

Office of Global Health coordinates Burgeoning international activities

In a world where nations and economies are increasingly connected — whether through economic globalization, ongoing demographic changes, or environmental accidents or catastrophes — ill or good health in any population affects everyone.

It's with this perspective that the Carolina School of Public Health's Office of Global Health promotes and supports the School's and the University's many global health activities, including research, teaching and service projects.

“Providing a global health perspective

means emphasizing mutual information and cultural exchange among researchers, policy-makers and health personnel in different countries to address the myriad public health challenges of the world,” says Associate Dean for Global Health Dr. Peggy Bentley. “HIV/AIDS, malaria, SARS, tuberculosis,

cancer and obesity are just a few of the issues that affect or have the potential to affect people in every country on the planet.”

The Office identifies funding opportunities and helps develop proposals both independently and with UNC faculty engaged in global health research. It supports cooperative partnerships with investigators and institutions worldwide, develops formal internship and fellowship programs for students, hosts a monthly global health seminar series, works closely with a dynamic Student Global Health Committee, and offers a Global Health Certificate to graduate students wishing to learn how better to respond to the challenges of an interdependent world.

Last fall, the Office received a \$400,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to expand global health curriculum and research opportunities across the UNC-Chapel Hill campus and engage faculty and



PHOTO: (left) Master of Public Health students at the University of Malawi listen to an epidemiology seminar given by UNC professor Dr. Steve Meshnick.

students in an interdisciplinary study of global health issues. The grant is one of 12 Framework Programs for Global Health grants issued to U.S. and foreign universities by the Fogarty International Center, the international component of the NIH. It will create the UNC Framework Program for Global Health.

“The new UNC program will bring together a diverse set of formal partners on campus and engage local and international research organizations, including Family

Health International and RTI International, and collaborators in South Africa, Malawi, India, Russia, Peru and Chile, in the development of multidisciplinary educational and research opportunities with a global focus,” Bentley said.

Among other things, the new grant will send two UNC faculty members and four UNC graduate students to teach and study in the Malawi-Carolina Summer Public Health Institute in Blantyre next summer, a program funded by another UNC Fogarty Grant.

UNC's campus partners in the Framework Program for Global Health include the Schools of Public Health, Medicine, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Journalism and Mass Communication; the College of Arts and Sciences; the Associate Provost for International Affairs' Office; the Student Global Health Committee; the University Center for International Studies; the Carolina Asia Center; the Institute of Latin American Studies; the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations; a newly established Center for African Studies; and several interdisciplinary centers, including the Carolina Population Center, the Carolina Environmental Program, the Center for Infectious Diseases and the Center for AIDS Research.

For more information about the Office of Global Health, visit their Web site at www.sph.unc.edu/ogh/.

- By Emily Smith