

Executive Summary

In its 26th year, the Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) at the George Washington University stands firmly committed to advancing population health, well-being, and social justice locally and globally. Guided by this mission, GWSPH has consistently demonstrated a dedication to applying public health knowledge to enhance policy, practice, and management, solidifying its position among the most esteemed institutions in the nation. Additionally, the school has made significant strides in conducting rigorous, basic, applied, and translational research, contributing to the ongoing development of public health practices and policies worldwide.

Experiencing substantial growth over the past quarter century, GWSPH now boasts an alum network of more than 14,000 and more than 335 faculty members spanning seven distinguished academic units. With an impressive offering of more than 55 degree programs, the institution has secured a prestigious U.S. News and World Report national ranking of No. 12, bolstered by specific accolades such as the residential and online MHA programs' No. 8 nationwide ranking and the No. 7 ranking of the Department of Health Policy and Management. In part, GWSPH's collective achievements have propelled the George Washington University into the top echelon of premier educational institutions in North America. Notably, the recent induction into the Association of American Universities (AAU) is a powerful affirmation of the institution's enduring commitment to academic research excellence and its significant contributions to the field of public health. At the age of 26, we feel that we are just getting started on the path toward preeminence.

At the heart of its endeavors, GWSPH remains steadfast in its commitment to educating the next generation of public health leaders, policymakers, practitioners, scientists, advocates and managers. With an unwavering focus on nurturing a culture of intellectual curiosity and academic excellence, the school's faculty continue to inspire and empower students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to effect meaningful change in public health. Central to the school's growth and success has been the exceptional dedication of its faculty, whose diversity and remarkable achievements have further solidified the institution's academic standing. They lead in and outside of the classroom, serving in governmental and nongovernmental agencies, serving appointments in federal, state and local advisory bodies, advising members of Congress as well as state and local governments, and disseminating impactful research findings around the world.

This reaccreditation period began with a great surge of optimism buoyed by an ambitious and creative strategic planning process, capped by a strategic plan we adopted in AY2020. There was much that could not be foreseen at the time—not only the COVID-19 pandemic and how the pandemic called our faculty, students and staff to contribute many extra hours to teaching, technical assistance, advising, research and service, but also the new challenges to address racism, gun violence and the many deaths of despair that were beginning to erase years of progress in public health even prior to the pandemic. The strategic plan also could not anticipate several significant transitions on our campus, which included experiencing several leadership changes at GW.

Amid these challenges, the school exhibited resilience and adaptability, providing leadership to our campus in controlling COVID-19, converting research equipment to a COVID testing lab and establishing an effective surveillance system to keep all GW students, staff and faculty safe. GWSPH harnessed the power of public health but also academic technology to ensure the continuity and quality of the student experience. Its robust online learning and teaching capabilities have facilitated seamless transitions between residential and virtual learning environments and fostered a culture of academic innovation, positioning the institution at the forefront of online education in public health. In doing so, GWSPH also broke through a number of barriers that have impeded progress in the past. In the first three years of the pandemic, Dean Goldman was included as a member of the university executive decision-making body. Global Health Chair James Tielsch was elected chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the leader of all faculty across GW. Moreover, Dr. Tielsch co-chaired the GW

Presidential Search Committee that selected our current President, Dr. Ellen Granberg. This year, one of our fantastic GWSPH alums, Joseph Wright, MPH, was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award.

Building upon these successes, the school has embraced a culture of innovation in all that we do, particularly its online programs, with the MPH@GW and MHA@GW online models standing out as a testament to this achievement. These programs have yielded positive outcomes with high student and faculty satisfaction levels, demonstrating the comparability of online students and faculty to their residential counterparts. Notably, these online classes are wholly owned and led by the esteemed faculty of GWSPH, underscoring the institution's commitment to maintaining the same academic rigor and excellence in both online and residential settings.

Even during the pandemic, the school experienced substantial growth in its Interprofessional Education (IPE) initiatives, fostering meaningful domestic and international partnerships and opportunities for students to collaborate to address the greatest challenges facing public health. Over the last five years, this strategic expansion has enriched the academic experience and positioned the institution as a global leader in fostering collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to public health challenges.

While navigating the challenges of the pandemic and other significant stressors, the school successfully achieved nearly every goal outlined in its [strategic plan](#).

