

UB Health Impact

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS SPHHP.BUFFALO.EDU

Communications director

Meet SPHHP's new communications director Jackie Hausler.

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Child obesity research

Youfa Wang brings an advanced understanding of this global epidemic.

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IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF POPULATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS

WINTER 2014



Grant-getters

SPHHP CENTER RECEIVES FEDERAL GRANT AS IT CELEBRATES 25 YEARS *Page 3*

Feedback welcome as strategic plan evolves

For the past few months, we have been reviewing and revising our strategic plan and as part of this process, I invite you to read and comment on our current draft. The complete draft can be found online at sphhp.buffalo.edu/sp-review.

Our vision is to be a leading school recognized for the advantages of its combination of related academic programs that promote the understanding, prevention and treatment of disease and disability, thereby improving the health of populations, communities and individuals, both regionally and globally. Our three broad goals are briefly summarized below.

Our education goal is to provide an academic environment that includes foundational preparation in public health, evidence-based practice and communication, and professionalism for all students. We also aim to prepare graduates for success as public health professionals, practitioners in the health professions, educators and researchers. We seek to recruit diverse and well-qualified students, faculty and staff; assess effectiveness of our degree programs; and promote interprofessional education and collaboration.

Our research goal is to conduct high impact research that relates to health and wellness issues faced by populations, communities and individuals. To accomplish this, we strive to compete successfully for external peer-reviewed funding and disseminate research findings and new knowledge.

Our service goal is to provide meaningful service to communities (local to global), the university, scholarly and professional organizations, governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Please send comments, suggestions and questions to me by the end of February at lk22@buffalo.edu.

Lynn T. Kozlowski
Dean and Professor of
Community Health and
Health Behavior



Scheider named Teacher of the Year

William Scheider, research assistant professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, has been named Outstanding Teacher of the Year for the school. The award is presented to a faculty member whose "recent teaching performance, initiatives, publications and/or presentations demonstrate outstanding contributions to education within the School of Public Health and Health Professions," according to the award description.



William Scheider

Scheider began teaching at UB in 2004. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a PhD in epidemiology, both from UB, and an MS in nutrition from Cornell University.

Scheider's teaching evaluations are among the highest both within the department and the school. Recently, he has taken on the development of two new introductory epidemiology courses, one for undergraduates throughout the university and one for SPHHP students not enrolled in the traditional public health concentrations. Both of these courses represent significant commitments where Scheider has carefully developed clear and thoughtful lectures to address the complex content.

Scheider also serves as the director of the MPH concentration in environmental health, and serves as chair of the Education Committee within his department.

Outside of the classroom, Scheider plays a large role as a community educator, providing both objective knowledge and needed leadership in the community-based Clean Air Coalition.

Student public health ambassadors named

Paul May, Fiyidi Mikailu and Alexandra Warner have been selected as Public Health Ambassadors for the current academic year.

Each academic year, SPHHP selects three graduate students as ambassadors who work to improve the visibility and prestige of the school, while gaining leadership and communication experience. The appointment is for one year.

Ambassadors attend the American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting, which includes spending time at the school's exhibit booth, attending the school's reception at APHA and promoting the school and its programs. Ambassadors also represent SPHHP at selected regional recruitment events and other activities, such as open houses. The 2013 APHA meeting took place Nov. 2–6 in Boston.

Public Health Ambassadors receive financial support from the dean's office to offset part of their expenses for attending APHA.

Ambassadors are nominated by department chairs.

Fish honored at Bulls game



Dale Fish

Dale Fish was nominated as the faculty honorary coach at the UB football homecoming game against Eastern Michigan. Fish was nominated by UB faculty for distinguished service in his field and contributions to the university. The Faculty Honorary Coach Program was established to foster and promote a positive professional and collaborative relationship between the faculty and athletics staff.

"We estimate that Dr. Fish has taught gross anatomy to over 6,000 students during his career," says physical therapy program director Kirk Personius, who was one of Fish's nominators.

