

Evaluation of a Master of Public Health Integrated Core Curriculum: Generating Evidence to Inform Future Course Implementation

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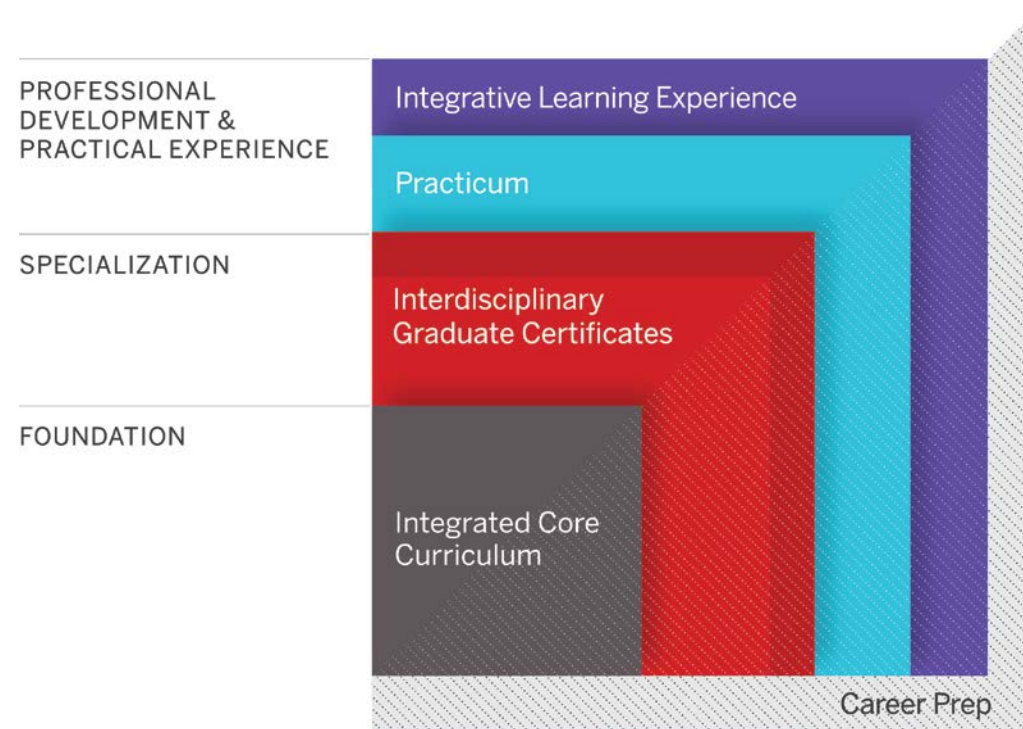
Assessment Mini-Grant: “SPH Travel Grant to the 2017 Annual Conference of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE)”

Outline

- BU MPH Curriculum Evaluation
- First Step: Integrated Core Course Evaluation
- Evaluation Plan (questions, logic model, and plan)
- Results
- Course Revisions
- Lessons Learned
- Next Steps

