

# Global Community Health and Behavioral Sciences to become two separate departments

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*David Hotchkiss (photo above) will serve as interim chair in advance of the transition*

Effective July 1, 2021, the Department of Global Community Health and Behavioral Sciences (GCHB) will be divided into two departments to better serve students and better align the teaching faculty. The two new departments will be the Department of International Health and Sustainable Development and the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Sciences.

[Dr. David Hotchkiss](#), current vice chair of GCHB, has been tapped to serve as interim chair as the department prepares for the transition over the coming year. Current Chair [Richard Oberhelman](#) will step down at the end this semester and will return to the Department of Tropical Medicine where he taught for many years.

The shift is the result of a year-long discussion involving department faculty and school leadership about the best path for the department's future. During the transitional year, decisions will be made about program offerings, the administrative make up of each department, and the physical locations of each department.

"This school has a long and distinguished history in international health that wasn't as visible as it could be within such a large department," said Dean Thomas LaVeist. "I'm excited by the prospect of bringing greater attention to the school's historic work in international settings, while preparing students for the present and, most importantly, sustainable future of the field of international health."

"Similarly, by establishing the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Population Science, we will bring together faculty whose work transcends boundaries and is fully grounded in the important work of social and behavioral sciences. In the coming year, we will conduct a national search for a chair who will chart an exciting future for this new department."

Hotchkiss holds a master's degree in demography from Georgetown University and a PhD in economics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research focuses on the evaluation of health systems strengthening strategies in low- and middle-income countries, and he currently teaches courses in international health policy and health economics. Prior to joining Tulane, he was a research associate at the International Food Policy Research Institute.

"The decision to establish the two new departments is a key part of the school's new five-year strategy to strengthen our leadership role in preparing future generations of public health professionals to work locally

and throughout the rest of the world,” says Hotchkiss. “I am excited by the opportunity to work with Dean LaVeist, Tulane faculty, and the rest of the Tulane community on the transition process over the coming year.”

Faculty in GCHB will select the department that best aligns with their teaching and research interests, and they can opt to hold a primary appointment in one department with a secondary appointment in the other, pending chair approval. Faculty members in other departments will be offered the option to change their departmental affiliation as well.