Fish received his undergraduate training at the University of Toledo before attending the University of Pennsylvania to study physical therapy. He received his master's degree from Boston University and PhD in anatomical sciences from UB. Fish started teaching at UB in 1974 and is a beloved instructor of gross anatomy for programs in physical therapy, occupational therapy and exercise science.

Fish is currently senior associate dean in the School of Public Health and Health Professions and is leading the school's effort for re-accreditation in public health.

The celebration was particularly special as several of his past students were also attending the homecoming game as part of UB's alumni reunion for physical therapy graduates in the region.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



ALUMNI PROFILE // CARMEN TEKWE <<

Support every step of the way

After jobs with the prestigious Center on Aging and Health at Johns Hopkins University and with George Washington University's Biostatistics Center, Carmen Tekwe, PhD '11, decided to return to school for a doctoral degree. With that difficult decision made, her choice about which program to attend was an easy one.

"I wanted to work with Randy Carter and UB was the place to do this," she says. Tekwe had completed her master's degree at the University of Florida under Carter's mentorship, and he later joined the UB faculty as professor and associate chair of the Department of Biostatistics.

"Dr. Carter is an excellent teacher and mentor to his students who goes out of his way to make sure we each succeed," she says. "He can be tough when necessary but at the same time, he can also gently guide us when necessary. His passion for mentoring and promoting the field of biostatistics influenced me greatly, and that was why I wanted to work with him."

Tekwe cites this faculty support as a highlight of her PhD program. "I also had a lot of support from my peers, which was very helpful," she adds.

She also credits her thesis work with providing new opportunities for

research, travel and practical application of the knowledge she gained through coursework. Tekwe spent three months in Hiroshima, Japan, working with Carter and researchers from the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF). Her work involved developing statistical methods and models to adjust for measurement error in estimates of radiation doses suffered by atomic bomb survivors.

This field research experience, coupled with research assistantships and opportunities to travel to conferences and network with fellow biostatisticians, prepared her for her current career in research.

After completing her PhD, Tekwe was recruited by Raymond J. Carroll of Texas A&M University to join the university as a postdoctoral fellow. She then transitioned to her current role there as an assistant professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

NOMINATE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Do you know SPHHP alumni we should feature in an upcoming issue? Let us know by emailing sphhp-alumni@buffalo.edu



Grant-getters

SPHHP CENTER RECEIVES
FEDERAL GRANT AS IT
CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

The University at Buffalo Center
for Assistive Technology (CAT)
received a \$4.7 million competitive
award from the U.S. Department
of Education's National Institute
on Disability and Rehabilitation
Research (NIDRR).



Joseph Lane, MBPA, Director of Center for Assistive Technology
and Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer



THE 2013-18 AWARD was announced as CAT celebrates its 25th anniversary and brings the total amount of extramural support generated by the center to about \$100 million since its founding in 1988.

The grant will fund a new five-year cycle of CAT's Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer (KT4TT), initially funded by the NIDRR in 2008.

The NIDRR sponsors the research and the development of projects in the field of rehabilitation and assistive technology for persons with disabilities.

The CAT, an interdisciplinary research center in the UB School of Public Health and Health Professions, has as its mission the improvement, dissemination, transfer and commercialization of products developed by NIDRR grant recipients and, internally, the demonstration of best practices in the field.

"The school and UB are very proud of the sustained accomplishments of CAT over the past quarter century," says Dean Lynn Kozlowski.

"In the case of the work funded by this grant," he adds, "the difficulty of moving valuable new products into the marketplace has long been recognized. CAT's team has taken up this challenge and is working to address and resolve obstacles to the production and marketing of important new inventions that will assist disabled persons."

Joseph Lane, director of CAT, says, "NIDRR sponsors research and development intended to generate

socio-economic benefits, but like so many domestic and international programs, the projects fail to bridge the gap from laboratory to marketplace."

"University scientists and engineers who design and test state-of-the-art products for the disabled often are understandably focused more on their research than on the eventual commercialization process," he says. "That, however, does not prevent them from applying the due diligence necessary to align their work with the interests and requirements of corporations who have the required capacity and expertise to bring the products of their research to market."