The BU MPH

Interdisciplinary training in population health



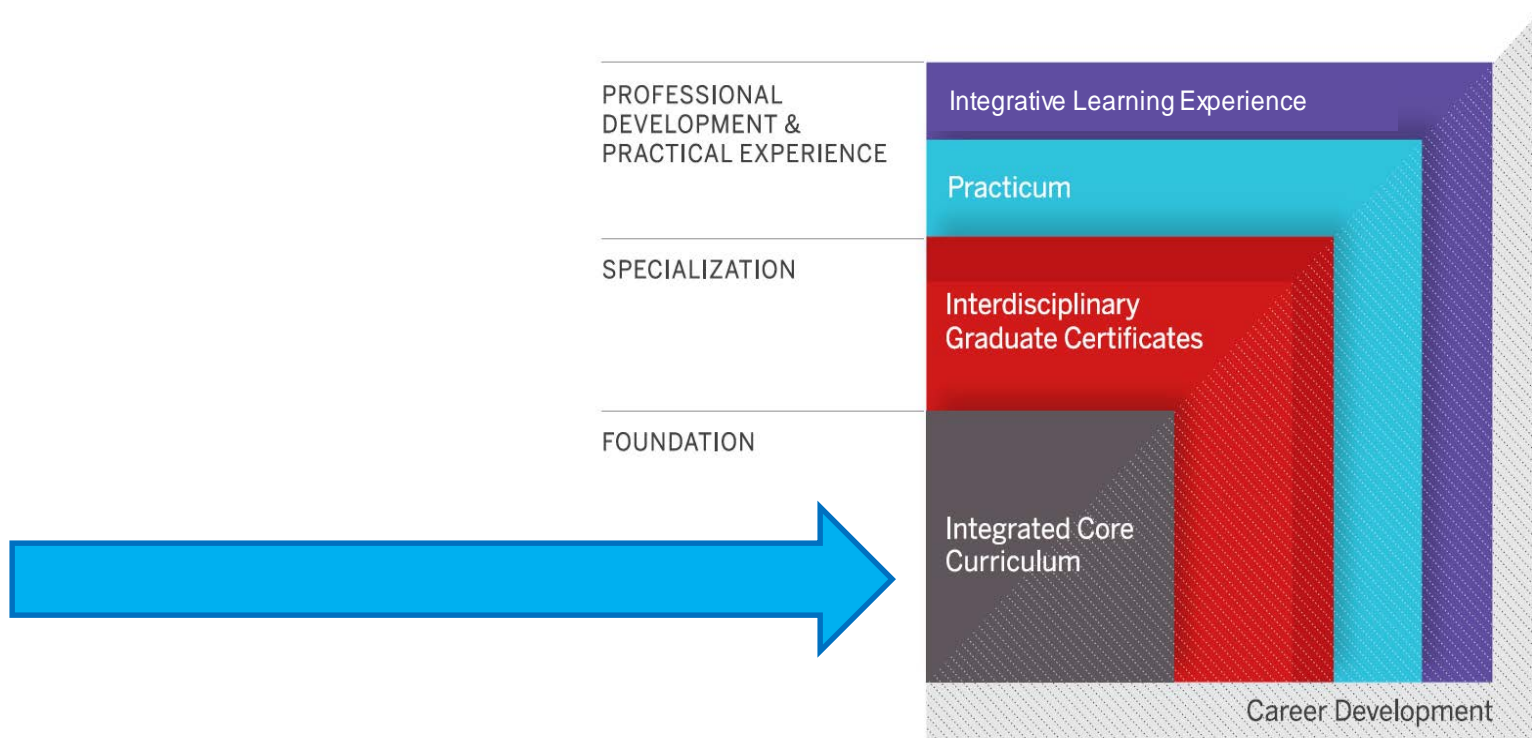
BU MPH Curriculum Evaluation

- Why evaluate the BU MPH?
 - Determine program impact
 - Inform decision-making
 - Ensure accountability
 - Produce evidence to serve multiple purposes
 - Create a collective community at BU SPH
- Engage stakeholders in each step
- Evaluation activities answer evaluation questions, which are developed based on a logic model

