of the Practice in environmental sciences and engineering.

“Finding out what water and sanitation facilities communities actually use is surprisingly challenging, before and after projects. Doing so is critical to the design and implementation of effective programs. Sharing global experience in monitoring and evaluation increases quality and reduces cost,” says Kolsky, a former senior water and sanitation specialist at The World Bank.

The vision of The Water Institute is to bring together individuals and institutions from diverse disciplines and sectors and empower them to collaborate on critical global issues in water and health, including water scarcity and sharing, climate change and others. The Institute supports nonprofit Plan International USA (tinyurl.com/PlanUSA-WASH) by assessing promotional efforts for sanitation issues and also helps evaluate the impact of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s water initiatives (www.hiltonfoundation.org). Its presentation of the annual Water and Health Conference in October is central to the Institute’s vision for research, teaching and dissemination of knowledge. (See whconference.unc.edu.)

**BIOSTATISTICS: CHANGING THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE**

Former biostatistics professor Lisa LaVange, PhD, directed the oldest continuously funded National Institutes of Health coordinating center at UNC from 2005 to 2011. The Collaborative Studies Coordinating Center (CSCC), founded in 1971 in the UNC biostatistics department, has a rich history and tradition of conducting clinical trials and epidemiological studies.

“Biostatistics and epidemiology faculty members work with statisticians, programmers and project managers to design and conduct complex national and international studies,” LaVange says. “These provide immeasurable improvements in people’s lives globally.”

Early on, the CSCC documented benefits of lowered cholesterol in reducing morbidity and mortality. Its longest-running study, Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities, has produced more than 1,000 manuscripts relating heart disease to risk behaviors and clinical and genomic factors. Data now are being used to identify predictors of neurocognitive functioning during aging. Today, studying health disparities among Hispanics of various backgrounds, the CSCC plays an integral role in identifying and reducing risks for disease, thus changing the practice of medicine.

**CAPSTONE PROJECTS**

**TRAINING STUDENTS, BENEFITING COMMUNITIES**

“Health Behavior (HB) Capstone projects focus students on achieving real-world changes while taking part in mentored service and learning opportunities,” says Megan Ellenson Landfried, MPH, manager of the department’s Master of Public Health program. “Each project strengthens partnerships between UNC and local communities.”

The projects are as varied and complex as the teams of HB Master of Public Health candidates who apply their education, experience and passion to make the projects happen. For an entire academic year, teams of four or five students develop or improve public health programs, services and resources by collaborating with a dozen community organizations. Competition from nonprofit groups applying to become Capstone partners is fierce, Landfried reports.

Capstone projects in North Carolina have contributed to Orange County’s Master Aging Plan, El Pueblo Inc.’s adolescent reproductive health curriculum, the Northern Orange Partnership for Alcohol and Drug-Free Youth’s Social Norms marketing campaign materials and North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s statewide primary prevention plan for intimate partner violence. To learn more about the program, visit www.sph.unc.edu/hb/capstone.

—JB Shelton

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