



The Public Health Programs at UNC Charlotte  
(the MSPH, the BSPH, and the PhD in Public Health Sciences)  
are fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health

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**Public Health Programs at UNC Charlotte**  
Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH)  
Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH)  
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health Sciences (PhD)

**Onward...**



Master's

Fall 2014 flew by in a flash. August saw the launch of our long anticipated PhD in Public Health Sciences as well as our new graduate certificate in public health core concepts and the formalization of several dual degree configurations involving our MSPH program.

August also saw the beginning of our department's year-long strategic planning initiative toward developing our next 5-year plan and articulating it with our college and campus plans being developed in parallel. We've already reexamined our mission, vision, and values statements as a precursor to setting goals and objectives. Details of these changes and the iterative review we will make at the degree program level are forthcoming.



Doctoral

In October, we received official **affirmation of our CEPH reaccreditation for 7 years**. We were, however, slightly disappointed to see several slight downward revisions to the glowing ratings assigned by the site visit team that we had cautiously

boasted about in our spring issue. (Those changes in ratings - but not in the underlying comments and observations - were made to ensure consistency of ratings [aka inter-rater reliability] across all of CEPH's program assessment visits.) We also learned of likely significant changes to CEPH criteria during its upcoming round of periodic revisions that could benefit our program if enacted.

November saw many of us in New Orleans for the American Public Health Association Meeting, with our UNC Charlotte exhibit booth providing a welcome meeting point.

Looking ahead, **Richard Jackson**, Professor and Chair of Environmental Health Sciences at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and expert on the impact of the built environment on public health ("Health in All Policies") will be our National Public Health Week keynote speaker on **Wednesday 8 April**. The event will be held at the Center City campus as part of the college's BlueCross and BlueShield Dialogue for a Healthier Community. Plan now to attend. More details to follow



Bachelor's

likely significant changes to CEPH criteria during its upcoming round of periodic revisions that could benefit our program if enacted.

**Chelsea Moxlow honored by SOPHE**

The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) recently honored Chelsea Moxlow, MSPH ('13), CHES, as one of 2014's outstanding young health educators.

Chelsea currently serves as a Health Educator with the Livingston County Department of Public Health in Michigan where she also acts as the Public Information Officer and Accreditation Coordinator for both state and national accreditation efforts. She represents the department on twelve community workgroups, including substance abuse prevention, child abuse prevention, injury prevention, public information, nutrition/hunger, youth obesity prevention, community collaboration, etc.



She chairs two of the workgroups, Healthy Habits for Youth and Community Needs Assessment. Chelsea is in her second term as the Chair of the statewide Behavioral Health Sciences Forum under the Michigan Association for Local

Public Health. One of Chelsea's favorite aspects of her job is her ability to use her MSPH degree training to work on the more technical aspects of health education including designing and administering surveys, evaluating programs and services, analyzing data, and designing research studies.

As the Behavioral Health Sciences Chair, she works with a representative from the Michigan Department of Community Health to design a cross-jurisdictional study on obesity prevention best practices among local health departments. Additionally, Chelsea leads the charge to implement a performance management system, continuous quality improvement concepts, and a comprehensive workforce development plan in the department.

When asked if she had any advice for current MSPH students, Chelsea said, "You are capable of a lot more than you think. Don't let anyone, especially yourself, stop you from growing and moving forward."

## MSPH Internship



### Roselyne Kewe

Over the summer, MSPH student Roselyne Kewe interned at the Gaston County Department of Health and Human Services in Gastonia, NC. She worked with various nonprofit organizations in the community including Regional AIDS Interfaith Networks (RAIN), Catawba Care Coalition, Inc., and The North Carolina AIDS Action Network (NCAAN).

Roselyne developed educational modules for homeless women in Gaston County, Belmont and Charlotte and coordinated their delivery at multiple women's shelters. The modules addressed "Community Education on HIV/AIDS" and "Community Education on HIV/STI." Roselyne created supplemental poster boards that summarized visually the important content.

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## Corliss Allen received Graduate Award

Public Health Sciences PhD student Corliss Allen received the Wayland Cato Award. This award is given to first year doctoral students who show evidence of the potential to make a significant contribution to society by completing their degree. The fellowship provides full funding for the student and a stipend.

The scholarship was started in 2004 by the Wayland H. Cato Jr. Foundation to recruit exceptionally talented newly admitted graduate students into doctoral programs at UNC Charlotte. Corliss noted: "After being away from academia for five years, I was unsure how I would be able to transition back into school full time financially. Receiving this fellowship gave me the resources to fully commit myself to my studies."