Research:

The overall research output at GWSPH continued to grow despite pandemic-related obstacles. Noteworthy achievements include steady growth in the quality and quantity of research, the development of new research entities focusing on critical public health issues, and a dynamic range of research activities, from laboratory work on antibiotic resistance and malaria prevention to initiatives addressing family planning in densely populated regions of Tanzania and Latin America. Under the guidance of dedicated faculty, GWSPH's research confronts urgent and complex global public health challenges.

Education:

GWSPH reached several important educational goals, including the establishment of the Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, the overhaul and development of an updated core for MPH programs, an increased number of joint degree programs, strengthened leadership and diversity in academic programs, and the successful development of new PhD programs. The introduction of a leadership-focused DrPH program, both on campus and online, demonstrates the school's commitment to expansion and growth, attracting a diverse cohort of students and solidifying the school's position as a leading advanced public health education provider.

Applied Public Health:

Despite pandemic headwinds, GWSPH enhanced its applied public health program.

Global Health:

GWSPH increased funding for research and leadership activities in global health, securing roles in prestigious organizations and welcoming new faculty contributing to research in COVID-19, nutrition, and child and maternal survival.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:

GWSPH made strides in fostering diversity, equity and inclusion, conducting online seminars on health disparities, establishing a standing GWSPH Diversity and Inclusion Action Committee, and launching the Office of Inclusive Excellence, Diversity and Justice in 2022. Inclusive excellence is a foundational element of GWSPH's identity, critical for future achievements.

Building an International Student Base:

All goals related to building an international student base were met and exceeded.

Enhancing Student Engagement and Access to Space:

Goals were generally met and exceeded, with exceptions during pandemic-related closures.

Increasing Scholarship Support:

While the goal was met, there is recognition that further improvement in this area is needed.

Increasing Student Services:

Similar to scholarship support, the goal was met, but areas for further improvement were identified.

Infrastructure Goals:

Success in building partnerships was achieved; however, erosions in staff support have affected institutional efficacy, and GWSPH is still recovering from these challenges.

The introduction of MicroMasters in the fall of 2023, not originally included in the strategic plan, has strengthened the institution's dedication to providing accessible and innovative educational opportunities. This pioneering initiative underscores the school's dedication to providing flexible and dynamic learning pathways that meet the diverse needs and aspirations of individuals in the public health field, including students, professionals and scholars.

Our distinguished faculty members drive research within their respective departments and collaborate extensively across more than 20 centers and institutes, spanning a vast network of more than 90 countries. Notably, we are No. 10 out of schools of public health in terms of "total grants and contracts,"¹ and our federally funded grants and contracts, paired with increasing levels of philanthropy, fuel an average annual investment of more than \$80 million. In FY 2023, GWSPH ranked among the top 10 schools of public health to receive NIH funding.²

As the only school of public health in the nation's capital, GWSPH students maximize the benefits of the location and proximity to influential institutions. With 539 residential undergraduate students and 2,084 master's and doctoral students, GWSPH provides distinct opportunities for students to collaborate and work alongside prestigious organizations such as the NIH and Congress, empowering them to utilize the resources and opportunities offered by Washington, DC. Upon graduation, GWSPH graduates move directly into the field or pursue further education, including through our own PhD and DrPH programs. Our graduates make an immediate impact in the organizations they select for employment, including federal, state and local public health agencies and departments, international and domestic nongovernmental organizations, health care organizations and delivery systems, as well as an array of organizations in the private sector.

At the core of the GWSPH's mission is an unwavering dedication to systematic and precise exploration, driving the revelation of the fundamental mechanics and root causes of disease and health disparities. This wealth of knowledge is then leveraged to craft, evaluate, and disseminate innovative strategies for treatment and prevention, ultimately revolutionizing the field of public health and public health outcomes.

¹ ASPPH, 2022

² Forbes, 2024

Looking ahead, the Milken Institute School of Public Health remains poised to continue its journey of transformative impact, guided by a vision of global leadership and a steadfast commitment to driving positive change in public health education and practice. Empowered by a foundation of excellence and fueled by a spirit of innovation, GWSPH is uniquely positioned to shape the future of public health on a global scale, fostering healthier and safer communities powered by public health.