

August 16, 2007

James Robinson, PhD  
Department Head, Department of Health Science  
College of Health and Social Services  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Dear Dr. Robinson:

It is with an enormous sense of professional and personal accomplishment that I present this letter and complementary documentation to you, as evidence of my efforts and commitment to seek tenure and promotion to the level of Associate Professor at New Mexico State University, in the Department of Health Science. My first five years at NMSU have been focused on addressing some of the diverse US/Mexico border health issues while remaining diligently involved in the effective preparation of new public health professionals who will work in, with, and for communities, to address many of the issues that impact the people and their health. In the information which follows you will review my successful annual performances, excellent teaching evaluations, demonstrated research activities as reflected in peer reviewed journal articles, and diverse service to the profession. Future projects include continuing my work with border health and environmental issues, and new projects, with NMSU colleagues, working with and for Navajos to address key health issues.

**Background, Experience and Career Goal**

My journey to NMSU came after 25 years of working predominately as an executive director in the non-profit sector, managing different health and human service agencies, and serving tribal health programs in the Southwest. In these programs I provided leadership while working with diverse populations, striving to obtain monies to start and maintain essential health and human services programs.

Before starting down the non-profit and tribal health paths, I served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia, South America, first with a malaria eradication program and later as an Assistant Clinic Administrator in a medium sized community, in coffee country. This service provided me with vast, life changing experiences, culturally, linguistically, and emotionally, setting the path for the rest of my professional life in community health.

The opportunity to work at a land grant institution on the US/Mexico border has allowed me to apply my experiences, education, bilingual language skills, and strong beliefs in the value of communities. Preparing the next generation to make positive impacts in their communities and with the agencies in which they will serve is invigorating, exciting, and motivating to me. I wish to continue this pursuit, in my research, teaching, and service components as my career continues to develop and mature at NMSU.

### NMSU Annual Performance Evaluations

Annually, I have compiled and submitted my accomplishments and activities. As can be noted below, each year I have exceeded the Departmental average in the scoring, with two years receiving scores of 100 and 104; the latter was the highest score ever given by the former Department Chair in his 8 years in that role. My scores have continually improved over the years.

Year	<b>Forster-Cox</b> Annual Performance Evaluations Scores (Out of 100 points possible)	Departmental Average Performance Evaluations (Out of 100 points possible)
2006	100	95
2005	104	85
2004	97.5	75
2003	95	87
2002	87	85
5 yr avg.	96.7	85.4

### Teaching

At NMSU, I have developed and taught 13 different courses: four graduate public health courses, six undergraduate community health courses, and three split level graduate/undergraduate courses. Three of the above referenced courses were for on-line delivery, two for the new on-line MPH program and one for the relatively new gerontology minor. In my face-to-face classes, I have developed strong WebCT components to complement classroom lectures, activities, and projects. Most semesters I have taught four courses (a 12 hour load), in addition to my service and research activities.

Teaching diverse students at NMSU about the public health and health education world is a personal and professional joy. Sharing information about the profession and allowing students to make the connections between information in a text, a theory, and the “real world” is what I strive for continually. Having come to academia after a long and diverse career I am readily able to apply what is presented in class to the work-a-day world, to all students. I present examples of various program successes, failures, and challenges to students. These “real world” experiences not only complement other course materials, but also support my teaching efforts by providing interesting examples that students can remember and later apply. In all my classes I present the following core concepts: 1) the importance of developing and using strong, clear written and verbal communication skills; 2) respecting others; 3) the importance of giving to your community through volunteerism; and 4) living and working in an ethical manner.

Since I began at NMSU, I have received exceptionally favorable teaching evaluations from my students. As shown below, my average evaluation score exceeds the Department average for each of the five years I have taught at NMSU.

