



The Public Health Programs at UNC Charlotte (the MSPH & BSPH) are fully accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health



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**Public Health Programs @ UNC Charlotte**  
Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH)  
Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH)

## Beginnings

*From the Graduate Coordinator*



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the UNC Charlotte Public Health Programs Newsletter, serving the students, alumni, stakeholders, and faculty of our CEPH-accredited public health programs.

Since arriving at UNC Charlotte in 2005, I have led our graduate public health programs. I led the transformation of our MS in health promotion into a CEPH-accredited MSPH program and contributed to the design of the BSPH program and to the planning for our proposed PhD in public health sciences (more in a future newsletter).

My undergraduate training was in biology, followed by a master's degree in emergency health services. After working at the National Study Center for Trauma and EMS, I moved to the MPH Program Office at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. I helped facilitate the competency-based refinement of the MPH curriculum while concurrently pursuing my DrPH in health services research and evaluation. I was tapped to help develop and manage an emerging

MPH program at the American University of Armenia and lead its affiliated Center for Health Services Research and Development.

These experiences solidified my commitment to the development and accreditation of practice-relevant, competency-based public health programs within a systems perspective. Thus, I can assure you that the UNC Charlotte public health programs are at the forefront of public health education and are designed to meet the current and future needs of Charlotte, North Carolina, and the region.

As you will read in this issue, our public health program continues to evolve and our students and alumni continue to impress and amaze. We need your support and engagement to continue this trajectory of excellence. Please get connected and stay involved.

Cheers,

Michael E. Thompson, MS, DrPH  
Associate Professor  
Coordinator, Graduate Public Health Programs

## *From the Undergraduate Coordinator*

**Greetings!** The UNC Charlotte BSPH Program is celebrating its sixth academic year.

The Association for Prevention Teaching and Research recognized our program in its case studies profiling effective undergraduate public health programs. Our ability to produce practitioner/scholars who impact the field of Public Health (over 130 to date), 96% graduation rate, and above average pass rate on the CHES (Certified Health Education Specialist) exam distinguished our program.

I earned a Biological Science degree from Florida State University and an MS in Health Promotion and CHES from UNC Charlotte. I was selected as an NIH Emerg-

ing Leader Intern. This experience led to my becoming a Public Health Advisor serving as the Personnel Accountability Liaison (Louisiana) for Hurricane Katrina response efforts and Project Lead for African American Initiatives. I returned to UNC Charlotte in 2007 as the Internship Coordinator and have served as Undergraduate Coordinator since 2010.

Check us out on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Camina Davis, MS, CHES  
Coordinator Undergraduate Public Health Programs



Be a part of the discussion!  
Join our

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BSPH Alumni  
Association"**  
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## Outstanding Master's Thesis Award



**Tatreka Polite Middleton (MSPH, '11)** is the 2011 recipient of UNC Charlotte's Outstanding Master's Thesis Award in the Life Sciences Category. Ms. Middleton's thesis, "Race, Socioeconomic Status, and Rural/Urban Geographic Disparities in the Management of Diabetes Among Adults in North Carolina" was recognized for its focus on the disparities in diabetes prevalence in North Carolina. North Carolina ranks 17th in the prevalence of diabetes with more than 640,000 individuals diagnosed. Dr. Crystal Piper chaired Ms. Middleton's thesis committee, with Drs. Michael Thompson and Jan Warren-Findlow serving as committee members. Congratulations to Tatreka!

## National Public Health Week 2012



National Public Health Week 2012 was an exciting week of events related to this year's theme: "A Healthier America Begins Today"! Monday featured a Keynote Address entitled

"Prevention: The Great Equalizer" by Dr. Leandris Liburd, the Director of Minority Health at the CDC. Earlier in the day, Dr. Liburd met with students in an open forum where she discussed her career at the CDC and answered questions from students.

On Tuesday, the Graduate Public Health Association hosted a "Lunch and Learn" session with Kerry Burch, MPH, of the Mecklenburg County Health Department. Ms. Burch presented the findings and process behind the recent Mecklenburg County community assessments. Tuesday eve-

ning, MSPH students, alumni, and faculty gathered with their MHA counterparts for a Public Health Sciences alumni networking event co-sponsored by the two student organizations, GPHA and CHESO.



The UNC Charlotte Beta Phi chapter of Delta Omega, the National Public Health Honor Society, held new member inductions during National Public Health Week. Three student members, four alumni members, and one honorary member were inducted.



MSPH and MHA alumni, faculty, and current students at the PHS Alumni Networking Event at Black-Finn Saloon during National Public Health Week, co-sponsored by GPHA and CHESO.

## Delta Omega Fall Speaker Event: Dr. Ophelia Garmon-Brown

In November, the UNC Charlotte Beta Phi Chapter of Delta Omega, the National Public Health Honor Society held its fall speaker event.

Delta Omega was pleased to welcome Dr. Ophelia Garmon



-Brown, Vice President for Community Partnerships at Presbyterian Hospital and Charlotte's 2010 Woman of the Year.

Dr. Garmon-Brown spoke on the topic of "Caring for the uninsured: Now or later".

## BSPH Students Among Levine Scholar Program

The Levine Scholars Program is UNC Charlotte's most prestigious merit scholarship program that was established in 2009 by benefactors Sandra and Leon Levine. 15 Levine Scholarships are awarded each year to extraordinary high school seniors based on scholarship, ethical leadership and civic engagement. The inaugural class of Levine Scholars entered in the fall semester of 2010.

