Peace Corps Master’s International Program: Providing SPH Graduate Students With Unique Volunteer Service Around the Globe

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
- Chancellor Honors SPH Students
- DrPH Leadership Program
- Spending Spring Break in Granada
As another academic year comes to a close, I like to pause and reflect on all that our students, faculty, staff, alumni and supporters have helped the UIC School of Public Health accomplish in this issue of Healthviews. I am pleased to share with you stories that will make you proud to be part of the UIC SPH community.

You may have heard the news already about the $1.4 million estate gift that was generously left to UIC SPH by Dr. Paul Levy and Virginia Tomasek. This unrestricted gift is the largest to the school from an individual and will support student scholarships and establish the first endowed professorship in the division of epidemiology and biostatistics. You can read more about it on page 15. Check out the Pulse of Public Health on page 3 to see how members of the UIC SPH community suggest we use another gift of this size should one come our way!

I’m pleased to share news about a new online certificate program in Pharmacoepidemiology (see page 6). To my knowledge, it is the only fully online program to offer this kind of training and I know its potential reach is global. Another very unique online program offered by our school is our Doctorate in Public Health Leadership (DrPH) program. Check out pages 4-5 to find out what the buzz is all about!

I’m very proud of the fact that our faculty rank 8th on research funding per faculty member among schools and programs of public health. Read about our groundbreaking research in each of our divisions on pages 12-13. Robin Mermelstein, clinical professor of community health sciences, received UIC’s 2014 Woman of the Year Award (page 14). The award recognizes Dr. Mermelstein’s significant contributions to women’s health.

The school’s commitment to global health is evident by the impact we are having around the world. Check out pages 8-11 to learn more about our students, alumni and faculty working in various countries (and Chicago) to address public health concerns. Did you know that UIC SPH is partnering with the Peace Corps? Read about two students who are the first to graduate from our Peace Corps Master’s International (PCMI) program, the only program of its kind in the Midwest. Lastly, I hope you’ll see photos from the many events that took place during the past year (pages 24-25) and be inspired to join me at one of our alumni events planned for the upcoming year.

Wishing you good health,

Paul Brandt-Rauf, DrPH, MD, ScD
Dean, UIC School of Public Health
New UIC Chancellor Honors Public Health Students

A highlight of the academic year is the Chancellor’s Student Service and Leadership Awards (CSSLA) program. Since 1973, the CSSLA program has recognized outstanding student leaders and student volunteers who, while maintaining high academic achievement, demonstrate a commitment to the UIC community through student organizations and campus activities and through active service and community engagement throughout the greater Chicagoland area.

This year, UIC’s new Chancellor, Michael D. Amiridis, presented awards to 17 School of Public Health students through the CSSLA program. A 2016 graduate of the Bachelor of Arts program, Katie Bobbitt, also won the Eugertha Bates Memorial Award. This award honors a student whose volunteer activities in a campus or community setting demonstrate an outstanding degree of caring dedication, selfless commitment, and a truly exceptional humanitarian contribution to the needs of others. Ms. Bobbitt was nominated for her work with UIC’s Global Brigades, the largest student-led organization for global health and sustainable development. Not only did she volunteer on two trips to Honduras, but she also served as the inaugural Chapter President where she was able to expand the volunteer on two trips to Honduras, but she also served as the inaugural Chapter President where she was able to expand the

In addition to the individual students being recognized, the Mental Health and Disability Alliance (MHDA) received top honors as the New Student Organization of the Year. MHDA was founded by John Capua (MPH '15) to address barriers surrounding mental health and disability. Mr. Capua said he worked with other public health students during the group’s initial planning phase because he knew that people with mental health issues often don’t seek help because they are afraid of being stigmatized. With more than 50 members, the group includes undergrad and graduate students, staff and faculty working together to host events on campus to raise awareness. The group’s visibility on campus caught the eye of the Chancellor’s office because of the impact they are having on students’ lives. “It’s really important to have an open discussion about mental health. It’s okay to have depression, it’s okay to have PTSD, it’s okay to have these conditions.” Mr. Capua said. It’s no wonder the group received the top award for campus student organizations.

To make our world healthier, another gift of that size could go to support the incredible students of SPH. If another $1.4 million gift was used to execute some of the amazing health interventions and programs I’ve seen proposed by my classmates and peers, I have no doubts the world could become a healthier place.

Members of the Mental Health and Disability Alliance receive the New Student Organization of the Year award.

2015 CHANCELLOR’S STUDENT SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katie Bobbitt</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Capua</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Finn</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephina Frankovich</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachelle Johnson</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulliams Kamlem</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hee Jin Kim</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shambra McBrayer</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Pananookool</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015 Chancellor’s Student Service and Leadership Awards

ROHAN JEREMIAH, PHD, MPH
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES

I believe UIC School of Public Health should use its next major financial gift to establish a Center for Domestic and Global Health Equity with a mission to train scholars and practitioners to become leaders that foster cross-disciplinary and community-based public health projects around the world.

EMALEE PEARSON, MSW/
MPH CANDIDATE
PRESIDENT, PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ASSOCIATION

To make the world healthier, another gift of that size could go to support the incredible students of SPH. If another $1.4 million gift was used to execute some of the amazing health interventions and programs I’ve seen proposed by my classmates and peers, I have no doubts the world could become a healthier place.

When a school receives donations, it shows how much they believe in the programming. What an honor! UIC is respected for its research. Let’s keep it strong by providing scholarships to students who exhibit a financial need and by strengthening the pipeline programs for the next generation of public health professionals.

JAMEL RUSSELL, MPH '15
PRESIDENT, MINORITY STUDENTS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

With the shaky political climate and uncertain future of public health programs in the City of Chicago, we have the opportunity to make the world healthier by starting in our own backyard. Such gifts can be instrumental in positioning ourselves as key stakeholders who represent the interests of many of the underserved populations with whom we work.

HAMZA OBAID, MPH '13
ANALYST, PROVIDENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTING MEMBER, RECENT GRADUATE BOARD

The UIC School of Public Health recently received a $1.4 million gift from the estate of a former faculty member and his wife. If the school were to receive another gift of this size, how would you suggest they use it to make the world healthier? The UIC community weighs in...
Leading Change in the 21st Century: the DrPH

Public health as a discipline and the public’s health status present its leaders with a set of complex problems. With healthcare transformation, persistence of health conditions such as violence and chronic diseases, tremendous disparities and inequity in health, and emerging public health threats, leadership is vitally needed to meet these challenges in more effective and enduring ways. The call for leadership in public health is not new. For nearly a century, a succession of reports on public health authored by the Institute of Medicine and other authorities in the field have identified leadership as a key ingredient to more effective public health practice.

In 2005, the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health Doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) program was created to reflect the increased need for leadership to address the changing public health landscape. Led by Program Director Dr. Patrick Lenihan and colleagues, the DrPH program adopted a practice-leadership focus to strengthen public health leaders’ competency to drive change, develop policy, build systems, foster innovation and engage in scholarly practice that builds a strong foundation for evidence-based public health practice.

The program’s innovative design seeks to maximize its mission through pillars of action learning, adaptive leadership, and systematic reflection, and building the evidence-base of public health practice.

To ensure a practice-orientation, the DrPH program employs an action-learning approach. Nearly all students work full-time and in leadership positions, making it easier to facilitate application of lessons learned, and where leadership principles covered in the virtual classroom can be tested and shared. This real-time feedback reinforces the practice relevance of the content-oriented and theoretical material.

David Carrington joined the program in 2014 and serves as the President and CEO of a healthcare organization. He notes that in less than a year, the program’s approach has helped his understanding of effective leadership. “The program’s value is rooted in the ability to implement new knowledge immediately. It is more than just theory; the program assists me by providing real time solutions to real life leadership issues,” Mr. Carrington said.

