Goals and Priorities for the 2012-2013 Academic Year

Yale School of Public Health (YSPH)  
in the  
Yale School of Medicine (YSM)

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July 2012 marked the end of the first year in my second five-year term as Dean of the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH). I came to Yale in 2006 because the position offered an opportunity to develop the School into a world-class school of public health that would have a positive impact on the health of populations throughout the world. My vision was that YSPH would soon be seen as one of the top 5 schools of public health in the world, recognized for its research, education, and service. My strategy for achieving that vision included: enhancing research excellence for knowledge and impact; maximizing student experiences; focusing and coordinating practice and service activities; improving management and infrastructure; improving the financial foundation of School activities; and creating a recognized/respected “brand.”

We have achieved considerable success since 2006. Our faculty has been rated as the most scientifically productive school of public health faculty, our PhD program was recently ranked in the top five public health graduate programs in the country by the National Research Council, and we have made numerous other substantial improvements.

During the coming year, I will continue to develop the excellence of our faculty through recruitment, individual development, and investments in the resources our faculty need to be successful, while continuing to improve our education and service activities. Below I review some of our past developments and specify the goals I have set for the coming year.

STRATEGIC GOAL: ENHANCE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FOR KNOWLEDGE AND IMPACT

My original objectives regarding our research programs included developing more focused programmatic research, encouraging strategic collaborations, and maximizing the excellence of current faculty. Below I summarize strategies for achieving these objectives.

Organizational Structure and Leadership

An important step in facilitating recruitment, professionalizing faculty leadership, and improving our “branding” was achieved this year when we received Officer and Corporation approval to change the name of the School’s organizational units from “divisions” to “departments,” which will be led by “chairs” rather than “heads.” This naming now is comparable to other Schools of Public Health. It also allowed us to rename the Social and Behavioral Sciences Program as a Division in the Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology. Having an organizational description that is consistent and competitive in the field of public health will offer clarity and appeal for faculty and student
Since 2006, we have completed external reviews of three divisions; Global Health, Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases (EMD), and Environmental Health Sciences (EHS). Many of the changes recommended for EMD and Global Health have been made and both are thriving. A recommendation of the committee that reviewed Environmental Health Sciences was to recruit a world-class senior faculty member to lead the Division. We have retained a national academic search firm to facilitate that search. The firm has identified significant interest in the position from numerous outstanding scholars and we are optimistic that we will identify and recruit a new Chair in the coming year. We expect that the designation of EMD as a Department will greatly facilitate the recruitment of a leading scholar as Chair.

After we hire a new Chair for Environmental Health Sciences, we will have new heads of all the Departments and the Social and Behavioral Sciences Division. This year, I will implement a program for providing leadership and management training to Department Chairs. We will delineate explicit roles and responsibilities for Chairs and invite speakers and management coaches to Chairs’ meetings to help develop their management and leadership skills.

Last year, the Chairs engaged in more focused strategic planning. Strategic issues, such as areas of recruitment and educational direction, were discussed at bimonthly meetings. The Chairs will set Department priorities each year and they will be reviewed for reappointment every three years.

Faculty Development

In general, our faculty members are doing extremely well. Academic Analytics, which published an index of faculty scholarly productivity based on publications, citations, funded research, and awards and honors, ranks the faculty at the Yale School of Public Health as the most productive faculty of all the schools of public health in the country. In FY 2012, we received $43.5M in federal grant support and $4.7M in non-federal support, for a total of $48.2M. This represents a $4.2 million increase (9.5%) from last year; an impressive achievement considering the recent funding climate.

In recognition of exceptional scholarship and a commitment to academic and research excellence, this past year a request from the School for four named professors was approved by the Officers and Corporation. Such recognition is a vital tool for acknowledging career success and contributions to the School and University missions.

In 2012 we were very successful recruiting excellent new faculty to complement our existing scientific expertise. Short descriptions of our 7 new hires are provided below.

Department of Biostatistics

Forrest Crawford, Ph.D. in Biomathematics, UCLA, 2012. Forrest’s work focuses on statistical methods for learning from stochastic processes in genetics, evolution, epidemiology, neuroscience, and public health. His ongoing projects include studies of evolutionary dynamics of infectious
diseases, intra-host viral evolution, human microbiome analysis, DNA sequence alignment, DNA forensics, reporting error models for self-reported quantities in surveys, and analysis of medical image data. He is also interested in theoretical and methodological issues in statistical inference, including probabilistic matrix factorization, regularization for high-dimensional regression problems, Bayesian nonparametrics, and optimization.

Department of Chronic Disease Epidemiology

Shiyi Wang, M.D., Taipei Medical University, and Ph.D. in Health Services Research, Policy, and Administration, University of Minnesota, 2012. Shiyi was a joint recruitment with the Cancer Center. His primary research interests are outcomes research and decision science. He is currently working on evaluation of preoperative breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) for women with newly diagnosed early breast cancer. He is interested in combining systematic literature reviews, simulation modeling, and secondary data analyses to examine issues that are critical to clinicians and policy makers’ decision making.

Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases

Sunil Parikh, M.D., Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and M.P.H., University of California, Berkeley, 2005. Prior to joining YSPH, Sunil was an Assistant Professor Adjunct at UCSF. His research focus is translational studies of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. He studies early immune responses to infection, human genetics, and treatment. Current projects include: understanding the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of antimalarials using a combination of individual and population-based approaches to inform treatment guidelines; characterizing the impact of pharmacogenetic variants on drug metabolism and treatment outcomes; understanding the impact of the HIV epidemic on the treatment of malaria in co-endemic regions; and characterizing the impact of host transcriptional and genetic variability in early immune responses to malaria.

Virginia Pitzer, Sc.D. in Epidemiology, Harvard School of Public Health, 2007. Prior to joining YSPH, Ginny was a postdoctoral research fellow at Princeton, in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Her research focuses on mathematical modeling of the transmission dynamics of imperfectly immunizing infections. She studies how interventions such as vaccination, improved treatment of cases, and improvements in sanitation affect disease transmission at the population level. Her primary research focus is on rotavirus, one of the leading causes of severe diarrhea in children in developed and developing countries for which two new vaccines have been recently introduced. Current projects include understanding the transmission dynamics and potential impact of vaccination in developing countries, and developing and applying epidemiological methods to estimate the waning of vaccine-induced immunity for rotavirus. She is also interested in the spatiotemporal dynamics of RSV and evaluating control options for typhoid fever.

Dan Weinberger, Ph.D. in Microbiology and Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Harvard School of Public Health, 2009. Dan is currently a postdoctoral fellow at NIH. His research focuses on the epidemiology and vaccine impacts of Streptococcus pneumoniae. His studies evaluate the factors that impact disease burden including viral co-infections and public health interventions such as pediatric vaccination. His work has been highly interdisciplinary and he has already developed
collaborations with colleagues in Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Israel, in addition to active projects with partners at Harvard and Johns Hopkins.

Department of Health Policy & Management

Xi Chen, Ph.D. in Applied Economics, Cornell University, 2012. Xi’s research focuses on social and economic behavior and their consequences in low resource contexts. His recent research focuses on social interactions on stigmatized behavior, escalating gift spending and early child health. His research attempts to offer more plausible explanations to the Deaton food puzzle and questions conventional anti-poverty programs that do not adapt to local customs. He also explores how demographic characteristics in China, as a result of son preference and one child policy, affect consumption and income generating behavior as well as public health.

Zack Cooper, Ph.D., London School of Economics (LSE), 2011. Prior to joining YSPH, Zack was an Economic and Social Science Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow in Economics at LSE. His work focuses on investigating the causes of variation in health care providers’ productivity within and across countries and understanding how competition, transparency and financial incentives operate in hospital and insurance markets. Zack’s current research includes a project using patient-level data from three large commercial insurers to look at the causes of variation in hospital prices across the US, one using data from the Netherlands, the United States, Canada and England to compare hospital productivity across the four countries, and a large-scale randomized control trial investigating the impact of good hospital management on patient outcomes and hospital spending.

Recruitment Priorities for 2012-2013

We will continue building the faculty during my second term in a way that contributes to the excellence of our research and educational activities and that improves the distribution of ranks across departments. The appropriate distribution of faculty with different levels of seniority is important to ensure the adequacy of leadership and mentoring for junior faculty, and an orderly development of senior scholars over time.

Biostatistics (BIS): We searched for two new biostatistics faculty members last year and since we only hired one (Forrest Crawford), a search for a second new member of the biostatistics faculty will begin in the fall of 2012. The area of expertise will be open but we are particularly interested in certain areas such as: early phase clinical trials, computational statistics, imaging, spatial statistics, and survival analysis.

Chronic Disease Epidemiology (CDE): Our strategic planning process led to the conclusion that we should recruit a new faculty member with expertise in global noncommunicable diseases. This search would be open to all areas of chronic disease, but we would be especially interested in a scientist with interest in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and/or obesity. Potential areas of research include epidemiology, prevention, clinical trials, and translational research.
Within CDE, faculty members in the Division of Social & Behavioral Sciences have identified minority health and health disparities as an area for expansion. Other areas of expertise that would complement current research interests are social determinants of health and aging.

*Environmental Health Sciences (EHS)*: In addition to the search for a new Chair of EHS, we have decided that it is important to start building our junior faculty before the new Chair has been hired due to the small size of the EHS faculty. Thus, we will recruit a new junior faculty member with expertise in areas such as risk and exposure assessment in the area of air quality.

*Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases (EMD)*: We will continue to build EMD by recruiting up to two junior faculty members next year. We will be particularly interested in recruiting an epidemiologist or entomologist who conducts research on vector borne diseases. Diseases which would complement and build on existing strengths in the Department are Dengue and Malaria.

*Health Policy and Management (HPM)*: In recent years, HPM lost several junior faculty members. We recruited two outstanding junior faculty members last year and will search for one more faculty member with expertise in health policy and/or health services research soon. We also will focus a search on recruiting a new junior faculty member with research expertise in health care management.

*Multi-Department*: Several department Chairs have indicated that we should develop our research in mental health. A scientist with interest in mental health could be a behavioral scientist, an epidemiologist, or a policy expert. Thus, we will conduct an open search for a person exploring mental health research and assess the extent to which highly qualified applicants complement and expand existing strengths.

In addition to recruiting new faculty, it is important to maximize the excellence of current faculty. In 2009 we implemented a School-wide Junior Faculty Mentoring Program that now includes faculty in the Research Scientist track. We continue to monitor and improve that program.

**Collaborative Research**

One of our major efforts to foster collaborative research was to establish the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences (YCAS). YCAS now employs 15 masters and PhD level biostatisticians, in addition to partially supporting 5 regular track faculty members and is expected to reach a stable financial position within two years.

This fall we are launching an exciting collaborative effort with the Law School and School of Medicine that has the potential to stimulate very exciting scholarship and programs, the “Global Health Justice Partnership.” The goals of this program will include forging collaborative relationships with partners around the globe to address issues at the interface of public health and human rights through scholarship and research, policy and practice. The first multi-disciplinary project of this new partnership is aimed at the population of miners and ex-miners in South Africa who are battling occupational lung disease, tuberculosis, and HIV in a system that fails to provide them with access to
adequate workers’ compensation and healthcare. This effort will initially be headed by Amy Kapczynski from the Law School and Gregg Gonsalves from YSPH.

Under the leadership of Albert Ko, Chair, Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases, we have established a vibrant research and education collaboration with the Brazilian Ministry of Health, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz) to examine infectious diseases and urban poverty in Brazil. I am also working with the leadership of Shanghai Jiao Tong University to develop a strong education and research partnership across many public health disciplines, and with Yale’s administration to develop distance learning capacity to facilitate courses and workshops.

**Data Security**

It is essential that the School have policies and procedures for the storage and management of sensitive data that meet Yale’s security standards. We have received recommendations from ITS that will lead to a comprehensive management strategy for sensitive information. A YSPH Data Security Committee was appointed last year. The Committee has been charged with the following tasks:

a. Conduct an inventory of systems, hardware and software, including an assessment of compliance with University data security standards.

b. Develop a multi-year hardware and software replacement and upgrade plan and a budget for funding it. The plan should focus on ensuring YSPH is capable of applying appropriate, University-defined safeguards to sensitive data.

c. Develop a program for ensuring the professional management of all systems and applications with sensitive data, including the use of central University IT resources to address complex computing requirements beyond YSPH’s local capabilities.

The Committee expects to submit a final plan for review by this fall.

**Priorities for 2012-2013**

- Continue strategic planning in collaboration with Department Chairs and provide on-going management and leadership training to Chairs.

- Recruit a new Chair of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences and continue developing and expanding the faculty in the School.

- Continue to foster cross-University collaborative research and education initiatives, such as with the Yale Law School as well as international collaborators, and support the growth and excellence of the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences.

- Monitor and enhance the YSPH Junior and Research Faculty Mentoring Programs.

- Finish developing and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Yale’s data security standards.
STRATEGIC GOAL: MAXIMIZE STUDENT EXPERIENCES

We have made substantial progress in improving student experiences at YSPH. Since I arrived at Yale, we have completed strategic reviews of our MPH, MS, and PhD education programs and public health practice activities. As a result, we have made numerous changes to our curricula, created an Office of Community Health to oversee public health practice activities, and appointed an Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. We also launched a new MPH program for professionals with advanced degrees that is attracting excellent students and which is well regarded by the students. Our Global Health Concentration, Regulatory Affairs program, and Five-Year BA-BS/MPH Program for Yale College Students are also doing very well. Under the direction of our Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, we regularly assess the overall curriculum and the content of the core curriculum to determine if further improvements are needed. Our Associate Dean for Academic Affairs also will work with the YSPH Education Committee to encourage the use of technology in the classroom, and encourage and support the use of teaching methods that emphasize case-based, team, and experiential learning.

