How the Gillings Gift is Helping Students
Carolina Public Health Solutions Student Bulletin: Spring 2010

The Gillings gift continues to offer opportunities and have a direct impact on students at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. This bulletin summarizes recent highlights and new program opportunities. If you have questions or are curious to learn more about updates in this bulletin, do not hesitate to contact the Carolina Public Health Solutions (CPHS) office at accelerate@unc.edu

Hot off the Press

✓ In April 2010 the School announced four new Gillings Innovation Laboratories awarded to assistant professors from the departments of Nutrition, Environmental Sciences and Engineering, and Health Behavior and Health Education. These exciting projects tackle norovirus vaccine development, water pollution in North Carolina, microfinance and health, and toxicology testing in environmental compounds. Projects are expected to begin in the summer of 2010. To learn more about these innovative projects visit: http://www.sph.unc.edu/gillings_gift_news/four_new_gillings_innovation_labs_announced_14222_8289.html

✓ Natalie The, doctoral candidate, nutrition, and Stephen Richardson, doctoral candidate, environmental sciences and engineering, have been competitively selected as the first recipients of the Gillings Dissertation Award. Natalie is exploring how weight over the life course affects pre-diabetes and diabetes in young adulthood across race and ethnicity. Stephen is simulating the cleanup of contaminated soil from a former manufactured-gas plant by relying on the biodegradation of contaminants. The UNC-SPH School-wide Student Awards Selection Committee evaluated applicants’ dissertation outlines on quality, potential for public health impact, dissemination plan, clear metrics, and strengthening of the School’s strategic areas. Congratulations Natalie and Stephen! To learn more about this award and other School awards visit: http://www.sph.unc.edu/student_affairs/student_awards_and_honors_307_8707.html
Gillings Innovation Laboratories

✓ Gillings Innovation Labs are competitively selected projects that strive to achieve fundamental breakthroughs and solve important problems in public health. Since the program was established in 2007, 18 innovation labs have been awarded on topics as diverse as water and the environment, mental health, statistical genomics, and 21st century public health teaching. More than 90 public health students have been engaged in various aspects of these projects including research, presentations, and peer reviewed publications.

A few illustrative examples of student involvement in these projects include:

- A new documentary studies course titled, “Politics of Food,” at Duke University was developed by Charlie Thomson, Ph.D. at the Center for Documentary Studies as part of Alice Ammerman’s Local Food Innovation Lab. Twenty-two Duke and UNC students participated enthusiastically in the course, as highlighted by the following student course evaluation remark:

  The collaboration between Duke and UNC in this course is especially phenomenal. Taking a class with Duke and UNC students majoring in topics ranging from cultural anthropology to public policy, and graduate students studying nutrition at UNC, provides a rich basis of experience for discussion. A large number of community members have come to our class to share their experiences in the local food movement – a collaborative experience indeed!

- Milan Svoboda, Ph.D. student, Department of Analytical Chemistry, Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague, co-presented “Investigation of Cryogenic Trapping for Arsenic Speciation Analysis by Hydride Generation – Atomic Absorption Spectrometry” at the 5th International student conference "Modern Analytical Chemistry" in Prague, as part of Miroslav Styblo’s Arsenic Innovation Lab.

- Saleema Karim, Ph.D. student in the department of Health Policy and Management, with a background both in financial management and educational technology, is working with Bill Zelman’s 21st Century Classroom Innovation Lab to develop innovative distance learning modules with a focus on budget development and management.

- Janey Messina, Ph.D. student in medical geography, co-authored, “Spatial and socio-behavioral patterns of HIV prevalence in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” Social Sciences and Medicine, (in review), as part of Steve Meshnick’s Innovation Lab on new approaches to the surveillance of tropical diseases.

