

October 28, 2024

W. Randy Smith, PhD
Vice Provost for Academic Programs
Office of Academic Affairs

Re: Formation of a new division in the College of Dentistry

Dear Dr. Smith,

The College of Dentistry requests permission to form a Division of Dental Public Health (DPH) within its administrative structure. We aim to significantly enhance our college's contributions to public health and dental education. I am writing to outline the specific rationale for creating this new division and the process we followed to confirm that there is strong support from the college and other constituents. The rationale is multifaceted and detailed in points 1 to 7 below.

(1) Increased Focus on Community Health and Outreach in Clinical and Didactic Teaching. The United States faces numerous oral health challenges that impact diverse populations across the country. Tooth decay, the most common chronic disease, and poor oral health can significantly harm self-esteem and psychological well-being. In Ohio, dental care is the number one unmet healthcare need for children, with shortages of dental providers and a lack of Medicaid providers posing major barriers for disadvantaged populations. Establishing a division dedicated to community health and outreach will allow us to prioritize community dental health initiatives and integrate them more effectively into our clinical and didactic teaching. This focus aligns with the mission of the College of Dentistry (CoD) and The Ohio State University (OSU) to address the oral health needs of our community and to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of dental public health principles and practices. Consequently, we will produce dentists who are not only proficient in managing oral diseases but who also are strongly committed to promoting oral health and preventive treatment in the communities they serve.

(2) Strengthened Research Capabilities in DPH. A distinct division dedicated to DPH will significantly bolster our research capabilities. It will create a centralized hub for research activities, fostering collaboration among faculty members, and attracting research funding. By focusing on critical areas such as improving access to dental care and dental workforce research, new division will provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators with the aim of developing strategies to eliminate barriers to oral health. This division will facilitate interdisciplinary research initiatives, and leverage expertise from various departments within the CoD and other academic units at OSU, such as the College of Public Health. Enhanced research capabilities will lead to innovative solutions for oral health challenges and elevate the college's national and international research profile.

(3) Creation of a More Efficient Administrative Structure for the Oral Health Improvement through the OHIO (Outreach) Project. The OHIO Project, which has been a cornerstone of our community outreach efforts, will benefit from a more streamlined and dedicated administrative structure. The CoD plans to expand its capacity not only to serve children but also to reach underserved populations such as elders and individuals with special health care needs. By creating a more efficient administrative structure, the OHIO Project will be better positioned to fulfill its mission. A separate division will enhance coordination, resource allocation, and program management, thereby enhancing the project's impact and sustainability.

(4) Better Competition for Tenure-Track Faculty in DPH. A distinct division will enhance our ability to attract and retain top-tier faculty specializing in DPH. This separation underscores our commitment to the field and positions us competitively alongside other leading dental schools, many of which have established similar divisions.

(5) Facilitation of a Residency Program in DPH and New Graduate Degree Programs. A dedicated DPH division will pave the way for establishing a residency program in DPH, as well as new graduate (Master and PhD) degree programs. These initiatives will not only elevate our educational offerings but also contribute to addressing the growing demand for public health professionals in dentistry.

(6) Enhanced Opportunities for Collaboration with Other Academic Units at OSU. The creation of this division will foster closer collaboration with other academic units within OSU, such as the College of Public Health. These partnerships can lead to interdisciplinary research, joint educational programs, and community health initiatives that leverage the strengths of both colleges.

(7) More Effective Incorporation of DPH Issues into the CoD's Decision-Making Process. By having a dedicated division, we can ensure that DPH issues are more effectively incorporated into our college's strategic planning and decision-making processes. This integration will enhance our ability to address public health challenges and contribute to the overall health and well-being of the communities we serve.

To ensure broad-based support and to build consensus, we conducted extensive consultations with faculty and other stakeholders. Here are the key steps in our consultation and consensus-building process.

Consultation and Discussion in Dean's Council. We initiated the discussion within the Dean's Council, where the concept and intent of forming a new Division of DPH was examined and discussed at several meetings. The council members provided valuable insights and highlighted the potential benefits and challenges of this initiative. Their feedback was instrumental in shaping the proposal and addressing any initial concerns.