Evaluation Plan – Timeline

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES BY CURRICULAR COMPONENT	SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (in Months)																																										
	2016												2017																														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec																			
General Evaluation Activities																																											
Engage stakeholders in evaluation design and tool development	■																																										
Finalize EES Charge and Membership				■																																							
Disseminate results of evaluation to stakeholders	■																																										
COMPONENT 1: Integrated Core Curriculum																																											
Spring 2016 Cohort - Pilot Evaluation																																											
Administer Surveys (pre-course, post-course, follow-up)	●				●					●																																	
Conduct focus groups with students										●																																	
Dissemination of results (conferences, SPH Administration, faculty/staff)										●																																	
Fall 2016 Cohort - Full-Scale Evaluation																																											
Administer Surveys (pre-course, post-course, follow-up)																																											
Conduct focus groups with students																																											
Dissemination of results (conferences, SPH Administration, faculty/staff)																																											
Instructor evaluation activities (focus groups, interviews, document course revisions)																																											
Fall 2017 Cohort - Full-Scale Evaluation (cont.)																																											
Administer Surveys (pre-course, post-course, follow-up)																																											
Continue Integrated Core Course evaluation activities																																											
COMPONENT 2: Certificates																																											
Planning Phase																																											
Redesign and pre-test BU SPH course evaluations																																											
Develop evaluation plan and data collection tools																																											
Evaluation Phase																																											
Implement Certificate evaluation plan																																											
Implement new BU SPH course evaluations																																											
COMPONENT 3: Practicum																																											
Planning Phase																																											
Redesign practicum forms and tools																																											
Evaluation Phase																																											
Implement Practicum evaluation plan																																											
COMPONENT 4: Integrative Learning Experience																																											
Planning Phase																																											
Design ILE forms and tools (i.e., "course" evaluation, grading rubrics, reflection questions)																																											
Evaluation Phase																																											
Implement Integrative Learning Experience evaluation plan																																											
COMPONENT 5: Career P.R.E.P.																																											
Spring 2017 Course																																											
Administer Surveys (pre-course, post-course, follow-up)																																											
Conduct focus groups with students																																											
Fall 2017 Course																																											
Administer Surveys (pre-course, post-course, follow-up)																																											
Evaluate new online Career P.R.E.P.																																											

First Step: Integrated Core Course Evaluation



Integrated Core Curriculum (ICC)

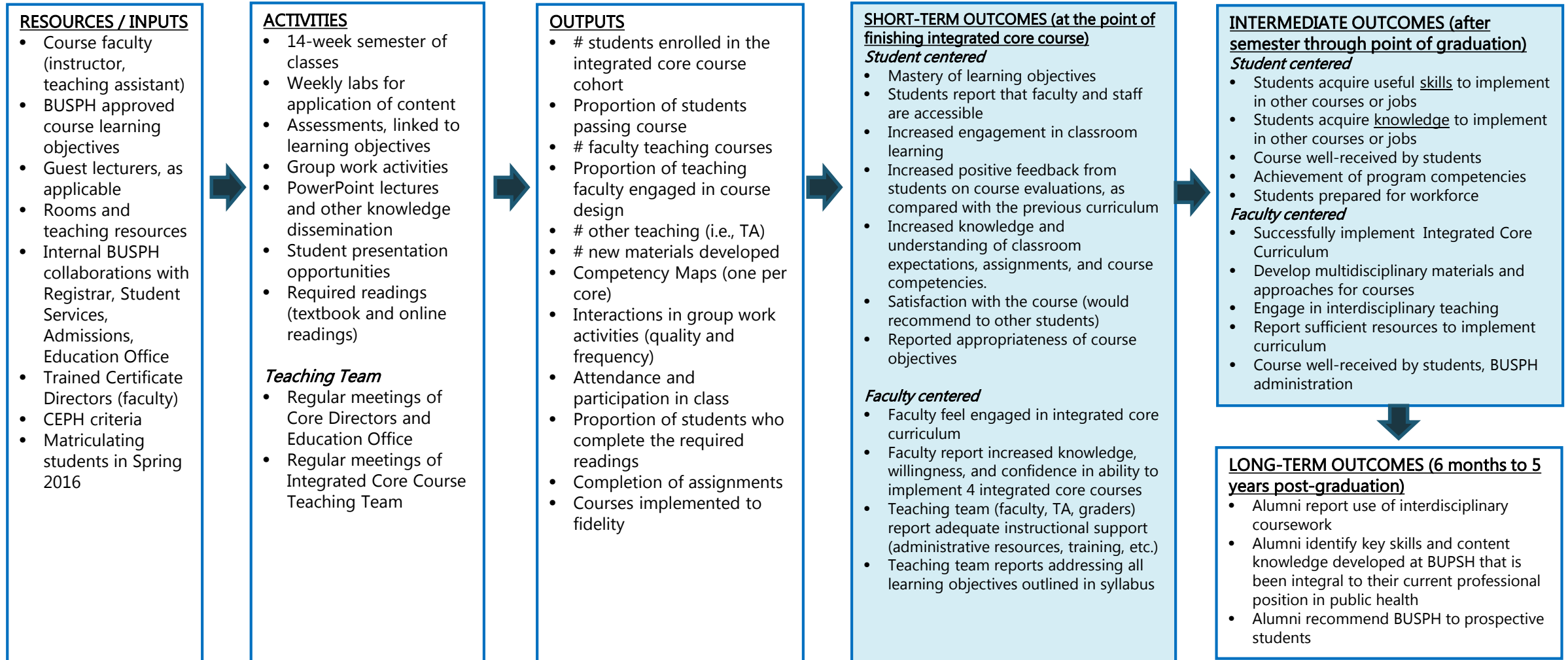
Strong foundation across spectrum of disciplines