To learn more about Innovation Labs visit: http://www.sph.unc.edu/accelerate/gillings_innovation_labs_gils_8532_9209.html
Gillings Visiting Professors

- In her first six months as Gillings Visiting Professor, **Leah Devlin**, DDS, MPH, has identified 3 new practice internships for SPH students with NC Legislators and the NC Council of Churches. Dr. Devlin has also worked with the NC Institute for Public Health, the Area Health Education Clinics, and the NC Division of Public Health to create SPH student internships for 7 local health departments and 1 with the NC Division of Public Health. She has also participated in a number of seminars and classes in the departments of Nutrition, Health Policy and Management, Epidemiology and Health Behavior and Health Education. Dr. Devlin hopes to continue to expand opportunities for SPH students and is available to meet individually or with groups for consultations.

- **Don Holzworth**, MS, Chairman, Futures Group International, and Gillings Executive in Residence, privately sponsored the Student Global Health Committee’s Global Health Challenge event held in March 2010 and participated as a judge. He has also been a part of the SPH Certificate Assessment Committee and provided consultation in leadership and presentation skill building. In the months ahead, Mr. Holzworth is available to meet with current or prospective students.

- **Sheila Leatherman**, MSW, research professor of health policy and management and Gillings Visiting Professor, has engaged Jess Edwards, doctoral student, epidemiology, Kim Heard, doctoral student, health policy and management, and Guadalupe Huitron, MPH student, maternal and child health, as summer interns focusing on microfinance and health initiatives. Work will include traveling to Peru to work with a local microfinance institution, FINCA-Peru, and supporting the work of Freedom for Hunger. Professor Leatherman plans to support a limited number of summer internship opportunities in microfinance and health in 2011 and 2012.

Other News

- Some funding from the gift is being directed toward the development of curricular enhancements, including **more global health content** in core courses across the departments of Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition and the Public Health Leadership Program. These efforts are being coordinated by the School's Office of Global Health. The following course sequences are being revised as part of this initiative: MHCH 701-702: Foundations of Maternal and Child Health; NUTR 720 and 725, Public Health
Nutrition Management I&II; PUBH 680, Public Health Practice; and PUBH 791, Core Principles of Public Health Leadership.

✔ As part of the School’s financial literacy initiative that is partially supported by the gift, SPH students are providing feedback to the online component of HPM 600 coursework. Modules will include budgeting, financial statement analysis and cost effectiveness. Modules should be finalized by the Fall of 2010. In addition, the Office of Student Affairs and student government sponsored a financial literacy workshop for SPH students in February 2010 led by Professor Marci Thomas, health policy and management.

✔ The webcast of the “Innovations in Public Health: Fresh Food. Fresh Air. Fresh Ideas,” seminar featuring Alice Ammerman’s Local Food Innovation Lab and Will Vizuete’s Air Pollution Innovation Lab is now online: [http://www.sph.unc.edu/media/webcasts.html?webcast=2010-03-01](http://www.sph.unc.edu/media/webcasts.html?webcast=2010-03-01)

✔ The Spring 2010 edition of Solutions, the newsletter of Carolina Public Health Solutions, focuses on the power of collaborations and interdisciplinary approaches. To view this edition as well as past editions, visit: [http://www.sph.unc.edu/accelerate/solutions_newsletter_10603_9594.html](http://www.sph.unc.edu/accelerate/solutions_newsletter_10603_9594.html)

Looking Ahead

✔ Each of the School’s seven departments and the Public Health Leadership Program will be selecting outstanding first year graduate students to receive merit-based scholarship support made possible though the gift. Funding recipients will be announced in May 2010. The current round of scholarships will be applied to the 2010-2011 academic year. The School intends to make funding pools available each year.

✔ Criteria for a Student Service Award, to help student organizations support their innovative service projects, will be finalized before the Fall 2010 semester begins, and funds will be available in late 2010.

![Leah Sirkus](image)

Leah Sirkus, doctoral student in the department of epidemiology, is the student representative to the Acceleration Advisory Committee (AAC). Leah works to increase communication with student government and developing new opportunities for students involved with Gillings Innovation Labs. She welcomes student input to relay to the Committee. To contact Leah with comments and suggestions, email: leah.sirkus@unc.edu.

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