



UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

FY2024 Operating Budget Development Narrative Prompts

310 School of Public Health

Programmatic & Academic Vitality Narratives

- 1) Please briefly summarize your unit's/campus's strategic plan and how your FY24 operating budget proposal (as submitted in Workday Adaptive Planning) connects to your campus/unit strategic plan. *Word Limit: 500*

The School of Public Health (SPH) 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (<https://sph.washington.edu/about/strategic-plan>) is strongly aligned with the UW Blueprint. The SPH 2020-2025 Strategic Plan emphasizes our dual commitments to conducting groundbreaking research that addresses the greatest health challenges in our region and around the world and preparing leaders who are prepared to work in partnership with communities to improve the health of all people.

SPH faculty and staff currently work on 500+ grants annually. Both the number of research projects and the amount of extramural research dollars brought into the school has increased in recent years and is expected to continue to increase gradually over time. Our operating budget proposal reflects this incremental growth.

Currently, SPH faculty teach about 2,000 graduate and undergraduate degree enrolled students each year, in over 600 classroom courses. SPH also teaches about 8,000 non-SPH degree enrolled, other UW students, through its courses. This level of instruction is about twice what it was a decade ago, despite no significant change in the total number of faculty in our school during that time period. SPH continues to see growing application demand for most of its graduate programs (MPH, MS, and PhD) and growing interest in its undergraduate programs (Public Health-Global Health major, Food Systems, Nutrition and Health major, and Environmental Health major). In the near term, as reflected in the operating budget proposal, SPH expects to accommodate modest enrollment growth, to balance student demand and faculty constraints. For the longer term, SPH is reviewing how best to support more significant growth in various program enrollments (e.g., by recruiting additional teaching faculty to support undergraduate instructional demand).

- 2) Building on the responses your campus/unit submitted during the FY23 annual review cycle ([posted here](#)), how has your unit/campus integrated the themes and goals of [the 2022 – 2026 UW Diversity Blueprint](#) into your campus's/unit's ongoing work to take actions towards access, inclusion, and equity? *Word Limit: 750*

Five years ago, SPH added an Assistant Dean for Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) who has played a pivotal role in responding to student, staff and faculty concerns across the school and developing and deploying a plan aimed at aligning our organizations practices with our public health values. In addition to coordinating with individuals and groups working on EDI issues in departments and programs across SPH, The Asst. Dean for EDI also leads a small but mighty staff in the Office of the Dean that focuses on schoolwide EDI initiatives. Together with our school-wide and departmental EDI committees, the school's EDI team produced an EDI Action Plan in 2019 (<https://sph.washington.edu/sites/default/files/2019-07/UWSPH-EDI-Action-Plan-2019.pdf>) . This plan articulates our school-wide EDI goals and the strategies we are using to achieve those goals and is highly aligned with the previous version of the UW Diversity Blueprint. During the last year, we have made significant progress implementing this plan. We are particularly proud of the anti-racist training program that our EDI team developed and implement. Hundreds of faculty and staff in SPH have now completed this training, which has a significant positive impact on the culture in our school and our ability to navigate complex conversations. Over the last two academic years, we have also placed particular emphasis on consistently implementing best



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practices for faculty hiring, working to ensure that all of our search pools reflect appropriate depth and diversity. This has resulted in the addition of an outstanding group of new faculty in SPH, who have filled vacancies created by retirements and departments. Last year, we also successfully completed our search for an inaugural director for the center for Anti-Racism and Community Health (ARCH).

Tuition Based Program Rate Recommendations - Narrative Section

Responses to the questions below are required for each tuition category that your unit/campus recommends adjusting (as submitted to OPB by 2/1/23). **Please note question #7 is required for any programs for which no tuition increase is requested.** If you are recommending changes for multiple tuition categories, please differentiate your responses within each question.

- 1) Please explain why each proposed change is needed and how your unit/campus will use new incremental tuition revenue increases or absorb incremental tuition revenue losses. *Word Limit: 500*

We are requesting a 3% increase in tuition for all tuition-based graduate programs in our school. Salaries make up the majority (80%+) of our direct teaching costs. A 3% increase is needed to cover salary growth and additional operational increases.