The program’s six competencies guide a highly structured curriculum, consisting of nine core courses and a focused area of emphasis leading to the completion of a portfolio and a dissertation. The portfolio is a unique program feature and documents mastery of the six program competencies attained through a student’s professional career and academic achievements, including those in the DrPH program. Developed in stages using tools of systematic reflection, the portfolio is built as a student identifies, assesses, and presents in an integrated narrative an individual leadership vision along with evidence reflecting the application of each competency.

Students also complete a practice-based dissertation employing approaches that include a sophisticated use of data in problem-solving, the appraisal of evidence for application, the studied adaptation of evidence-based interventions under real world conditions and more traditionally the direct contribution to the evidence base through practice research.

Overall, the program focuses on providing a theoretical foundation and tools for leading change in today’s public health world using principles of adaptive leadership and systematic reflection. In nearly every required class, students apply an iterative process for complex problem solving that requires students to systematically reflect on possible innovative approaches that lead to a more enduring outcome.

Rocio Luna matriculated into the DrPH Program in 2012 and is a public health practitioner with over 20 years’ experience. Ms. Luna notes that she always appreciated the interconnectedness of factors that contribute to issues and problems faced by those practicing in the field. She knew that her master’s degree in public health provided her with a solid training base, but often only technical strategies for approaching complex public health problems. “Public health problems are often adaptive challenges that require experiential learning, critical new insights, innovation, and a systems perspective,” Ms. Luna says. “These are skills and concepts that I have learned and applied throughout the DrPH program and symbolize my evolutionary journey from manager to adaptive leader. As an adaptive leader, I am now in a better position to influence change, adopt new approaches, perspectives, and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves."

Lakisha Flagg, a member of the 2011 cohort, recently passed her dissertation proposal defense. An experienced Army public health nurse and a commissioned officer, Major Flagg already has nearly 15 years of experience. Despite her experience and strong expertise, she also notes that this approach to problem solving has been key to her work. “While in the program, I have collected a wide-range of knowledge and skills. One of my most critical learning points has been the ability to gain a true understanding of issues before beginning to solve them. And, I have learned that skills like these have the potential for application in many areas of my professional practice. I have used these skills in workforce development projects, conducting needs assessments, and coordinating and designing training. I have also been able to apply them to strategic projects involving multiple stakeholders to identify assumptions and mandates in order to clarify priorities. These skills have proven to be invaluable to me as I mature as a leader and I continue to find opportunities to refine them.”

Another key feature of the DrPH program is its distance-based, peer-learning model. Initiated in 2010, the DrPH program moved to an entirely distance-based format as well as applying a co-learning, cohort model to organizing the students. This change allows the program to tap into a broader and more diverse pool of students. It keeps students connected to their work settings across the world and helps to create a peer-based learning community and reinforce principles of experiential learning most effective for professional leadership development.

DrPH students matriculate into the program already as leaders in their areas of expertise but looking to take their leadership in new directions. They work internationally, nationally, and locally in either governmental public health, the military, academia, non-for profit sector, or healthcare making a strong impact in their settings.

Student’s work ranges in scope and topic, driving health and synergizes that require increasing access to services in rural Ethiopia; addressing barriers and facilitators to a range of public health issues such as reproductive life planning across the United States; addressing succession planning and the engagement of the public health workforce; implementing a state-wide performance management system to promote collective impact; or working to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in public health programming efforts.

Our graduates are also engaged in work that is transforming the field of public health. A recent graduate, Susanna Visser (DrPH ‘14) said that her time spent cultivating the DrPH competencies resulted in the virtual explosion of the Public Health landscape on the very ground that I was tending for impact in the field of pediatric behavioral health. As an epidemiologist at CDC, I found every opportunity to weave the DrPH content into my daily activities, embracing qualitative methods, critical thinking, policy evaluation, and strategic planning to further advance the more traditional epidemiologic approach that I had successfully relied upon for a decade. Taken together, these skills helped me position and expand an important public health issue into an initiative that was selected as an agency priority less than 6 months after graduation. I attribute a great part of this achievement to my more holistic view of the public health system that I gained from my time spent in the DrPH program.

If every student is able to impact the field of public health like Dr. Visser suggests, the DrPH program graduates will make a tremendous impact in the field of public health.

“Did you know? The UIC School of Public Health has one of only two online Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (DrPH) programs offered in the U.S.”

David Carrington, back row center, joins members of the 2014 cohort.

Students also complete a practice-based dissertation employing approaches that include a sophisticated use of data in problem-solving, the appraisal of evidence for application, the studied adaptation of evidence-based interventions under real world conditions and more traditionally the direct contribution to the evidence base through practice research.

Overall, the program focuses on providing a theoretical foundation and tools for leading change in today’s public health world using principles of adaptive leadership and systematic reflection. In nearly every required class, students apply an iterative process for complex problem solving that requires students to systematically reflect on possible innovative approaches that lead to a more enduring outcome.

Rocio Luna matriculated into the DrPH Program in 2012 and is a public health practitioner with over 20 years’ experience. Ms. Luna notes that she always appreciated the interconnectedness of factors that contribute to issues and problems faced by those practicing in the field. She knew that her master’s degree in public health provided her with a solid training base, but often only technical strategies for approaching complex public health problems. “Public health problems are often adaptive challenges that require experiential learning, critical new insights, innovation, and a systems perspective,” Ms. Luna says. “These are skills and concepts that I have learned and applied throughout the DrPH program and symbolize my evolutionary journey from manager to adaptive leader. As an adaptive leader, I am now in a better position to influence change, adopt new approaches, perspectives, and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves."

Lakisha Flagg, a member of the 2011 cohort, recently passed her dissertation proposal defense. An experienced Army public health nurse and a commissioned officer, Major Flagg already has nearly 15 years of experience. Despite her experience and strong expertise, she also notes that this approach to problem solving has been key to her work. “While in the program, I have collected a wide-range of knowledge and skills. One of my most critical learning points has been the ability to gain a true understanding of issues before beginning to solve them. And, I have learned that skills like these have the potential for application in many areas of my professional practice. I have used these skills in workforce development projects, conducting needs assessments, and coordinating and designing training. I have also been able to apply them to strategic projects involving multiple stakeholders to identify assumptions and mandates in order to clarify priorities. These skills have proven to be invaluable to me as I mature as a leader and I continue to find opportunities to refine them.”

Another key feature of the DrPH program is its distance-based, peer-learning model. Initiated in 2010, the DrPH program moved to an entirely distance-based format as well as applying a co-learning, cohort model to organizing the students. This change allows the program to tap into a broader and more diverse pool of students. It keeps students connected to their work settings across the world and helps to create a peer-based learning community and reinforce principles of experiential learning most effective for professional leadership development.

DrPH students matriculate into the program already as leaders in their areas of expertise but looking to take their leadership in new directions. They work internationally, nationally, and locally in either governmental public health, the military, academia, non-for profit sector, or healthcare making a strong impact in their settings.

Student’s work ranges in scope and topic, driving health and synergizes that require increasing access to services in rural Ethiopia; addressing barriers and facilitators to a range of public health issues such as reproductive life planning across the United States; addressing succession planning and the engagement of the public health workforce; implementing a state-wide performance management system to promote collective impact; or working to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in public health programming efforts.

Our graduates are also engaged in work that is transforming the field of public health. A recent graduate, Susanna Visser (DrPH ‘14) said that her time spent cultivating the DrPH competencies resulted in the virtual explosion of the Public Health landscape on the very ground that I was tending for impact in the field of pediatric behavioral health. As an epidemiologist at CDC, I found every opportunity to weave the DrPH content into my daily activities, embracing qualitative methods, critical thinking, policy evaluation, and strategic planning to further advance the more traditional epidemiologic approach that I had successfully relied upon for a decade. Taken together, these skills helped me position and expand an important public health issue into an initiative that was selected as an agency priority less than 6 months after graduation. I attribute a great part of this achievement to my more holistic view of the public health system that I gained from my time spent in the DrPH program.

If every student is able to impact the field of public health like Dr. Visser suggests, the DrPH program graduates will make a tremendous impact in the field of public health.

“Did you know? The UIC School of Public Health has one of only two online Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (DrPH) programs offered in the U.S.”

