

Masters of Public Health Program

Program Overview

When the Master of Public Health (MPH) program was created at Kansas State University (K-State) a critical goal was to become accredited. The goal was achieved this year when the program earned accreditation from the Council on

Education for Public Health. The Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation (OEIE) provided evaluation services for the program; in this capacity, OEIE conducted a summative analysis to present highlights, challenges and

recommendations documenting progress to-date and identifying potential future directions.

The information in this report is based on participant responses from the evaluation activities. In the report the number in parenthe-

ses represents the frequency of participant responses.

Note: Results reflect a subset of the overall MPH program based on those who participated in the surveys below.

Data Sources by Academic Year and Instrument					
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	Total
Alumni Survey	X	X	X		41
Employer Survey	X		X		90
Faculty Feedback Survey	X				31
Preceptor Survey	X	X	X	X	60
Student Field Experience Survey	X	X	X	X	63
Student Mid Program Survey	X		X	X	78
Student Exit Survey	X	X	X	X	60

Faculty Experience

“Need for administrative assistance for faculty and students in the areas of academic advising and field experience placement. Too many students in a few of the courses - and very little incentive to increase number of course offerings available.”

Faculty Survey

Overall, faculty shared that MPH is an important, quality program at K-State. In addition to teaching, faculty advise MPH students and participate on MPH committees. The majority of MPH faculty are in the College of Veterinary Medicine followed by the College of Human Ecology, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Agriculture. Figure 1 on the following page provides a breakdown by college and role.

Critical concerns or issues related to the MPH program:

- Lack of funding (9)
- Accreditation (7)
- Enough faculty for growth (7)
- Need MPH only advisors/faculty (7)
- Lack of resources (6)
- Faculty/Administration support (6)
- Lack of direction or cohesion as a program and personnel being on the same page (6)

Suggestions to address concerns or issues:

- Rework funding structure (9)
- Hire more MPH-specific faculty (7)
- Stricter criteria for student admission (6)
- Strong commitment from Administration/ Department/College (5)

Preceptor/Employer Experience

Overall, preceptors shared that the MPH program has great students, found the program worthwhile and would be interested in future part-

nerships. Preceptors also shared the most valuable aspects of the public health field experience for MPH students education were the

real-life/hands-on environment as well as the practical value of being able to apply knowledge and problem-solving.

“Outstanding leadership at the director level. Unique strengths (faculty expertise, research programs, & breadth of course offerings) in food & agricultural areas. Interdisciplinary nature.”

Faculty Survey

Preceptor/Employer Experience (Continued)

Employers shared the following as being the most important skills their hiring managers look for:

- Communication skills (26)
- Knowledgeable/meet educational requirements (23)
- Prior work experience in public health (18)
- Works well with others/people person/team player (18)
- Problem solving/critical thinking skills (15)
- Professionalism (reliable, dependable, trustworthy, honest, etc.) (11)

Employers suggested that the following skills should be included in an MPH program that would prepare graduates for employment with their organization:

- Practical experience with large and small health departments (18)
- Statistics/technical skills (13)
- Communication skills (13)
- Program planning/budgeting/implementation (12)
- Report & grant writing (9)
- Dealing with politics/bureaucracy (7)
- More epidemiology/epidemiology study design (7)

Preceptors provided the following suggestions for the MPH program that would improve the field experience:

- Better student preparation/more training for field experience (9)
- Additional statistical training (5)
- Better matching of students to field experience (3)

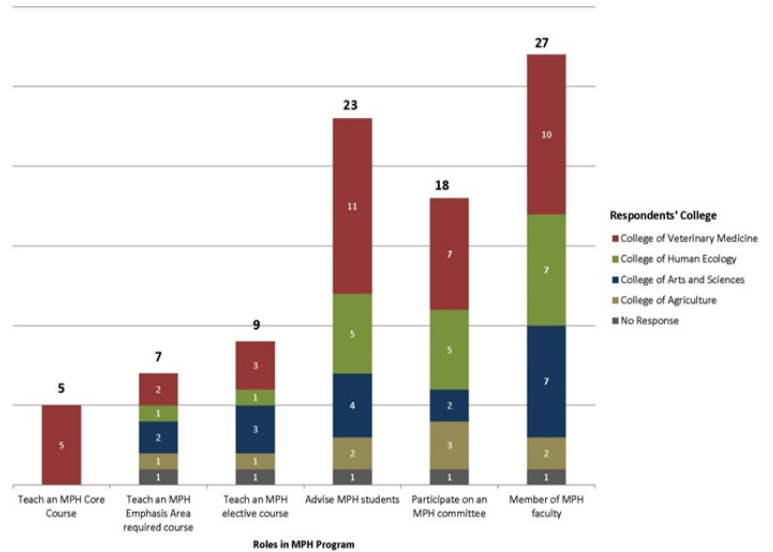
Figure 2 provides a visual of the types of organizations where students completed their field experience; however, a challenge identified by both preceptors and students is the student securing their field experience. Preceptors were asked to provide suggestions of other organizations or activities for possible or potential future field experiences. Organizations:

