MEMORANDUM

TO: Nancy Marcus  
   Dean, Graduate Studies

FROM: Karin Brewster  
   Director, Center for Demography & Population Health

RE: Action plan follow-up to 2014 Review of MS in Demography

The FSU Graduate Policy Committee reviewed the program leading to the Master of Science degree in Demography during the Fall 2014 semester. The GPC recommended that the program be continued and made seven additional recommendations aimed at program improvement. Two of the GPC recommendations require action on our part and Faculty Associates in the Center for Demography and Population Health (CDPH) met in January to discuss the QER and the GPC report. This memorandum describes our responses to the two recommendations on which we are able to take action independently of the College of Social Sciences and Public Policy.

1. To promote “centeredness” and enhance connections between the CDPH faculty, the Center should have at least one required meeting of the Center faculty per semester to assess program performance, seek opportunities for collaborations, discuss progress, etc.

To promote centeredness and enhance connections among faculty Associates, we have agreed to a monthly meeting (“First Friday” meetings). The primary aim of these meetings is to seek opportunities for collaboration, particularly on start-up programs aimed at producing extramural grant applications, but we will also assess the performance of the MS program and address other CDPH business, as necessary. To ensure that these meetings are productive, each meeting ends by setting an agenda for the next month’s meeting. The February and March First Friday meetings considered opportunities created by the new collaborative arrangement that FSU has established with the Atlanta Census Data Research Center. The agenda for April includes identifying three broad areas of collaborative research that will lead to the development of “signature” research programs. Once we have identified these broad areas, our intent is to develop at least two intramural applications for seed funding from the FSU CRC to support the development of applications for access to data at the ACRDC.
2. The CDPH should strongly consider developing and adopting a strategic plan that at a minimum updates the vision for the Center, identifies a desired size for the CDPH faculty and identifies the desired departmental mix for these faculty, articulates the current and desired research emphases of the faculty, and describes the goals and enrollment targets of the MSD program.

CDPH faculty Associates intend to address the various components of a strategic plan over the next 12 to 18 months, within the context of our new monthly meetings. We will necessarily address each component as we develop our “signature” research programs, building on the interests and skills of the current faculty. We believe that we can most effectively address these components of a strategic plan sequentially, as follows:

a. Identify complementarities among the research orientations and skills of the current faculty Associates in order to identify areas of collaboration.
b. Develop collaboratively signature research programs. A restatement of the Center’s mission and vision will derive from these programs;
c. Evaluate the ideal departmental mix of faculty and program size on the basis of the first two outcomes.

CDPH faculty Associates look forward to developing and implementing this plan in cooperation with the Dean and the departments of COSSPP.

In addition, we are eager to discuss with Dean Rasmussen the five GPC recommendations requiring his input, including:

- appointment of a full-time program administrator,
- mechanisms to ensure an appropriate faculty mix to support the program,
- provisions for the Director to provide input on annual evaluations for CDPH Associates
- increasing the number of tuition waivers and graduate assistant support
- consideration of seed funding or other mechanisms to encourage generation of grant applications

Please advise me if you require additional information.

cc: David Rasmussen
    Lee Stepina
    Isaac Eberstein