- Quantitative methods for public health
- Individual, community and population health
- Health systems, law and policy
- Leadership and management in public health

ICC: Activities to Date

- Spring 2016 Cohort – Pilot Evaluation (16 students, 7 faculty, 4 TAs)
 - Implementation challenges (student perspective)
 - Competency achievement (unrelated to certificates)
- Fall 2016 Cohort – Full Scale Evaluation (350 students, 24 faculty, 30 TAs)
 - Implementation challenges (student and faculty perspectives)
 - Competency achievement and applicability to certificates
 - Faculty-centered outcomes (i.e., resources, course implementation, etc.)
- Fall 2017 Cohort – Full Scale Evaluation (403 students, 30 faculty, 50 TAs)
- Evaluation on each cohort uses mixed methods approach
 - Pre-course, post-course, and follow-up course surveys
 - Follow-up course focus groups
 - Students – 6 focus groups, 34 attendees (facilitated by BUSPH Evaluation Team)
 - Faculty – 4 focus groups, 20 attendees (facilitated by external consultant)
 - Teaching Assistants – 2 focus groups, 9 attendees (facilitated by BUSPH Evaluation Team)

Evaluation Plan: Integrated Core Logic Model



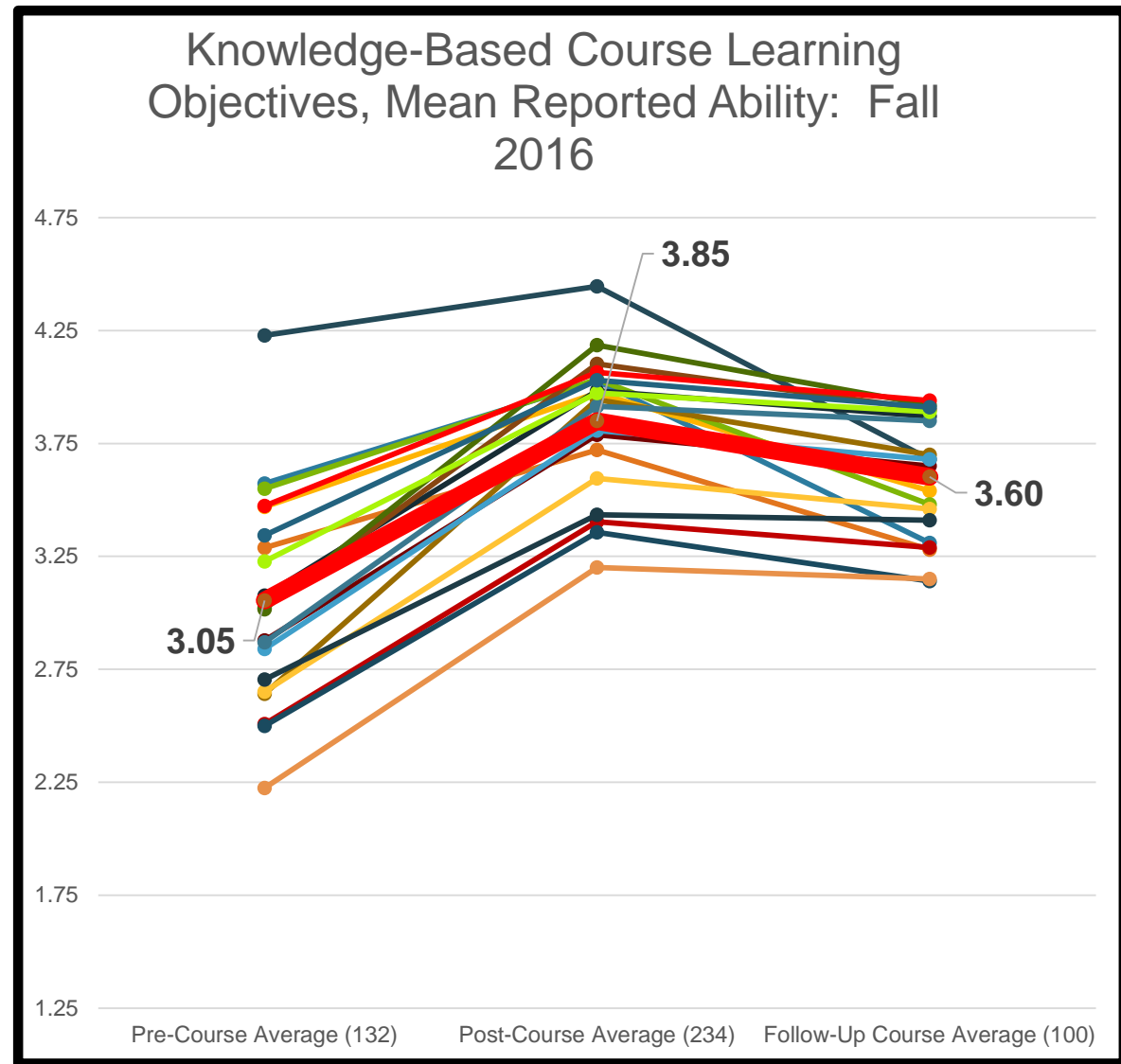
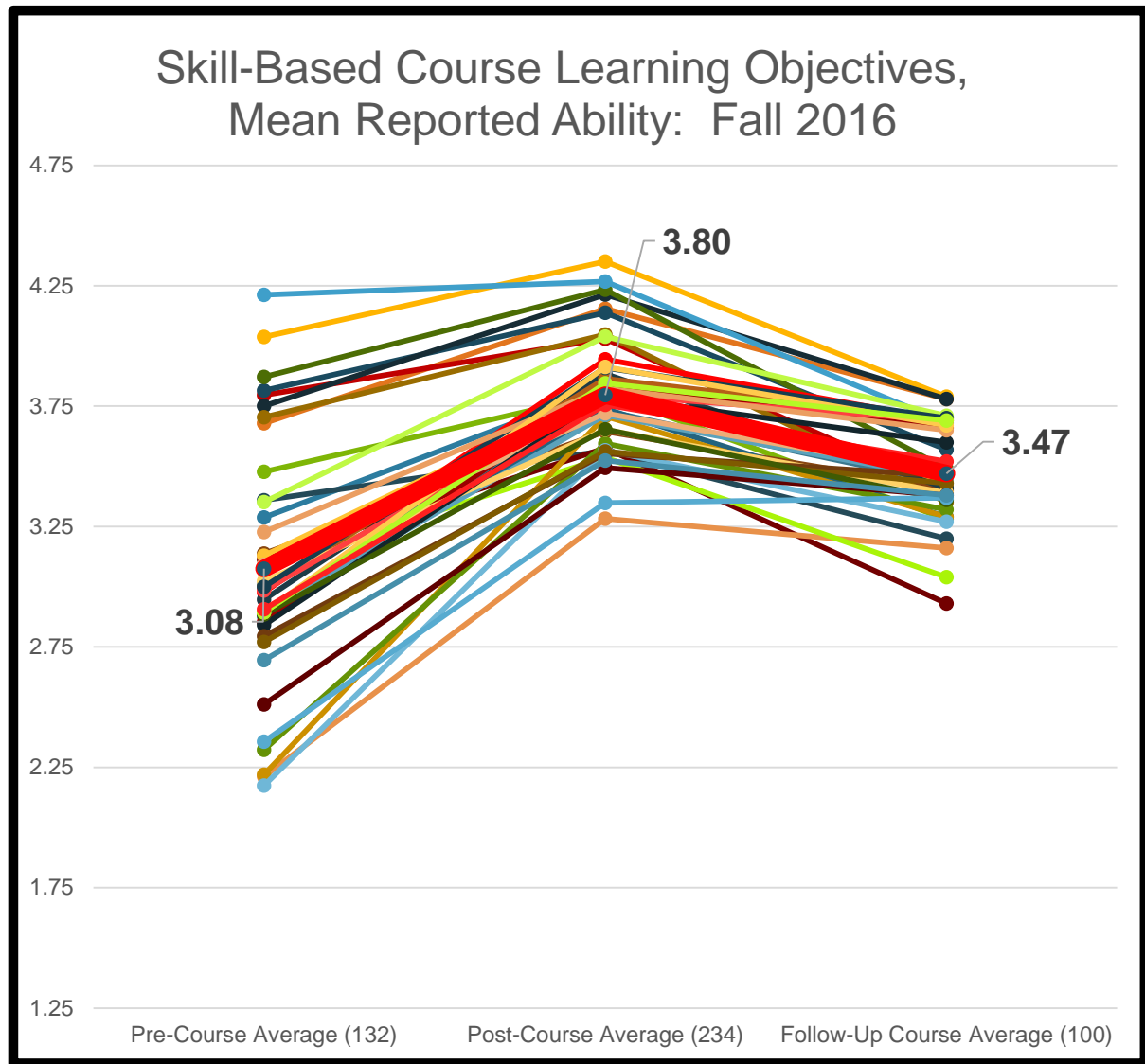
Evaluation Methods