Consultation with Chair of the Division of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry. Faculty and staff in the OHIO Project and Dr. Xi Chen, who are currently under the Division of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry, will be moved to the new division. Therefore, we discussed this transition with Dr. Shereen S. Azer, the Chair of the Division of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry at several one-on-one (with me) and at open general faculty meetings. The Chair expressed support for this move, emphasizing that it would create a more focused and effective administrative structure for community outreach.

Consultation with CoD Faculty and Staff in the Divisions of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry, and Pediatric Dentistry. Discussions were held with those faculty and staff currently appointed in the Division of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry who would be a good fit for the new Division of DPH (staff in the OHIO project and Dr. Xi Chen). These discussions revealed a high level of enthusiasm and willingness to transition to the new division recognizing the alignment of their work with the goals of DPH. In addition, Dr. Tammy Duangthip who is currently working in the Division of Pediatric Dentistry will lead the new division of DPH. The leadership of the college strongly support this move. They highlighted several areas of synergy noting the opportunities for joint research and community health programs that would benefit the entire college. Dr. Tammy Duangthip agreed to move and lead a new division as planned given her skills in this area and her international reputation.

Consultation with Dean of College of Public Health. To explore any overlap between programs in the College of Public Health and the proposed Division of DPH, the Interim Dean of the College of Public Health (Professor Karla Zadnik) was consulted. Potential areas of collaboration were identified. The intent is that the new division would complement existing College of Public Health programs without redundancy. Professor Zadnik expressed enthusiastic support and looked forward to future collaborative efforts.

Presentation to the CoD's Executive Committee. The proposal was presented to the CoD's Executive Committee. The response was positive, with the committee members endorsing the formation of the new division and recognizing its potential impact on our strategic goals.

In Summary, the response from all constituents has been overwhelmingly positive with strong endorsements from key figures both within and outside the college. This collective support underscores the perceived need and potential impact of the soon to be established Division of DPH. This division will significantly advance our mission and strategic goals by enhancing our focus on community health, improving administrative efficiency, and fostering collaboration across academic units. It also will strengthen the CoD's ability to improve community-based education, establish residency and graduate programs in DPH, and better integrate public health issues into our decision-making processes.

We look forward to your approval and support for this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Carroll Ann Trotman, B.D.S., M.A., M.S.
Dean and Professor
College of Dentistry

From: [Smith, Randy](#)
To: [Zadnik, Karla](#)
Cc: [Reed, Katie](#)
Subject: RE: Division of Dental Public Health
Date: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 2:04:52 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Karla,

Thank you.

Randy



W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

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Assisted by:

Katie Reed

Executive Assistant

From: Zadnik, Karla <zadnik.4@osu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, January 15, 2025 1:34 PM
To: Smith, Randy <smith.70@osu.edu>
Cc: Reed, Katie <reed.901@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Division of Dental Public Health

Dera Randy—

Yes. I consulted with Amy Ferketich, our Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, and we're all in!

--Karla



Karla Zadnik, OD, PhD, Glenn A. Fry Professor in Optometry and Physiological Optics
The Ohio State University

Interim Dean

College of Public Health

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From: Smith, Randy <smith.70@osu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 11:58 AM
To: Zadnik, Karla <zadnik.4@osu.edu>
Cc: Reed, Katie <reed.901@osu.edu>
Subject: FW: Division of Dental Public Health

Karla,

I plan to take this to CAA as an informational item.

Just confirming that you are still supportive – given the title.

Randy



W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

Office of Academic Affairs

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Assisted by:

Katie Reed

Executive Assistant

From: Trotman, Carroll Ann <trotman.13@osu.edu>
Sent: Sunday, January 12, 2025 1:57 PM
To: Smith, Randy <smith.70@osu.edu>
Subject: Fw: Division of Dental Public Health

Dear Randy,

Happy New Year!!! Just sending this to you again. Is this close to being approved?

Kind regards,

Carroll Ann



Carroll Ann Trotman, B.D.S., M.A., M.S.

Dean and Professor

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From: Trotman, Carroll Ann
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2024 1:33 PM
To: Smith, Randy <smith.70@osu.edu>
Cc: Trotman, Carroll Ann <trotman.13@osu.edu>
Subject: Division of Dental Public Health

Dear Randy,

I hope all is well with you. I have attached the letter that details the request to form a Division of Dental Public Health within the College of Dentistry.

Please take a look and let me know if there is anything that I need to add or edit.

Kind regards,

Carroll Ann



Dr. Carroll Ann Trotman

Dean and Professor

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

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