- 2) Explain whether and how each proposed change will affect peer comparisons and/or whether a market analysis was conducted. *Word Limit: 500*

Market analysis shows UW SPH tuition in the middle of public university peers, on par with North Carolina, above Minnesota, below UCLA and Berkeley. Applicants and current students report that factors beyond tuition, such as the lack of availability of lower cost health insurance (not just student insurance), high local housing costs, difficult requirements for qualifying for in state tuition, length of degree completion time, etc., do factor into their enrollment decisions.

- 3) Tuition and fee increases have a disproportionate impact on low-income students. Please comment on how each fee change will affect student debt loads, and specifically how the program will offset this impact. *Word Limit: 550*

Average SPH student debt loads are shown in the table below. The percentage of students with debt and the average debt load per student has as remained relatively constant over the past several years, with modest decreases in overall debt load and percent with debt for undergraduate and Masters students. Average debt loads do vary quite a bit by degree level. Average debt loads are highest for Masters students because 1) the cumulative length of time in school compared to undergraduates (students who need to borrow as an undergrad typically will need to borrow additional resources during their Masters years); 2) tuition levels (graduate tuition is generally higher than undergraduate tuition for our programs); and 3) limited support opportunities (e.g., TA/RA roles are more likely to go to PhD students). Our fee-based Masters students carry approximately the same debt load as our tuition-based students.



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The debt burden our students experience is of concern because 1) many of our students come from economically-challenged backgrounds; 2) many of our students enter the field of public health specifically because they want to work with health marginalized communities but their ability to take these jobs, which do not pay well, can be limited if their debt burden is too high; and 3) we lose outstanding diverse applicants to our graduate programs because peer schools of public health can (and do) offer better support packages. We are particularly concerned about further adding to student debt load in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had devastating economic impacts on many of our students and their families.

In response to these concerns, we have increased the number of Masters scholarships available to students over the last four years. The School currently provides \$5,000 and \$10,000 scholarships annually to approximately 15 students, providing \$220,000 in total support. In addition to the scholarships funded from our operating budget, we also provide an additional \$150,000 in endowed scholarship support annually to students in SPH programs. Further growing student aid is one of our Advancement priorities moving forward and is a primary focus of our "Campaign for Students." We are particularly focusing on raising money for students with demonstrated financial need and are explicitly linking this to our goal of creating a more diverse public health workforce that better reflects the communities we serve. In addition to scholarships support, SPH utilizes approximately 115 TA positions and 175 RA positions annually. These positions provide approximately \$7M in tuition waivers for students annually with another \$5M in tuition is directly paid by grants. Finally, SPH provides a few students with emergency support funds on an ad hoc, as needed basis, in consultation with the Office of Financial Aid.



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SPH Student Debt					
BA/BS	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Students	278	322	320	406	461
With Debt	120	128	120	160	145
Total Debt	2,451,400	2,428,361	2,088,513	3,006,632	2,285,931
Average	20,428	18,972	17,404	18,791	15,765
Pct w/Debt	43%	40%	38%	39%	31%
Masters	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Students	302	313	221	262	335
With Debt	160	154	101	140	167
Total Debt	12,606,698	11,798,508	7,827,682	11,784,592	12,183,303
Average	78,792	76,614	77,502	84,176	72,954
Pct w/Debt	53%	49%	46%	53%	50%
PhD	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Students	41	95	37	47	38
With Debt	13	26	10	8	10
Total Debt	603,101	1,040,073	467,962	468,946	682,479
Average	46,392	40,003	46,796	58,618	68,248
Pct w/Debt	32%	27%	27%	17%	26%

Describe whether you expect the proposed tuition rate(s) to result in any substantial changes to enrollment (including a change in the resident/nonresident composition) or to the volume of waivers awarded. *Word Limit: 250*

We do not expect any substantial changes in resident/non-resident enrollment composition in our programs or to the volume of waivers awarded due to the proposed change in tuition. As mentioned above, the number of waivers is dependent on TA/RA positions rather than tuition rates. About 50% of our MPH students are in-state students (with California residents being the largest out-of-state group). Maintaining tuition parity with other state schools does help keep enrollment strong. About 80% of our PhD students are out of state. Waiver eligibility through the TA/RA positions is a strong factor in their deciding to enroll in our programs.

- For each proposed change, please explain what would happen if the change were not implemented (e.g. deficit, loss of staff positions, etc.). If a proposed change is part of a plan to eliminate a current deficit, please indicate that. *Word Limit: 250*



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If the proposed 3% increase in tuition for tuition-based graduate programs in our school were not implemented, SPH would need to make up approximately \$450,000 annually out of ongoing operations or reserves.