Corliss received her BS in Psychology (2007) and MPH (2009) from Florida A&M University. She worked in behavioral sciences on the local, state,

and federal levels, including working in the academic, nonprofit and for profit arenas. More recently, she was employed with the Centers for Disease Control as a public health prevention specialist fellow. Corliss' projects ranged from an evaluation of the national Petition Program to creating a volunteer recruitment kit for the National Strategic Stockpile. Before deciding to return to school, she was a behaviorist for an advertising agency. In addition to these experiences, Corliss has been involved in a number research studies with minority populations and chronic disease prevention and self-management.



Corliss Allen (l) with Graduate School Dean Dr. Tom Reynolds

"I am so humbled and grateful for this fellowship; it made my decision to enter the doctoral program an easy one! I am forever grateful to the generosity of Mr. Cato and family, as well as the Graduate School Committee who saw fit that I receive such an award."

## PhD Student Presents

Kenesha Smith, MSPH ('14) and member of the inaugural cohort of the PhD in Public Health Sciences, recently presented at the annual American College of Epidemiology meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland. Using Utah PRAMS data, Kenesha's MSPH thesis investigated whether maternal depression during pregnancy was associated with preterm birth or small for gestational age (SGA) status.



Kenesha's findings indicated that depression may not be associated with adverse birth outcomes among a predominantly healthy population of non-Hispanic White, well educated women.

Kenesha's conclusions suggest that future studies should focus on other populations (i.e., minorities) to determine if an association exists or these subgroups. Drs. Larissa Huber, Michele Issel, and Jan Warren-Findlow were members of Kenesha's MSPH thesis committee and are co-authors.

Kenesha noted, "Overall, this was a great experience. I had the chance to meet with interesting people in the field and discuss my findings with them. Their knowledge on the topic provided some enlightening tips for future studies."

## Inaugural PhD Cohort

The Department of Public Health Sciences welcomes the new PhD in Public Health Sciences program led by Dr. Issel.



### Corliss Allen

2007, BS in Psychology (Florida A&M University)

2009, MPH, Health Behavior and Education (Florida A&M University)



### Purva Korgaonkar

2008, Bachelor of Dental Surgery (India)

2013, MSPH, Community Health Practice (UNC Charlotte)



### Kenesha Smith

2012, BS, Exercise Science (UNC Charlotte)

2014, MSPH, Community Health Practice (UNC Charlotte)

## BSPH Alumna Spotlight: Allison Jensen

Allison Jensen (BSPH 14, gerontology minor) currently serves as the Director of Communications for the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL). NFWL is the nation's oldest organization addressing the needs of elected women at all levels of government. Their mission is to provide strategic resources to elected women leaders for leadership, development, and effective governance through conferences, seminars, educational materials, professional and personal relationships, and networking.

When asked about the aspect she likes best about her job, Allison stated that she is amazed at how often she is able to take things that she has learned while in the BSPH program and apply them to problems in the work setting. "I can't even keep count of the number of times that I have used my Public Health Portfolio as a reference for a project I am working on, or to bring new ideas to the table in terms of evaluation methods and behavior models that we can use to measure our success and get our women legislators to change a specific behavior."

One of the most important lessons Allison learned while at UNC Charlotte was that, "failure is okay...in fact, it's inevitable. Your reaction to it is what will set you apart from the rest." She learned that failing at something or being reject-

ed should not cause anyone to be bitter; instead, it should push one to improve. During her time in college, Allison learned to use her failures and rejections as motivation.

Allison advises students to challenge themselves and not take the easy way out, to quit being afraid to step out of their comfort zone, and to not give up when things

get tough. She notes, "College is your opportunity to find yourself, find your passion in life and chase your dreams. Use your strengths to help you overcome your weaknesses, and never be afraid of taking on a challenge placed in front of you. Good things don't come to those who sit back and wait; Good things come to those who work their butt off and never give up."



## MSPH Alumna Spotlight: Allyson Cochran

Allyson Cochran (MSPH '12) is a two-time alumna at UNC Charlotte, having also earned a bachelors degree in biology in 2009. Allyson is a Clinical Research Data Manager for Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Surgery (HPB) Surgery group at Carolinas HealthCare System. Much of her activity centers on data analysis and publishing. Several times a year, her department hosts a Liver Course for physicians. She also participates in the HPB national conference.



Allyson enjoys her position because she is able to use her MSPH degree in a clinical setting. This environment ensures she is always learning and adapting to remain at the forefront of the interface between public health and tertiary medicine. "I like being a woman in a

technical field because it offers many opportunities I really never considered. I also have excel-

lent work-life balance here at CHS," noted Allyson. She feels fortunate for the opportunity to work with world-renowned surgeons and use data to directly impact their patient care.