Assessments in Fall 2016 and 2017 Full-Scale Implementation

Faculty	Student
Document review (i.e., syllabus)	Pre-course, post-course, and follow-up survey
Regular meetings*	Mid-semester survey (standardized)*
Key informant interviews	BU SPH Course Evaluations
Time tracking*	Key informant interviews
In-class observations*	Student focus group
Focus groups	School Survey

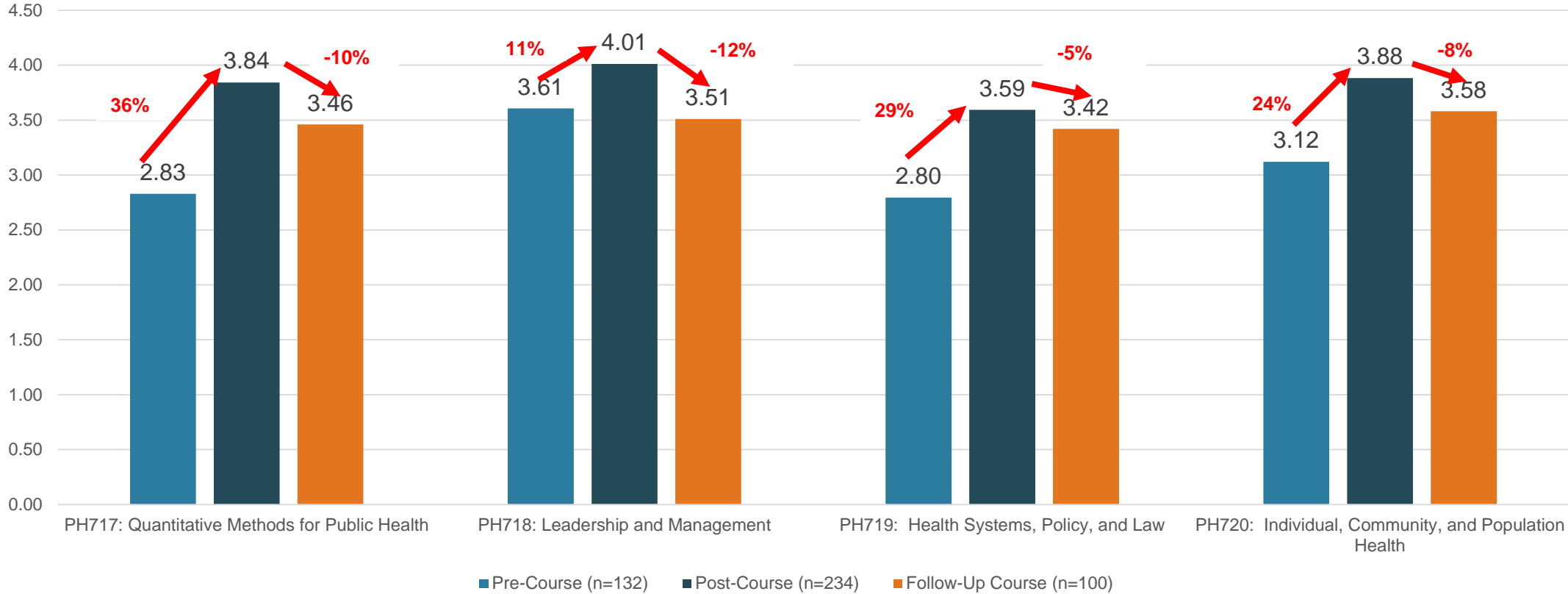
*Activities not conducted in Fall 2016 or 2017 evaluation but planned for Fall 2018 evaluation.

Results: Student Outcomes – Skills and Knowledge Fall 2016



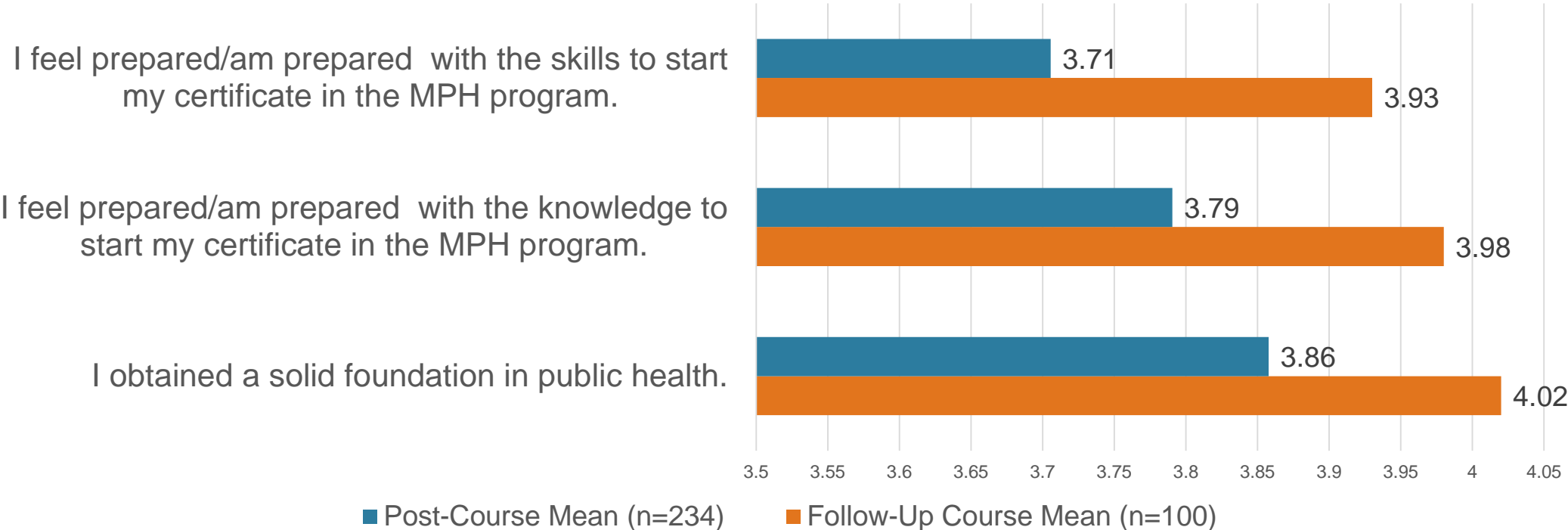
Results: Student Outcomes – Skills and Knowledge by Core Course: Fall 2016

