

ABSTRACT: 2017 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

Project Title: Realignment of academic and student service units to enhance faculty and student success

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Background, Challenge or Opportunity: The College of Public Health at the University of Kentucky is nearing completion of its strategic planning process and seeks to innovate in its curricula and efforts to enhance student success. Its current structure of student and academic services is antiquated and inefficient. Furthermore, the College's accrediting organization, Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), released new accreditation criteria in fall 2016 that will require transformation of curricula and processes in the College. These internal and external forces provide an opportunity for the College to realign its structure in order to enhance faculty and student success. The goals of the realignment are to provide greater support to academic program directors, reduce administrative burden on faculty for advising, provide enhanced capacity for educational technology, and enhance student success.

Purpose/Objectives: To realign two existing College units- the office of academic and faculty affairs and the office of admissions and student affairs- into the Office of Student Success.

Methods/Approach: CEPH staff were consulted to identify best practices in other schools of public health, and student/academic affairs structures in other schools of public health and in other colleges at the University of Kentucky were examined. Guiding principles for the realignment were established. A functional chart for each position in the new combined unit was designed, and all position descriptions for staff in the two affected units were reviewed. New position descriptions were created, and some existing position descriptions were modified. The University of Kentucky Human Resources Office provided consultation. A communication plan was developed, and the next step is to implement the realignment. This is projected to occur in late spring 2017.

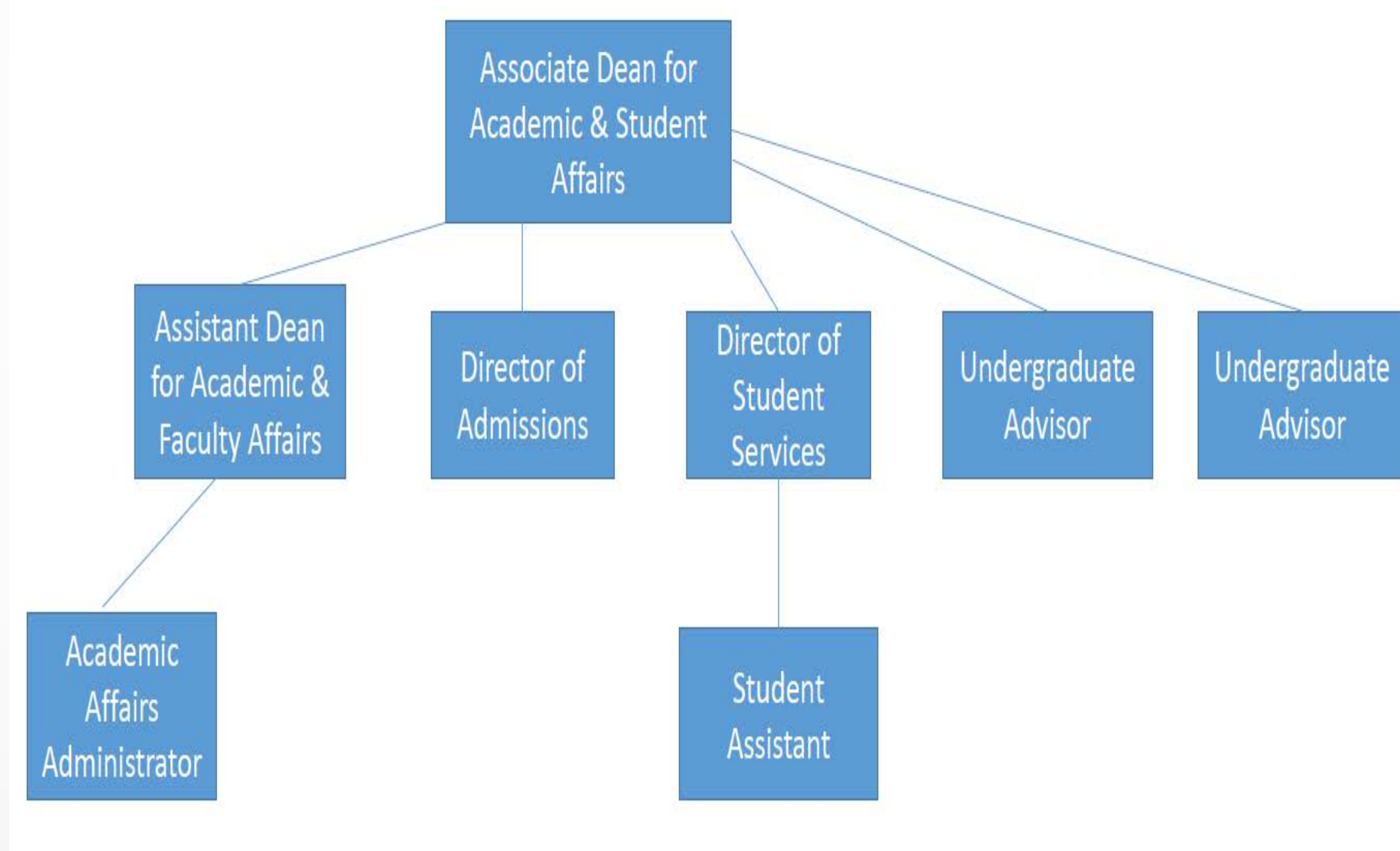
Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy: Three primary outcomes will be monitored to evaluate the realignment: faculty satisfaction, student success, and enhancement of technology-mediated instructional effectiveness. One year after the realignment, faculty will be surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the new structure, including the removal of graduate student advising responsibilities, and academic program directors will be interviewed for their feedback. Student success will be determined with three metrics: undergraduate student retention, graduation rates for all students, and satisfaction with advising. Satisfaction of faculty will also be used to determine the effectiveness of new personnel to enhance technology support for faculty to advance their instructional effectiveness (e.g., canvas support, instructional design, hybrid course models). The College will also track the number and nature of innovations in pedagogy among faculty as a result of the new educational technology support and scaffolding. Finally, assuring CEPH compliance with new accreditation criteria will provide an important outcome supported by the realignment.