- Army Wellness Center
- Children & Family Services
- Ft. Riley
- Government Agencies
- Head Start
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment
- Safe Kids Program
- Sharing a student between agencies

Activities/Programs:

- Assessments and evaluation
- Children’s injury prevention
- Children’s programs
- Community outreach programs
- Continuing education workshops
- Developing new materials for program
- Emergency preparedness
- Health fairs
- Health promotion
- Healthy people activities
- Job shadowing

Figure 1 MPH Faculty Member Roles and College Affiliations

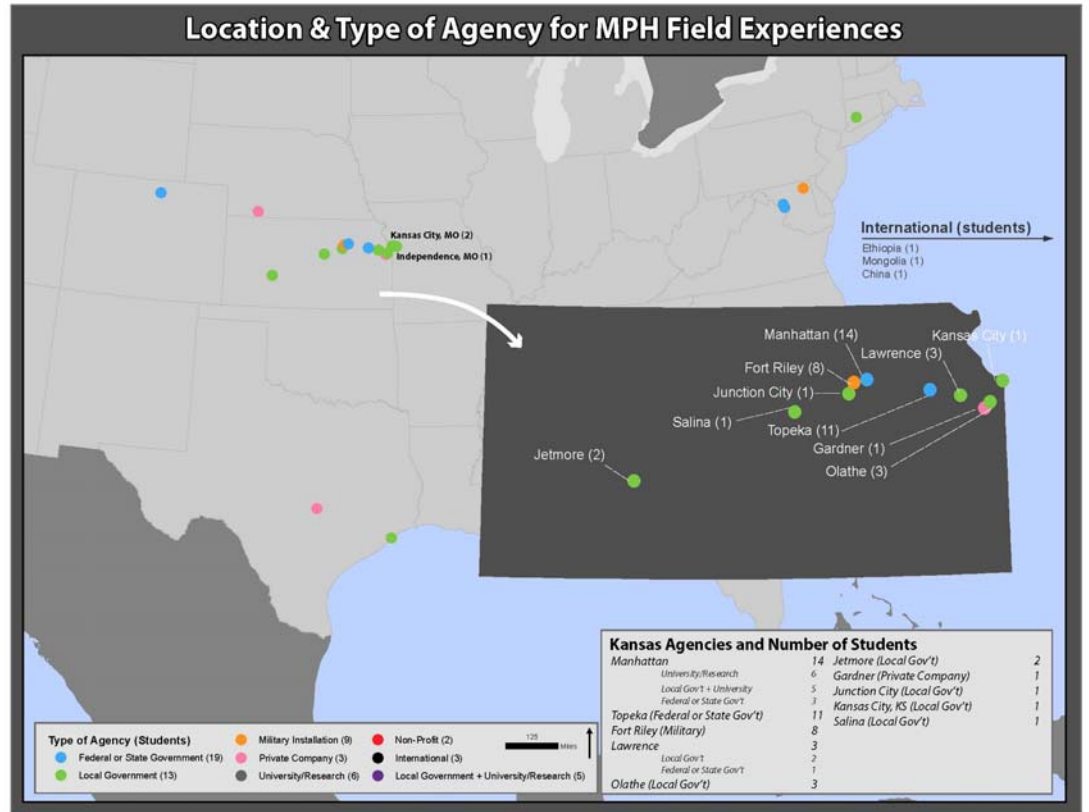


Faculty Feedback Survey (N = 31)

- Obesity study
- Partnerships related to International health needs
- Safety clinics
- Training volunteers
- Vaccination and immunization
- WIC and maternal childcare

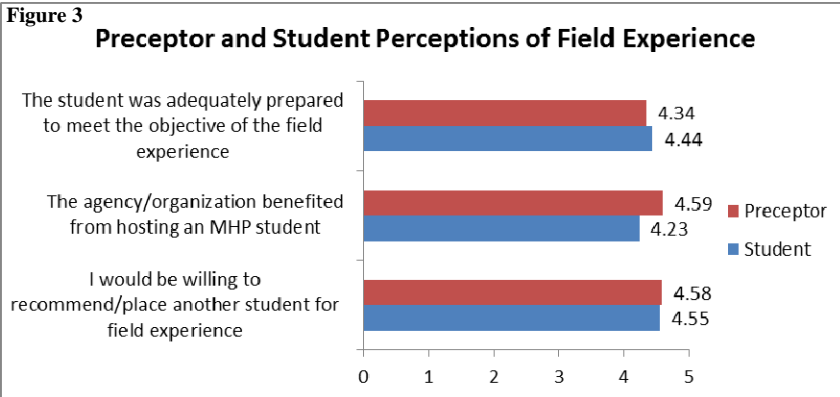
In addition, Figure 3 on the following page provides the preceptors and students perceptions of the student field experience.

Figure 2



Preceptor Survey (N = 60)

Preceptor/Employer Experience (Continued)



*1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree
Student Field Experience Survey (N = 66) and Preceptor Survey (N = 59)

“Not sure if you have this already, but it would help if there was a website that listed students who were looking for field experience and what their public health interests were. The process for connecting students and public health organization needs to be a little formalized.”

Employer Survey

Student Experience

Overall MPH students provided positive feedback about the MPH program including statements that the experience was great and they learned a lot. This applied to feedback on the program overall and the field experience.

Students midway through the MPH program indicated the following as the most positive aspects of the program in their first year:

- Encouraging/helpful staff, faculty, and advisors (30)
- Specific courses (14)
- ◇ Epidemiology (7)
- ◇ Healthcare Administration (2)
- ◇ Behavioral Public Health (1)
- ◇ Toxicology (1)
- ◇ Physiology (1)

- ◇ Infectious Diseases & Zoonoses courses (1)
- ◇ Social Sciences (1)
- Variety of courses/caters to interest (9)
- Online classes (7)
- Flexibility (6)
- Improved skills and knowledge (6)
- Communication (5)

Students completing their field experience indicated the most significant learning events were gaining experience in specific health topics, specifically the public health process, Zoonoses, Epidemiology, Nutrition, learning techniques/processes and military public health; working with data and conducting research; and learning to communicate. In addition, students

found the following to be the most helpful aspects of the field experience:

- Learning/preparing for future career opportunities (14)
- ◇ State and county public health officials (3)
- ◇ Veterinary (1)
- Real-world experience (13)
- Improved specific skills (9)
- ◇ Research (5)
- ◇ Writing (4)
- ◇ Data analysis (2)
- ◇ Lab techniques (1)
- ◇ Trouble shooting (1)
- Expanded knowledge in a public health area (8)
- Using knowledge from class (7)
- ◇ Statistics (2)
- ◇ Epidemiology (1)
- Working with people in the

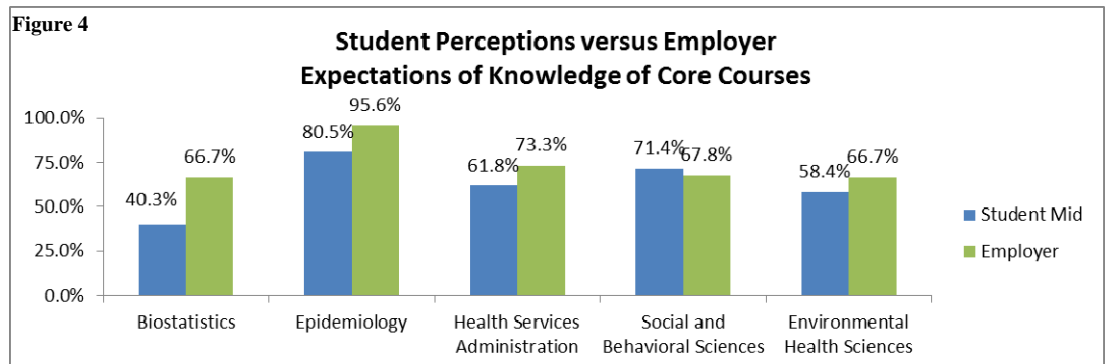
field/public (6)

- Networking (5)
- Working with government agencies (5)
- Working with professionals (5)

Students and employers were asked specific questions about the core courses for the MPH program. Figure 4 shows that students' knowledge is very close to employers' expectations, with the greatest focus on Epidemiology. In addition, after students completed their field work they were asked which courses best prepared them for those experiences; they indicated Epidemiology as the highest of the core courses. However, students indicated that their emphasis area required and elective courses best prepared them for their field experiences.