- 5) For each tuition category that you have proposed changing, please discuss your unit/campus's overall tuition rate strategy for the next 3-5 years. In your response, please explain whether and how your long-term strategy connects to "market" rates (e.g. where do you want to be, rate wise, compared to peers?) *Word Limit: 250*

Our long-term strategy related to tuition increase is to 1) implement nominal inflationary increases (to cover additional expenses related to instruction and running academic programs), while 2) keeping our tuition rates in the middle of those of our public peers. We see no significant tuition rate growth, beyond inflation, among our peer group. Inflation has obviously become a much more significant short-term variable. We hope to keep tuition increases as modest as we can.

- 6) If you are not planning to increase tuition for any program, please respond to the following: Generally, small, inflationary increases (1-2% annually) are preferred over no increase or large increases every few years. Please answer the following questions for each program where no increase is requested. *Word Limit: 250*
- a) Please explain why this program's rate does not warrant an increase by describing the program's financial position, structure, peer comparisons, or other relevant information.
 - b) What do you currently anticipate annual rate change requests will be for the next two years?

Communication with Faculty & Student Stakeholders

Communication of your unit's/campus's annual review materials, including your proposed FY24 operating budget, narrative responses and tuition rate recommendations is an important and necessary component of the UW's budget development process. Your responses to the questions below will be documented and included as part of the FY24 operating budget development review materials provided to Executive Leadership of the UW. **It is expected that all unit/campus review and consultative processes are completed by the March 17, 2023 due date.**

- 1) Please indicate the date that FACULTY leadership within your unit/campus was consulted and provided the opportunity to provide input as part of this budget planning exercise

The Dean and/or Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration met with the SPH Faculty Council to discuss the school's budget (and how it fits into the campus budget model and process) on the following dates: 11/17/22, 2/9/23 and 3/9/23. In addition, the Faculty Council were sent emails with a link to the draft budget narrative and offered the opportunity to provide feedback on 11/17/22 and 2/7/23.

- 2) Please list a point of contact for your FACULTY leadership (name and UW email address).

The Faculty Council Chair for UW SPH for the current academic year is Bryan Weiner (bjweiner@uw.edu).



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- 3)** Please indicate the date that STUDENT leadership within your unit/campus was consulted and provided the opportunity to provide input as part of this budget planning exercise.

The Dean met with the SPH Deans Advisory Council for Students (DACS) to provide an overview of the SPH budget process on 11/28/22 and to discuss the proposed tuition increase for tuition-based graduate programs in SPH on 1/23/23. Students were given an opportunity to review the draft budget narrative prior to both of these meetings and were provided with an opportunity to pose questions and provide written feedback on both the draft narrative and the proposed tuition increase on 1/20/23.

- 4)** Please list a point of contact for your STUDENT leadership (name and UW email address).

The SPH Deans Advisory Council of Students (DACS), which consists of approximately 20 students from degree programs across SPH operates as a 1 credit course for the entire academic year (Autumn, Winter and Spring Quarters), led by the Dean, without a formal DACS leader. DACS roster and contact information is available through our student services liaison, rukie hartman (mrht@uw.edu).

- 5)** Enrolled students affected by tuition rate increases should be consulted on proposed increases before proposals are finalized. Please describe when and how students were consulted and summarize the feedback they provided regarding EACH of your tuition recommendations.

Students representing a wide range of our undergraduate and graduate programs were consulted through the above mentioned DACS class and provided written and verbal feedback. They were given an opportunity to review the draft budget submission on their own time and invited to provide written input on what, if anything, they would like changed. During the class sessions, they were provided with an additional opportunity to ask questions and provide additional input. Key feedback received from DACS students this year included:

- Students appreciated the opportunity to review the budget narrative and to provide feedback.
- While some students acknowledged that they understood that tuition needed to be raised to cover increased costs of instruction and educational programs, almost all students who responded pointed out that students are under financial stress already and would prefer not to have tuition increases.
- Several students reinforced that tuition increases disproportionately impacts low-income students and exacerbate our difficulties in recruiting lower-income students and students who wish to work in organizations that provide services to underserved communities.
- Several students commented that they would like to see more financial aid provided for students by the school. One international student pointed out that it is particularly challenging for international students to get financial aid.
- Several students stressed the importance of TA/RA positions for graduate students and the need for these positions to provide salaries that match the cost of living in Seattle.