Knowledge and Skill Competencies Addressed by Each Integrated Core Course, Average Rating Fall 2016



Results: Student Outcomes – Preparedness at Follow-Up: Fall 2016

Perceived Preparedness: Knowledge and Skills, Post-Course and Follow-Up



ICC Results: Focus Group Themes (Students)

- Academic Experience
 - Class size (some classes worked better in a larger setting and others in a smaller one)
 - Grading (inconsistencies across cohorts for the same course)
 - Pace (lack of communication across core instructors within a cohort led to confusion)
- Academic Support
 - More support needed for certain curricular components, part-time students
 - Cohort structure provided both benefits and challenges
 - Writing center a huge benefit
- ICC Content
 - Lacking depth in some areas, good foundation for rest of degree
 - Skill acquisition viewed favorably, want more opportunities (if not used, lose the ability)
 - General positive perspectives on certificate readiness

ICC Results: Focus Group Themes (Faculty)

- Implementation Barriers
 - A lot of material to cover
 - Class size impacted pedagogy used (i.e., active learning opportunities minimal)
 - Communication and coordination across core courses lacking
 - Lab timing and content not optimal
 - Time concerns related to preparation before and during the semester
- Implementation Facilitators
 - Benefit of having Core Directors (support, coordination, advice)
 - Teaching Assistants, though lead TAs were recommended
 - Teamwork, interdisciplinary support, and peer learning opportunities were benefits
- ICC Content
 - Agreement with Student Focus Group results
 - Integration across core courses lacking
 - Doubts about students' preparedness for certificates

Course Revisions: Using the Evaluation for Fall 2017

COURSE	REVISIONS
Quantitative methods for public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Updating learning objectives▪ Incorporating more programming review sessions for R▪ Clarifying student expectations around TA sessions
Individual, community and population health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Updated team project grading▪ Standardizing TA feedback on written assignments▪ Adding required lab session on the writing style of ICPH-specific assessments
Health systems, law and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Adding optional revision process to policy memo assessment▪ Providing more in-depth feedback on policy paper▪ Adding more exam style assessments in order to give students feedback earlier in the semester
Leadership and management in public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Adding more graded individual assignments▪ Including more guidance around team project and grading▪ Adding 1 hour didactic session on public speaking before presentation▪ Training TAs in discussion facilitation and working with troubled teams

Lessons Learned (and How We Will Apply Them)

- Educational evaluations are a useful exercise in ensuring curriculum is implemented as intended and expected outcomes are achieved
 - Process findings can be incorporated now and in the future
 - Outcomes tracked into later semesters allows for conclusions on application
- Engagement of stakeholder groups (i.e., students, faculty) provides a more comprehensive picture of effectiveness
- Don't underestimate the importance of both quantitative and qualitative data
 - Qualitative information helps explain quantitative findings
- Ongoing follow-up is important to understand long-term impacts of curriculum

Thank you!

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