According to 2010 data compiled by the Association of Schools of Public Health, YSPH had the fifth lowest MPH acceptance rate of the 49 schools of public health in the U.S. The national average is 50.6% and Yale’s was 36.8%, comparable to Harvard’s (36.6%). Our Office of Student Affairs is making major improvements to our web site and recruitment information, which should facilitate and improve recruitment of the very best students in the country.

Having a vibrant doctoral program is a critical component of a major academic research program. We continue developing our doctoral program in ways decided upon last year: increase program size through new and existing training grants and seek support for first year students; improve mentoring; and foster a sense of community amongst students and faculty. From 2006 through 2010, we admitted an average of 8 doctoral students a year. In a campus-wide review last year, the YSPH PhD program was excellent in terms of time to completion of degree and percent of students completing. Because of the importance of doctoral students to the excellence of our research and education programs, I have substantially expanded our program. Last year, we admitted 25 outstanding new doctoral students.

YSPH currently is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) until July 1, 2014. We have formed a committee to prepare materials for the reaccreditation review.

Priorities for 2012-2013

- Continue to assess the overall curriculum to determine if further improvements are needed. Encourage the use of technology in the classroom, and encourage and support the use of teaching methods that emphasize case-based, team, and experiential learning.

- The Director of Graduate Studies will work directly with faculty, students and administrators to increase the doctoral program size through new and existing training grants and seek support for first year students; improve mentoring; and foster a sense of community amongst students and faculty.
• Undertake a school self-study of our educational programs in preparation for our seven year review cycle for reaccreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH).

STRATEGIC GOAL: FOCUS AND COORDINATE PRACTICE AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

In my first term, we developed criteria for student public health practice experiences and established an Office of Community Health (OCH) that is responsible for coordinating and evaluating summer internships and public health experiences. We also established the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) which facilitates collaboration with the City of New Haven’s municipal offices, school system, and community organizations. Among other activities, we obtained funding to develop an exhibit at the Peabody Museum in collaboration with the Rudd Center entitled, “Big Food: Health, Culture and the Evolution of Eating.”

In 2008, to help strengthen the sense of community among YSPH students, staff, and faculty, and to facilitate coordinated, systematic contributions to the New Haven community, we created a Community Connections Committee (C3). The C3 mission is to connect colleagues from our multiple research centers and off-site locations, provide more opportunities for students and staff to learn about ongoing research at the School, and to contribute to the health of our neighbors in New Haven. C3 has coordinated numerous events including Pink Hair for Hope to raise money for breast cancer research, coordinated several charitable drives such as the United Way Fund, and encouraged participation in other events such as Smilow’s ‘Closer to Free’ bike ride.

Priorities for 2012-2013

• Using the strong foundation provided by OCH and CARE, support the promotion of healthy communities through student internships and collaborative translational research initiatives.

• Continue building a sense of community within YSPH and with the New Haven community through C3 activities.

STRATEGIC GOAL: IMPROVE MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Our faculty and research activities are now located in 4 on-campus locations and 8 off-campus facilities. Less than 40% of our occupied space is in the main YSPH building at 60 College St. This approach is very disruptive to teaching and research activities, and the lack of consolidated space is an increasing challenge for faculty and staff.

As part of my reappointment process, we reached an agreement for an appropriate amount of space in the proposed building at 100 College Street. This space will house those researchers not presently located in LEPH, 135 College, 47 College, 300 George or 2 Church Street South, and will accommodate planned new recruitments.

Under the direction of our Associate Dean for Finance and Administration, we reorganized our Office of Finance and Administration so that we can better meet the administrative needs of the faculty and staff. In the coming year we will continue improving those services.
Priorities for 2012-2013

• We will work to keep renovation projects on schedule and continue considering ways of improving the way in which we use space.

• We will continue to improve faculty administrative support.

STRATEGIC GOAL: IMPROVE THE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In my first term, we developed a better financial model for allocation of discretionary resources for research and teaching, developed consistent policies for teaching credit and reimbursement for courses, and increasing development activities.

During the past six years, 32 new endowed funds have been created at the School. To put this in perspective, between the School’s founding in 1915 and 2005, approximately 25 endowed funds were created. The School also received several significant current use gifts this year and increasing interest from Yale College alumni.