Allyson recently assumed presidency of the UNC Charlotte Beta Phi chapter of Delta Omega in September, having completed her term as president-elect. While an MSPH student, she served as vice president of the Graduate Public Health Association (GPHA).

Allyson stresses to students to be as involved in the program as possible: "You only have two years in graduate school, so make the most out of them by working hard, networking, and saying yes to any and all opportunities that come your way." She also finds it invaluable to have learned technical/computer-based skills. Allyson recommends taking advantage of elective courses to expand skill sets such as computer science, data analytics, geographic information systems.

Beyond being actively involved in the public health community and learning technical skills, Allyson encourages graduate students to view their program as a launching pad to their careers, noting that, "Your launch pad is only as good as you build it; no one will do it for you and you cannot expect someone to hand you your ideal career if you neglect your own foundation."

Roselyne's preceptor, Sandee Champion, worked in Public Health Nurse Informatics. Mrs. Champion created multiple shadowing opportunities for Roselyne. Through these experiences, she increased her knowledge and perspective on sexually transmitted diseases.

Roselyne was given opportunity to present, attend high level meetings, and participate in outreach. She delivered her first presentation at the Shelter of Gaston, a domestic violence shelter. Roselyne joined the team in charge of the HIV 101 education at the Salvation Army Center of Hope in Charlotte. She co-presented the educational program with the case manager of RAIN about prevention and awareness measures.

At first, Roselyne wanted a clinical experience, but after noticing issues within the system, she decided to advocate for HIV/AIDS. She now pursues opportunities for more aid and funding for people with HIV, especially in relation to Medicaid. She believes determination and education can begin to solve issues in Africa and the USA.

Roselyne credits her internship as a beneficial experience personally and professionally. She applies learned skills in a practical way. She built a network from the various people and organizations she was fortunately exposed to. By being committed during her internship, Roselyne has continued to realize opportunities long after the internship ended.

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## Internship Spotlight:



### Andrea Ellis

Senior BSPH student, Andrea Ellis completed an internship through Project IMHOTEP funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Morehouse College. She conducted her internship at UNC Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Her major roles and responsibilities were to assist the onsite researchers involved in the Chitosan Dose Optimization and Removal of Microbial Contaminants Project.

This lab-based project determined the optimum doses of candidate chitosans to achieve maximum coagulation and settling performance in turbid water through fundamental and applied laboratory experimentation. Andrea interned under Dr. Lydia Abebe, an Environmental Sciences and Engineering post-doctoral research associate

Andrea gushed, "My overall internship experience was awesome! It was both challenging and rewarding as we not only had assignments to complete at our internship site but we also had daily and weekly project assignments that were due throughout the internship."

## GPHA Fundraises

Graduate Public Health Association (GPHA) helped to raise money for I AM not the MEdia, a non-profit in Charlotte. The proceeds from purchases at the uptown Buffalo Wild Wings on Thursday, August 28 benefitted the organization. I AM not the MEdia promotes education for teens and young adults about media's negative influences and the importance of positive decision making, and inspires them to embrace their own individuality. GPHA President Charnele Walton completed her internship at the organization over the summer and remains an active supporter.

## India Study Abroad



A new spring break study abroad to India is now available. Students will have the opportunity to visit and observe the work of NGOs addressing the empowerment of vulnerable populations in two different regions of India. This program, led by Dr. Shanti Kulkarni of the Department of Social Work and Dr. Beth Racine of the Department of Public Health Sciences, will explore health, empowerment, and gender equity.

## APHA Conference



The American Public Health Association (APHA) held its Annual Meeting this past November in New Orleans. Thousands of public health professionals from around the world gather each year for the event. Events included a discussion on the future of health in America by five former U.S. Surgeons General and the current acting Surgeon General, over 1,000 educational sessions, and numerous networking and career opportunities.

For the second consecutive year, the Department of Public Health Sciences hosted a booth at the annual meeting. In addition to speaking with individuals interested in continuing their public health education, department faculty were able to catch up with colleagues and former students.



*Drs. Thompson and Issel visiting with students and colleagues at APHA*

## Happenings



**Clockwise from top banner:** MSPH and Graduate Certificate students pose in during orientation; Dr. Thompson presents at Public Health Sciences Open House on October 24; First year MSPH student Charles Warner-Hillard talks to a prospective student; Dr. Issel converses with potential PhD student