From the Director

This fall, I have had the pleasure of getting to know some of our freshmen, as I have been teaching a revamped Introduction to Public Health course. This course is part of some curriculum changes that we are excited to implement. Beginning with the class of 2021, the Introduction to Public Health course and a new Research Methods in Public Health course are now required for the Public Health Studies major. Introduction to Public Health will give students a comprehensive overview of the field early in their college career and will ensure that all students understand some fundamental principles before taking more advanced courses in public health. The Research Methods course is a writing intensive course that will give students the tools necessary to critically evaluate published research, search the public health literature, and write a systematic literature review.

In addition to strengthening the curriculum, these changes allow us to work more closely with freshmen than in previous years. Not only will the freshmen potentially benefit from the chance to interact with the program faculty and advisors earlier (before they can actually declare the major as rising sophomores), but the PHS program as a whole is likely to benefit from the greater participation of freshmen in program events and activities. Teaching Introduction to Public Health has been a lot of fun for me this semester. The students have impressed me week after week. They have continually surprised me with fresh ideas and inspired me with their enthusiasm. We welcome them to Public Health Studies and look forward to spending the next three and a half years with them!

Maria Bulzacchelli
PHS Director

Student Spotlight

Seniors Arshdeep Kaur and Madison Dutson, along with their community partner Shan Gordon, are the recipients of the 2017 Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute’s Community-Driven Research Grant for Environmental Health. Their Environment and Your Health class sparked their interest in the field and a desire to get involved in community-based research. They partnered with Cool Green Schools, a local nonprofit, to create solutions to the diverse set of environmental health challenges in Baltimore City Public Schools. Many schools struggle with high temperatures, poor ventilation, access to water and restrooms, as well as overall cleanliness, all of which negatively impact student learning. Through their work, they hope not only to overcome environmental health concerns within the classrooms, but also to spark student interest in science and public health.

With the funding of “mini-grants,” students will propose and carry out research and interventions on the environments in their schools. With this student-led approach, Madison and Arshdeep aim to create innovative and sustainable solutions targeted at the problems that are most important to students in their everyday activities.

Goodyear Award

Tracy Chen ’18 received the second annual James D. Goodyear Public Health Service in Baltimore Award, which supports one PHS student per year pursuing an otherwise unpaid summer internship in Baltimore. Tracy writes: “I spent my summer of 2017 working with Kinetic Kitchen, a mobile after-school program that offers cooking classes focused on nutrition education to students at the Tench Tilghman Elementary School and adults living in neighborhoods that lack access to fresh produce. Residents living in a built environment that restricts healthy eating are more susceptible to chronic illnesses.

Kinetic Kitchen recognizes that providing free and low-cost produce is not enough to address the increasing burden of chronic disease. The mission of Kinetic Kitchen is to focus on health education as a means of primary prevention by educating Baltimore youth and adults to develop healthy dietary habits. As an intern, I developed a nutrition curriculum that complements pop-up cooking demonstrations, taught cooking lessons, led reflection activities after each cooking lesson, and managed the blog stream on the Kinetic Kitchen website. My internship with Kinetic Kitchen has provided me the opportunity to gain a real-world experience in delivering public health education.”

“...”

The James D. Goodyear Public Health Service in Baltimore Award is made possible by generous donations to the PHS Program. We need your support! If you are interested in making a donation to support this award, please visit the KSAS Make a Gift page and designate your gift for the Public Health Studies Goodyear Award Fund. Thank you!
On October 12th, the PHS Program held its first Summer Experience Poster Session. Organized by the Public Health Student Forum, the event brought together nearly 80 student participants to showcase their summer work. A majority of presenters were completing the final element of their Applied Experience, an experiential learning component of the PHS curriculum that requires all PHS majors to do at least 80 hours of field work in public health. Beginning this year, for their final Applied Experience assignment, all students must present their work in a poster. Students’ work spanned both research and practice settings and included a wide range of topics, such as gene expression, LGBTQ health, tobacco advertising, sleep, mental health, environmental health, and health care financing. Some students worked right here in Baltimore, while others worked abroad. The poster session was truly a tribute to the varied interests and abilities of PHS students. Inquiries about the Applied Experience should be directed to Lisa Folda.