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Public Health Quarterly Newsletter



Welcome to the Department of Health Science and Human Ecology's Public Health Quarterly Newsletter! Our goal is to publish a quarterly newsletter in order to feature outstanding public health undergraduate and graduate students who have been nominated by a faculty for their exceptional work and academic achievements.

We are also excited to welcome our new **Department Chair, Dr. Dimitri Tamalis!**

Questions or comments about the Newsletter?

Please email Newsletter Coordinator Dr. Becerra at mbecerra@csusb.edu

Welcome to our incoming Department Chair Dr. Dimitri Tamalis

Dr. Dimitri Tamalis received his bachelor in Chemistry from McPherson College, KS and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Kansas State University. He has conducted postdoctoral research at the New York University Medical Center and the Health Sciences Center at the University of Oklahoma. Prior to coming to CSUSB he taught at Florida Memorial University in Miami for fourteen years where he attained the rank of Professor. His educational achievements include the establishment of a Radiobiology major and the creation of online courses at FMU. His research interests have concentrated on environmental issues with funding coming from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other federal sources. The investigation of radiation dose levels to the human body due to specific diets and the characterization of radioactive material in oil exploration waste products have been two major topics Dr. Tamalis has presented in conferences (such as the annual American Nuclear Society meeting) and published in journals (such as the Journal of Environmental Radioactivity and the Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry).



"I am very excited to be joining the Department of Health Science and Human Ecology. When I came to San Bernardino for my interview, I was impressed by the level of administrative support, the available resources, and the faculty and students with their drive to significantly improve the department's ranking and visibility. I look forward to hitting the ground running so that we can work in many areas, from program assessment, senior project research, grant acquisition, and others. Together I believe we can accomplish a lot and I want the faculty, staff and students to know that they will have a mentor and a strong advocate for the program in me."—Dr. Tamalis

Featured Faculty: Dr. Angie Otiniano Verissimo



Dr. A. Otiniano Verissimo presented on her innovative teaching methods during the Spring 2016 Faculty Showcase at CSUSB. She won the peer-award for her presentation.

Course Innovation Summary: Students in HSCI 370 identified a main health concern among local high school students and worked in groups to develop a social marketing campaign to be posted on social media addressing this health concern. In addition, students developed a 5-minute oral presentation and paper on their social marketing campaign.

Dr. A. Otiniano Verissimo also coauthored a **book chapter** titled "Racism and Behavioral Outcomes Over the Life Course" in "The Cost of Racism for People of Color: Contextualizing Experiences of Discrimination" book recently published through the American Psychological Association.

You can find more information about the book at: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4317394.aspx?tab=2>

Featured Public Health Education Undergraduate Robert Avina

Q) Tell us a little about yourself (especially your current job, internship, etc.)

I am currently a senior and also completed an internship with Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest, which is located in Riverside. I was involved in two departments, political affairs and community outreach at the internship. I created a political analysis of the local candidates that are up for reelection, and advocated for reproductive health in underserved communities throughout the County. My long-term goal is to complete my Master's of Public Health at CSUSB and work with non-profit organizations that reach out to communities by being the support system that keeps them on their feet.



Robert Avina will be starting his MPH program at CSUSB in Fall 2016.

Q) How do you feel your major has helped you work towards your goals?

The program has prepared me for my internship with Planned Parenthood. The content our program provides its students with helped me break through and fully examine the needs of the community. In doing so, I was able to meet with community leaders face-to-face in hopes of making a positive step forward. What I learned from our program allowed for me to transition into my internship without hesitation. The skills set that I received from our program allowed for me to accomplish my deliverables that my preceptor assigned to me.

Featured Public Health Education Alumnus Jesus Barrios

Q) Tell us a little about your current job and related responsibilities?

I am currently the program Coordinator at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center. I over see the planning, implementation, and evaluation of our sexual health programming, which provides a range of free services (STI/hepatitis screen, treatment and vaccination, PEP, and PrEP) MPH candidate at CUNY SPH, 16' Focus area: health implications of immigration detention on LGBTQ detained people.

Q) What key area(s) would you recommend for change in the public health education program?

The first, have more courses on public health practice and current innovative public health strategies to solve some of the pressing public health issues. The second, support student independent projects/senior thesis.

Q) How did the program prepare you for your current job?

The program provided me the foundation to understand the work I was going to emerge myself into, and my practice confirmed my purpose in the field of public health.



Featured Master of Public Health (MPH) alumna

Sarah Elfaqir, MPH
Graduated: June 2016

Q) Tell us a little about yourself (especially your current job, internship, etc.)

I work as a HSCI 120 lab instructor at CSUSB. I like it because I like helping others understand their overall health and well being. I also intern at the Riverside Department of Public Health in the Injury Prevention Services where I am creating a new curriculum training for university level peer educators on prevention of impaired driving.

Q) What is your long term goal and how has the MPH program prepared you for that?