Lane says that as recipients of public funding, the sponsors and grantees share an obligation to apply methods and metrics that will ensure the investment generates the intended beneficial results for individuals with disabilities. He says their activity must be both rigorous and relevant because the goals of specific projects are practical, not theoretical.

"Overall, the goal is to improve the performance of government programs that are challenged to deliver the promises inherent in public policies related to science, technology and innovation public policies," he says.

"We pursue this by the study and demonstration of the technology transfer and the commercialization process within our focused field of assistive technology, and then generalizing the results."

Lane points out that the center's project team has 20 years of experience in the

evaluation and commercialization of such innovations and, collaboratively, has introduced nearly 60 new devices to the marketplace. The latest, the Morph Wheel by Maddak Inc., is a convenient, easy-to-store wheelchair with foldable wheels that has won many awards from industry tradeshows including MedTrade, Popular Science and the London Design Museum. The Morph Wheel was also recently featured on CNN Tech.

"The school and UB are very proud of the sustained accomplishments of CAT over the past quarter century."

The current funding specifically requires the Center on KT4TT to contribute to three outcomes for NIDRR's technology-based grantees:

- Increase NIDRR grantee rates of successful transfer and commercialization into the marketplace, into engineering design standards or other intended applications.
- Increase NIDRR grantee understanding of technology transfer processes and practices that are successfully used to generate products and services in the marketplace.
- Increase the capacity of NIDRR grantees to plan and to engage in technology transfer and commercialization activities.

Meet SPHHP's new communications and alumni relations director

JACKIE HAUSLER COMES TO UB FROM TROCAIRE COLLEGE



Jackie Hausler

The School of Public Health and Health Professions has a new director of communications and alumni relations. Jackie Hausler joined the school on Nov. 18, coming over from Trocaire College, where she was Web and social media editor.

“I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the UB team,” says Hausler. “The City of Buffalo is on the rise, and there are a lot of wonderful things happening specifically because of the university and UB 2020. I’m so excited to be a part of the growth and to be joining the wonderful team of professionals at UB. My experience is with a health and health care focused college, so many of the skills will be very transferable to SPHHP.”

IN HER NEW ROLE, Hausler will oversee, coordinate and contribute to school communications and alumni relations activities. She will also chair the SPHHP Communications Committee, which is charged with identifying and recommending procedures, policies, best practices and strategies for effective and consistent promotion of the school through a variety of channels.

As part of her duties, Hausler will also manage the school’s family of websites, and social media activities.

“I think social media will become a focus in this new position since it is such a great medium to get information out to

people in a timely matter,” says Hausler. In her role at Trocaire, she was a finalist in the 2012 and 2013 #SocialMadness competition through Buffalo Business First. She also helped advance Trocaire to one of the top five finalists in the 2012 Beta Awards “Best Online Award.”

Hausler will also serve as the school’s alumni relations officer, collaborating with the university-wide offices of development, alumni relations and community relations, as well as with SPHHP alumni and donors.

The communications director serves on the Dean’s Community Advisory Committee, the Executive and Planning Committee and the Strategic Plan Data Committee, and contributes to SPHHP’s Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation team and other administrative groups.

Hausler holds a master’s in higher education and student affairs administration from SUNY Buffalo State and a bachelor’s degree in communications from SUNY Fredonia.

“The City of Buffalo is on the rise, and there are a lot of wonderful things happening specifically because of the university and UB 2020.”



EVENT <<

More than a handshake

In a brief ceremony at the conclusion of the annual Perry Lecture, SPHHP recognizes students who have been named winners of various competitive scholarships and awards. Students come forward, accept certificates and then pose with the dean for a picture. It’s a happy moment; big smiles all around.

After everyone goes home, how do the awards affect the winners a month or a year or 10 years later? We polled past award winners.

