Answers to FAQ about the transition to public health degree

Q: Will I be able to graduate with a B.S. in Public Health instead of in Health Science?
A: If the Chancellor’s Office approves our application to change the name of the major and minor to Public Health, then students graduating in Fall 2017 or after will get to choose whether they want their degree to say “Public Health” or “Health Science.” Students graduating before Fall 2017 will not be able to have their degree say “Public Health” because that degree will not be in the catalog by then. Students graduating in Fall 2017 or after will be contacted by the Registrar after the Chancellor’s Office approves the new degree and surveyed about whether they would like to have their degree say “Health Science” or “Public Health.”

Q: Do I have to change my degree to Public Health?
A: If you are a current student, you can decide to keep the degree Health Science. You do not need to change to Public Health.

Q: If I’m graduating before Fall 2017, can I still get the Public Health degree?
A: No. The degree change will only take effect in Fall 2017, so students graduating before then cannot change their degree name to public health.

Q: Who can still qualify to get the B.S. in Health Science?
A: Students who began continuous enrollment at a California Community College or California State University before Fall 2017 will have Catalog Rights to the B.S. in Health Science degree. That means that those students could select to graduate with a degree in Health Science instead of Public Health.

Q: Will all the courses that I’ve already taken or plan to take count to the B.S. in Public Health?
A: We have not proposed a curriculum change at this point. That means that the requirements of the B.S. in Public Health will be the same as the requirements for Health Science at least through Spring 2018. Beginning in Fall 2018, there will be some changes to the curriculum and we will ensure that these changes do not delay graduation for any of our current students.

Q: What about the Health Services Admin concentration?
A: The Health Services Administration concentration will still be available. For students selecting to change their degree title to Public Health, the degree with the concentration would be: “B.S. Public Health with a concentration in Health Services Administration.” For those keeping Health Science, there will be no change.

Q: Will there be any other concentrations available?
A: We plan to develop an additional concentration in Community Health. That concentration will not be available until Fall 2018 or later. If you are interested in learning more about this concentration or contributing ideas, please consider getting involved (see opportunities below).
Q: Is there a way I can be involved in helping to design the B.S. in Public Health curriculum?
A: Yes! We are eager to hear feedback from current students about the features of the curriculum they want to maintain, what they would like to see changed, and what they would like added to the curriculum. There will be opportunities to share your ideas throughout the process.

Some of the ways to get involved:
1) Fill out the upcoming Qualtrics Survey about your experiences of the curriculum. Your feedback will help make the new curriculum better.
2) Attend the Health Science Peer Advisor social event on October 20th from 6pm - 8pm at the CASA Success Center, MH 533, and participate in a conversation about your ideas for the new curriculum. There will also be free food!
3) Sign up to participate in a focus group discussion led by Peer Advisors to gather student perspectives on the current and proposed curriculum and degree requirements. The first focus group will be November 1 at 4pm. You can register to participate by filling out a google form here: https://goo.gl/forms/S7NbRBBx2ryaXv2X2. If you cannot make this date but are interested in participating at a later date, please complete the form and note your interest in another date at the bottom.
4) Provide anonymous feedback either by telling your thoughts to the Peer Advisors, who are keeping track of ideas, or by writing your thoughts down and putting the paper in a drop box at the Peer Advisor table.

Q: Why are you changing the degree to Public Health?
A: For the past several years, our undergraduate health science curriculum has provided students with a public health education more than it has provided students a real science-based health education. The California State University system has descriptions of what they expect different degree types to include. Our program is very much more a public health program than a health science program.

The CIP definition for Public Health (CSU code 12141, CIP 51.2201) is:

A program that generally prepares individuals to plan, manage, and evaluate public health care services; to function as public health professionals in public agencies, the private sector, and other settings; and to provide leadership in the field of public health. Includes instruction in epidemiology, biostatistics, public health principles, preventive medicine, health policy and regulations, health care services and related administrative functions, public health law enforcement, health economics and budgeting, public communications, and professional standards and ethics

In contrast, the CIP definition for Health Science/Health Studies (CSU code 12011, CIP 51.0000) is:
A general, introductory, undifferentiated, or joint program in health services occupations that prepares individuals for either entry into specialized training programs or for a variety of concentrations in the allied health area. Includes instruction in the basic sciences, research and clinical procedures, and aspects of the subject matter related to various health occupations.

Undergraduate education in public health is a growing trend in higher education. More universities are offering these degrees and there is even now an opportunity for undergraduate public health degrees to be accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), which already accredits our MPH program. We plan to seek accreditation for this program.

Q: When will the B.S. in Public Health be accredited?
A: We will be seeking accreditation for the B.S. in Public Health as a part of a single unit with the Master of Public Health offered by our department. Once the new curriculum takes effect in Fall 2018, we anticipate being granted this accreditation by CEPH in Fall 2018 or Spring 2019.

Q: Where can I learn more about accreditation of undergraduate public health degrees?
A: CEPH has a detailed history of accreditation of undergraduate public health degrees here: http://ceph.org/constituents/programs-baccalaureate-level/history-and-overview/ There is also a timeline that charts this history with a lot less detail: http://ceph.org/constituents/programs-baccalaureate-level/history-and-overview/road-to-accreditation/