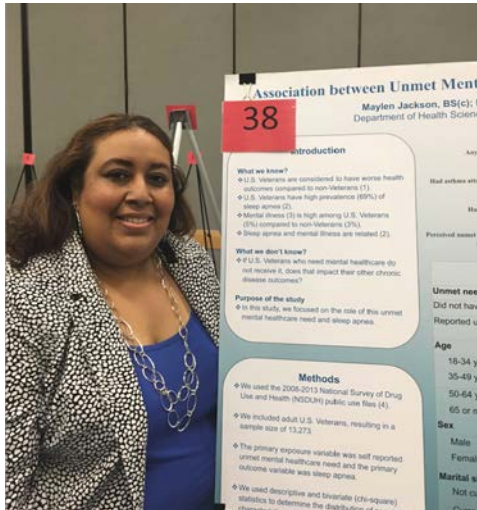
I would like to obtain my Doctorate in Public Health and teach at the university level. The program has helped me understand certain techniques and skills needed to know how to conduct research properly and gain knowledge on certain public health issues. It has thought me how to be sensitive to many issues that people might be facing and how we, as public health educators, can plan to tackle them through strategic and community action planning. One major strength of the program is that it gives you the opportunity to actually work on projects that are hands on and realistic to the actual scope of public health.

Q) How do you feel the MPH program has helped you work towards your long term goals?

It has helped me understand certain techniques and skills needed to know how to conduct research properly and gain knowledge on certain public health issues. It has thought me how to be sensitive to many issues people might be facing and how we, as public health educators, can plan to tackle them through strategic and community action planning.

Q) Have you found what you learned in the MPH program apply to your internship or job?

Yes. In my internship I am required to be aware of how to read certain data and statistics. I also have to know how to find research on issues and where to find sources that are of importance. Also, knowing how to present and talk in front of others.



Featured incoming Master of Public Health (MPH) student Maylen Jackson

Maylen received the very competitive national HACU fellowship for Summer 2016

Q) Tell us a little about yourself (especially your current job, internship, etc.)

I'm currently a program analyst working in Syracuse, New York in a government agency with the Veterans Health Administration. At the present time I am working on making a crosswalk for the Behavioral Health outpatient clinic (BHOC) three accreditation bodies. My second project is analyzing and creating an action plan to reduce the missed opportunity rate for BHOC. This internship, through HACU from day one, has been very hands-on. I have been to many VA trainings, executive meetings, and also listened in on many conferences calls. All these learned experiences so far have given me a tremendous understanding of how the biggest health network in our nation works. These experiences thus, far have introduced me to a world outside San Bernardino and I am excited to continue learning and making the best of this opportunity and also get out to the city and see Syracuse.

Q) What is your short and long term goals?

My short term goals are to finish this internship in good standing with HACU and network with as many professional here in Syracuse as possible and learn as much as possible to take with me for other jobs in the future. My long term goals would be to finish my MPH in two years and get a career in the VA system or any other organization where I can work with seniors or Veterans.

Maylen is also an alumna of the Public Health Education (PHE) program and had to say the following about the PHE program!

Q) How did the PHE program help you with your current position as well as your goals?

The PHE program helped me understand how health disparities are a big problem in our nation and how we as public health educators can contribute to better the health of others and find solutions to eliminate health disparities. In my current position the PHE program helped me to understand the reasons why health disparities exist among our Veterans, and why they are considered to be one of the biggest population with health disparities in our nation. The opportunity this HACU fellowship has given me and the knowledge the PHE program has taken me under has helped me to be better prepared to do my job here in Syracuse and get closer to reaching my goals of working with Veterans or seniors.

Featured incoming Master of Public Health (MPH) student Brandon Ignatowski

Brandon was nominated by the entire HSCI department as an outstanding undergraduate student nominee to the College of Natural Sciences



Get to know Brandon!
He will be starting his MPH program at CSUSB in Fall 2016.

After changing my major from Biochemistry in my last year as an undergraduate, I graduated Magna Cum Laude in Public Health Education. I grew up practicing martial arts and received my 1st degree black belt at 11 years old and my 2nd degree at 14 years old. I also served four years in the Army and completed two tours in the Middle East during the OEF/OIF conflict. These experiences have given me the discipline needed to accomplish my scholastic goals and carry me throughout the rest of my life.