“Did you know? The UIC School of Public Health has one of only two online Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (DrPH) programs offered in the U.S.”

“Did you know? The UIC School of Public Health has one of only two online Doctor of Public Health in Leadership (DrPH) programs offered in the U.S.”
New Online Certificate Program Examines Effective Medication Use

The increased use and complexity of pharmaceuticals have led to public and societal concerns about medication safety and effectiveness. Better evidence on the benefits and harms of medications in populations is critically needed to help inform health care, health policy and treatment decisions made by providers and patients. Individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively examine medication use in large populations are highly sought after by employers from not only the pharmaceutical industry, but also those in consulting organizations, government agencies, and academia.

Together with the UIC College of Pharmacy, the School of Public Health will begin offering a Pharmacoepidemiology Certificate program in the Fall of 2015. “It fills a critical need for those health care professionals concerned with post-marketing drug surveillance and related issues such as drug marketing and comparative effectiveness and risk management,” said Paul Brandt-Rauf, Dean of the School of Public Health. “It is unique in that it is a fully online program that can reach a wide audience of practicing professionals.”

The field of pharmacoepidemiology focuses on medication use in large populations and the effect of those medications on the public’s health. Traditionally, there has been a particular focus on safety monitoring of medications once they come into widespread use, called pharmacovigilance. However, there is also an increasing appreciation of studying both the benefits and harms of medications in populations to help inform providers and patients when making treatment and prevention decisions and to ensure equity in medication access.

“My colleagues in the College of Pharmacy and I are excited to launch this certificate,” said Ronald Hershov, professor and director of the division of epidemiology and biostatistics. “It is designed to equip those working in the pharmaceutical industry for work that will greatly impact the safety and equitable use of medications in the U.S. In fact, it is the only fully online program to offer this kind of training and as such, its potential reach is global.”

Pharmacoepidemiology draws on many areas, including pharmacology, biostatistics, healthcare policy and regulatory affairs. “This field is particularly critical now due to the growth of the elderly population in the U.S. and elsewhere and the resultant increased medication use in those populations,” said Dr. Hershov. The pharmacoepidemiology certificate program will be important to persons currently working in the pharmaceutical industry or related fields that would benefit from additional skills and training. Traditional health science students will also benefit from the coursework since pharmacoepidemiology is a growing, important field.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

- No required campus visits
- 13 credit hour program
- Learn anytime, anywhere
- Diverse student population
- Fully-accredited and nationally-ranked university and colleges
- Renowned faculty with research and field experience
- Multidisciplinary instruction
- More than a decade of online teaching experience
- The certificate may be earned in one year (two courses each Fall and Spring semester)
- Credits could be used toward an MPH or other degree programs

For more information, call (312) 996-4795, email PECadmin@uic.edu or visit www.pharmacoepidemiologycertificate.uic.edu.

Oral Histories Play Vital Role in Community Health Assessment Course

While those in the humanities have known the importance of oral history for centuries, it has not been a common resource used for health research purposes. Instead, hard data—tangible numbers or statistics, for example—is typically favored by experts to get their messages across. That is starting to change, however, as evidenced by a multidisciplinary community health assessment being led by Dr. Jennifer Hebert-Beirne, assistant professor of community health sciences, and Jennifer Felner, MPH, PhD candidate who has been her teaching assistant for the past five semesters at the UIC School of Public Health. Master of Public Health candidates in the class are learning about the health needs and assets in Chicago’s North Lawndale and Little Village neighborhoods by engaging with community residents and hearing it in their own words.

The addition of oral histories as a data source in our Community Health Assessment began when we were told we weren’t getting the story that is Little Village,” explained Dr. Hebert-Beirne, simply by using traditional methods such as public surveillance data on births, deaths, disease and other health indicators. It was community partner Enlace Chicago’s suggestion to work with StoryCorps, a nonprofit that aims to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share and preserve the stories of our lives.

The next step is to urge others in the public health field to value qualitative data in addition to quantitative data, which is still extremely important at a community level. Katie McClellan, an MPH candidate in the class, said that after hearing these stories she recognized “that you place a number on someone’s story. This is so necessary to how we move forward in public health, rather than just numbering things.”
Making a Difference in the Health of Populations

1. CHICAGO

Nesha Usmani, MPH candidate in community health sciences, is a Wellness Program Intern at RefugeeOne. Her work includes organizing, maintaining, and updating a database of over 500 refugees, which is used to inform on mental health trends of refugees in Chicago. She will also conduct a literature review to look at perception as a barrier to health care access. This literature review will be used as a policy brief to inform stakeholders on the importance of refugee resettlement programs and refugee mental health.

2. CUBA

UIC SPH has now established a relationship with Escuela Nacional de Salud Publica (ENSAP), the National School of Public Health of Cuba. Dean Brandt-Rauf and Dr. Pastor Castell-Florit Serrate, Director of ENSAP, recently formalized the relationship with the signing of a collaboration between the two institutions. This will offer new opportunities for the Global Health Program and other faculty and students to work in Cuba.

3. HAITI

Janet Lin, MD, MPH led a group of UIC SPH students in a Disaster Risk Reduction project in Port-au-Prince, Haiti in March 2015. The UIC team partnered with the local YMCA d’Haiti to help community leaders build the capacity to assess, mitigate, and manage environmental threats, and build community resilience. This is the 4th time the training program has been implemented in Haiti. This project allowed the group to engage first-hand in the implementation of community-based disaster risk reduction programming.

4. SOUTH AFRICA

Katelyn Stermer, an MPH candidate in epidemiology and the Global Health concentration, was awarded a Boren Fellowship to spend 11 months abroad in Durban, South Africa. While the fellowship is primarily for immersive language study of isiZulu, she will also be enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and taking elective classes from their MPH curriculum. Katelyn will also have the opportunity to complete her practicum in rural KwaZulu-Natal collecting data on temporal trends in HIV infection as well as Tuberculosis (TB) co-infection.

5. ZAMBIA

Shannon Brunner, MPH ‘12 currently serves as a data analyst with the Prevention, Care and Treatment branch at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Zambia. Her work has included the development and management of data use training programs for healthcare practitioners, analyses and evaluations of HIV data, and geographic information systems (GIS) technical support for the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Zambia interagency team.

Around the World

Members of the Passaro family join the 2015 Passaro Scholarship Awardees.

NAME: Zabin S. Patel, MPH candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
LOCATION: Istanbul, Turkey
PROJECT: Zabin will conduct a cross-sectional study that investigates the Quality-of-Life (QoL) of Turkish patients receiving head and neck therapy. Zabin will also examine if QoL is related to socio-demographic variables, including age, educational level, marital status, area of residence, monthly income, and employment status, or clinical variables such as pain, type of surgical treatment, stages of disease, and time since surgery.

NAME: Courtney Babb, MPH
LOCATION: Nakuru District, Nakuru Province, Kenya
PROJECT: Courtney will be returning to Nyando, Kenya to lead a project that evaluates the effectiveness of a latrine intervention on childhood diarrheal health. She will be partnering with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation where she will conduct a cross sectional survey to compare the incidence of diarrhea in children in communities with and without the latrine intervention.

NAME: Krista Schaefer, MPH candidate in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
LOCATION: Kisumu, Kenya
PROJECT: Krista will work with the Nyanza Reproductive Health Society (NRHS) on the Sexual Health and Preserving the Environment (SHAPE) project. She will collect data and make observations to answer questions regarding access to care in rural, resource-constrained areas.

Name Nesha Usmani speaking about her global health work at the 2015 Annual Alumni Celebration.
Global Health Program Partnership With Peace Corps

Through its Global Health Program, the UIC School of Public Health is dedicated to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of people and communities throughout the world. The program supports education and research across disciplines to find new approaches and creative solutions for global health challenges. One way in which the program does this is through its collaboration with the Peace Corps to offer a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree that includes a foreign service component. The Peace Corps Master’s International (PCMI) program in public health is the only program of its kind in the Midwest.