#### Annual Average Teaching Evaluation Scores

Year	<b>Forster-Cox</b> Annual Average Teaching Evaluations (Out of 5.0 points possible)	Departmental Annual Average Teaching Evaluations (Out of 5.0 points possible)
2006	4.6	4.3
2005	4.8	4.6
2004	4.8	4.3
2003	4.8	4.3
2002	4.6	4.3

5 yr avg.	4.7	4.3
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In 2006 I was awarded the Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award. This teaching honor, awarded to one faculty member in each college annually, is based on information gathered from students and recommendations from department heads, deans, and provosts.

I have also been active as an educator outside of the classroom. Since 2004 I have served as the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. In 2005, I began as the sole faculty member who oversees all undergraduate field experience placements. To date, I have supervised 70 undergraduate and 10 Masters students in their community field experience settings. Since 2002, I have served as a faculty co-advisor for the NMSU Eta Sigma Gamma, Beta Omega Chapter of the National Professional Health Education Honorary Society. In all my roles, I encourage students to take the Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) exam, as a necessary, specialized step into the profession, when completing their Bachelor of Community Health or Master of Public Health degree.

To date, I have served on 10 MPH thesis committees (two as chair), 26 non-thesis MPH Final Examination committees (17 as chair), and one PhD committee, as the Border Health minor representative. Annually, I serve as the Dean’s Representative on approximately 10-15 committees, primarily in the Schools of Nursing and Social Work, at both the Las Cruces and Albuquerque campuses. At any given time, I serve as an advisor for 10-12 MPH students as they move through the program.

To continually enhance my classroom planning, development, presentation, and evaluation methods, I have been an active member of the NMSU Teaching Academy. Membership is based on participation, with Distinguished Membership as the highest level, requiring 30 hours of participation within one academic year. In 2005-2006 I attained Distinguished Member standing and in 2003-2004 and 2006-2007, Sustaining Member. In 2003 I participated in the Team Mentoring project through the Teaching Academy, identified a mentor, and began to learn of the NMSU tenure and promotion process. Beginning in 2006, I became a member of the National Science Foundation (NSF)-ADVANCE Faculty Mentoring Program and have regularly worked with my mentor in that program; concurrently I serve as a mentor to a newer junior faculty member on campus through this same program.

**Research and Scholarly Activities**

My research efforts reflect my diverse community experiences working in rural, tribal, and international communities before coming to NMSU. Presently my two major areas of interest and activity is the supporting of youth as they complete high school and segue into the university to complete health careers and environmental health and home safety issues along the US/Mexico border. To date my research and scholarly activities have resulted in 7 published articles, serving as the Co-Principal Investigator of one federal \$885,000 grant, and participating in 9 conference presentations.

My research efforts with the Southern Area Health Education Center (SoAHEC) have focused on pipe-line development (supporting students’ pathways in education prior to their health professions training) and environmental health issues, specifically in the border region. For the years of 2002-2006, I served as the Co-Principal Investigator for the Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP), a Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) funded program that received \$885,000 for 3 years. The program invited youth, primarily from rural Southern NM communities and selected reservations, to participate in a year long enrichment program followed by a 6-week campus based academic program. The goal was to encourage students to attend the university, help them pursue health careers, and ideally, return to their communities and to share their new knowledge and skills. The work from this program generated one publication, in which I was first author, and three presentations at international, national, and regional professional meetings. From an evaluation

completed of this program, the HCOP students graduated high school and entered college at twice the rate of other NM youth.

My other research activities have addressed a variety of US/Mexico border issues, most prominently environmental health and home safety, working with the SoAHEC team. To a lesser extent, I have worked on issues of water availability and border youth and their tobacco use. My efforts in these areas have resulted in five published articles; I have served as first, third, sixth, and twice as fourth author.

An additional published article and one manuscript under review have evolved from my work with graduate students. An article developed with an agriculture doctoral student as we explored the reintroduction of family gardening on the Navajo reservation to provide a fresh food source and some physical activity to help address the diabetes problem. With another project, I mentored an MPH thesis student in her study of Body Mass Index of more than 1400 NM kindergarten children. This research established a baseline for this age group for the state. One manuscript is under review from this research with the Californian Journal of Health Promotion. A second manuscript is nearing completion and will be submitted to the American Journal of School Health for review. I was second author for the article and both manuscripts.