Funds from scholarships were, of course, important. “The scholarships helped reduce some of the financial stress and hardship placed on me as a non-traditional student,” says Katherine Herling, DPT ’10, who collected a hat trick of scholarships—the Caffiero, the Perry and the Stonegraber. Jim Lenker, BS ’93, PhD (Engineering) ’05, was one of several respondents who said his Perry scholarship helped him keep his student debt low.

For Vera Busby, Dietetic Internship ’06, a Rachman Scholarship paid for her entire internship, and it motivated her to excel. “I likely learned more

through the process of achieving the scholarship. I worked harder than I ever had to achieve straight A’s.”

Lesli Wall, BS OT ’94, who now practices in Atlanta, Ga., says her Perry Scholarship gave her “a better sense of self and what I was able to accomplish, that carried over in clinical work. I am and always will be grateful.”

Patrick Vanini, BS ENS ’12, put his Perry Scholarship to a specific practical use: it paid for more medical school interviews than he could afford otherwise. “Being able to experience these additional schools helped me make a more educated decision.” He’s now a first-year student at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Bradenton, Fla.

Do these awards have any effect on the world beyond the individual lives of their winners? Amy Himowitz, BS-MS OT ’05, who practices in the Washington, D.C., area, says yes. “The Perry Scholarship motivated me to continue striving to make a difference for patients and the community.”

Carrying the weight of the world

NEW SPM CHAIR YOUFA WANG BRINGS WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH

by Sara Saldi

On Nov. 1, internationally known childhood obesity and nutritional epidemiology expert Youfa Wang, MD, MS, PhD, became chair of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Wang comes to UB from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and School of Medicine where he was the founding director of the Johns Hopkins Global Center on Childhood Obesity. He also served as associate professor in several departments including International Health; Epidemiology; Health, Behavior and Society; Medicine; and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

“I’m very excited about the many wonderful opportunities including the UB 2020 initiatives, collegiality and spirit of collaboration at UB, and the strong

university and state support for faculty, staff and students on research, training and innovation. There seems to be so many exciting areas and programs for future development,” says Wang.

Wang’s main research interests focus on nutritional epidemiology, child nutrition and growth, obesity, non-communicable chronic diseases (NCDs), health disparities and global health. He also has extensive experience studying the application of innovative research methods in the biomedical field, including systems science modeling.

His interest in childhood obesity for the last 17 years stems from his concern for the vulnerability of children.

“Children need care and support, and they particularly need adults who can make a difference in their lives and help guide them,” he says. “I want to act in that role not just for my own children, but for children worldwide.” Wang has two young sons.

Wang’s work has advanced understanding of the global childhood obesity epidemic, assessment of childhood obesity and the influences of dietary intake on risks of chronic diseases.

His research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other funding agencies. He is the

“Children need care and support, and they particularly need adults who can make a difference in their lives and help guide them.”

principal investigator (PI) or a key investigator of more than 10 ongoing research projects in the United States, China and other countries.

As the PI, he has secured approximately \$23 million in NIH research grants. At present, he directs two ongoing NIH-funded projects in addition to other ongoing projects.

Wang and his team established a Global Center of Excellence on childhood obesity and NCDs research, training and outreach in 2011 with a \$16 million NIH center grant and additional institutional co-funding. More than 50 well-established investigators from 30 leading U.S. and international institutions are involved in the project.

He has served on numerous national and international expert panels, and review committees, including more than 20 NIH and CDC grant-review committees, and a World Health Organization Expert Committee developing new international growth standards. He also chairs the Nutrition Epidemiology Section of

the American Society for Nutrition.

Wang has more than 140 publications, including 120 peer-reviewed papers. Some of his papers have been cited more than 1,000 times. He is an associate editor for four international scientific journals.

He received his MD from Beijing Medical University, his MS in epidemiology from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College and his PhD in nutritional epidemiology from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Youfa Wang



STUDENT PROFILE // ANNE WEAVER <<

PhD student studies pollution in Bangladesh



Anne Weaver's global health experience includes analyzing data collected from Kenya about the treatment of diarrhea, and conducting a pilot intervention study about household ventilation and air pollution in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

“I learned so many things working in Bangladesh that can only be learned through experience,” says Weaver, a PhD student in epidemiology. “I learned about the community I was working with, what their daily lives are like, what they value and how we can collaborate. I also learned the very real challenges and rewards of living, working and conducting research in a foreign country.

