Greetings Wildcats!

Dear CWU Public Health Family,

The start to this academic feels very different than years past. Many of us are navigating unanticipated changes to our teaching and learning environments, managing competing priorities for our time and energy, and caring for our community during an era of uncertainty. Despite all these changes, we are evermore committed to our fundamental vision of making health central to all people, in all places, at all times. We know that our great community of public health students, faculty, alumni and practitioners will continue to do this vital work, as we all adapt and thrive toward resilience together.

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From Your Program Faculty
The CWU Master of Public Health Program welcomed 12 new students in the 2020 cohort in the Annual MPH Kickoff Event on Monday, September 28th. First and second year students in the MPH program joined with department faculty to share their learned experiences, motivations toward advanced study in public health, and their goals for the coming year.

On September 24, 2020, CWU President Jim Gaudino announced a continued emphasis on distance and hybrid instructional models with limited in-person classes through Spring quarter 2020. In order to reduce the volume of students in campus-based courses, the CWU Public Health B.S. and graduate programs will deliver all coursework through online or virtual modalities for the rest of the 2020-2021 academic year. We will continue to leverage new ways of online connection and engagement through virtual advising and Open House events, regular electronic communication from faculty and program directors, and networking opportunities with peers, employers, and community partners.

The CWU Multimodal Education Center has information and guidance on how to be successful using online coursework during these changing times. See [http://www.cwu.edu/online-learning/online-learning-basics-students](http://www.cwu.edu/online-learning/online-learning-basics-students) for more details.
As the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) spread across Washington state, the shortage in the public health workforce was especially noticeable in rural locations like Yakima and Benton-Franklin Counties. As health districts worked diligently to respond to the overwhelming community needs with their existing staff, the need for increased public health capacity to perform critical disease mitigation efforts grew.

In response to this need, CWU’s Public Health Program began work to establish a program to link graduate-level trainees in public health with community health needs in rural health districts in Washington State. The outcome was a Summer Rural Health Fellowship program for students to engage in significant and practical field experiences while working along public health practitioners in COVID-19 response initiatives.

Three fellowship positions were created to expand capacity to rural health agencies to deliver vital community health services and support to residents of rural counties. Two fellows were funded by Yakima Valley Resilience and Response Fund; a funding partnership with United Way of Central Washington, the Latino Community Fund, and the Yakima Valley Community Foundation. The support for the Benton-Franklin Health District program was a partnership between Three Rivers Community Foundation and Central Washington University Foundation.

“The fact that this unique grant opportunity came at a time when our students could lend a critical skillset to the COVID-19 response in our region is a tremendous value to our faculty, students, partner agencies, and the communities we all serve,” said Dr. Tishra Beeson, program coordinator for Central Washington University’s Master of Public Health program.

SUMMER 2020 FELLOWS

Debbie Rich ’19, assisted the Public Information Officer at the Yakima Health District with communication activities including a community “pop-up” event to bring awareness of the impact of COVID in Yakima County. She also assisted in the development of workflow script for community testing sites, and creation of communications overview of outreach and activities related to COVID-19 response.

“This fellowship was a great way to utilize my prior experience in communications, as well as provide opportunity for practical application of the assessment, planning, and evaluation strategies I’ve learned at Central.”

Alberto Saldaña Jr. ’19, was placed on the Yakima County emergency operations center pandemic & response planning team as a public health unit/planner. His activities included community education, mask distribution, and development of policies and procedures for isolation and quarantine facilities in Yakima County. He also provided courier services to state and private testing laboratories.

“Having the opportunity to work directly in field during a pandemic made this fellowship unforgettable. Fellowships allow students to put the knowledge they have learned - and continue to learn, into practice”.

Jolene Rios ’96, received fellowship with the Benton-Franklin Health District: COVID-19 Outbreak Outreach Mitigation Team. She assisted with outreach to the community for education and performed onsite visits with infection control guidance to H2A housing in the county. She also worked with businesses regarding prevention measures and recommendations for positive case management.

"The combination of my professional experience and the MPH degree course at CWU allowed me to participate in the boots on the ground public health activities required for COVID-19 mitigation in a rural setting."
As the first U.S. case of COVID-19 was reported in Washington State, awareness about the critical role of public health professionals rose to new heights. The resulting spread of the virus required the public health workforce to quickly mobilize in response to the health threat, expand to cover more areas, and coordinate medical testing resources. As the positive case numbers in the state increased, so did the respect and admiration of public health professionals; as well as a demand for more. Several Central Washington University Public Health Alumni have found themselves on the frontlines of the pandemic, serving in vital public health response roles across the region.

