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ARTS & SCIENCES

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June 1, 2010

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Professor and Chair

Report of Annual Evaluation Conference: Assistant Professor Benjamin Meier

On Friday, April 30, 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 2009-10, his first year on our faculty, Dr. Meier had two papers published in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, and seven more papers accepted for publication, all forthcoming in 2010: one in *Health and Human Rights*, two in law journals (*Stanford Journal of International Law* and *Case Western Reserve Law Review*), one in the *Hastings Center Reports*, and three in scholarly books on rights-based approaches to public health and on global health and human rights respectively. He also gave eight scholarly presentations on his work to national or international audiences, including two major international conferences in New York and Vietnam, the national meeting of the American

Public Health Association, a radio interview, and three academic conferences at other universities; and he gave six presentations to UNC campus-wide and professional-school audiences as well as the department.

He is currently working on five additional manuscripts aimed at publication in *Global Health Governance*, *American Journal of Public Health*, *Global Public Health*, the *North Carolina Medical Journal*, and another journal TBD; he is scheduled to give three additional presentations to international audiences this summer and four more to national audiences during the 2010-11 academic year, including CDC and the APHA annual meeting; and he is completing evaluations of clinical research approval policies for Rwanda, Kenya and Zambia. Over the longer term, in addition to his research agenda he would like to organize a major conference in Health and Human Rights at UNC focused on translating international law into national policy; and to position himself to play a significant role in celebrating of the occupational health and human rights role of the International Labor Organization during its 100th anniversary celebration in 2019.

His teaching portfolio in 2009-10 included teaching the department's undergraduate core course in Ethics and Public Policy (PLCY 240) both fall and spring semesters, plus designing and teaching a new spring semester course on global health policy (PLCY 575); he also mentored three undergraduate and two graduate independent study projects, and one undergraduate Honors thesis which was awarded the department's Best Thesis Award in May 2010. In 2010-11 he will continue to offer these three courses plus designing and teaching a new topical course for both graduate and undergraduate students in Health and Human Rights (PLCY 570), and will mentor two undergraduate Honors theses. In Fall 2011 he plans to request his pre-tenure Research and Study Leave.

Dr. Meier's course evaluations for Fall 2009 were consistently outstanding and well above the departmental average, which is itself very positive; 22 of 29 students in his fall course on Ethics and Public Policy rated him as deserving of a teaching award, with numerous enthusiastic specific comments as well. Course evaluations for Spring 2010 are not yet available. It is also worth noting that Professor Meier has become immediately active in involving both graduate and undergraduate students in collaborative research, encouraging them to create publishable work themselves, and including them frequently as second authors on publications.

Dr. Meier received a major honor in being selected to serve as Ph.D. Convocation speaker at Columbia University's commencement in May 2010. In professional service, he is a member of the APHA Governing Council and APHA's International Human Rights Committee, the Health Equity and Social Justice Leadership Core Workgroup of the Association of Schools of Public Health's Global Health Competency Development Project, and also the Triangle Global Health Consortium.

In our conference Dr. Meier voiced several requests for consideration:

1. to have a single graduate TA rather than two undergraduate graders assigned to assist him in teaching Justice in Public Policy (PLCY 340, formerly 240) next year and in the future, for greater efficiency of supervision; with this support he intends to increase enrollments to 60 students in PLCY 340, while holding to 30 students in topical courses.

2. to increase the appropriateness of his teaching in global health policy for graduate students, including more graduate students from Public Health (also sought by Dr. Peggy Bentley from GSGPH and IGHID), perhaps by offering PLCY 575 with a primarily graduate-level focus in alternate years, or having Public Health support an extra section of this course for graduate/professional students
3. to move when possible to an office closer to other faculty members with whom he interacts most frequently
4. to attract more of our own doctoral students to work with him
5. to promote increased collaboration between our faculty and students and those in other units such as Law and Public Health, beginning perhaps by inviting more of them to attend our PLCY 810 research seminars
6. to increase the international visibility of our department
7. and to have greater staff support for grant submission and management

I am supportive of all these requests, to the extent we can find the means to honor them, with the possible caveat on #2 that we may need further discussion about how best to accommodate more public health graduate students while also accommodating the considerable and rising demand for its subject matter in the College and not overburdening his own teaching responsibilities.

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 were very positive in their assessment of Dr. Meier's first year here, and also made several constructive suggestions for further mentoring, and expressed an active willingness to participate in mentoring, which I have conveyed to Dr. Meier in a subsequent conversation.

In short, Dr. Meier has had an outstanding first year both in research and teaching as well as professional service, and is rapidly building his visibility both nationally and internationally as a respected scholarly voice on health and human rights policy. He also has become an active and valued colleague in the department, and an organizer of more active intellectual interchange among both 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: Dr. Meier