



**Towson University Department of Health Science
Undergraduate Program in Community Health Education**

COMMUNITY HEALTH MATTERS

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Greetings from Health Science

The Department of Health Science is pleased to launch *Community Health Matters*, the first newsletter for our colleagues in Community Health Education. The Department's experience in the field is rivaled only by the years of experience you and your agencies bring to our undergraduates in Health Science.

To keep communication flowing, to update all with the latest information about the Department of Health Science and, quite frankly, to brag about our wonderful students, we are launching this first *Community Health Matters* from the Undergraduate Program in Community Health Education. We also look to it as a means to circulate information about you, your experiences with students, and internship opportunities. Through *Community Health Matters*, we hope to initiate a dynamic and informative exchange with our colleagues in community health. We welcome your ideas, your feedback, and look forward to a wonderfully productive year.

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The Faces of Community Health Education

Spring '08 yielded a bumper crop of Community Health Education interns. The variety of students' interests was mirrored in the rich diversity of their internship placements. Virtually every facet of community health education – health care setting, government, college and work site – hosted an internship experience.

Students seeking more clinically-directed placements worked with the Department of Community Health Outreach at St. Joseph Medical Center, Franklin Square Hospital, LifeBridge Health System, Northwest Hospital and Adventist Health Care. Baltimore City Health Department's Healthy Teens and Young Adults Center was home for one student's placement, while Baltimore County's WIC Program hosted a spring '08 intern. Interested in marrying community service with health education, a Community Health Education intern worked with the YMCA Head Start Program, while others immersed themselves in the life of Howard County's Health Department and the House of Ruth. To experience the global nature of community health, a student worked with IMA World Health. The Department of Health Science also arranged internships with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Health, Education and Wellness and The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE), hosting its first Health Science intern. The National Center for Trauma and EMS was home as well to other interns.

The fall '08 cohort is similarly diverse in its selection of internship sites. Among their experiences will be two new placements: the Midatlantic Cardiovascular Foundation and the Maryland DHMH Center for Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning and Reproductive Health Program.

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THE NEW FACES OF HEALTH SCIENCE

In the past year, the Health Science has been fortunate to acquire two new full-time faculty.



Theresa Jackson earned her Master of Public Health degree (2004) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 2008, Theresa went on to be awarded her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland at College Park. Given her interest in public and community health, Theresa's dissertation examined evidence of reliability and validity of mental health indicators on a revised national survey measuring college student health. Among Theresa's classroom responsibilities, she directs courses focused on instructional methods in health education; the organization, implementation and management of health education programs; as well as health care in the US.

Theresa has seemingly unlimited energy. To date, her research interests include college student risk taking behaviors and mental health. In addition, she maintains active links to work directed toward stress and coping; alcohol and other drug use prevention; community based participatory research; survey development; program evaluation and statistical modeling. This fall, Theresa will be presenting some of her research in San Diego before the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association.

We welcome Theresa and look forward to her continued work as faculty supervisor for interns in community health education.



Dr. Niya Werts also joins the full-time faculty in September 2008. Niya's background blends a Master of Science degree in Exercise and Health from Miami University of Ohio (1998) as well as a Master of Science degree in Information Systems, University of Maryland Baltimore County (2001). Niya received her Ph.D. in Health and Informatics in 2004, from the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Dr. Werts has taught a variety of classes on the college and adult education levels from Introduction to Systems Analysis to Exercise Prescription. She most enjoys lecturing about Nutrition. Food and its impacts on health, from both a western medical perspective and eastern traditional holistic perspective, are areas of interest for her both professionally and personally.

When not in the classroom, Niya has worked on academic and research related projects about nutrition related diseases (obesity, diabetes and hypertension) with the National Institutes of Health, the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and the University of Maryland at Baltimore School of Family Medicine. If that's not enough to exhaust you, Niya also enjoys martial arts and foreign films. When not power lifting or teaching, she is likely to be practicing her broadsword.

This fall, Niya joins the Department of Health Science's full-time faculty and will supervise community health education interns.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The process of placing interns is both multi-faceted and lengthy. Students first obtain academic clearance from their advisors to complete the experience. Only students who have completed all Departmental requirements may participate in the internship. Once their eligibility is established, students must attend a pre-internship meeting at which they learn about specific internship needs (e.g., criminal background checks, immunizations) as well as the schedule governing their internship placement process. Students also discuss their internship interests and submit lists of possible placement sites. The Department then contacts prospective agencies to establish their willingness to supervise a member of the intern cohort. In the interim, students prepare letters of introduction, résumés and other documents as required by a specific placement. Our spring '09 placement process begins to unfold as early as September 19, 2008!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING EVENT

UNIVERSITY UNION

SEPTEMBER 19, 12-2PM

Many prospective internship sites are planning to participate. All students contemplating an internship (especially during Spring or Fall '09) are strongly encouraged to attend this event.

