November 28, 2006

Dianne D. Horgan, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Graduate College
Administration 302
PO Box 210066
The University of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721

Dear Dr. Horgan:

The UA Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health (MEZCOPH) and the Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS) in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences propose implementation of a new graduate-level dual degree program that allows students to earn both a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Latin American Studies and Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) within a three year timeframe.

Over the past year, CLAS Director Dr. Scott Whiteford and Associate Director Dr. Raúl Saba have participated in discussions with MEZCOPH faculty and administrative leadership regarding development of a dual M.P.H./M.A. degree. These discussions are fueled by ongoing collaboration between the groups on a variety of research and outreach projects focused on public health issues in Latin America, which are a priority and research interest of many faculty and students in both programs. The goal of this new dual degree is to create a unique learning environment for students interested in pursuing careers and/or conducting research in public health in the context of Latin America.

The M.P.H./M.A. dual degree program is supported by two outstanding faculty groups. Latin American Studies hosts an exceptional interdisciplinary faculty with particular regional strengths in Mexico, Central America and Brazil, and in thematic areas focusing on Borders of the Americas, Environment and Development, History and Culture, and Power and Inequality. The Center for Latin American Studies coordinates a broad range of instructional, research and outreach activities relating to Latin America.

The Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health brings to the dual degree program a diverse group of faculty members who engage in teaching, service, and research on the many different areas of public health. Current areas of emphasis include: nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, and substance abuse, women's health, child health, minority health, international health, violence against women, cancer prevention, AIDS, health education, prevention science, program evaluation, quality of care improvement, patient empowerment, chronic disease self-management, and quality of life assessment. Their strength is in the diversity of approaches used to achieve their common goal – optimal health for the public.

Both the M.P.H. and M.A. degrees are designed to be interdisciplinary graduate degree programs. The M.P.H. degree provides opportunities for students to obtain broad knowledge and
basic skills in the core areas of public health. Students may select from six different areas of concentration: Biostatistics, Environmental and Occupational Health, Epidemiology, Family and Child Health, Health Education and Behavioral Sciences, or Public Health Policy and Management. Students acquire proficiency in one or more specialized areas through advanced coursework, and gain experience in applying advanced knowledge to the solution of actual health problems in community settings during internship training. The M.A. in Latin American Studies provides students with a depth of understanding of Latin American history, culture, Spanish and Portuguese language skills which will enable them to be more effective public health practitioners in Latin America or the Southwestern U.S.

The proposal for a dual master degree in Latin American Studies and Public Health is attached. The M.P.H. curriculum component varies slightly between concentrations as each area of study is structured to meet the demands of the subject matter. For purposes of the dual degree, the units unique to the M.P.H. concentration are the six core courses (16 units), the internship (3-6 units), and concentration course units to total the required minimum number unique to the M.P.H degree. The units required for completion of the Latin American Studies degree are the same regardless of the public health concentration area selected. The total number of units for the dual degree ranges from 63-69 depending on the M.P.H. area of concentration.

Thank you for your consideration of this exciting new dual degree program.

Sincerely,

G. Marie Swanson, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Dean and Professor
Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health

Edward Donnerstein
Dean
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Enclosures

cc: Denise Roe, Dr.P.H.
Scott Whiteford, Ph.D.
Raúl Saba, Ph.D.