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College of Health Sciences
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Salud y Saludos

The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

Salud y Saludos February 2011

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From the Dean's Desk

As we start the Spring semester, UTEP continues to boast record high enrollments. UTEP's Spring semester 2011 enrollment is a full 4.5% higher than Spring 2010. The College of Health Sciences has experienced an even faster rate of growth (14.4%) in enrollment over the past two years, reaching a record high enrollment of 1653 students! Three new graduate programs, the Master of Social Work, the Master of Rehabilitation Counseling and the Doctor of Physical Therapy programs have contributed 61 new graduate students- resulting in an unprecedented **37% growth** in enrollment of graduate students alone. This is a remarkable achievement and reflects the cumulative efforts of everyone engaged in student recruitment, admissions, advising and instructional program development and delivery. Most importantly, this growth in professional education program enrollment will result in a major increase in UTEP's capacity to meet the health-related workforce needs of our region.

At the same time, we are busily preparing for our move to our new building on campus. The 138,000 sq ft College of Health Sciences/ School of Nursing building is quickly nearing completion. Link here to the recent feature story about the building on KVIA-channel 7. We are thrilled with the beautiful new spaces this building will provide and the expansion of our research and teaching capacity. Almost 3000 students and over 100 faculty from the School of Nursing, the Social Work, Public Health Sciences, Kinesiology and Clinical Laboratory Sciences undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as the Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program will move to the new facility. The showpiece 16,000 sq ft. Clinical Simulation Center will be a cornerstone of our clinical teaching programs.

We are especially excited about the expanded research capacity of this facility. It will include a suite for metabolic and cardiovascular disease research, offering human performance testing, metabolic function testing and body composition analysis. Nutritional analysis and experimental food preparation laboratories will complement the research capacity in this suite. Our research facilities will also include a 4500 sq ft. bench laboratory for studies in immunology, environmental health, infectious disease and clinical chemistries.

The remaining 200 graduate students from five of our graduate programs, including the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and the Cooperative Pharmacy program will be housed in newly expanded and renovated teaching, research and clinical facilities in the existing Campbell building.

Stay tuned for updates as we make plans to celebrate the completion of these facilities!

Program Highlights

Department of Public Health Sciences

The Department of Public Health Sciences (DPHS) at The University of Texas at El Paso College of Health Sciences (UTEP CHS) is dedicated to preventing disease and improving the health status of diverse communities through education, research, and outreach. DPHS provides high quality education to students enrolled in its undergraduate degree program in Health Promotion and in the Master of Public Health degree program**.**

Graduates from the UTEP CHS **Health Promotion Program** are qualified to provide the information and skills necessary to help individuals make informed decisions about lifestyle and personal health behaviors which can play an important role in preventing and controlling many current health problems. The program is accredited by the Joint Committee of the Society for Public Health Education and the American Association for Health Education (SOPHE/AAHE Baccalaureate Program Approval Committee SABPAC).

Students completing a minor in **Community Health** are qualified to work in settings such as public health agencies, community based organizations, hospitals and other medical facilities, and wellness centers. The Community Health minor also prepares students to become Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES), a certification that establishes a national standard of practice for all health educators. Students completing a minor in **Education** are qualified to work as health instructors in the School System. Students have the option of completing an **approved minor** such as Business, Biology, Chemistry, and Psychology to tailor their degree.

Graduates from the Health Promotion program are prepared to pursue a MPH or follow other career paths such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, among other health care professions.

Students are actively engaged in community outreach activities such as health fairs, fundraising walks, and research activities and work under the direction of our qualified faculty.

Terri Anchondo, a recent graduate from our MPH program was selected to receive the Student Abstract Award by the American Public Health Association (APHA) Food and Nutrition Section (FNS). Terri worked under the supervision of Dr. Paula Ford, an expert in Nutrition and Geospatial analysis graphical Information Systems and presented at the American Public Health Association Conference which took place in Denver, Colorado in November 2010. The presentation was titled: Neighborhood Deprivation, Neighborhood Acculturation, and the Retail Food Environment in a U.S.-Mexico Border Urban Area.