Future research and scholarly efforts will include my continued work with the environmental health and home safety project through SoAHEC. In addition, I am developing a joint proposal with a faculty member in the NMSU College of Agriculture to secure funding to start some community gardens on the Navajo reservation, and am partnering with a NMSU School of Nursing faculty member on an NIH grant to address Vitamin D, obesity, and type 2 diabetes in Navajo people.

### **Service and Leadership**

A highlight of my community service activities is my significant role in the development and present management of a Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program for the College. This program, one of approximately 40 in the nation, specifically recruits Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) into masters programs within the College: Public Health (MPH), Social Work (MSW), the new joint MSW/MPH degree, and Nursing (MSN). Beginning in 2003 with one Fellow, the program now has 10 or more Fellows annually, allowing RPCVs who have served in many different countries throughout the world to bring their experiences into classrooms. All this has been accomplished with no funding. In my current role, I serve as a mentor to all Fellows as they move through their academic programs. The previous Department Head of the Health Science Program informed me that the Fellows program was the most effective recruitment tool for the MPH Program.

In 2006, in my role as the Undergraduate Coordinator, I served as the primary Department contact/liaison for our Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) and the American Association for Health Education (AAHE) (SABPAC) program reapproval. The enormous time and effort invested in this activity led to a successful re-approval through 2011. Our program is only one of three nationally that has both the undergraduate SABPAC approval and graduate Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation. The excellent experience I gained in the SABPAC reapproval process was beneficial to me when I served as one of three reviewers of the State University of New York (SUNY) Potsdam Health Education program in 2007.

After earning my Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) in 1992, I began to serve as a reviewer on the New Mexico CHES Continuing Education Approval Committee in 1994, which is housed in the NMSU Department of Health Science. I assumed the Chairperson role of the Committee in the summer of 2007.

I have served as a proposal reviewer for two federal agencies, the Indian Health Service (IHS) since 1990 and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 2000. These service responsibilities allow me to support my profession while continually enhancing my grant writing and reviewing skills.

Since 2003 I have served as the Treasurer of the Paso Del Norte Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) chapter. This chapter encompasses the US/Mexico border region, including Las Cruces, El Paso, and Juárez, Mexico. Other roles and responsibilities I have across the state and nation include W.F. Rosenblatt Scholarship Award Committee for the New Mexico Public Health Association, Dona Ana Community College - Associate in Public Health Advisory Board, American Public Health Association - CHES Peer Reviewer, and a reviewer for three professional journals: *Health Promotion Practice*, *International Electronic Journal of Health Education*, and *Rural and Remote Health*.

Within NMSU, I sit on two University committees: the Teaching Academy Advisory Board and the NMSU Review Board for Faculty Salary Increases and Performance Evaluation Board. Presently, I am on four different College of Health and Social Service (CHSS) committees: the CHSS Advocate Council, Southwest Center on Aging, CHSS Research Committee (Chair, 2006-2007), and the CHSS Faculty Affairs Committee. Ongoing committees within the Department include: Associate in Public Health Liaison with the Dona Ana Community College and Dine College in northern NM, Bachelor of Community Health (BCH) Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Eta Sigma Gamma, Co-Faculty Advisor, Outcomes Assessment Committee Member, BCH Oversight Committee, Undergraduate Field Experience Coordinator, Field Experience Presentation Coordinator, and the NM CHES Continuing Education Approval Committee (Chair, beginning summer 2007).

Since 1994, I have served as a volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Mexico. For 12 years I served as a Board member holding diverse positions, including Board President for 6 years. For 13 years I have traveled the state, serving as a Wish Grant trainer. In 2007 the Foundation celebrates the granting of 1000 wishes in NM; I have participated in the granting of more than 200 of these wishes to special NM children. The importance of serving my community is a role I take very seriously and one which I continually share with students, reminding them of our lifelong responsibility to provide charitable service to others.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Forster-Cox, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor