November 1, 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 Mexican American Studies and Research Center (MASRC) 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 Science (M.S.) in Mexican American Studies and Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) within a three-year timeframe.

MASRC Director Dr. Antonio Estrada and Dr. Scott Carvajal have been working with MEZCOPH faculty and administrative leadership during the past year on development of the new degree program. This program is designed to integrate practical and research-related public health training with an emphasis on issues of particular relevance to Mexican Americans and Latino populations. The Mexican American Studies concentration in Latino Health emphasizes intensive training on cultural knowledge, cultural competency and on health research challenges of particular relevance to Latino populations. The MPH Health Policy and Management component of this program is designed to prepare leaders of public and private health systems to manage effectively and to create and implement policies that promote the public’s health. The concentration develops skills in management and leadership, policy analysis and formulation, strategic and financial planning, health services administration and evaluation for all levels of practice, including local/community, state, national and international.

The need for this dual degree program is evident in the growing influence of Hispanic Americans in the United States. Latinos are the largest minority group in the nation and, according to population projections, before mid-century one in four U.S. citizens will be of Hispanic origin. Mexican Americans represent the largest segment of this growing Latino population. Some of the more important health issues for the 21st century affecting this group are lack of access to affordable health care and health insurance, and the lack of health research on the Mexican American community.

The dual degree will provide students with a comprehensive training program that provides the tools to promote their ability to work collaboratively with key community agencies in promoting leadership and empowerment of Mexican Americans within the state and the nation. Although persons completing this program will be culturally competent health professionals well prepared for immediate entry into the public health workforce, the central goal of this dual degree program is to prepare students for doctoral level study as part of their becoming future academics,
researchers, and policy makers concerned with promoting health in Latino populations and communities.

The dual master degree proposal is attached. The proposed curriculum is structured around the M.P.H. Public Health Policy and Management concentration and the Mexican American Studies Latino Health Strand. In the future, consideration will be given to expanding the dual degree to include additional M.P.H. concentration areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this important 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: Antonio Estrada, MASRC
    Joel Meister, MEZCOPH
    Denise Roe, MEZCOPH
    Chris Tisch, MEZCOPH