Background

The College of Public Health at the University of Kentucky is nearing completion of its strategic planning process and seeks to innovate in its curricula and efforts to enhance student success. Its current structure of student and academic services is antiquated and inefficient. Furthermore, the College's accrediting organization, Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), released new accreditation criteria in fall 2016 that will require transformation of curricula and processes in the College. These internal and external forces provide an opportunity for the College to realign its structure in order to enhance faculty and student success. The goals of the realignment are:

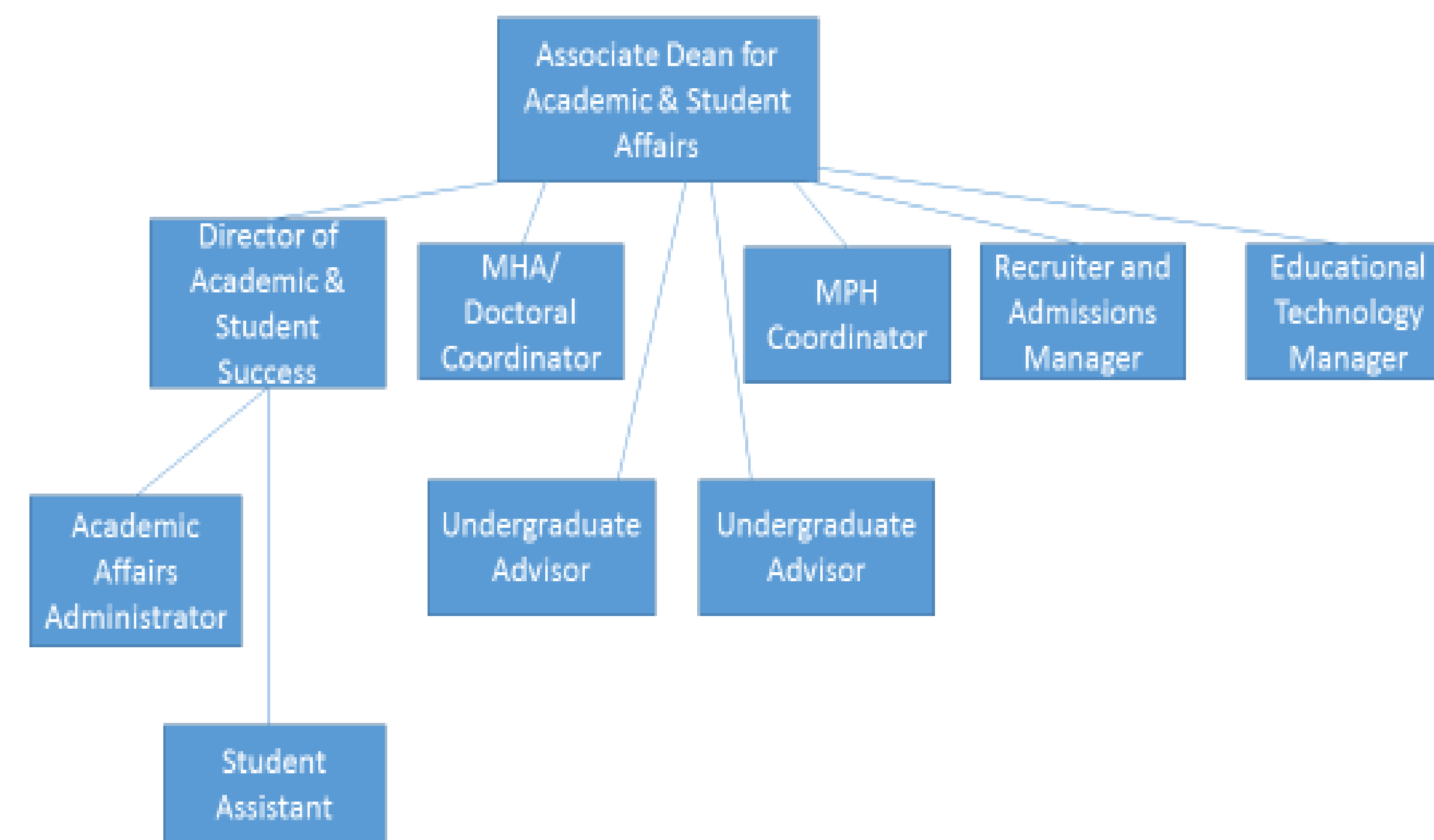
- To provide greater support to academic program directors
- To reduce administrative burden on faculty for advising
- To provide enhanced capacity for educational technology
- To enhance student success