The **Master in Public Health** degree program prepares students for public health careers in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. The program is directed toward individuals with prior health experience or who have a strong commitment to public health. MPH program students take core courses designed to develop knowledge, and analytical and technical skills in five

fundamental public health competencies: social and behavioral sciences, health services administration and policy, epidemiology, environmental health and biostatistics. The required practicum provides students with an opportunity to apply the public health theory and skills they have learned in a practical setting.

Department faculty includes experts in multiple disciplines including infectious diseases and vaccine development, health education and health promotion, occupational health, nutrition, national and global health, and behavioral sciences. Faculty in our department are actively involved in community outreach, community based participatory research, international research and they represent The University of Texas at El Paso - College of Health Sciences at state and national forums such as the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc., the American Public Health Association, the Society for Public Health Educators, the American Dietetic Association, the Texas Diabetes Council, the Society for Behavioral Medicine, and many other forums.

CSWE Site Visitor Visits The Department of Social Work's MSW Program

On January 27, 2011, Dr. Robert Ortega conducted a site visit for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as the second step in the process of accreditation for our new Master of Social Work (MSW) program. During his site visit, Dr. Ortega met with university administration (Dr. Natalicio, Dean Curtis and Dr. Lusk), departments that support the program and our students (DSSO, Library, Media Services), faculty, students, and community members (Social Work Advisory Council and field instructors). In Dr. Ortega's meeting with Dr. Natalicio he noted her vision for the university and how the MSW program supported this mission. He provided the program with feedback at the end of the day. The final determination will be made by CSWE Accreditation Division at their June meeting.

As a follow up to the site visit, the MSW Program also received verification from Ms. Carol Miller, LMSW-AP, Executive Director of the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners that students enrolled in our MSW Program are eligible to sit for the LMSW exam upon graduation. Texas policy on the licensure of social workers (Rule §781.406 on Required Documentation of Qualifications for Licensure) stipulated that one is eligible to sit for the exam if s/he has graduated "...from programs accredited or in candidacy for accreditation by CSWE." UTEP's MSW Program was advanced to candidacy by CSWE in June, 2010.

Research and Grant Awards

2010 Research and Grant Awards

During 2010 faculty members of the College of Health Sciences received a total of $2.2 millions in grants from external funders. We expect that during 2011, we will match or increase the number and the total amount of the awards. (see the full story)

Amanda Loya, Pharm.D. and **Jose Rivera, Pharm.D.** received funding for a pilot grant from the Hispanic Health Disparities Research Center to evaluate "Perceptions of antiretroviral medication adherence and side effects and the impact of a medication literacy curriculum in Latino HIV-positive patients." This pilot grant is a 2-year award for a maximum of $50,000 per year pending satisfactory progress during the grant cycle.

Stephanie Escamilla, Pharm.D. and Kate Morton, Pharm.D. UTEP Pharmacy Residents and UTEP faculty **Jeri J. Sias, Pharm.D.** and **Margie E. Padilla, Pharm.D.** received grants. The American Pharmacists Association Foundation awarded two Incentive Grants (2010-2011) to the Community Pharmacy Residents Kate Morton, PharmD and Stephanie Escamilla, PharmD. There were only 14 grants awarded to residents throughout the United States. Dr. Morton's project, "Manejando Tus Medicamentos (MTM) con La Fe" was prepared through Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Inc. with Jaime Anaya, PharmD, Carly Cloud, PharmD, Albert Lucero, RPh, and Jeri Sias, PharmD, MPH. Dr. Escamilla's project, "Utilizing Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Services to Identify Diabetic Patients with Low Socioeconomic Status at Risk for Depression and Medication Non-Adherence along the US/Mexico Border" was prepared with Centro San Vicente Clinic under the guidance of Margie E. Padilla, PharmD, CDE. 2011 APhA Foundation Incentive Grant Recipients

Faculty Corner

UTEP Pharmacy faculty **Selina Aguilar, Pharm.D.** became a Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS) through examination by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties effective December 31, 2010.

Suzanne Crow Receives Speech Language Award

Suzanne Crow, faculty member in the UTEP Speech Language Pathology Program, has received the Award for Continuing Education (ACE) from the American Speech Language Hearing Association. According to Award Notice by the American Speech Language Hearing Association, "Ms. Crow joins a select group of individuals who have made a concerted, personal effort to continued Professional learning beyond the academic degree."