To celebrate the School’s upcoming (2015) Centennial, we will soon launch an effort to raise an additional 75 endowed scholarships, bringing the total scholarships to 100, or approximately one for each MPH student at the School. We believe this goal and the upcoming Centennial will energize our donors and identify new prospects.

To achieve our vision of being one of the world’s leading schools of public health, we need to substantially increase our development efforts. To that end, the School has formed a Leadership Council, which has now met twice, in October, 2011 and June, 2012. The Council is working with YSPH leadership on key public health strategic initiatives, together supporting the School’s students, research, and community work, and furthering our mission and the University’s global agenda.

Priorities for 2012-2013

• Work with the new YSPH Leadership Council to develop support for strategic initiatives to further the School’s and University’s mission.

• Continue development activities using priorities set last year, potentially using the forthcoming Centennial celebrations to stimulate new giving.

GOAL: CELEBRATE YSPH’S HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLAN FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Over the past several years, we have greatly improved the “branding” of YSPH and communications with internal and external stakeholders. Celebrating the numerous achievements of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and holding School-wide events such as social gatherings, research retreats, and professional development programs have created a more collaborative and productive environment at the School.
It is important to place our current activities in a historical context. Last year I appointed a committee to develop recommendations for planning the School’s centennial celebration in 2015. The committee developed a list of possible activities to honor the school’s founder, C.-E.A. Winslow as well as the contributions of past faculty and alumni to public health and we now have a plan for celebratory activities. These include archival research that will form the basis of a document which will trace the history of the YSPH dating back to its founding in 1915. A committee will nominate up to three individuals who have made a major contribution to the field of public health to receive a Winslow Medal during the Centennial Year. Each award will be presented at an on-campus ceremony, followed by a lecture by the recipient and a reception. The Centennial Committee will plan a series of lectures with the theme “Public Health in the 21st Century,” to take place on campus throughout the Centennial celebration year. We are trying to raise funding to produce a 10-15 minute video on YSPH that can be used for development and student recruitment, and an oral history project to capture the stories of alumni, faculty and friends of YSPH.

Conducting business in an environmentally responsible manner is a vital component of a healthy future. Yale University has set a greenhouse gas reduction target of 43% below 2005 levels by 2020, and has provided the 2010-2013 Sustainability Strategic Plan encouraging the “...active contribution of every member of the Yale community.” Last year, YSPH formed a Sustainability Committee to develop and implement a Sustainability Strategic Plan for the School. We worked closely with the School of Medicine, but identified unique priority areas for faculty, staff and students to engage in towards our goal of excellence in environmental citizenship. A sustainability plan has been developed and approved and we will be implementing it in the coming year. Individual, central and institutional priorities include waste, energy, water/food, procurement, and transportation. Goals include 25% paper reduction, Green Certifications, academic integration, and community environmental stewardship.

Priorities for 2012-2013

- Develop a series of activities to celebrate the School’s hundred year history.

- Ensure successful implementation of the YSPH sustainability plan.
SUMMARY: Yale School of Public Health 2012-2013 Priorities

RESEARCH
- Continue strategic planning in collaboration with Department Chairs and provide on-going management and leadership training to Chairs.
- Recruit a new Chair of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences.
- Continue developing and expanding the faculty in the School.
- Continue to foster cross-University collaborative research such as with the Yale Law School, and support the growth and excellence of the Yale Center for Analytical Sciences.
- Monitor and enhance the YSPH Junior and Research Faculty Mentoring Programs.
- Finish developing and implement policies and procedures to ensure compliance with Yale’s data security standards.

EDUCATION
- Continue to assess the curriculum, increase the use of technology in the classroom, and encourage the adoption of case-based, team, and experiential learning techniques.
- The Director of Graduate Studies will work directly with faculty, students and administrators to address the doctoral program priority areas mentioned above.
- Prepare for CEPH reaccreditation.

PRACTICE
- Using the strong foundation provided by OCH and CARE, support the promotion of healthy communities through student internships, and collaborative translational research initiatives.
- Continue building a sense of community within YSPH and with the New Haven community through C3 activities.

OPERATIONS
- Work to keep renovation projects on schedule and continue considering ways of improving the way in which we use space.
- Continue to improve faculty administrative support.

FINANCE
- Work with the new YSPH Leadership Council to develop support for strategic initiatives to further the School’s and University’s mission.
- Continue development activities using priorities set last year, potentially using the forthcoming Centennial celebrations to stimulate new giving.

HISTORY AND SUSTAINABILITY
- Develop a series of activities to celebrate the School’s hundred year history.
- Ensure successful implementation of the YSPH sustainability plan.