Marie Betts ’16, is the Infection Prevention Specialist and Disease Investigator for Kittitas County Public Health Department. She received her MPH from Saint Louis University ’18, in Biosecurity, Disaster Preparedness, and Epidemiology. Marie shares, “The variety of classes at CWU allowed me to explore different fields of Public Health. The professors connected me to resources to learn more about Emergency Management and Epidemiology.”

Ramiro Amezcua ’20, is a Public Health Advisor for Caduceus Health Care Inc. contracted by Center for Disease Control and Prevention at the Seattle Quarantine Station. “Public health is integrated within all of our lives in one way or another” states Ramiro. “The program at CWU prepared me for the key concepts of the field and I was ready to help the fight against COVID-19 as a Public Health Advisor.”

Shanna Chua ’20, is the Health Services Consultant & Lead Coordinator for Community-Based testing for the Washington State Department of Health. “Central’s Public Health program helped me gain the skills and knowledge needed to help me obtain my current position” she claims. “In my current position, I’m required to communicate with a team and also report to a supervisory group. The program enhanced my communication and collaborative skills.”
CWU Awarded $100,000 to Study Effects of COVID-19, Poor Air Quality

The Central Washington University Department of Health Sciences has been awarded a $100,000 research grant by the American Lung Association (ALA) to study how COVID-19, poor air quality, and certain socioeconomic factors have affected underserved populations during the pandemic.

The award will help members of the CWU Public Health faculty and a team of student researchers conduct surveys of Yakima County residents about the combined effects of the virus, air quality, and limited economic resources.

Drs. Casey Mace-Firebaugh and Tishra Beeson, hope their research will provide the ALA with valuable insight into why poor air quality and infectious disease have combined to create such a unique challenge for communities as diverse as Yakima County, which experienced one of the highest COVID-19 infection rates on the entire West Coast earlier this Spring. The evidence collected during the upcoming survey will help the CWU team and others in the scientific community respond more effectively to future outbreaks.

Access the full story https://www.cwu.edu/cwu-awarded-100000-study-effects-covid-19-poor-air-quality


CWU Public Health is Hiring Research Assistants

We're looking for the right set of student researchers who have:

- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Ability to adhere to detailed research protocols
- Experience making outgoing phone calls and/or administering surveys
- Ability to work independently
- Proficiency in English and Spanish language preferred

Details at MyCWU Student Employment JOB ID #3796

Hours are flexible, dependent on project needs.

CALLING ALL STUDENTS!

JOIN THE PUBLIC HEALTH CLUB

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Jill Hoxmeier, PhD, MPH, CHES, and colleagues published and presented:

- #MeToo for whom? Sexual assault disclosures before and after #MeToo. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*
- Engaging boys and men as allies in prevention: The efficacy of bystander program approaches for boys and men. *Engaging Boys and Men in Sexual Assault Prevention.*
- The Chivalrous Bystander: The Role of Gender-Based Attitudes and Empathy on Bystander Behavior and Perceived Barriers to Intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence.*
- The Impact of #MeToo on Sexual Assault Disclosures for College Students from Marginalized Communities. *Eastern Sociological Society Annual Conference.*

Jasmin Washington, B.S. Public Health ’19, and Dr. Jill Hoxmeier presented:

- Strength Under Pressure: Superwoman Schema (SWS) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among Black Women. *SOURCE. Award for Outstanding Presentation in CEPS.*

Dr. Tishra Beeson received over $10,000 in grant funding from the Yakima Community Foundation, the United Way of Central Washington, the Latino Community Fund of Washington State, CWU Advancement and Three Rivers Community Foundation to support the Summer Rural Health Fellowship Program, placing MPH students in rural health districts for a 10-week in-residence fellowship.

Dr. Amie Wojtyna was tapped to lend her expertise to the University’s reopening planning team. As CWU’s only infectious disease epidemiologist, Dr. Wojtyna provides insight on trends in COVID-19 disease mitigation and recommendations for safe reopening procedures across the university’s multiple divisions.

**IDEAS? COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?**

Have an idea for a great story or article related to Public Health? Are you an employer looking to recruit students or interns? Would you like more information about events, opportunities, or activities? Let us know! Our goal is to provide relevant and useful content for your use.

**CWU Public Health Alumni**

We want to hear from you and tell your story! Let us know where your PUBH degree has taken you and the ways that you are making an impact in Public Health.

Contact: debra.rich@cwu.edu