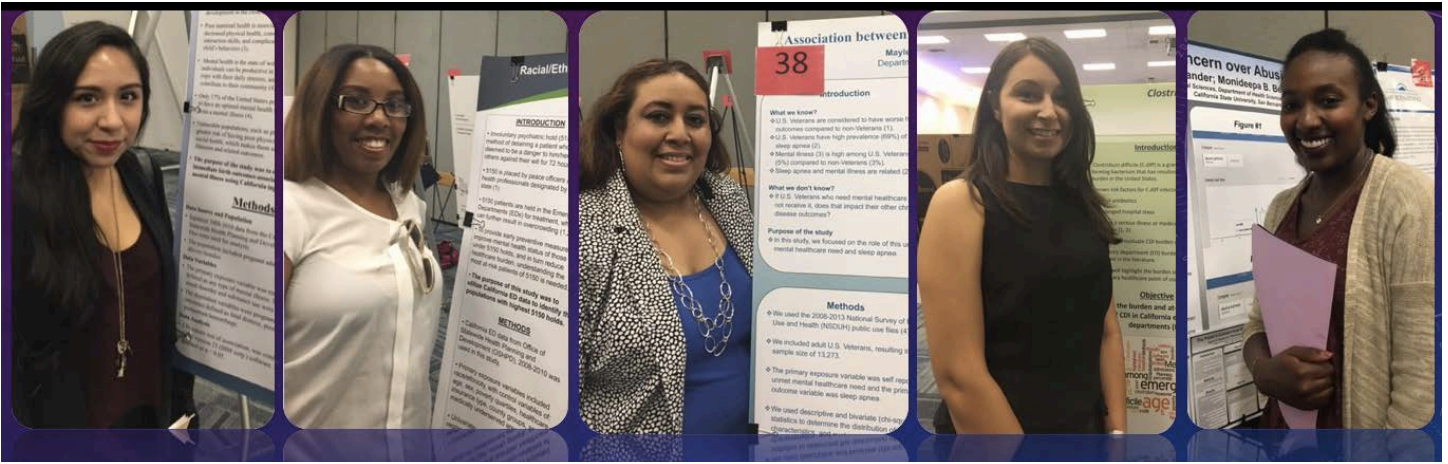
Here's what HSCI faculty had to say about him!

"It has been a pleasure to work with Brandon. I appreciate and admire his positive attitude, insightful questions, life experience, perseverance, personal strength, and natural leadership ability. It's rewarding to see him take his academic program seriously and actually apply the things he learns. He has what it takes to be a successful health professional, and I'm sure he will represent CSUSB and our department well." – Dr. Coleman

"Brandon is an exceptional student whose commitment to smoking cessation and the veteran community shines through." – Dr. Otiniano Verissimo

"Brandon has always shown great potential for growth. He has demonstrated strong committed to his academics and I am confident that he will succeed in the MPH program." – Dr. Becerra

Featured Spring Student Activities



Abigail Lopez

Tamika Hicks

Maylen Jackson

Alexa Reyes

Taylor Alexander

Three public health students (Abigail Lopez, Maylen Jackson, and Taylor Alexander), in addition to Tamika Hicks (healthcare management) and Alexa Reyes (environmental health), were chosen to present their research posters at the Meeting of the Minds Research Symposium on May 19, 2016 at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB).

Abigail Lopez received HSCI departmental honors in Spring 2016 for working on her project related to maternal mental illness and postpartum outcome with Drs. Becerra and Okpala. Abigail will be starting her MPH program at CSUSB in Fall 2016.

Maylen Jackson received HSCI departmental honors in Spring 2016 for working on her project focused on unmet mental healthcare need and sleep apnea among U.S. Veterans with Drs. Becerra and Henley. Maylen will be starting her MPH program at CSUSB in Fall 2016.

Taylor Alexander presented her project from HSCI 451: Principles of Epidemiology, where she utilized Google Trends to assess the public's interest in gender-based intimate partner violence. Taylor has also submitted her paper for publication at the *Journal of Student Research* at CSUSB.

Both **Alexa Reyes** and **Tamika Hicks** were recipients of Faculty/Student grants in order to evaluate the burden of emerging infectious diseases and involuntary psychiatric holds in California emergency departments, respectively. Alexa has also submitted her paper for publication at the *Journal of Student Research* at CSUSB.

Want to do research and learn about the departmental honors?
Check out the link to our department website below!

Departmental honors:

<http://health.csusb.edu/studentsAlumni/departamentalHonors.html>

Independent study (required for departmental honors:

<http://health.csusb.edu/studentsAlumni/independentStudy.html>

Featured Summer Student Activities



Two public health students (Rochelle Granados and Tarah Hernandez), in addition to Brittney Bol (healthcare management) were competitively chosen to participate in the Office of Student Research Summer Research Program, 2016, at CSUSB.

Rochelle Granados conducted a research project evaluating the relationship between sleep health and mental illness. Rochelle has further gained interest in the field of mental health and plans to continue her project on the role of mental illness related on other health outcomes.

Tarah Hernandez evaluated the relationship between food insecurity and sleep health. Tarah will be using this data to conduct further analysis and complete her MPH Thesis.

Brittney Bol focused on assessing the relationship between sleep health and academic performance. Due to her interest in education and literacy, she also completed a second project focused on diabetes literacy among vulnerable populations, which she plans to continue on for departmental honors.

All students were committed to 20 hours a week/10 weeks for the program, which included a stipend, as well as regular meetings with OSR on professional development workshops, such as presentation skills, GRE preparation, etc., and a final oral presentation.