“I plan on conducting more research in Bangladesh in the future, building on my prior experiences. I also hope to eventually work in more areas of the world as this is such a rewarding experience. I'd like to work in Kenya because my data analysis there made me want to learn more about the country and its people,” Weaver adds.

On Oct. 31, Weaver gave a presentation to SPHHP students and faculty titled, “Analytic plan for air pollution dispersion study, Dhaka, Bangladesh.”

STAY CONNECTED!

Visit the UB Alumni Association's UB Connect page and let us know what you've been doing since graduating.

>> sphhp.buffalo.edu/alumni/connect



A snapshot of SPHHP research projects



Pavani Kalluri Ram, associate professor in the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, is principal investigator on a cooperative agreement from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The lead qualitative investigator on the project is Lauren Blum, a medical anthropologist based in Senegal. The overall goal of the

cooperative agreement is to understand the motivators and barriers to handwashing behavior and hand hygiene promotion in populations affected by humanitarian emergencies, such as conflicts or natural disasters.

Hygiene-preventable diseases, including diarrhea, respiratory infections and Hepatitis E, are common sources of morbidity and

mortality among displaced populations, such as refugees. This two-year project consists of a series of studies that use quantitative and qualitative methods to describe the handwashing behavior of refugees and the challenges to handwashing promotion as perceived by frontline respondents and subject-matter experts in global humanitarian organizations.

In addition, Ram and her team will develop and test evidence-based approaches to improve hand hygiene in refugees or other populations affected by humanitarian crises. To execute this work, Ram and her team are partnering with colleagues from CDC, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Oxfam Great Britain and others. Fieldwork for this project will be led by Jelena Vujcic, a UB research scientist, in Maban County, South Sudan.



Heather Orom, assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, is principal investigator on a National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute-funded project that will examine racial/ethnic disparities in prostate cancer treatment, with the goal of reducing racial gaps in prostate cancer mortality and patient treatment.

African-American men are more than twice as likely to die from prostate cancer as European American men and, researchers say,

the disparity is largely attributable to the racial and ethnic differences in the receipt of definitive, or potentially curative, treatment. The central hypothesis of this study is that racial dynamics in the health care system result in African-American men being less likely to receive definitive treatment, and more likely to experience decision-making difficulty, distress and treatment decision regret.

The study will be the first to test whether racial dynamics shown to be common in other health care domains contribute to racial and ethnic differences in receipt of definitive therapy and treatment decision-making distress and regret.



A research group organized by **Albert Vexler** and **Jihhee Yu**, associate professors in the Department of Biostatistics, has been focusing on theoretical developments related to efficient statistical hypothesis testing methods applied to

clinical trials. Part of the research focuses on the development of a class of novel semi- and nonparametric likelihood methods for statistical inference.

Vexler and Yu have worked on statistical inference methods using the nonparametric likelihood approaches to test multiple

groups in the presence of incomplete data or data attrition. The methods allow the users to avoid strong distributional assumptions by using nonparametric approaches. The group is developing specialized computing packages based on novel probabilistic algorithms, calculating statistical test characteristics such as power, effect size, sample size and critical values in order to expedite and improve statistical analysis, designs and any other relative investigative methods.

In the context of this research, Vexler and Yu train students and medical investigators to use the correct approaches to analyze data. Application of these methods enables flexible and powerful inference in clinical investigations.



Todd C. Rideout, assistant professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, is principal investigator on a five-year National Institutes of Health, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine-funded pre-clinical study that will examine the safety and efficacy of phytosterols in treating high lipid levels in pregnant females.

Adding to the urgency of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) as a global health issue is the rise in dyslipidemic risk factors among women of childbearing age due to underlying genetic and/or dietary factors. Pronounced maternal hyperlipidemia during pregnancy is a high-priority health concern, as it increases

maternal CVD risk and produces offspring who are predisposed to dyslipidemia and early-onset atherosclerosis.

As the use of lipid-lowering medication during pregnancy is contraindicated, natural lipid-lowering products should be examined as potential strategies to reduce gestational dyslipidemia. Phytosterols are plant-based bioactive compounds with demonstrated cholesterol-lowering efficacy and a recognized safety record in both animal and human clinical investigations.

This pre-clinical study will use hamsters to examine the safety and efficacy of phytosterols in treating maternal gestational hyperlipidemia and evaluate in utero and postnatal phytosterol exposure as a novel 'up-stream' preventative strategy to protect against CVD in adult life.



James A. Lenker, associate professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science, is a co-investigator on a recent five-year, \$5 million award from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education, for a Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Accessible Public Transportation.

The Accessible Public Transportation grant includes three research studies and two product development projects. Lenker is the principal investigator (PI) on one study that will explore factors associated with paratransit usage for individuals having mobility limitations due to physical, cognitive or vision impairment.

Lenker and colleagues are hoping to identify factors that, if systematically remediated, could enable paratransit users to take fixed-route transit more frequently, which would enhance community participation for people with disabilities while saving costs for transit authorities. Within the same grant, Lenker is co-PI on a second study that will evaluate boarding and disembarking challenges for people with mobility impairments using shuttle buses that are used by hotels and airports.

Lenker also is the co-PI on a recently awarded, one-year research contract from Diebold Corporation to evaluate the usability of a new ATM with features intended to enhance accessibility for wheelchair users and persons with vision impairment.

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July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013



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For more information on how to support the School of Public Health and Health Professions, please contact Mary Glenn, director of development, at 716-829-4773 or glenn@buffalo.

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2] <<



Physical therapy faculty members congratulate Julie Garra '00 after she won a UB physical therapy sweatshirt at a reunion held in conjunction with UB homecoming. All proceeds from the sweatshirt raffle supported the Physical Therapy White Coat Ceremony fund. From left are: Andrew Ray, assistant professor; Juli Wylegala, director of clinical education; Garra; and Kirk Personius, program director.

PT alumni come home

More than 20 physical therapy alumni and their families returned to UB Oct. 6 for the inaugural Western New York physical therapy alumni event at the UB Bulls homecoming game.

Physical therapy graduates and faculty members joined together for a tailgate party before the football game, a 42-14 Bulls victory over Eastern Michigan. They also had the opportunity to celebrate with beloved faculty member Dale Fish, who was honored as faculty honorary coach at the game.

The school would like to offer a special thanks to the many PT alumni who volunteered their time to organize this event. Plans are underway for similar events around a Bulls basketball game in the spring.

For more information or to get involved, contact physical therapy program director Kirk Personius at kep7@buffalo.edu.

Rowe elected president of rural health association

Don Rowe, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, was elected as president of the New York State Association for Rural Health at its annual meeting and conference on Sept. 19. The association is the largest in the state devoted specifically to rural health.

Rowe served as public health director for Genesee County from 1985 to 2002. He joined UB the following year and in 2007 became director of UB's Office of Public Health Practice.

Rowe received the Outstanding Leadership in Public Health Award and the Public Health Professional of the Year Award from the NYS Association of County Health Officials. He sits on numerous local and state boards and chairs the NYS Rural Health Council.

Academic Service Award-winners named

Dietrich Kuhlmann (biostatistics) and David Pendergast (exercise and nutrition sciences) have been named as Academic Service Award recipients for 2013. The SPHHP Academic Service Award, initiated in 2003, recognizes contributions to academic service made by volunteers or adjunct faculty member to academic programs in the school.

Kuhlmann is chair of mathematics and statistics at Canisius College; he has been an adjunct faculty member in SPHHP for a number of years, having taught more than 3,000 students. Kuhlmann regularly meets with students on weekends and has stepped up to teach additional courses when needed.

Pendergast has been a long-time mentor, volunteer and advocate for the school. He has mentored both undergraduate and graduate students, as well as junior faculty. In addition, he recently served as interim chair of SPHHP's Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences.