Oralia Loza, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences, joined UTEP CHS in January 2010. What brought her to UTEP was the unique opportunity to continue her research on border health issues and teach at a university where students could relate to her as a Latina and first generation college graduate. Her research experience is focused on the health, particularly the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infection, of underserved and vulnerable populations living along the U.S.-Mexico border, including sex workers and injection drug users. She is now establishing research in HIV risk behaviors and substance abuse among men who have sex with men, transgender women, and Latinos, and migrants. She currently teaches graduate and undergraduate level courses in epidemiology, biostatistics, and substance abuse and enjoys serving as advisor to the Students for Public Health, sitting on the Women's Resource Center board, and forming part of Women's Health Initiative team. Dr. Loza

holds a BS in Mathematics and MA in Statistics from the University of California at Santa Barbara. She received her doctorate in Public Health (Epidemiology) from the joint doctoral program at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine and the San Diego State University School of Public Health in 2009 then completed a post-doc at UCSD Global Public Health

José O. Rivera, Pharm.D., Director of the UTEP/UT Austin Cooperative Pharmacy Program was promoted to Clinical Professor at the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy.

Student News & Leadership

UTEP DPT Students Score for Physical Therapy Research in Texas!

The UTEP Physical Therapy Program's first annual Mini-Golf Tournament was a huge success. It was held on October 16, 2010 at Adventure Zone El Paso in celebration of Physical Therapy Month. (see full story)

Student Social Workers Recognized by El Paso Independent School District

On January 11, 2011, the UTEP Student Association of Social Workers (SASW) was recognized from the EPISD Board of Trustees. They received a Recognition Plaque for their involvement in the community and for the Thanksgiving Basket Giving. The UTEP association and their members organized a Thanksgiving Basket Giving on Tuesday, November 23 during the holidays to help some of the most needy families in the district receive a basket full of food. The distribution of the baskets was a success. SASW President Ms. Chrystal Loveless serves in the EPISD as a social work intern.

Best Practices

The Health Education and Awareness Research Training (H.E.A.R.T.) project is a $2.7 million research study that was funded by the National Institutes of Health. The Project focuses on the prevention of cardiovascular disease among Hispanics living in El Paso's Lower Valley region. Dr. Maria Duarte-Gardea from The University of Texas at El Paso and Dr. Hector Balcazar from the UT-Houston School of Public Health, El Paso Regional Campus are both Principal Investigators on this research study which began in October 2008 and will continue through the end of March 2013.

The H.E.A.R.T. Project offers an extensive menu of activities, known as "Mi Corazón, Mi Comunidad", which aim to help prevent cardiovascular disease. Activities include a total of eleven "Su Corazón, Su Vida" sessions developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, which are taught by Community Health Workers employed by the YWCA Dorothy Woodley Hunt Branch. These classes focus on the anatomy and function of the heart and how one can maintain a healthy heart through physical activity and healthy eating. Other topics included in the H.E.A.R.T. curriculum include hypertension, cholesterol, diabetes, weight management. H.E.A.R.T. program participants also gain information on shopping for healthy eating, healthy meal preparation on limited time and budget as well as how to incorporate physical activity into a busy schedule.

Of course, no cardiovascular disease prevention program would be complete without physical activity. Upon enrollment into the H.E.A.R.T. Project, participants obtain a free one-year YWCA membership plus four months full access to any of the YWCA fitness classes of their choice, gym, and swimming pool. Other physical activity alternatives include walking groups which meet every Wednesday morning and evening at four different parks located within the Lower Valley, and Latin dance aerobics classes which meet every Saturday morning at Shawver Park, followed by sports or swimming for the whole family for one full hour.

What makes the H.E.A.R.T. Project a Community-Based Participatory Research Project is that it also has a Community Health Academy and Leadership Council which is comprised of community members who represent El Paso's Lower Valley community and individuals who are experts in the field of public health. The Council is currently working on helping the community to take steps toward making environmental policy changes that will help to improve the health of El Paso's Lower Valley. A second focus of the council is to advocate for the inclusion of Community Health Workers in the implementation of disease prevention and health promotion programs such as this which seek to improve the health status of the communities served.