*Preparing students to work in global environments and become successful contributors to global health solutions is a high priority at the UIC School of Public Health. The PCMI program provides the perfect opportunity for our students to accomplish this by applying their skills to promote healthy populations and improve the quality of life in countries in need around the world,* said Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf.

Now in its fifth year, the PCMI program provides rigorous public health training, equipping students with the management, methods, and application skills they need to improve health outcomes in their host countries. Candidates enrolled in the program take most of their MPH courses before entering Peace Corps service and, upon completion of the program, will have attained both academic training and substantial field experience. Brian Barg (MPH ’14) and Jessica Ruggiero (MPH ’15) are two students in the first cohort to complete the program.

Mr. Barg spent 26 months in Malawi where he was a Community Health Advisor. He worked with community members in his village to implement projects and conduct trainings on topics such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, malaria, and natural medicine. He says a critical lesson he learned was the importance of cultural competency when designing or implementing a program. “I did my best to take different considerations into account during planning. For example, not having sessions on market days because no one would show up.” Mr. Barg explained. The PCMI program offered him a unique opportunity, he said. “It served as a place to directly apply what I learned in the classroom in a real world setting. While Peace Corps does train you on some basic health education, I felt better with the additional knowledge I got from UIC.”

Ms. Ruggiero was in Botswana for 25 months. “My first two months were in-country Peace Corps training, including language, culture, and our responsibilities as volunteers,” she explained. “After training, I moved to my village for the remainder of my service.” As a School and Community Liaison for Life Skills, Ms. Ruggiero led a weekly health/leadership club after school “where fifty kids would meet me under a tree to talk about topics such as HIV prevention, decision making, goal setting, and self-esteem.” She also managed the school library, started a community exercise group, assisted the HIV support group with grant proposals, and taught the adult education class to make jewelry from recycled magazines. She used the data she collected from a youth empowerment and HIV prevention camp for her capstone project.

Both Mr. Barg and Ms. Ruggiero credit the PCMI program with having a significant impact on their lives. They both would recommend the program to anyone who is interested in global health work. “If you are wanting to step off the path and do something different, challenge yourself in a way you never have, then this is the opportunity of a lifetime. It is definitely not the easy choice, and there were times I asked myself what I was thinking, but at this point I feel that it was the best decision I ever could have made,” Ms. Ruggiero said.

In March 2015, the UIC School of Public Health and the University of Michigan School of Public Health (UMSPH) piloted the Public Health Action Support Team (PHAST), a global public health practice and training program in Grenada, West Indies. PHAST is an interdisciplinary public health practice group of MPH students, faculty and staff members that help health departments and community organizations with short-term public health related projects. Over spring break, PHAST was deployed to Grenada, a tri-island state comprising the islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique, located in the most southerly part of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean.

“The objectives of these PHAST global opportunities are to train public health graduate students to respond to the needs of public health agencies and programs, enhance public health graduate students educational experience through real-world public health experiences, and promote professional development in the field of public health,” said Rohan D. Jeremiah, assistant professor in community health sciences and PHAST Lead Coordinator.

Students served as public health consultants to numerous community-based organizations, government departments, public and private sector programs, facilitating ways to improve the health of people across the nation. They provided public health capacity building to three community driven projects in Grenada. The host organizations were: Cedars Home for Abused Women, the only domestic violence shelter and home of its kind on the island; the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association, and the Drug Control Secretariat located within Grenada’s Ministry of Education.

Students working at Cedars Home assisted with an asset-based assessment of the organization, supported the development of an organizational strategic plan, and developed safety protocols for residents and staff. PHAST members working with the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association conducted qualitative interviews to explore the increased rates of unsafe reproductive health practices and public health implications. At the Drug Control Secretariat, PHAST conducted interviews to explore the gendered expressions and justifications of alcohol usage among Grenadian adolescents as well as contributed to the development of the country’s new alcohol control policy.

“We at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development are pleased with the technical assistance provided by the PHAST and St. George’s University. Their assistance will contribute immensely to public health in Grenada,” said Dave Alexander, Drug Control Officer, Drug Control Secretariat.

Several media outlets in Grenada and across the Caribbean region featured our PHAST students’ activities, highlighting their roles in providing technical assistance in various public health sectors. Dana Thomas, Program Manager at UMSPH remarked, “We are pleased to have the PHAST model become a part of UIC. We believe that this multi-institutional partnership that seeks to provide training for our students to benefit our global communities is an ideal platform for engaged global learning and partnership building.”

Both institutions intend to deploy PHAST annually during spring break, as well as arrange individual field experiences during the summer in order to maintain project continuity. "This is an exciting new global health initiative at UIC," said Alyson Lofthouse, Associate Director of the school’s Global Health Program. “We look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in Grenada and at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.”

Dr. Rohan Jeremiah and Casey Lowman interview Sergeant Francois of the Grenada Royal Police Force.

Dr. Ruggiero with students in her adult education class with whom she worked on income-generating projects like making jewelry from recycled magazines.

Students served as public health consultants to numerous community-based organizations, government departments, public and private sector programs, facilitating ways to improve the health of people across the nation. They provided public health capacity building to three community driven projects in Grenada. The host organizations were: Cedars Home for Abused Women, the only domestic violence shelter and home of its kind on the island; the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association, and the Drug Control Secretariat located within Grenada’s Ministry of Education.

Students working at Cedars Home assisted with an asset-based assessment of the organization, supported the development of an organizational strategic plan, and developed safety protocols for residents and staff. PHAST members working with the Grenada Planned Parenthood Association conducted qualitative interviews to explore the increased rates of unsafe reproductive health practices and public health implications. At the Drug Control Secretariat, PHAST conducted interviews to explore the gendered expressions and justifications of alcohol usage among Grenadian adolescents as well as contributed to the development of the country’s new alcohol control policy.

“We at the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development are pleased with the technical assistance provided by the PHAST and St. George’s University. Their assistance will contribute immensely to public health in Grenada,” said Dave Alexander, Drug Control Officer, Drug Control Secretariat.

Several media outlets in Grenada and across the Caribbean region featured our PHAST students’ activities, highlighting their roles in providing technical assistance in various public health sectors. Dana Thomas, Program Manager at UMSPH remarked, “We are pleased to have the PHAST model become a part of UIC. We believe that this multi-institutional partnership that seeks to provide training for our students to benefit our global communities is an ideal platform for engaged global learning and partnership building.”

Both institutions intend to deploy PHAST annually during spring break, as well as arrange individual field experiences during the summer in order to maintain project continuity. “This is an exciting new global health initiative at UIC,” said Alyson Lofthouse, Associate Director of the school’s Global Health Program. “We look forward to continued collaboration with our partners in Grenada and at the University of Michigan School of Public Health.”
Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Dr. Basminette Boodram is a Research Assistant Professor in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and an active researcher in the Division’s Community Outreach Intervention Projects (COIP). Her highly interdisciplinary research addresses the complex interplay of individual, social, and structural factors that lead to health disparities among marginalized populations. Her recent work examines the potential for the still emerging population of predominantly non-white, suburban youth who inject drugs (PWID) to “bridge” HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) as they move between communities with high and low infection prevalence.

Dr. Boodram is UIC’s principal investigator of an intervention project called Hepatitis C Community Alliance to Test and Treat (HepCATT), a program representing a highly innovative interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration that includes the Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health, University of Chicago, Northwestern University, American Liver Foundation, Walgreens, and numerous Chicago area healthcare centers. HepCATT will build Chicago’s capacity to test for and cure HCV infections. An estimated 70,000 Chicago residents are living with HCV infection. Approximately half are unaware of the infection, HepCATT will work to strengthen early HCV diagnosis and address barriers to treatment, enrollment and adherence through the first HCV-based intensive case management program, which was developed by Dr. Boodram. It will also aim to cure HCV infection among Chicago residents most affected, developing a state-of-the-art HCV virtual healthcare system and enhance cross-agency collaboration and advocacy for HCV-affected populations.