“I like the availability of the program and the choices in type of master in Public Health. The internship has been nice for my small agency to get some assistance public health programs. Example: Public notification system enrollment and community Health Assessment. The students have been well prepared to work in the public health system.”

Employer Survey



Employer Survey (N = 90) and Student Mid Program Survey (N = 77)

Student Experience (Continued)

Overall Alumni/Students liked:

- Relationships with fellow students/faculty (10)
- Flexibility of curriculum (9)
- Specifically vet med classes (2)
- Epidemiology (1)
- Zoonotic diseases (1)
- Kinesiology (1)
- Nutrition (1)
- Faculty willingness to help students (8)
- The quality of the courses/courses prepared students for jobs (8)

“So far my experience has been extremely positive. I feel proud to be part of the MPH program, and think that the program organizers and professors are all doing a great job.”

Student Mid Survey

At different levels of the program experience students identified opportunities or resources that would improve the MPH program. Midway through the program students were asked what educational services or resources that would be helpful to a graduate student in the MPH program. The students provided the following resources:

- Issues with field experience (15)
- ◊ More guidance locating field experience (9)
- ◊ More options for field experience – type or location (5)
- Expand course offerings (7)
- Advising/Communication about program/class/coursework (7)
- Career advice/job placement (7)
- Resources/library (6)

After students completed their field experience they were asked what areas would have been more helpful for the field experience. The students provided the following areas:

- No suggestion/felt prepared (13)
- More experiences to meet or work with other areas (9)
- Communication (writing, public speaking, etc.) (7)
- More statistics/data coursework (6)
- Prefer different public health focus (3)
- Understanding and implementing budgets (3)
- Field experience not focusing on one aspect (2)
- Creating education/outreach programs (2)
- More knowledge of program evaluation (2)

“There needs to be better assistance with field experience placing for students. It was a very stressful for months trying to locate a company that would take me on for a semester. Getting started in my search was the hardest part. A bit more guidance/increased relations with outside organizations would be very helpful for future students looking to land a field experience position..”

Student Exit Survey

Alumni/Students indicated in order for the MPH program to better prepare students for work in the public health field the following are needed:

- Field experience/internships (9)
- Professional practice courses (8)
- Greater variety of MPH courses (3)
- More Statistics courses (3)

In addition alumni/students least liked the:

- Format of courses (8)
- ◊ Did not like online courses (5)
- ◊ Relevancy of course material (2)
- ◊ Formats vary from College to College (2)
- Limited opportunities to connect with fellow students and faculty (5)
- Lack of accreditation (4)
- Limited course choices (4)
- Dislike core courses (4)

The mid program survey asked students what they found to be the most challenging part of the program in the first year. These include:

- Specific courses (18)
- ◊ (BIO)Statistics (5)
- ◊ Epidemiology (4)
- ◊ KIN 818 (3)
- ◊ HMD 720 (2)
- ◊ Toxicology (2)
- ◊ Molecular Diagnostics of Infectious Diseases (1)
- ◊ Physiology (1)
- ◊ Online course (13)
- Time management (11)
- Finding field experience (11)
- Communication (8)
- Problems with instruction/curriculum (8)
- Staff/advisement (6)

“There should be more courses offered and available during the year.”