We are proud to have Anna Bawtinhimer (pictured above, left), a 2014 Scholar, and



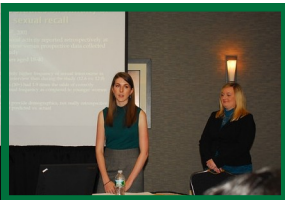
Kelsey Mongeau, a 2015 Scholar (right), as members of our BSPH program.

The Levine Scholarships carry a high honor, one that bestows tremendous opportunities and assumes high expectations of its recipients – as students, as leaders within the university, and as citizens of the greater global community. To complement classroom learning, Levine Scholars participate in rich and varied opportunities in the vibrant commercial and cultural center of Charlotte.



## Four MSPH Students Present at NCPHA Annual Conference

In September, four MSPH students presented at the NCPHA Annual Conference held in Charlotte. Katie Cooper and Lauren Graham's (pictured right) presentation in the Student Caucus was titled "Identifying Factors Related to Adherence to an Optimal Oral Con-



traceptive Regimen. Jordan Lyerly and Ashley Young's (pictured left, below) presentation in the Epidemiology Section was titled "Fertility and Oral Contraceptive Use Study (FOCUS) Validity of Retrospective Recall of Frequency of Sexual Intercourse."



## Four MSPH Students Attend APHA Meeting in Washington, DC

According to Mona Elgowainy, "Heading to Washington DC for APHA's annual meeting was an amazing experience!" "Near the end of October, Beth Brumbaugh, Shellery Cunningham, Pushti Patel, and Mona piled into a car and drove to the nation's capital, where they attended many informative lectures, poster sessions and several meet-and-greet socials.

Mona added, "Attending APHA's annual meeting also gave us the opportunity to network with some of world's foremost public health



professionals, We also were exposed to a variety of disciplines and had the opportunity to learn some new things."

As members of the APHA Student Section, the four also had a chance to network with students with similar interests and represent UNC Charlotte and our MSPH program.

As Shellery Cunningham noted, "Attending APHA was a great opportunity to network with professionals and future colleagues, as we prepare to embark upon our public health careers!"

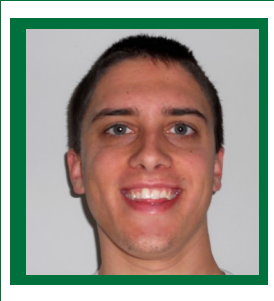
## MSPH Student receives 2011 Herschel and Cornelia Everett Foundation First-Year Graduate Fellowship



**Rebecca Mueffelmann**, a first year MSPH student and 2011 Exercise Physiology graduate of East Carolina University, was named the recipient of the 2011 Herschel and Cornelia Everett Foundation First-Year Graduate Fellowship.

The Herschel and Cornelia Everett Foundation First-Year Graduate Fellowship was established in 2001 by the Everett family trust to support their value on education and to foster the growth of UNC Charlotte. Through the continued support of their daughter, Ann E. Belk, the foundation works to help graduate students actualize their career goals. The fellowship is awarded to stellar incoming master's students.

## BSPH Internship Spotlight



**John Vecchiola, (BSPH '12)** is preparing to enter the UNC Charlotte MHA program this fall. In Summer 2011, John completed his internship with the University City YMCA, working with the Membership Services Director to enter information, process payments, and develop a plan to retain existing members. His hard work led to part-time job.

According to John, "The internship added to my experience and skills. I improved upon my communication skills, conflict resolution, ability to effectively work with others, and how able I am to communicate and work with others who have very different backgrounds than me."

He called his internship was an invaluable and rewarding experience.

## BSPH Alumni Spotlight : Christopher Matthews ('09), CHES

**Christopher A. Matthews, BSPH (2009)** worked as an RA on two NIH-funded projects and also as an intern and volunteer with the Male Involvement Program based in the Mecklenburg County Health Department while a student. Christopher also served as an officer for the Public Health Association.

Upon graduation, Christopher was hired as a Prevention Specialist at Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center where he designed and implemented a marijuana prevention program that exceeded program goals and directly impacted over 3300

CMS students.

Currently a site coordinator for Communities In Schools of Charlotte, Christopher teaches courses on criminal diversion, drug education, and anger management at the Behavioral Health Intervention Center, LLC, which he founded in Spring 2011.

Christopher gives back to the UNC Charlotte by serving on the Public Health Advisory Board and sharing his experiences.



## MSPH Alumni Spotlight: Marianne Weant ('11)



**Marianne Weant (MSPH '11)** worked with the North Carolina Parent Teacher Association (NCPTA) for both an independent study

and for her internship. For the independent study, supervised by Dr. Thompson, she developed a school health advocacy manual. This project was developed by the executive board of NCPTA and was funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation (BCBCNCF). While she was working on this project, the concept for her internship developed, and she began working on an additional health manual.

As Marianne notes, "Both of these projects allowed me to develop data collection and research skills from classes and to receive regular feedback from professors. While I was working on these projects with Dr. Thompson, I was able to interact with the executive board of NCPTA, state government officials, non-profit health organizations, and funding organizations. Through

*these projects, I developed an overall vision of NCPTA's potential role in school health and wrote a grant to develop the program."*

The grant she wrote was soon funded by BCNSNCF for three years, including her full-time position to implement the program.

Marianne stated, "I would not have been able to develop the program concept or write the grant without the MSPH program, particularly the independent study and internship experiences. The ideas for our key grant activities came from our lessons learned from the first two projects-- where we could have done better, what assumptions were incorrect, and what we would do differently. Having criticism and feedback from an advisor throughout those projects provided an experienced set of eyes that wouldn't have been available to NCPTA otherwise and contributed to the overall vision of our school health program." Through the independent study and internship experiences and coursework, she developed the skills to implement a school health program, to build professional relationships with other health educators, and to pursue funding opportunities for health programs.