Dr. Boodram’s interdisciplinary approach can also be found in her novel approach to infectious disease transmission and intervention modeling. She co-founded the Consortium for Modeling and Analysis of Treatments and Interventions (www.c-mati.org), which provides a forum for active development of cross-cutting multidisciplinary research, bringing together diverse researchers to generate realistic computational models for advancing public health and clinical interventions.

Dr. Boodram was the co-principal investigator of a recent UIC Vice Chancellor Award of Excellence grant where she led a team in the development of the first realistic computational model to examine HCV among PWID in Chicago that maximized use of 25 years of empirical data. The goal of this work is to facilitate research inquiry not feasible using empirical epidemiological studies, including epidemic forecasting, evaluating the impact of treatment scale up, and simulation of phase III vaccine trials through a collaboration with the Food and Drug Administration.

Division of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences

Environmental monitoring is long-term and costly, but it is necessary to safeguard the health of humans and the ecosystem. Numerous chemicals have been synthesized in recent decades, and some are now classified as chemicals of emerging concerns (CECs) because they are persistent in the environment, accumulate in humans and animals, and toxic. With funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. An Li, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences, has led the project Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program (GLSSP) since 2010.

In this project, Dr. Li’s team has collected more than a thousand sediment samples. These samples are being analyzed for hundreds of highly concerned CECs, using sophisticated laboratory procedures and instruments. For example, herbicide atrazine and its degradation products have been found to accumulate in the sediment of Lake Michigan, with their concentrations increasing exponentially over time. In addition, the sediment from the southern lake was found to be significantly more heavily contaminated than those in the northern, in agreement with the agricultural use pattern of this herbicide. Dr. Li’s major collaborators include Professor John P. Giesy of the University of Saskatchewan, Professor Neil C. Sturchio of the University of Denver, and Professor Karl J. Rockne from UIC Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. More than twenty others including visiting scholars, postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduate assistants have participated in this work.

Division of Community Health Sciences

Environmental monitoring is long-term and costly, but it is necessary to safeguard the health of humans and the ecosystem. Numerous chemicals have been synthesized in recent decades, and some are now classified as chemicals of emerging concerns (CECs) because they are persistent in the environment, accumulate in humans and animals, and toxic. With funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Dr. An Li, professor of environmental and occupational health sciences, has led the project Great Lakes Sediment Surveillance Program (GLSSP) since 2010.

In this project, Dr. Li’s team has collected more than a thousand sediment samples. These samples are being analyzed for hundreds of highly concerned CECs, using sophisticated laboratory procedures and instruments. For example, herbicide atrazine and its degradation products have been found to accumulate in the sediment of Lake Michigan, with their concentrations increasing exponentially over time. In addition, the sediment from the southern lake was found to be significantly more heavily contaminated than those in the northern, in agreement with the agricultural use pattern of this herbicide. Dr. Li’s major collaborators include Professor John P. Giesy of the University of Saskatchewan, Professor Neil C. Sturchio of the University of Denver, and Professor Karl J. Rockne from UIC Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. More than twenty others including visiting scholars, postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduate assistants have participated in this work.

Dr. David DuBois, professor of community health sciences and Fellow of the Institute for Health Research and Policy, has devoted his career to investigating factors that contribute to holistic positive development for young persons and translating scientific knowledge in this area to the design of effective programs and policies. His work focuses on the role of mentoring relationships in strengthening the health and well-being of youth. With funding from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, he is leading two studies that involve the oldest and largest mentoring program in the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters. In this program, volunteers are trained to form supportive, long-term relationships with youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Youth served by the program experience adversity in their lives, ranging from poverty to incarceration of a parent. One of Dr. DuBois’s studies is investigating the benefits of introducing strategies to promote youth thriving into the program. In collaboration with national program staff and Big Brothers Big Sisters affiliates in different parts of the country, over 800 youth and their mentors have been randomly assigned to receive either the new thriving supports or standard program services. The new supports focus on helping youth on a journey toward personal thriving. The process begins with the mentor helping the young person to discover and explore his or her “sparks” area of special interest. A youth’s sparks may help stimulate longer-term career goals and serve as potent sources of motivation for efforts to both do well in school and sustain engagement in healthy behaviors. Later activities draw on recent brain science to help youth better appreciate their inherent capacity for continuous learning and further development of their skills, thus countering the negative stereotypes that research has shown can undermine the confidence and hope of vulnerable young persons.

Dr. DuBois is also leading an investigation of the long-term effects that participation in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program may have on health and well-being in adulthood. This research follows up with participants from a randomized controlled trial of the program conducted in the early 1990s to assess their health, educational, and employment status as adults. Dr. DuBois and his research team will be working to locate and survey the more than 1,000 participants in the original trial. Study results will offer important insight into whether parcels vulnerable young persons European American children who have a supportive mentor-volunteer can alter their prospects for becoming healthy and contributing members of their communities.

Division of Health Policy and Administration

Dr. Jamie F. Chiarelli, professor of health policy and administration and Fellow in the Institute for Health Research and Policy (IHRP), has dedicated her career to answering an old question, “Do policies matter?” with a resounding Yes. Her research focuses on understanding the nature and extent of public health laws and policies adopted by state and local governments nationwide and examining their impact on communities, schools, and individual health-related outcomes.

Her educational training in political science, health policy, and policy sciences, combined with her applied experience working as a policy analyst at the National Institutes of Health and as a federal government contractor prior to joining UIC in 2007, provide her with unique insights as to how the policy process works in practice, which she routinely applies to her research and teaching.

Dr. Chiarelli’s research has spanned a wide range of chronic disease policy issues, including illicit drug use, substance abuse treatment, cancer prevention, HIV/AIDS, injury prevention, and tobacco control. For the better part of the past decade, however, she has focused on obesity policy-related issues. This work has primarily been funded by grants and contracts from the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (CDER), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For the past eight years, her research has focused heavily on studying the prevalence, comprehensiveness and strength of school-district wellness policies, which are mandated by Congress, and related state laws across the country as well as food and beverage taxation from jurisdictions nationwide.

More recently, with UIC colleagues Drs. Sandy Slater and Lisa Nicholson, she has been leading first-of-its-kind research to examine the active living orientation of local zoning codes adopted across the country and their relationship with the active living orientation of communities and adult physical activity.

As a spinoff of their zoning work, Drs. Chiarelli and Slater were recently awarded a CDC Special Interest Project as part of the Illinois Prevention Research Center at IHRP to collaborate in the CDC’s Physical Activity Policy Research Network. As part of this work, they continue to refine their methods for studying the implementation of more active-oriented zoning codes through changes to community environments using Google Earth aerial photography methods.

Dr. Chiarelli has become nationally recognized as an obesity policy research expert. She has been appointed to numerous national committees and advisory boards, including two Institute of Medicine committees, and has collaborated with Chicago Public Schools, and advises the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago’s Children on policies and strategies to fight obesity here in our city. Her career demonstrates that policies can and do promote public health.
Robin Mermelstein Named Woman of the Year

Robin Mermelstein, professor of psychology and clinical professor of community health sciences, has been named the 2014 Woman of the Year by the University of Illinois at Chicago Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women. The award recognizes Dr. Mermelstein’s staunch support of women as a mentor and leader on campus and her contributions to women’s health as a scientist.

Dr. Mermelstein is a nationally respected researcher of health behaviors funded by the National Institutes of Health. Since 2008, she has directed the Institute for Health Research and Development awards.

She has devoted countless hours providing opportunities, advice, and a safe haven for women,” Dr. Donenberg wrote, mentioning that Dr. Mermelstein is often asked to help mentor and advise junior women faculty from the School of Public Health. “She provides the much-needed support, helpful feedback, and confidence-building for these women. They uniformly report feeling more comfortable with their career directions and motivated to keep moving forward after speaking with her.”

Letters supporting Dr. Mermelstein’s nomination were written by her former students, academic professionals who have worked for her, and investigators from the fields of medicine, nursing, public health and psychology. As one of her colleagues wrote, “Robin is a natural role model for anyone who has the privilege of working with her.”