Student Exit Survey

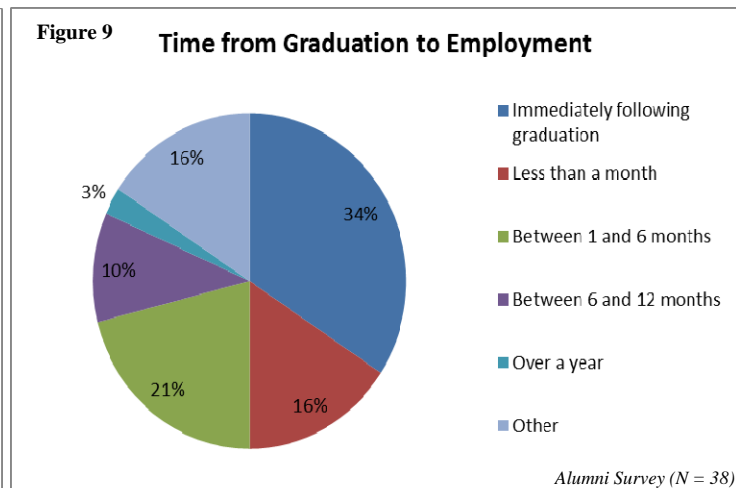
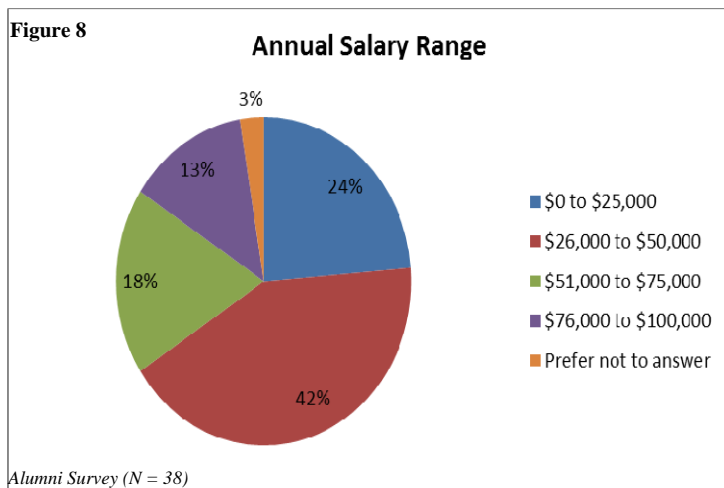
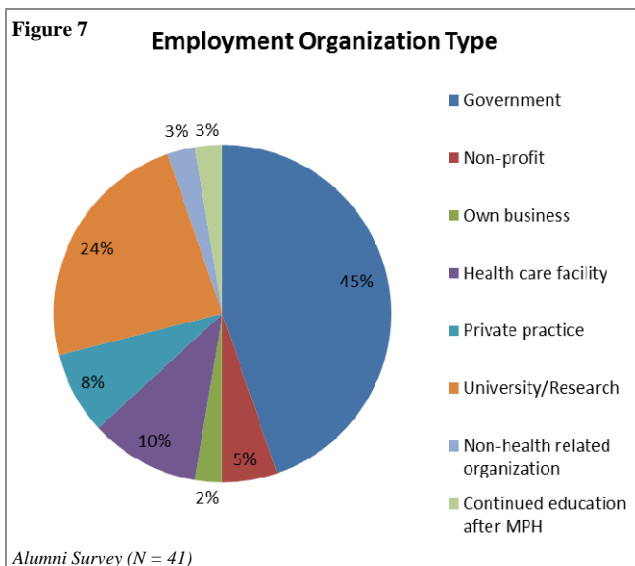
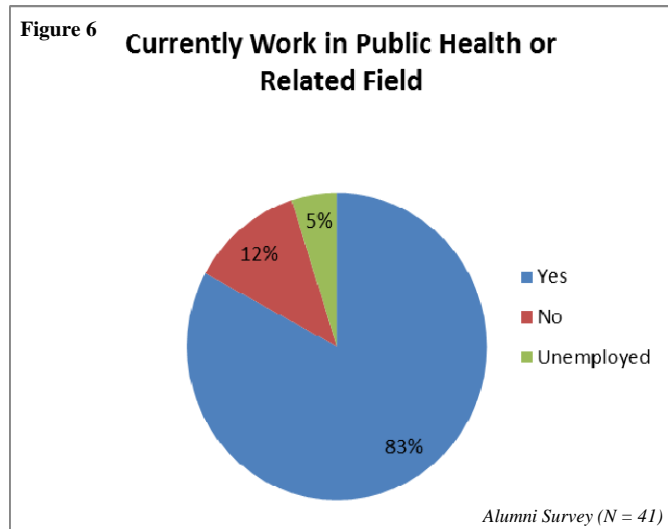
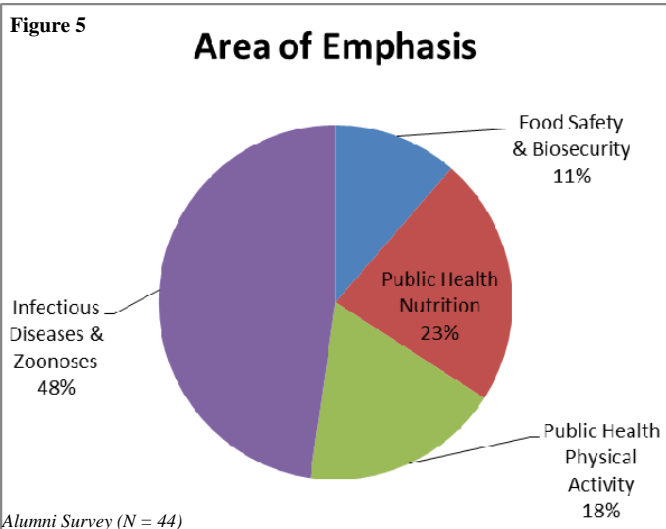
Pertaining to the field experience students provided the following suggestions that would improve the field experience for future students:

- Knowing expectations (both parties) (14)
- More time to look for opportunities (9)
- Technical suggestions (8)
- Suggestions for partnering organizations (4)
- Report/paper suggestions (4)
- More funding (3)

“Barta was very helpful for understanding deadlines, structure, and requirements. Dr. Cates also frequently emailed the students to make us aware. The majority of faculty members made themselves available and were willing to assist at any time. I believe I found a few mentors among the staff. My advisor was less helpful and expressed a general disinterest in my work and progress. Thankfully, the other faculty more than compensated for this and made my experience rewarding. “

Student Exit Survey

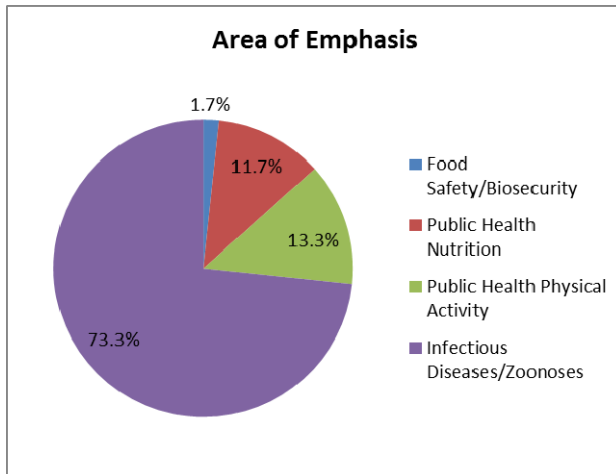
Snapshot of MPH Alumni Survey



* Other included "Already working in the field" and "No response"

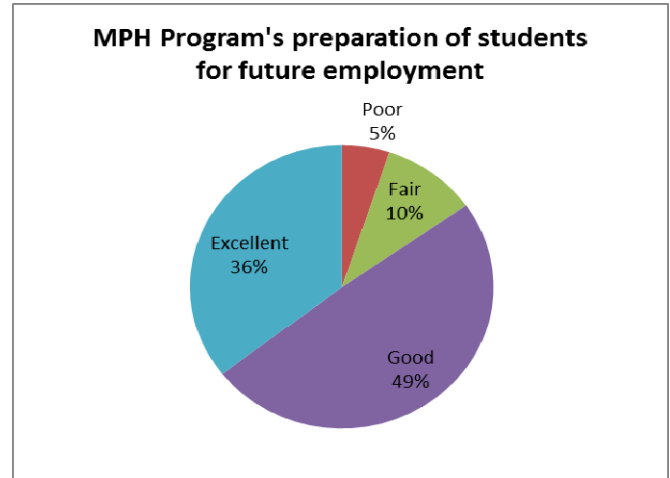
Snapshot of MPH Student Exit Survey

Figure 10



Student Exit Survey (N = 60)

Figure 11



Student Exit Survey (N = 59)

Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed based on the summative experience of faculty, employers, preceptors, and students both current and graduates.

1. Provide dedicated MPH advisors
2. Provide MPH specific faculty
3. Provide greater assistance for students looking for field experience opportunities:
 - Establish partnerships
 - Expand opportunities
 - Continue to advise students to start search process earlier
4. Expand course offerings
5. Increase funding
6. Secure/maintain strong commitment from Administration/Department/College

“ Great Leadership.

Solid foundation of courses.

Organized program.”

Faculty Survey

“Great experience overall at the Health Department. Great group of people that taught me a lot! I presented my oral report to the Director of the [county] Health Department and he was really impressed. He even asked me to present it again in their weekly meeting with all the Department Heads. After the presentation, I was asked to present to the Commission. I was also offered a job position here to continue working on my project and with other things”

Student Field Experience Survey



2323 Anderson Avenue, Suite 220
Manhattan, KS 66502

Phone: 785-532-5930
Fax: 785-532-7185