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The Lattice

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Director's Comments, Dr. G.D. Gilmore, MPH, Ph.D., MCHES

Career Exploration and Professional Development Opportunities

While my commentary in past issues of the Lattice have focused on advancements in public health practice, in this issue, I want to place the emphasis on the role and responsibility we have in addressing career exploration and professional development updates on behalf of our candidates and graduates. On the career exploration side, we collaborate with our Career Services Office and the Alumni Association in order to assist our candidates in prospecting for appropriate employment options. One way we do this is by maintaining open lines of communication with those two offices and collaboratively planning for class visit opportunities and discussion sessions that are more seamless (i.e., coordinated and ongoing) than sporadic. Additionally, once employed, we want our graduates

and other health professionals to become aware of realistic update and skill-building opportunities for their job-related responsibilities. An example of such a professional development opportunity is the **2015 Wisconsin Health Education Network (WHEN) Annual Meeting on April 23rd at the Marriott Madison West**, which addresses *Advancing Health Enhancement Strategies and Opportunities with Diverse Wisconsin Communities* (<http://uwlax.edu/conted/WHEN>)

Of recent note, two of our MPH graduates from 2013-2014 have been assigned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to their Public Health Associate Program. We congratulate Lindsay Engh assigned to Walla Walla, Washington and Ahmed Elhindi assigned

to Lansing, Michigan for their notable accomplishments (photo upper left).

Overall, we are here to help and offer guidance during the program experiences, but keep in mind that our commitment to our candidates and public health colleagues continues well into the future as job opportunities are explored and continuing updates and further skill development are sought following graduation. The take-home message is clear: Stay in communication with us before, during, and after your UW-La Crosse Public Health/Community Health experiences.

Alumni Spotlight: Kate Noelke

"I am doing everything I want to do, in the place that I love," said Kate Noelke, an August 2014 graduate of MPH-CHE program. Kate is an enthusiastic and passionate public health professional who is currently the Wellness Coordinator at UW-La Crosse and the Director of Development at Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center. As the Wellness Coordinator, she oversees 11 peer health educators and currently is developing and implementing campus-wide programming to help students develop sustainable health behaviors that they can carry on for the rest of their lives. She also will have the opportunity to teach some courses on campus, as well. She loves the work she is doing because she gets to connect with students, other professionals and the community.

Kate was eager to share her experience in the MPH-CHE program as she felt

that it gave her the ability to move her skills learned in the classroom to what she is doing in the field. She found a lot of value in the opportunity to connect with other students in the program and noted that the faculty facilitated an environment so that candidates can learn from each other.

Kate stays connected with the other alumni in the program through a listserv, holds gatherings at her home, and hosts an annual tubing trip every summer on the Black River. Kate tries to connect with other alumni, current students and prospective students through e-mail, talking about the program whenever she is at various events. She is impressed that she meets MPH-CHE alumni in so many places to which she goes.

Her best advice to current and pro-

spective students is to ENGAGE. She tells students to "get to work, get busy, and get involved and take it upon yourself to involve yourself in opportunities during your time in the program."



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Alumni Spotlight: *Lindsay Engh*

"I feel I am connecting directly with my aspirations, although it was not a linear path. There are so many subject areas in public health that interest me, it was hard for me to choose just one to pursue," said Lindsay Engh. Lindsay is a recent graduate of the MPH-CHE program and was also a recipient of the *Graduate Achievement Award*. Lindsay is currently a Public Health Associate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She is stationed in Walla Walla, Washington and is employed under the Public Health Associate Program (PHAP), which is a 2-year program for recent graduates who are looking to gain public health experience. She feels that her current assignment is exposing her to every facet of public health and providing her with skills that will help her be successful no matter which path she chooses.

Lindsay said that while she found her entire experience valuable in the MPH-CHE program, the faculty are the larg-

est asset to the MPH-CHE program. She feels that the faculty have such an extensive knowledge of the public health field and so many different experiences and backgrounds from which candidates can draw. She also found the curriculum to be well planned and one which provides candidates with a wide breadth of knowledge and experience that is applicable to the field.

Lindsay highlighted the importance of building relationships and connections with other alumni via social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and email. She said she would love to see a formal mentoring program set up for alumni and current students. She states she would love to connect with current and prospective students if they have questions or just want to chat.

Lindsay's advice to current and prospective students is to "say yes." Whether it is as a volunteer, through networking, or travel opportunities, students should take advantage. She states that "there is so much to learn in public health, it is best to get out there and experience it for yourself!"



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The Tenth Lattice Editor: *Kayleigh Day (2014)*

I am a first-year MPH-CHE candidate living in La Crosse with my husband Eric. I earned my BS in 2011 in Community Health Education and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies from UW-La Crosse. After graduation, I wanted to gain work experience, and worked at a local reproductive health clinic. It was there that I saw proof that health is influenced by factors outside of the individual. Wanting more of a challenge, I decided to go back and pursue my MPH. I am currently a graduate assistant working with both Dr. Gilmore and Dr. Duquette and I am also part of the Public Health Community Advisory Council.



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MPH-CHE Mission Statement

The mission of the MPH-CHE graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is to prepare professionals, using advanced-level health education competencies and public health core areas, who will address quality of life enhancement through health education and health promotion, mindful of the holistic, dynamic and interdependent nature of people and their interactions within the environment.



**Dr. Gilmore and Kate
Noelke**