



Wisconsin Environmental Health Association, Incorporated



November 16, 2007

Todd Kostman, Ph.D.
Curriculum and Scheduling Committee Chair
Department of Biology and Microbiology
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
800 Algoma Blvd.
Oshkosh, WI 54901-8640

Dear Dr. Kostman:

This letter is in support of the development of environmental health degree programs at your University. At a time when more than ever, environmental health issues such as chronic diseases and disabilities, infectious and food borne illnesses, biological and chemical terrorism threaten Wisconsinites, we find ourselves with a severe shortage of environmental health professionals. In fact, a survey done in 2004 of all 462 Wisconsin registered sanitarians indicated that 42% planned to retired by 2014. Our situation is urgent. Our State's public health system will not be able to respond adequately to these threats without additional resources including continuing professional development courses, medical/environmental research, and especially degree programs to develop our workforce.

Universities are often unaware that standard biology and chemistry courses are not sufficient preparation for workers in the Environmental Health profession. Although offering biology and chemistry programs and degrees does support our professionals, it is paramount that the environmental health professional be able to tie these principals in with pubic health to manage risk and to provide prevention and control of disease or hazards that threaten human health. Dr. Kleinheinz's example in recent years has demonstrated the role universities can have in connecting academic learning to professional development in public health.

We urge you seize this opportunity to build on what Dr. Kleinheinz has begun, and more fully develop an Environmental Public Health Program at UW-Oshkosh. Public, private, and academic partnerships such as this, that represent the Wisconsin Idea truly bring home to Wisconsin citizens the important roles of our great universities. As partners, the Wisconsin Environmental Health Association will support your program in any way possible. Several professionals in your area, including myself, are willing to support by providing internships, job shadowing, presentations and teaching to strengthen connections to the profession. Throughout time, your prestigious University has operated a stellar nursing program, turning out outstanding nursing professionals in Wisconsin. Many of these "respond" to pubic health issues every day in their profession. We encourage you to help us in the front line battle of prevention as well.

Please give strong consideration to the formation of an Environmental Health Emphasis within the Microbiology major. If there is anything further that WEHA can do to help pave the road, please let us know. If there is anything I can do personally, please don't hesitate to contact me at the Waushara County Health Department at 1(920)787-6590.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Christopher A. Hinz'.

Christopher A. Hinz, R.S.
President, Wisconsin Environmental Health Association

PO BOX 8565 MADISON WI 53708-8565