PREINTERNSHIP MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 22 OR SEPTEMBER 23

Students must bring with them documentation of their academic eligibility for internship as well as a list of their top three placement choices.

STUDENT INTERVIEWS

14 OCT – 4 NOV

Students arrange on-site interviews with prospective placements. All sites will first be contacted by the Department to confirm their willingness to participate. More than one interview will occur only when the student's initial choice proves unavailable -- whether because of student or agency preference.

FINAL DOCUMENTATION

11 NOV

Students submit forms establishing the mutual agreement of both student and agency to the spring '09 internship placement.



Spring '08 Interns in Community Health Education

With the end of the semester, Spring '08 interns returned to Burdick Hall for their final seminar.

The variety of students' interests was mirrored in the rich diversity of their internship placements.



Spring '08 Interns in Community Health Education

In the short time since their graduation, Spring '08 interns have begun the process of launching their professional lives. Some students were fortunate to find positions within their internship agency. While not always possible, the transition from internship to full-time staff is always gratifying for all involved. Other students are beginning graduate careers: one student joins the Master's in Health Science at Towson, while another enters graduate studies in Health Education at Indiana University. In that some interns blend internship with student teaching, several students also will begin life-after-Towson in the classrooms of Baltimore county and neighboring municipalities.

WHAT MAKES AN INTERNSHIP?

Internships are an opportunity for students to apply their undergraduate education to the realities of community health education, and to further develop established and new skills essential to such work. The intern in community health education is expected to function as a true staff member of the placement with duties and responsibilities commensurate with the student's capabilities.

Interns are full-time, with specific hours consistent with others employed by the placement agency. Interns may anticipate assignments including but not limited to needs assessments, development of objectives for a specific community served by the agency, as well as preparation of educational materials (e.g., PowerPoint, brochures, bulletin boards, lesson plans) appropriate to a specific community health program or population.

Once an internship is underway, the Department will provide oversight, support and assistance to both the student and agency. The intern's goal is to grow, to learn and to succeed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: I would like to change the description of my agency's information. How do I make that happen?

A: It couldn't be easier. If the existing description of your agency's activities is no longer applicable, if you've reorganized, if you want to emphasize different facets of your work, it is no problem to modify your existing description. Contact Ms. Sue Willis (sgwillis@towson.edu) to receive an updated General Agency Information form. Provide the necessary information, returning the completed form to Sue. She then will see that the updated material is posted in the Department's online listing of approved internship placements as well as included within archives made available to prospective interns.

Q: Can I request an intern for only certain times of year?

A: Agencies never have an obligation to accept interns. If you feel that a specific and predictable time of year is best suited for an intern, include that information on your General Information Form. That way both students and the

Colleagues in Community Health Education

The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Health Education & Wellness

The Center for Health Education and Wellness (CHEW) aims to increase student health and well being by addressing various health issues such as stress management, alcohol and other drugs, and sexual health. CHEW's vision is to create and sustain a learning environment where health behaviors are an integral component to academic and individual success. Under the leadership of Barbara Gwinn (a graduate of Towson's HLTH Master's program), CHEW provides health education programming and health promotion to the student population to foster and promote a healthier JHU community. CHEW proactively responds to the needs of a diverse undergraduate and graduate student population, with an emphasis on the prevention of illness and risk reduction. The CHEW crew, consisting of professional staff and students, offers a variety of programs that promote and affirm student health and wellness through the delivery of fun and interactive programming. Interns at CHEW receive hands-on, practical experiences in planning, implementing, and evaluating a program; conducting health awareness campaigns; and developing health-related materials. Students apply classroom knowledge to a real life situations, thus enhancing both their knowledge and skills. To learn more about CHEW, contact Barb Gwinn at bwginn1@jhu.edu

Department will know your preference. We also can direct students to you during only the semesters you desire. If, however, your request is for specific weeks – rather than an entire semester (or half semester) – we will be unable to accommodate.

Q: My office is undergoing demolition. For the duration of repairs, we will not have sufficient office space to accommodate a full-time intern. Is it possible for interns to spend part of their time in the office, with the other part spent working from home?

A: We understand the dilemma. The Department's perspective, however, is that a complete and meaningful internship experience means working full-time in the professional world. If an agency does not have appropriate physical space to accommodate a full-time experience, we will be unable to place a student in your agency. Once repairs are complete, however, please let us know. We will be happy to return your agency to the list of approved placements.