Established in 1992, the Woman of the Year award honors a UIUC woman who has consistently worked on women’s issues beyond the call of duty and who is an exemplary role model. The award criteria include providing service to women at UIUC while on the job, responding to issues affecting women, and offering service to women through volunteerism and public support of women’s programs.

“Robin exemplifies ‘Woman of Year’ by helping all women thrive in their research, maintain a sense of purpose and excitement about their work, take pride in their accomplishments, problem-solve challenges, network with colleagues, and ultimately succeed in their careers,” Dr. Donenberg wrote in a speech read by Interim Chancellor Eric Galsan in a March 15 luncheon hosted by the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women.

Geri Donenberg, associate dean for research at the School of Public Health and professor of psychology in psychiatry, nominated Mermelstein for the award. She wrote that for almost 30 years, she has “watched Robin demonstrate an unwavering commitment to advancing women’s career development and women’s health research.”

Dr. Mermelstein, who joined UIC faculty in 1989, conducts research tracking the development and progression of health-compromising (e.g., cigarette smoking, substance use) and health-enhancing behaviors and develops and evaluates programs to help change unhealthy behaviors. “Robin’s research and scholarly activity have been dedicated to improving women’s health and have had an impressive population impact with potential to greatly reduce a primary cause of morbidity and mortality in women - cigarette smoking,” read the Interim Chancellor. Among her contributions, Dr. Mermelstein has served as the dissertation advisor for more than three dozen doctoral students in psychology and as a dissertation committee member for 20 other doctoral students, including those from the School of Public Health. Dr. Mermelstein also has served as the primary mentor for a dozen recipients of career development awards.

The Chicago Plays! initiative by the Mayor’s Office to renovate the city’s playgrounds — 39 that have been renovated and 39 that have not — to determine whether community stakeholders influence park utilization and physical activity and in turn shape the neighborhood social environment.

“Given the importance of moderate to vigorous physical activity in reducing chronic disease risk, and the fact that only one-quarter of low-income urban minority youth currently meet national recommendations, the research is highly significant,” Dr. Powell said.

The center allows UIC researchers across the health sciences to further develop community collaborations and improve the evidence-base on what environments and policy changes work best to improve the health of Chicagoans,” said Dr. Powell. For example, Slater and her Illinois PRC colleagues are collaborating with the Chicago Park District and Friends of the Parks in the park study. They also will work closely with community residents and neighborhood park councils during the intervention phase of the project. Furthermore, members of local park advisory councils and neighborhood coalitions funded for renovations in the Chicago Play! program serve on a committee advising the research team.

The center also is partnering with local and state government, community groups and small businesses to conduct research. The findings will help guide public health policies and environmental changes aimed at improving nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco avoidance to reduce chronic disease risk — and to diminish disparities among population groups in these health behaviors and outcomes.

The Illinois center was awarded additional funding to support its collaboration in five national CDC networks that address specific research priorities. The funding also supports UIC researchers to work with additional community partners to conduct special interest projects locally:

- Develop a personalized, internet-assisted patient education tool to self-manage epilepsy
- Address critical global public health problems such as chronic disease through a community participatory approach to health service delivery
- Address the health needs of minority, immigrant and low wage workers who are at increased risk for chronic diseases and injury through an evaluation of physical activity and injuries among home care aids
- Examine the role that zoning codes, land use, and smart growth policies may play in facilitating walkable communities and walking
- Examine the impact of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative on the local retail food environment in underserved communities.

The MidAmerica Center for Public Health Practice of the School of Public Health is providing training to local public health professionals as part of the Illinois PRC. With the Cook County Department of Public Health and Illinois PRC researchers, they organized the May 2015 Change Institute, two days of technical training for 200 people interested in building healthier communities.

The UIC School of Public Health will publish updates on the Illinois PRC’s many interesting projects over the next five years. To learn more about the Illinois PRC, visit http://go.uic.edu/IllinoisPRC.
Dr. Susan Scrimshaw, Ph.D., believes she developed her love of helping people as a child in rural Guatemala in the back of a Jeep. She spent her formative years traveling from remote village to village in the Central American country, where she often assisted her father, Dr. Nevin Scrimshaw, a pioneer nutritionist who the New York Times stated “improved the health of millions of children in developing countries by creating low-cost vegetable-based foods for weaning infants.”

It was in those villages where Dr. Scrimshaw grew to admire the Latin culture and learned how to give back. “I grew up identifying as a Latin woman, which shaped who I am and how I worked,” Dr. Scrimshaw said. “Latinos are very focused on people and family relationships.”

Dr. Scrimshaw’s time at UIC SPH was also good for her personal development. “It was a team effort,” she said. “It was about recognizing anyone who has included the school in their estate plan. ‘I want to help a student of Latino origin to complete their education,’” she said. “Giving back is very important to me.”

The current dean at the UIC SPH, Paul Brandt-Rauf, said that Dr. Scrimshaw’s gift will have a significant impact on the school’s ability to continue her tradition of providing educational opportunities to deserving students dedicated to addressing issues of Latino Health. “As the cost of education continues to climb and the state’s investment in higher education continues to decline, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the special mission of our school without additional sources of support,” he said. “This is especially true for maintaining access to educational opportunities in public health for students from disadvantaged communities and for their work addressing the health needs of those communities. Fortunately, we do have many loyal supporters who believe in our mission and value of our work.”

“Susan Scrimshaw’s generous bequest is an outstanding example of this loyalty and dedication,” he continued. “We are deeply indebted to her for all she has done for the school in the past and for her continuing generosity.”

During her time at the school, Dr. Scrimshaw was beloved by the staff, faculty and students as well. “The wonderful thing about Susan was how supportive she was,” Dr. Wiebel said. “She relished in a discussion with an outreach worker who didn’t even have a high school education and their entire life was on the streets. She was comfortable going from the world of academia to the world of a sex worker on a street.”

The reason for that is simple, said Dr. Scrimshaw. “I like people.”

There was a time during Dr. Scrimshaw’s tenure when Congress pressured the NIH to stop funding needle exchange. “I funded it out of private donations,” she said. “I couldn’t let it drop.”

Dr. Scrimshaw said she was well aware of the need to feature experts from the field of community violence and COIP was the community involvement. Both programs became successful, but it was not always easy to communicate those successes, she said. “I believe very strongly in community health and applied research that could range from bench work to community-based work,” she said. “But working in the community is not always easy to delineate. You can’t conduct an experiment the way you can in a lab.”

Dr. Wiebel agreed. “Susan got it,” he said. “She was very keen on any community-based programming. She also got how difficult it was to change behaviors.”

While at the university, Dr. Scrimshaw and her team brought in more research money per capita than the UIC medical school did. The school was also second to the medical school in absolute dollars brought in on research. All of this, with only a fifth of the faculty of the medical school, she said. “It was a team effort,” she said. “They just needed someone to encourage them.”

Dr. Scrimshaw’s time at UIC SPH was also good for her personal life. She met her would-be-husband, Allan Stern, whom she married just a few months before leaving the school for her next past and for her continuing generosity.”

There was a time during Dr. Scrimshaw’s tenure when Congress pressured the NIH to stop funding needle exchange. “I funded it out of private donations,” she said. “I couldn’t let it drop.”

Dr. Scrimshaw said she was well aware of the need to feature experts from the field of community violence and COIP was the community involvement. Both programs became successful, but it was not always easy to communicate those successes, she said. “I believe very strongly in community health and applied research that could range from bench work to community-based work,” she said. “But working in the community is not always easy to delineate. You can’t conduct an experiment the way you can in a lab.”

Dr. Wiebel agreed. “Susan got it,” he said. “She was very keen on any community-based programming. She also got how difficult it was to change behaviors.”

While at the university, Dr. Scrimshaw and her team brought in more research money per capita than the UIC medical school did. The school was also second to the medical school in absolute dollars brought in on research. All of this, with only a fifth of the faculty of the medical school, she said. “It was a team effort,” she said. “They just needed someone to encourage them.”

