TTUHSC Graduates First Cohort of M.D./MPH Students

At the conclusion of our fourth academic year as a program, the Department of Public Health is pleased to report that our first cohort of dual degree M.D./M.P.H. students graduated in May 2018. These 17 students have been with the Julia Jones Matthews Department of Public Health since it’s inception in 2014 and all placed with a medical residency. They will span the country from California to New York and many places in between. We congratulate this amazing cohort and expect to see many fantastic things from them in the fields of medicine and public health.

As of May 2018, TTUHSC has graduated 56 MPH and two public health certificate students, with 93% currently employed or pursuing further education!
Announcements

- Fall registration is now open. Current students should contact their faculty advisor for guidance on fall classes.
- Application deadline for Fall 2018 is June 15th.
- Incoming summer students will complete MPH orientation online.
- Fall 2018 orientation is scheduled tentatively for Aug. 20th for incoming students.

Accreditation Update

The Department of Public Health completed its accreditation site visit for the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) on February 1-2, 2018. We are pleased with the feedback and look forward to a final report from the CEPH board June 2018. Administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community advisory board members all have played instrumental roles in the accreditation process over the past 4 years. We thank you for your dedication!
Faculty Activities & Honors

- Dr. Theresa Byrd presented at Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Philippines, with Drs. Christina Esperat, Wendy Thal and Linda McMurry from the TTUHSC School of Nursing. She presented on the AMIGAS program and did a day-long workshop on Community Based Participatory Research with Dr. Esperat. She got to see whale sharks “up close and personal” on her birthday during this trip!
- Dr. Appiah received the “Outstanding Teacher of the Year” award from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Abilene Interdisciplinary Symposium

On April 27, 2018, the TTUHSC Department of Public Health co-hosted an interdisciplinary symposium on cancer and biomedical research at the TTUHSC Abilene Campus. The all-day event included talks from a variety of distinguished experts in the field, including a presentation from DPH Department Chair Dr. Theresa Byrd, as well as a student and faculty poster session.

Recent Publications


*Public health faculty, students and alumni in bold
Student Research Week
March 20-23, 2018

The department was well represented at student research week this year. Twelve students presented posters on their research and two MPH students received awards.

- Drew Rasmussen
  1st Place—Masters Division
- Samantha Curtis
  2nd Place—Masters Division

Kandi Quesada, Dijo John, Chris O'Dell, Dr. Khan, Damilola Owade, Drew Rasmussen, Dr. Byrd, Summre Blakely MPH, Dr. Queen and Dez Ojo at the SRW Poster Session (March 2018)

Samantha Curtis, Dr. Khan, Drew Rasmussen and Dr. Michael Blanton at SRW Awards Ceremony (March 2018)

Hridoy Haq, Samantha Curtis and Ashley Edling attended SRW Yule Ball Banquet (March 2018)
Project Spotlight—Christine Lucio APE

Christine Lucio, MSW, LCSW, completed her Applied Practice Experience through the U.S. Department of the State’s Virtual Student Federal Service e-Internship Program. This unique year-long program allowed Christine to work on an interdisciplinary team of students from across the country. These interns used a variety of innovative technologies to bridge the physical gap and work cohesively on projects for embassies in the Middle East and Asia. In addition to receiving real-life experience, these projects gave the interns a better understanding of foreign civil service and global health. Christine really enjoyed the opportunity to learn from her team members and professionals within the State Department. One of her favorite assignments was interviewing medical officers in the field to learn how they best serve diplomats and the community at large. Although her formal internship ends in May, Christine will be continuing her work with the State Department over the summer.

Please contact your faculty advisor to learn about practice opportunities for your APE or ILE!

Christine Lucio and virtual team from the U.S. Department of State (May 2018)

Project Spotlight—Dez Ojo & Chris O’Dell APE

Desiree Ojo and Chris O’Dell completed their Applied Practice Experience at Lubbock County Detention Center this spring. An eight-week long observational study was conducted at the Lubbock County Detention Center (LCDC) where researchers observed the processes and procedures involved in pre-booking, booking and classification of inmates. The purpose of this study was to observe the procedures and processes currently in place which involve the booking and housing of inmates with mental health conditions, how inmates are screened and how the inmates are separated into housing units. Researchers observed mental health screening procedures and mapped mental health information processing and sharing across departments. Researchers then obtained the procedures pertaining to the housing of inmates post screening. This study did not observe or describe the inmates themselves, nor did it evaluate the performance of employees.

Chris O’Dell & Dez Ojo presenting their work at Student Research Week (March 2018)
TTUHSC Student Public Health Association

Lubbock
2017-2018 officers
President – Tiffany Torres
Vice President – Dez Ojo
Treasurer – Mahlet Afesse
Social Chair/Public Relations – Justin Sudduth

2018-2019 officers
President/Public Relations – Samantha Curtis
Vice President/Treasurer – Drew Rasmussen
Social Chair/Secretary – Ashley Edling

SPHA is a student organization that promotes community service and public health research at TTUHSC.

Upcoming plans
With next year’s officers in place, please watch for email announcements and follow our chapters on Facebook at SPHA Abilene and SPHA Lubbock for updates on upcoming activities!