Current Structure



Draft Structure for New Office of Student and Academic Affairs

New Office of Student and Academic Affairs



The new structure adds an educational technology manager, who will provide leadership in the college to enhance the use of technology in instruction and course management. The structure also includes two new graduate program coordinators who will provide support to academic program directors and advising to graduate students. Faculty will continue to advise students' research and mentor them, but the day-to-day advising will now reside with the program coordinators. A new director of academic and student success will provide leadership for academic affairs operations and student engagement, and the recruiting and admissions manager will provide leadership for undergraduate and graduate student recruitment. The undergraduate advisors and the academic affairs administrator positions were not modified. The assistant dean for academic and faculty affairs position was modified into assistant dean for strategic planning and assessment, reporting to the dean. This person will lead all academic program assessment activities and will serve as the college lead for student and faculty data systems.

Enhancing Student Success



Approach

CEPH staff were consulted to identify best practices in other schools of public health, and student/academic affairs structures in other schools of public health and in other colleges at the University of Kentucky were examined. Guiding principles for the realignment were established. A functional chart for each position in the new combined unit was designed, and all position descriptions for staff in the two affected units were reviewed. New position descriptions were created, and some existing position descriptions were modified. The University of Kentucky Human Resources Office provided consultation. A communication plan was developed, and the next step is to implement the realignment. This is projected to occur in late spring 2017.



Evaluation Strategy

Three primary outcomes will be monitored to evaluate the realignment: faculty satisfaction, student success, and enhancement of technology-mediated instructional effectiveness. One year after the realignment, faculty will be surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the new structure, including the removal of graduate student advising responsibilities from faculty, and academic program directors will be interviewed for their feedback. Student success will be determined with three metrics: undergraduate student retention, graduation rates for all students, and satisfaction with advising. Satisfaction of faculty will also be used to determine the effectiveness of new personnel to enhance technology support for faculty to advance their instructional effectiveness (e.g., canvas support, instructional design, hybrid course models). The College will also track the number and nature of innovations in pedagogy among faculty as a result of the new educational technology support and scaffolding. Finally, assuring CEPH compliance with new accreditation criteria will provide an important outcome supported by the realignment. Subcommittees of the college's Academic Affairs and Assessment Committee will provide leadership in determining new curricula for the MPH and DrPH programs, and the new staff positions (MPH and DrPH Coordinators, Educational Technology Manager, and Director of Academic and Student Success) will play important roles in that process as well.

Next Steps

The final structure for the realignment will be determined with the Dean's input by May, with implementation scheduled for summer. The new structure will be fully implemented before fall 2017. The College will begin formal planning processes to transform its curricula in response to new CEPH accreditation criteria in summer 2017, with final plans complete by fall 2018.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Dean Donna Arnett for suggesting and guiding this institutional action project. I am also grateful for her encouragement to apply to ELAM.