Dr. Scrimshaw’s time at UIC SPH was also good for her personal life. She met her would-be-husband, Allan Stern, whom she married just a few months before leaving the school for her next job as president at Simmons College in Boston. The couple asked their wedding guests to forgo giving them gifts and either make a donation to their church or to the UIC SPH.

“I believe so strongly that once we are able to give back we should,” Dr. Scrimshaw said. “Someone helped you and you should always give back when you can.”

The concept of giving back and helping others is concepts that were driven home to her by both of her parents, Nevin and Mary Scrimshaw. While Nevin Scrimshaw did his work in Guatemala on nutrition and also worked to end endemic goiter (a swelling of the thyroid gland that can lead to mental retardation, deafness and dwarfism), Mary Scrimshaw, a biologist, did graduate work in anthropology—while raising five children.

From his wife, Nevin Scrimshaw learned the importance of consulting anthropologists and consulted with renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead about his work in Guatemala. “She accepted a meeting with him and they talked for hours,” Susan Scrimshaw said, adding that Mead insisted on the importance of adding anthropologists to his team in Guatemala.

Dr. Scrimshaw, always supported by her remarkable father, remembers a day when she was about 12 when he came back from a leadership conference. “He put his nametag on me and said ‘You are going to be Dr. Scrimshaw one day,’” she said.

Although Dr. Scrimshaw has left Chicago, she still remains committed to UIC SPH. Earlier this year she added the school to her estate plan, leaving a generous gift to the school to make sure that students have the same opportunities she has had through education. Because of her gift, Scrimshaw is now a charter member of the UIC SPH Legacy Society, a special group recognizing anyone who has included the school in their estate plan. “I want to help a student of Latino origin to complete their education,” she said. “Giving back is very important to me.”

The current dean at the UIC SPH, Paul Brandt-Rauf, said that Dr. Scrimshaw’s gift will have a significant impact on the school’s ability to continue her tradition of providing educational opportunities to deserving students dedicated to addressing issues of Latino Health. “As the cost of education continues to climb and the state’s investment in higher education continues to decline, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the special mission of our school without additional sources of support,” he said. “This is especially true for maintaining access to educational opportunities in public health for students from disadvantaged communities and for their work addressing the health needs of those communities. Fortunately, we do have many loyal supporters who believe in our mission and value of our work.”

“Susan Scrimshaw’s generous bequest is an outstanding example of this loyalty and dedication,” he continued. “We are deeply indebted to her for all she has done for the school in the past and for her continuing generosity.”

During her time at the school, Dr. Scrimshaw was beloved by the staff, faculty and students as well. “The wonderful thing about Susan was how supportive she was,” Dr. Wiebel said. “She relished in a discussion with an outreach worker who didn’t even have a high school education and their entire life was on the streets. She was comfortable going from the world of academia to the world of a sex worker on a street.”

The reason for that is simple, said Dr. Scrimshaw. “I like people.”

When asked about Nevin Scrimshaw and his work in Guatemala on nutrition and other important issues of Latino Health. “As the cost of education continues to climb and the state’s investment in higher education continues to decline, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain the special mission of our school without additional sources of support,” he said. “This is especially true for maintaining access to educational opportunities in public health for students from disadvantaged communities and for their work addressing the health needs of those communities. Fortunately, we do have many loyal supporters who believe in our mission and value of our work.”

“Susan Scrimshaw’s generous bequest is an outstanding example of this loyalty and dedication,” he continued. “We are deeply indebted to her for all she has done for the school in the past and for her continuing generosity.”

During her time at the school, Dr. Scrimshaw was beloved by the staff, faculty and students as well. “The wonderful thing about Susan was how supportive she was,” Dr. Wiebel said. “She relished in a discussion with an outreach worker who didn’t even have a high school education and their entire life was on the streets. She was comfortable going from the world of academia to the world of a sex worker on a street.”

The reason for that is simple, said Dr. Scrimshaw. “I like people.”
Endowment Encourages Academic Evaluation

Those who have benefited from an institution should give back to it if they can, believes Lee Hamilton, who received her MPH from the UIC School of Public Health in 1970. So Ms. Hamilton generously endowed $25,000 to the school to stimulate study in health policy research, an area she feels is often overlooked. She hopes the gift will encourage thoughtful academic evaluation of the short and long term impact of changes in health care delivery systems resulting from the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Since the ACA is one of the most major pieces of legislation our country has seen, Ms. Hamilton believes that many parts of it need to be studied, including how services are being delivered, how unfunded mandates will be handled, how success is defined and outcomes measured. “Our endowed funds provide students with needed aid to enhance their academic experience and make their education more affordable,” said Craig Hyland, Assistant Dean for Advancement, “Gifts like Lee’s are invaluable to our students.”

Ms. Hamilton was able to meet the student who is the first scholarship recipient of her endowed gift at the school’s annual Research and Awards Day. Michele Thornton, a PhD candidate in health policy and administration, received the scholarship and will conduct a study on the impact of the first two years of the ACA’s implementation. Ms. Thornton’s work will explore the impact of different types of outreach/enrollment efforts on the uninsured population. “I am so honored to be the first recipient of the Hamilton Scholarship. It will assist me in sharing my work by UIC at upcoming academic conferences. I’m thrilled that my interests aligned with Ms. Hamilton’s and I look forward to sharing my ongoing work with her and the UIC SPH community as it evolves,” said Ms. Thornton.

But while the impact of the ACA is of particular interest because of the magnitude of change it imposes, the school is not limited to its ongoing work with her and the UIC SPH community as it evolves,” said Ms. Thornton.

A speech and hearing therapist by training, Ms. Hamilton started working at UIC in 1966 as an instructor and then acting director of research in the Department of Otolaryngology. There, her focus was on research in early identification of hearing loss in high risk populations such as premature infants. She pursued an MPH because she recognized that to grow professionally an advanced degree was essential. Public health helped strengthened her academic skills and supported her professional interests.

After obtaining her MPH, Ms. Hamilton said she was able to take on new challenges as she advanced professionally at the UIC Medical Center. It also enabled her to develop opportunities outside the university by expanding her professional network.

Ms. Hamilton retired in 1997 from the UIC’s Office of the Vice Chancellor of Health Services. While in the office, she was involved in strategic planning, program development and policy analysis.

After retirement she worked as a consultant to the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs at Roosevelt University on a project concerning the multifaceted impact of substance abuse on metropolitan Chicago. Ms. Hamilton says she hopes students will be encouraged to pursue a degree in public health.

The study of public health is important because it relates to every aspect of our daily lives,” she said. “Public Health is multifaceted, calling upon the talents of many disciplines committed to research and the promotion of health and well-being at local, national and international levels. I would encourage students to explore public health because it offers both the opportunities and the flexibility to tailor careers that will meet their individual interests and academic strengths.”

The Power of a Transformational Gift

As a founding faculty member, and the first director of the school’s Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Dr. Paul Levy is remembered by colleagues as being transformational in his field. A highly innovative biostatistician whose expertise was widely sought by biomedical and public health researchers around the world, Dr. Levy, through his work, improved the lives of millions. Although he passed away in 2012, he will continue to impact the lives of many through a generous estate gift he and his late wife, Virginia F. Tomasek, made to the UIC School of Public Health.

“I feel this gift is a clear example of Paul and Virginia’s leadership and a capstone to the legacy they worked to build over their lives,” said Dean Brandt-Rauf. The estate gift of $1.4 million, the largest to the school from an individual, will support the first endowed professorship in the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics – the Paul Levy and Virginia Tomasek Professorship.

“This gift will be transformational for the School of Public Health,” said Dean Brandt-Rauf. “Having an endowed professorship named after Paul Levy is certain to be a powerful attractant for top talent in the field because he did so much well-known, groundbreaking work.”

