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Professor and Chair

Report of Annual Evaluation Conference: Assistant Professor Benjamin Meier

On Wednesday, May 4, Assistant Professor Ben Meier and I met for his annual evaluation conference as an untenured faculty member. This evaluation is not an indication of the likelihood of a positive or negative recommendation regarding tenure, but rather is a summary assessment of the activities in which the faculty member been engaged for the past year and a discussion of his plans and aspirations for the coming year. A written summary of the conference is placed in the faculty member's file. In addition, a copy is sent to the faculty member, who may write a response to the file if he/she so wishes.

Dr. Meier joined the faculty in Fall 2009 after completing his Ph.D. in Sociomedical Sciences in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, with a concentration in Comparative Political Science and Public Health. He previously earned the B.A. degree with distinction in Biochemistry from Cornell University in 1998; the Juris Doctor degree *cum laude* from Cornell Law School in 2001; and the Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International and Comparative Law from the Institute of International and Comparative Law at Université de Paris I and Cornell Law School, also *cum laude* in May 2001, with a concentration in Human Rights. His professional experience includes three years' experience as Public Health Law Manager of the Center for Health Policy at Columbia University; a research assistantship on World Bank issues in economic development and public health with Nobel laureate Professor Joseph Stiglitz; and significant summer positions in the Office of Policy Development of the U.S. Department of Justice; with the American Refugee Committee in Bosnia and Herzegovina, representing victims of human rights abuses on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and as Legal Office Fellow with the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, where he drafted memoranda on comparative law and public health issues related to ratification and implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Since September 2008 he also has been a Scholar of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at the Georgetown University Law Center. At UNC he also is a Faculty Fellow of the Center for AIDS Research, Institute for Global Health and Infectious Disease, and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management, Gillings School of Global Public Health; his recruitment to UNC was in fact made possible in part by support from the IGHID and CFAR.

During 2010-11, Professor Meier has published 7 scholarly articles and 3 scholarly book chapters, all but one of them as first author. Two of his articles were accepted by *Health and Human Rights*, the leading journal in that field, as well as others by the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, *Case Western Reserve Law Review*, *Stanford Journal of International Law*, and the *Hastings Center Reports*, as well as one by the *North Carolina Medical Journal* (the latter also was co-authored by one of our Public Policy students). He also has 7 additional manuscripts under development, two of them submitted (*Social History of Medicine* and *PloS ONE*), one under review by Sage, and others in progress; two of these also

are in collaboration with Public Policy students and one with a postdoc. In addition, he is active in four funded research projects, all related to the core themes of health and human rights but addressing these in several manifestations including health research in Kenya, health decision-making in South Africa, HIV/AIDS, human rights to potable water, and a larger continuing project to develop a health and human rights database in collaboration with colleagues at Georgetown Law Center.

Professor Meier has presented his work in 6 on-campus lectures and 16 national and international venues during the year, three of them also jointly with Carolina students; among other venues, he has presented papers to the World Health Organization, the APHA annual research conference (2x), Yale, Cornell, Columbia, American University, the University of Toronto, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, and topical conferences in Nairobi and Vienna.

In teaching, Professor Meier continues to teach our undergraduate core course in Justice in Public Policy (PLCY 340) each semester, as well as new courses in Global Health Policy (PLCY 565) and Health and Human Rights (PLCY 570). He also has directed one undergraduate honors thesis (in Global Studies), and 1 graduate and 2 undergraduate independent studies. His teaching evaluations have been exceptional, leading to his selection not only for the departmental Best Teacher Award initiated by the Public Policy students, but also for the highly competitive William C. Friday / Class of 1986 university-wide award for excellence in teaching, a high honor especially after only three semesters on the UNC faculty.

In Fall 2011 Professor Meier will be on research and study assignment, which he intends to use to pursue several projects including the health and human rights database, accountability for women's and children's health, human rights and HIV/AIDS policy, and the "water wisdom" project with the new UNC Global Water Institute; he will teach PLCY 340 and 575 in the spring semester as usual, as well as serve as a reader for at least two undergraduate honors theses.

Professor Meier would like to stabilize enrollments in PLCY 340 at 50-60 rather than 75 students; one way of achieving this might be to have it offered also by a graduate teaching fellow during the summer session, although as his own reputation for excellence in teaching continues to spread he probably will always face more demand than is optimal for his pedagogy: he will need simply to set limits and enrollment priorities to assure particularly that all majors who need the course can find spaces, as well as finding room for other students somewhat selectively whom he would like to teach.

We also discussed several aspects of his vision for his research program trajectory looking forward. One is his desire to pare down and focus the range of his research topics somewhat, and to develop policy-relevant research that would be published in public policy journals as well as law journals; perhaps in conjunction with continuing to explore the potential to conduct research through the department's Carolina Institute of Public Policy as that institute continues to develop. A second is his desire to begin reaching out more actively to the larger Triangle community of global health experts, including for instance RTI, INTRAH, FHI and other organizations that are engaged in this work full time. And a third, and perhaps most fundamental, is a desire to gradually shift the focus of his research from a specific focus on health and human rights to the broader range of important questions in global health policy.

All of these seem to me appropriate directions for his further development, and I encouraged them.

In the course of this evaluation I also consulted with senior staff of the Institute for Global Health and Infectious Disease, with which Dr. Meier is also affiliated and who contributed significantly to his recruitment. They also continue to be highly enthusiastic in their assessment of Dr. Meier's development as a research scholar and colleague.

In short, Professor Meier has had a highly productive and rewarding year both in research and teaching, including an exceptionally high university-wide honor for his excellence in teaching, and he continues to increase his visibility both nationally and internationally as a respected scholarly voice on health and human rights policy and on global health more generally. He also has continued to develop as an active and valued colleague in the department, and an organizer of more active intellectual interchange among students and faculty. We have every hope that he will continue to develop as an outstanding scholar and teacher in this department.

Richard N. L. Andrews
Professor and Chair

CC: Professor Meier