Department chairs nominate individuals for the award, with a selection committee choosing up to two winners.

SPHHP project helps to build a healthier community

GROWING HEALTHY TOGETHER ADDRESSES NEEDS IN BUFFALO'S DELAVAN-GRIDER NEIGHBORHOOD

By Pat Donovan

"Growing Healthy Together" is the Delavan-Grider community health project developed by Heather Orom, assistant professor in the Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, and Karen O'Quin, a PhD student in that department, in partnership with the Delavan-Grider Community Center and Rita Hubbard-Robinson, director of institutional advancement at the Erie County Medical Center (ECMC) and the ECMC Lifeline Foundation.

"The Delavan-Grider community is well-loved by its residents for its vibrancy, cohesion and neighbor-to-neighbor assistance," Orom says, "but there are some serious health issues and food availability problems here."

"Our job as responsible university representatives is to build on the neighborhood's strengths by being a resource for those working there to increase access to fresh, healthy food and improve community health," she says.

Between October 2011 and August 2012, Orom, O'Quin, neighborhood volunteers and a team of students in the UB Master of Public Health program undertook a community health assessment that involved one-on-one interviews with residents from 102 households in a section of the community near ECMC.

The UB team analyzed and presented the resulting data in a colorful, easy-to-read 31-page educational booklet, which team members delivered door-to-door in the neighborhood and continue to use as a starting point for discussions about health at community events.

With a great layout and excellent use of graphs and photos, the booklet clearly demonstrates to readers the higher-than average levels of chronic illness in the neighborhood—including high blood pressure, asthma, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

"Our job as responsible university representatives is to build on the neighborhood's strengths..."

HEATHER OROM, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HEALTH BEHAVIOR

It also describes the benefits of physical activity, offers suggestions to overcome self-described barriers to being active, discusses the positive effects of fresh foods on the disease process itself and offers information on a range of community services.

In response to their identified needs, Orom says concerned residents and ECMC are working to provide shuttles to area grocery stores and programs that promote eating well and moving more.

This has allowed Orom and O'Quin to begin a new phase of the project, one aimed at empowering patients in the medical setting. There will be 100 participants in this study and three community groups are already involved.

This study is grounded in research showing that active patients have improved health outcomes because they can communicate better and are better able to understand and control such things as their diabetes or hypertension.

"Our participants are meeting with members of the Patient Voices Network, a group of patients brought together by UB's Department of Family Medicine to improve primary care in Buffalo," Orom says.

"These speakers share personal stories about how they became informed and learned to express their preferences, participate in their health care decisions and collaborate with medical providers to set and reach health goals. Then they lead group discussions about how our participants can do this."

To ascertain if the narrative process helped subjects become more active partners in their own medical care, O'Quin will conduct follow-up interviews with them after their next visits with physicians.

Orom and O'Quin have been working since July 2010 to establish themselves as credible university partners, an effort that is paying off in trust and willing collaboration.

"This is important, because we're in this for the long haul," Orom says. "We plan to remain actively involved in Delavan-Grider and hope that, as a result, both residents and the university will grow our capacity to collaboratively build a healthier community."



Thanks to you,

I'll spend my career doing the research I love.

Erin Ellis was a champion swimmer and an Academic All-American at SUNY Geneseo. Life was good. Then she went to work as a researcher in programs for children who were in the care of child protective services, and for rural suicide prevention, and she saw what hard times look like. She wished she had a language to describe it. That brought her to the PhD program in UB's Department of Community Health and Health Behavior, where she is concentrating her research on the role of affect in health behavior decision-making. Her dissertation will look at risky sexual behavior through that lens. Gifts to the school send her to conferences to present her research. **The best reason to support UB is what students like Erin will do in the future.**

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QUICK LOOK <<

“Children need care and support, and they particularly need adults who can make a difference in their lives and help guide them.”

YOUFA WANG, MD, MS, PHD, CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE



NEW SPM CHAIR YOUFA WANG BRINGS WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH

See the full story on page 7