Abilene
2017-2018 officers
President – Christine Lucio
Vice President/Public Relations – Kirsten Scarborough
Secretary/Treasurer – Janet Mendenhall

2018-2019 officers
President – Kirsten Scarborough
Vice President – Stephanie Sariles
Treasurer – Joshua Sanders
Secretary – Ashlee Spann
Social Chair/Public Relations – Annette Lerma

National Public Health Week Activities
April 2-6, 2018

National Public Health Week is an American Public Health Association event. This year’s theme was “Healthiest Nation 2030”

TTUHSC Events included:
♦ A Public Health Analysis of Mental Health Screening and Assessment Procedures at the Lubbock County Detention Center by Dez Ojo & Chris O’Dell
♦ Communicable disease presentation at the SynergisticCenter with an epidemiological game on drug resistant disease.
♦ Guest lecture by Dr. Brie Sherwin on climate issues and transparency.
♦ Panel with professionals in different fields of public health.
♦ APE Presentations by Christine Lucio - U.S. State Dept. Virtual Student Foreign Services Internship Program and Janet Mendenhall - Implementing a Population Health Dept. in a West Texas Hospital System
♦ Abilene hosted a health fair with volunteers from both TTUHSC campuses.

New Faculty & Staff

Corey Patterson—Corey joined the DPH in April as the director of Special Projects on the Abilene campus. He will work on a variety of projects for the DPH including the development of dual degrees.

Committees

The DPH strives to include students in every aspect of the planning and facilitating of degree programs. The following committees have openings for Fall 2018 for any interested students. Please contact your academic advisor for more information.

Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee (Dr. Appiah)

CAB Graduation Representative (Dr. Queen)

Policy Development Committee (Dr. Pasupathy)

Applied Practice Experience Committee (Dr. Dennis)

Career Activities

The student public health association hosted a panel with professionals in different fields of public health during National Public Health Week. Panelists came from fields such as rural health, robotic surgery, university safety officers, Abilene Health Department and occupational health.

The DPH and School of Medicine co-hosted an M.D./MPH panel as part of P3 Week at the medical school. Four physicians holding an MPH shared a wealth of experiences during the hour-long session and provided great insights to both existing and prospective dual degree students. (See participant pictures and names on page 1)
Staff Spotlight - Nancy Cook

Nancy Cook joined the Department of Public Health Abilene campus in January 2017 as administrative assistant. Her work includes providing administrative support to Abilene faculty, staff and students. Nancy also serves as assistant to Dr. St. John, and she attempts to keep the Purchasing and Travel offices happy, with varying degrees of success. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Biochemistry from Texas A&M University.

Staff Spotlight

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Student Recognition

- Christine Lucio was named the 2018 Outstanding Public Health Student by the DPH faculty.
- M.D./MPH graduate Morgan Quezada was awarded the 2018 Excellence in Public Health Award from the U.S. Public Health Service Physician Professional Advisory Committee.
- MPH students, Steven Lara, Chris O’Dell, and Desiree Ojo helped host “Saving the Texas Foster Care System: A Special Panel Event” in conjunction with the Master of Public Administration program at Texas Tech University.
- Four students from Dr. Khan’s research team submitted abstracts for the American Public Health Association Conference in November.
- Samantha Curtis and Ashley Edling will attend an American Public Health Association advocacy bootcamp in July.

Dr. St. John at the 2018 YMCA Healthy Kids event in April

The Department of Public Health would like to extend our sincere thanks to community advisory board (CAB) members who participated in the CEPH site visit:

- Katherine Albus, MPH, R.D., L.D., child nutrition specialist, Region 17 Education Service Center, Lubbock, TX
- Deb McCullough, D.N.P., M.S.N., director, Andrews County Health Department, Andrews, TX
- Jack Rentz, president & CEO – Rentech Boiler Systems, Inc., Abilene, TX
- Eric Sanchez, CEO – Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council for the Concho Valley, San Angelo, TX
- Gino Solla, director, Ector County Health Department, Odessa, TX
- Katherine Wells, MPH, director of public health – City of Lubbock, Lubbock, TX
- Philip Wicker, owner – Pack n Mail, Abilene, TX; director of development, TTUHSC Abilene
Involvement

The department of Public Health welcomes its first 100 percent online students in Summer and Fall 2018. Applications for fall 2018 will be accepted through June 15th. Our face-to-face courses will continue to be offered in both Lubbock and Abilene.

Alumni and faculty: Look for our student organization pages on Facebook at SPHA Lubbock and SPHA Abilene.

Contact Us

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Student Public Health Association at Abilene Health Fair during National Public Health Week with Tiffany Torres, Steven Lara, Janet Mendenhall and Christine Lucio (April 2018)

Newsletter Information

The Spring 2018 newsletter was written and designed by Samantha Curtis, MPH student and DPH graduate assistant, and Dr. Jeff Dennis

To submit pictures or other items for future newsletters, submit details to: Jeff.Dennis@ttuhsc.edu

Dijo John and Samantha Curtis at a Red Bag Event talking to high school students about public health (January 2018)