health. Additionally, "Leadership, Management & Governance" is a required competency for all DrPH programs accredited through the CEPH (p. 19, Accreditation Criteria).

We also examined the fact that UMD proposes a DrPH program that would be predominantly online (students would be required to spend two one-week periods per year on campus in January and August). MSU has indicated that there is capacity and explicit strategic

¹ <https://media.ceph.org/documents/2016.Criteria.pdf>

planning to deliver their existing DrPH program online. Of note is the implementation of MSUs Masters of Public Health, with an area of concentration in Executive Health Management, to an online format.

Last, UMD contends that the admissions criteria for the proposed DrPH program are significantly different from that of MSU. While there may be differences in the admissions requirements between the existing program at MSU and the proposed program at UMD, we find that the admission standards proposed by UMD still have the potential to attract students that otherwise would apply to and enroll at MSU. Additionally, a change in admissions requirements, from either institution, is not currently considered a substantial modification and does not require further review from MHEC.

Analyzing these considerations collectively, we have determined that a DrPH program at UMD would cause demonstrable harm to MSU as currently proposed. Therefore, the DrPH program at UMD is denied. MSU has indicated that they have the capacity to grow their program enrollment and to deliver the program online, which were important factors in the analysis of UMD's DrPH program proposal. You may resubmit the proposal to MHEC at a later date in the event MSU does not expand its program and UMD is able to demonstrate that the State need for a DrPH program is not being met.

Finally, during the program review process, conversations were initiated between leadership and programmatic experts at MSU and UMD. I believe that there is great potential for collaboration between the two universities, and I strongly encourage that further discussions regarding collaboration continue.

Should UMD wish to appeal this decision to the full Commission in accordance with COMAR 13B.02.03.28, it may do so by notifying Chairperson Ian MacFarlane in writing within 10 days of the date of this letter. Notice should be sent in care of Jennifer Katz, Principal Counsel to MHEC, jennifer.katz@maryland.gov.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Thank you for your commitment to higher education in the State.

Thank you,



Dr. James D. Fielder
Secretary

CC: Jay A. Perman, M.D., Chancellor, University System of Maryland
Joann Boughman, Ph.D., Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, University System of Maryland
Antoinette Coleman, Associate Vice Chancellor, University System of Maryland
Mary Ann Rankin, Provost, University of Maryland, College Park
Elizabeth Beise, Associate Provost, University of Maryland, College Park
Boris D. Lushniak, M.D., Dean, School of Public Health, University of Maryland, College Park

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