In the early 1980s, Dr. Levy helped create data collection and analysis tools for the Centers for Disease Control’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, the world’s largest ongoing phone-based health survey. That system is “still yielding important health data that guides U.S. public health decision making,” said Ronald Hershow, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Director of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

The UIC School of Public Health has been sustained through the years by the generous gifts of many faithful friends. We are proud to honor the distinguished group of leadership donors who, year after year, help the University to prepare our students for success. Membership in the Founders Circle recognizes donors who make annual gifts of $500 or more. Benefits of membership include:

• Exclusive invitations to Founders Circle receptions
• Special communications from Dean Paul Brandt-Rauf
• Invitation to An Evening With Legacies and Leaders dinner

The Legacy Society was created by leaders who are ensuring both the school’s and their legacies live on into the future. “Their impact will be felt for decades to come. And we are proud they chose us as the stewards of their legacy,” said Dean Brandt-Rauf.

For more information about the Legacy or Founders Circles, contact Craig Hyland, Assistant Dean for Advancement, at craig@uic.edu or 312-355-4501.
Health officer of the Illinois Hospital has been appointed the first chief in the Ebola virus.

Liberians, who had been infected with workers, both international and designed to provide care to healthcare of Force Protection at the Monrovia October – December 2014 as the head deployed to Monrovia, Liberia from Safety and Health (NIOSH), was bestowed by the Mailman School.

It is the top alumni honor contributed to the Mailman School public health and been an important of Public Health. This award recognizes Columbia University - Mailman School Excellence in Public Health, awarded by the Alumni Association's Loyalty Award.

The award is given to alumni who make significant, notable and meritorious contributions, and who have consistently demonstrated exceptional loyalty, commitment, dedication and service to the University.

A special issue of Criminal Justice of community health sciences, has been named a 2015-16 Faculty Fellow from the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.

The Knox County Board of Health named MICHELE PISHBURN (MPH '09) to the dual role of public health administrator and CEO of the Knox County Community Health Center.

MARIAN FITZGIBBON, professor of health policy and administration, was inducted as president of the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) during the 36th Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions. SBM is a 2,200-member organization of scientific researchers, clinicians and educators.

Suzet McKinney (DrPh '08) was honored at the Women Driving Excellence (WDE) at the 2015 Chicago Auto Show. The event celebrates women who help start, accelerate, fuel, and steer others to excellence.

A special issue of Criminal Justice Review (Volume 40, March 2015) was dedicated in honor of PUL GOLDSTEIN, professor emeritus, for his Tchipitaree Framework. During the last 30 years, this framework has become one of the most influential ideas in the study of drugs and violence.

Seán Lee, PhD candidate, LIN MU, has been selected as one of four STAR Award recipients awarded by the UIC Graduate College University Fellowship program. STAR awardees are selected based on their stellar academic performance, participation and productivity in discipline-specific research/scholarship, overall promise, and a personal commitment to obtaining a PhD in their selected field.

Isabel Martinez Noah, (PhD '09), (MPH '98) is a member of the board at BEDS Plus, a non-profit in La Grange, IL that addresses the root causes of homelessness. Her work on the board has been featured in local news outlets as they advocate for the development of a supportive housing building for twenty chronically homeless people in the community.

Patrick Lenihan, clinical associate professor of community health sciences and director of the Doctor of Public Health in Leadership Program, is the 2015 Recipient of the Maurice “Mo” Mullet Lifetime of Service Award, which is awarded by the National Association of County & City Health Officials and honors local health officials for noteworthy service that reflects commitment, vigor, and leadership.

Suzet McKinney (DrPh '08) was honored at the Women Driving Excellence (WDE) at the 2015 Chicago Auto Show. The event celebrates women who help start, accelerate, fuel, and steer others to excellence.

Fourth year doctoral candidate, SEAN LEE, is one of five graduate student winners of the 2015 UIC Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring Award. The award is given by the Honors College and Graduate College to outstanding graduate student mentors.

Patrick Lenihan, clinical associate professor of community health sciences and director of the Doctor of Public Health in Leadership Program, is the 2015 Recipient of the Maurice “Mo” Mullet Lifetime of Service Award, which is awarded by the National Association of County & City Health Officials and honors local health officials for noteworthy service that reflects commitment, vigor, and leadership.
Congratulations to the Class of 2015

More than 290 graduates were honored at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health commencement ceremony on May 8, 2015. Attendees welcomed Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Executive Director of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, as their keynote speaker. Dr. Hasbrouck spoke about the current “dynamic period of a public health renaissance” and encouraged the new graduates to change the world for the better by following the “Four B’s:” Be You, Be Passionate, Be Audacious and Be Humble.

An important part of the commencement ceremony is the presentation of awards, including two named in honor of UIC SPH founders and one given by the University. The Bernard H. Baum Golden Apple Award is presented each year to a faculty member in recognition of outstanding teaching and extraordinary service to students. This year, it was awarded to Saria Awadalla, clinical assistant professor in biostatistics. The Alan W. Donaldson Memorial Award, named for UIC SPH’s first Associate Dean, was given to Marissa Young, MD, because of her demonstrated academic excellence, quality of leadership, and community service. The University presents the Silver Circle Award to the campus’ best teachers, as indicated by a student vote. This year, Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH, adjunct assistant professor in health policy and administration, was nominated for this award by the graduating seniors of the school’s undergraduate program.

The ceremony concluded with graduates being encouraged to stay connected with their alma mater. Tracie Smith (MPH ’03), President of the UIC SPH alumni board, spoke to the Class of 2015 about ways to stay involved. She urged the graduates to get involved, even during their very first year as alumni, by hosting a student intern at their place of employment, referring a future student to UIC SPH, or giving back by volunteering or donating to the school.

Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, Executive Director of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, delivered the commencement address.
2015 Events

Please consider joining us for the following events:

**ADLER AFTER DARK**
July 16, 2015
6:30 pm – 10:30 pm
Adler Planetarium
1300 S. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60605

**ALUMNI RECEPTION AT NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION**
August 21, 2015
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
UIC School of Public Health
1603 W. Taylor Street
Chicago, IL 60612

**HEALTHY SPIRITS**
September 9, 2015
5:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Goose Island
1800 N. Clybourn Avenue
Chicago, IL 60614

**FOUNDERS CIRCLE AND LEGACY SOCIETY ANNUAL RECEPTION**
October 8, 2015
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

**APHA ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION**
November 2, 2015
5:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Chicago Cultural Center
78 E. Washington Street
Chicago, IL 60602

For more information on all of these events, visit publichealth.uic.edu/alumni.

---

**2015 Annual Alumni Celebration**

The UIC School of Public Health held its Annual Alumni Celebration on April 9, 2015 at Galleria Marchetti. The evening’s reception included signature cocktails provided by alumna Mary Pellettieri (MS ’95) of Top Note Tonic, and a silent auction, which raised support for the school’s Global Health Program. Nearly 200 guests enjoyed dinner and an awards presentation to alumni who were recognized for making significant contributions to the field of public health.

Students in the school’s Global Health Program took to the stage to help raise funds for the program. All gifts to the program will be matched dollar for dollar through December 31, 2015.

---

**Alumni Notes**

- **Rising Star Award**
  Sherri L. LaVela, PhD ’08, MPH ’02, MBA
  Health Policy and Administration Alumni Achievement Award

- **Julio C. Silva, MD ’88, MPH ’00**
  Dr. Jacob Brody Epidemiology and Biostatistics Alumni Achievement Award

- **David Ansell, MD, MPH ’91**
  Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Alumni Achievement Award

- **Cynthia Klein-Banai, PhD ’10**
  Dr. Naomi Morris Alumni Achievement Award for Community Health Sciences

- **Linda Van Horn, PhD ’83**
  Dr. Naomi Morris Alumni Achievement Award for Maternal & Child Health

- **Basmattee Boodram, PhD ’09**
  Health Equity Advocacy Award

- **Paul Levy and Virginia F. Tomazek**
  Champion of Public Health Award

---

**Annual Alumni Celebration**

**For more information on all of these events, visit publichealth.uic.edu/alumni.**
Over forty years of excellence in teaching, research and service!