Diversifying the Health Disparities Research & Practice Community

Faculty & Student Perspectives on the Importance Of Interdisciplinary Training, Mentoring, & Partnerships

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Research • Training • Dissemination
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Five Cores:
- Administrative
- Research
- Research, Training, & Education
- Environmental (new – supplement)
- Community Engagement

Joe has mentored 2 students funded through HHDRC

Holly, Kristen, Sandra, Sujehy
UTEP Department of Public Health Sciences

- Interdisciplinary PhD Program
- MPH Program
- Undergraduate Health Promotion major

Everyone has a connection

I’m surrounded by great students!
Community Engagement Core

- Translate findings into clinical and public health practice in order to decrease health disparities.
- Disseminate research findings using community partnerships and scientific venues.

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Why we care

- Literature highlights need for and the benefits of diversifying the public health research and practice communities
- Internships offer insight and experience into careers in health disparities research and practice
- Increased access to graduate school
- More ethnic minorities in underrepresented fields
- Research Group & Practicum Experiences facilitate our professional development
What’s up with “3%”? 

- In 2004: Blacks represented 3.3% of the physician workforce; Hispanics 2.8%
- Hispanics accounted for just over 3% of doctorates awarded in 2005, Blacks just less than 3%
- Ditto for NIH career research rewards, 2005

Cargill, 2009; Stoff et al., 2009
Literature: sources & inspirations

The case for Diversity in Research on Mental Health and HIV

- NIH-supported Diversity Enhancing Programs
- Equity, broader research agenda, better access to health care

Lessons Learned from a Decade of Focused Recruitment & Training to Develop Minority Public Health Professionals

- Diverse set of role models
- Commitment to working with students with varied levels of academic prep

Race, Ethnicity, & NIH Research Awards

- Blacks less likely receive to receive awards (other factors accounted for)
- Blacks & Hispanics less likely to resubmit revised applications
- Policy implications

Stoff et al., 2009; Kreuter et al., 2011; Ginther et al., 2011
UTEP

- On the U.S. – Mexico border
- 77% Hispanic
- 83% from El Paso county
- “first Tier 1 university serving a 21st century student demographic”
MPH Students

- First generation college students
  - Native El Pasoans
- Undergraduate
  - Health Promotion/ Community Health
- Graduate
  - Public health with emphasis on border health issues
- Community Health Practicum with HHDRC
  - Program implementation & evaluation
- Interdisciplinary research group
  - Exposure – Experience - Confidence
Faculty

➢ Joe Tomaka, PhD (1993)
  ➢ Social and Health Psychologist
  ➢ Stress, Coping and Cardiovascular Reactivity to Stress, Brief Interventions for Alcohol and substance use

➢ Holly Mata, PhD (2011), CHES
  ➢ Clinical mental health background, now focusing on translational health disparities research (tobacco-related disparities; community health)
Community Health Practicum

- Health Promotion major/Community Health minor
- 320 hours of practicum experience with community agency
- 7 with Community Engagement since 2009
- Graduate school (5 MPH, 1 in OT, 1 in MRC)
- Fall 2011 became preceptor with DHPE Health Equity internships
  - Increased focus on social determinants of health
  - Students get paid
  - Benefit from additional mentoring

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Areas of Responsibility for Health Education Specialists (NCHEC)

I. Assess Individual and Community Needs for Health Education

II. Plan Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs

III. Implement Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs

IV. Conduct Evaluation and Research Related to Health Education

V. Administer Health Education Strategies, Interventions, and Programs

VI. Serve as a Health Education Resource Person

VII. Communicate and Advocate for Health and Health Education
The Purpose of our Health Education Efforts Through the Coalition

- highlight ethnic and gender disparities in HIV prevalence
- to provide accurate information about HIV
- to promote HIV/STI testing in our community
- to develop, implement, & share evaluation of coalition events
  - Evaluation of event my major project
Creating & Sustaining Partnerships

- Partnerships enhance health education efforts in our region
- Increase the reach of community partners
  - Events w/Black Student Union
  - Community events (walk; outreach)
  - Clinic partner provides free monthly testing; we provide education
Lessons Learned

- Our skills benefit the community
- Events bring more confidence to us as health educators and advocates
- Ongoing collaboration, evaluation, innovation
Other practicum experiences

- International AIDS Empowerment
- Northeast Coalition, a community network devoted to improving the lives of youth
- College Bound program through United Way
- *Developed and conducted a workshop on the importance of breast cancer screening for women in the YWCA Transitional Living Center*
- Helped develop an evaluation tool for the Youth Gang Outreach Program at Boys and Girls Club
BGC Healthy Habits

Funded by TX Dept of Agriculture

Student Educators provided programs

Adapted curriculum and evaluation plan

Enhanced club offerings while providing experience for us

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Healthy Habits: Parts I & II

- Training staff for sustainability
- Replicable in other club sites
- Evaluation component strengthened (bilingual & interactive)
Strategic mentoring

Self-Assessment for Health Educators (SAHE)

- Assesses perceived competence in Areas of Responsibility for Health Educators (multiple sub-competencies)
- Previous work has shown the positive impact of community health education project on perceived competence
- Currently, using SAHE and other mentoring tools to improve quality of mentoring and service to community partners
HHDRC Mentoring Plan

- Developed after Holly & Kristen attended several mentoring workshops
- Merged mentoring successes from other universities with Areas of Responsibility – tailored to HHDRC and intern assets and areas of focus
- Using SAHE and other mentoring tools to improve quality of mentoring and service to community partners
  - Holly, Kristen, Samantha (undergrad intern)
  - Evaluation of improvement in Areas of Responsibility & benefit to Community Partner
HHDRC Mentoring Plan

HHDRC MENTORING PLAN
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DISSEMINATION CORE

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS PER SEMESTER: AS NEEDED

INTENDED FUNCTIONS OF MEETINGS: TO PLAN COMMUNITY AND CAMPUS PROJECTS INJUNCTION WITH PARTNERS

FREQUENCY AND TYPE OF GROUP MEETINGS:
WEEKLY MEETINGS WITH THE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OVERSEEING ONGOING STUDENT FACILITATED PROJECTS, HHDRC GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT-MPH STUDENT PLANNING, ORGANIZING, IMPLMENTATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS, AND HHDRC SENIOR HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICUM INTERN IMPLEMENTING AIDING IN PLANNING

INTENDED FUNCTIONS: TO COMMUNICATE WITH OTHERS ONGOING PROJECTS

MODE OF COMMUNICATION
E-MAILS & FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

HHDRC SENIOR INTERNS

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
NETWORK WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, NPO’S, CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, ETC.
PARTICIPATE AND HELP COORDINATE CENTER’S WORKSHOPS
MEDIA COMMUNICATION DISSEMINATION

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: VER 6.1
READ PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS
ATTEND PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS (RESEARCH GROUP)
PARTICIPATING IN OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:
- INCREASE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR HEALTH EDUCATORS SCORE OF PERCEIVED COMPETENCE. FROM BASELINE ASSESSMENT
- MID-TERM AND FINAL EVALUATION

BODY OF WORK:
CONCENTRATION TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR:
- INTEGRATE HEALTH EDUCATORS’ AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN PRACTICE
- CREATE AN UNDERSTANDING IN ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ALONG THE U.S. MEXICO BORDER
- ADHERE TO HEALTHY PEOPLE 2020—FOUNDATION TO HEALTH MEASURE GOALS [DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH [SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL]]

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Research Group

• Weekly forum for graduate and undergraduate students conducting research in public health
  – 4+ years
• Reasonably interdisciplinary
  – Backgrounds in Public Health, Nursing, Nutrition, Biology, Psychology, Communication
• Forum for Informal training/mentoring in many areas:
  – Pre-Planned topics
    • Developing a research question, research design, statistical analysis, presentation style, and scale development
  – Participants discuss current or planned projects
    • Range from initial ideas ➔ practice dissertation defenses
    • Chance to rehearse/practice
    • Receive feedback from other group members
Recent Topics

- Missing Data Analysis
- Instrument Design
- Factor Analysis, SEM, AMOS
- Poster Design
- Proposal and Defense Practice
- Conference Presentation Practice
- Support & Resource Sharing
- Mediation and moderation
What students get out of RG?

- Learn some new things
- Gain experience
- Receive feedback from other group members
- Opportunity to engage in critical thinking
- Opportunity to engage in scholarly discussion and debate *in a relatively “safe” environment*
Research to help reduce youth smoking susceptibility (PhD, MPH, BS students involved)

Development and Evaluation of a Personalized Normative Feedback Intervention for Hispanic Youth at High Risk of Smoking

- Research experience for graduate & undergraduate students
- Informing community youth programs & future research
- Youth involvement

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Giving back to my community

- Serving as a resource for youth
- Being a role model
  - Staying in school
  - Achieving your dreams
- Research – gaining experience while facilitating participation & recruitment
  - Talked with youth about colleges and majors
  - Helped start youth-led Teen Service Club (now thriving)
Multilevel mentoring

Undergrads get research experience & confidence

New analysis skills (e.g., mediation/moderation)

Multiple mentoring opportunities

Year-long participation in Research Training Program

Intervention delivery, data collection, entry, analysis

PhD dissertation

MPH student thesis

MPH funded project

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What we do

Kristen – GRA for HHDRC Community Engagement Core
Thesis topic: Social desirability in self-reported drinking behavior

Sujehy – GRA for School of Nursing (Project VIDA II)
Thesis topic: Relationships between substance abuse and IPV among Hispanic women in the U.S. – Mexico border region

Sandra – GRA Dept. of Public Health Sciences
Thesis topic: Sexual behavior among migrant men

Holly – Research Ass’t Professor, HHDRC and School of Nursing
Promoting health, educational attainment, & civic engagement in vulnerable communities

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Other Experiences

- Planning & participating in HHDRC workshops
  - Grant writing
  - Mental health in the Border Region
  - HIV, Substance use, & Intimate Partner Violence
  - Policy Advocacy to Build Health Equity

- Professional Organizations
  - Regional & National Conferences
  - Service

- Additional Internships
  - Minority Health International Research Training
  - Cancer Prevention Research
Research group, ESG, SPH, Paso del Norte SOPHE
Guiding Framework

Stakeholder input, guidance, & feedback

Community Members • Partners • Leaders
Researchers • Policy Makers

Adapted from Dankwa-Mullan et al., 2010
Closing thoughts

- More funded opportunities for students 😊
- Build & sustain partnerships
- Encourage and support multi-level mentoring
Thank you!!


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