MEMORANDUM

TO: IUPUI Faculty Council  
Faculty/Staff of the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health

FROM: Nasser Paydar, Chancellor

DATE: August 31, 2020

RE: Administrative Review, Dean of the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, Paul Halverson

This memo summarizes the report of the Administrative Review Committee on the Founding Dean of the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, Paul Halverson.

Rafael Bahamonde, Dean of the School of Health & Human Sciences, chaired the committee. Its faculty representatives from other schools were Ben Boukai, Chancellor’s Professor in the School of Science; Paul Edwards, Professor in the School of Dentistry; Gina Sanchez Gibau, Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion; Sara M. Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor in the Paul O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs; Lindsey Mayo, Associate Professor in the School of Medicine, and Paul Wallach, Executive Associate Dean in the School of Medicine. Faculty from the Fairbanks School of Public Health included Suzanne Babich, Professor and Associate Dean of Global Health, Sean Grant, Assistant Professor, Social and Behavioral Sciences; and Joshua Vest, Associate Professor, Health Policy and Management. Staff included Amanda Briggs, Director of Marketing and Communication. Student representatives were Anna Heilers and Christina Ria Dantam. The community representative was Virginia Caine.

To complete its work, the review committee considered a personal statement furnished by Dean Halverson and met with him to discuss his goals for the review. The committee also commissioned the Institutional Research and Decision Support office (IRDS) to conduct a survey of Public Health faculty and staff and a separate survey of current students. Survey feedback was augmented by responses to interviews conducted with students, alumni, staff and faculty and with IUPUI deans, administrators and community partners.

Among his greatest strengths is Dean Halverson’s effective strategic leadership for the School, helping to strategically guide its development of innovative new programs and initiatives and thus support its initial accreditation in 2015 and successful reaccreditation in 2020. He also is praised for his effective collaboration with the community on initiatives of mutual benefit, such as Project ECHO (Extension for Community HealthCare Outcomes), Opioid and Tobacco research, and most recently in helping our state to prepare for and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. He is perceived to be a very strong ambassador for the School and advocate for Public Health, more broadly, which has translated into high levels of visibility for FSPH and ultimately helped to secure strong rankings for the school and its programs. However, during the review process, some faculty and staff expressed concerns about Dean
Halverson's leadership style and his engagement in shared governance within the School, as well as his style of communicating with faculty and staff that was perceived to potentially weaken the collaborative environment within the school.

The review committee concluded that Dean Halverson possesses numerous strengths that have allowed him to make progress in specific areas at the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health:

- As Founding Dean, Dean Halverson successfully built a new School without inheriting existing infrastructure, policies, or a strategic plan. In a short time Dean Halverson established five functional departments, two Centers, and a Dean’s Office and developed many strong partnerships with the surrounding community.
- Dean Halverson’s focus on Global Health, interdisciplinary programs, community collaborations, and opportunities for student internships and research are considered highly innovative. Other Deans and campus leaders view Dean Halverson as a strong collaborator and good partner. He is considered very approachable, friendly and personable.
- Dean Halverson is very effective at promoting the School to both the public and to students and is perceived as being well connected in the field of Public Health. His strategic leadership has helped to ensure successful faculty recruitment and strong national rankings for the school and its programs.

The review also identified areas that could be targeted for improvement:

- Some faculty and staff expressed dissatisfaction with Dean Halverson’s style of leadership and his lack of transparency as a leader. He is encouraged to be more inclusive of all faculty voices, expanding his focus beyond those faculty that focus principally on externally-funded research. There was a recommendation that communication be more open, participatory and frequent, especially regarding fiscal matters in order to inspire and improve morale.
- Some constituents suggested that Dean Halverson balance his focus on external partnerships with a more pronounced internal focus. This should include engaging more often with faculty and staff and participating more fully in shared governance. While widely praised for his approachable, friendly nature, there was also a desire expressed that the Dean involve chairs, faculty and staff more significantly in decision making.
- Student respondents believe that there is a lack of student identity and do not feel a strong sense of community in the FSPH. Students would welcome the opportunity to hear directly from the Dean about what is happening in their school. Dean Halverson is encouraged to meet with students more frequently and take steps to ensure that students feel that they are vital constituents of the school’s community.
- Concerns were expressed regarding inequities across the school and the privileged status associated with staffing, resources and development activity at the expense of other areas in the school.
Overall, Dean Halverson should be commended for his strategic vision for the Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health, his advocacy for the School, and for his effective cultivation of external partnerships that are of benefit to our state. The School’s recent reaccreditation through the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) in 2020 with “no action required items” is a positive reflection of Dean Halverson’s leadership and the strong faculty and staff that he leads.