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THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND HEALTH

UPDATES FROM THE URI HEALTH STUDIES PROGRAM



NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

This past year has been a period of growth for Health Studies. We now have over 400 majors and Drs. Cohen and Meucci joined the Health Studies faculty this past fall. Their research and teaching experiences have been a great benefit to the program. Our students continue to inspire me.

We have students volunteering as medical translators, completing service learning trips, participating in writing policy briefs, and completing interesting internships.

The fifth class of Health Studies majors graduated in May 2017! There are now 240 URI graduates who have a BS in Health Studies. We have alumni participating in clinical research, conducting health promotion programs, and serving at state health departments. We are proud that our graduates are working to promote health and well-being in Rhode Island and beyond!

I feel so lucky to be the director of Health Studies. I am honored to work with our faculty and our Health Studies advisor, Ms. Stephanie Champlin. I am grateful

to the departments and colleges across the University that provide our majors the opportunity to create interdisciplinary programs of studies. I am confident that our program will continue to grow and flourish. Thank you for your interest and support of Health Studies!

Sincerely,

Molly Greaney, PhD, MPH



STUDENT PROFILE JUSTYNA FALAT '17



Justyna Falat '17

- *Hometown: Westmont, Illinois*
- *Specialization: Health Promotion*

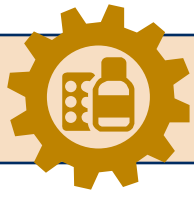
Why URI?

As an 18 year old growing up outside of the city of Chicago, I wanted to experience a new environment and be put outside of my comfort zone. I had traveled to Rhode Island before and fell in love with the beauty of it, so I definitely wanted to consider it as my undergraduate home. When choosing a school, I decided to go to URI because of the

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FAQS

What is Health Studies?

Health Studies is an interdisciplinary program designed to prepare students for non-clinical careers in public health, health education promotion, health services, and health-related research working in for-profit companies, hospitals and health agencies, and not-for-profit organizations.

What courses does the curriculum require?

In addition to the general education requirements, our students take courses in anatomy & physiology, statistics, ethics, and epidemiology, as well as three core Health Studies classes (HLT 100, 200, and 450). These courses provide a foundation and build students' knowledge and

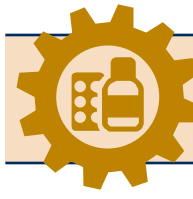
skills in interdisciplinary research, professional writing and verbal communication.

Where have students completed internships?

Students have completed internships in a variety of organizations, including state health departments, wellness companies, hospitals, and community-based organizations. Internships can be completed anywhere, and do not need to take place in Rhode Island.

Can majors complete a minor?

Yes, we strongly encourage students to complete a minor. Students have completed minors in Business, Psychology, Spanish, and Leadership Studies as well as many other areas.



CAREER EVENTS

Health Studies hosted two career events this past year, one in October and the other in April. Each event began with a panel presentation followed by interactive Q&A breakout sessions. These events have been a great success, and we would like to thank all the health professionals who participated!

Ms. Alison Croke, MHA

Neighborhood Health Plan of RI

Mr. Joseph Dziobek

Welcome House

Ms. Sarah Costa

Abacus Health Solutions

Ms. Lori Ann Hiener

Head Start/Early Head Start Associate Director, Tri-County Community Action Agency

Ms. Rebecca Lebeau

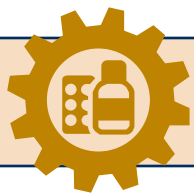
Chief Health Program Evaluator, Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Service

Ms. Meghan Meyer

Lead Clinical Research Coordinator, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Ms. Daniela Quilliam

MPH, RI Department of Public Health



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Health Studies majors have been actively engaged in the URI community, served as volunteers, and conducted research. A few of their experiences are highlighted below.

STUDENT RESEARCH

Two students, **Ariana Azzoli '17** and **Heidi Weidele '17** epidemiological assessments under the mentorship of Dr. Cohen.

Ariana completed a research project after volunteering at a low vision clinic and taking an Epidemiology class. She conducted a cross-sectional study to determine whether there is a difference in depression levels among older adults with by gender, because few studies have examined this particular association. The study sample was drawn from the National Health and Aging Trends study, a large, nationally representative sample of adults ages 65 and older. Linear and logistic regression



Ariana Azzoli

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STUDENT PROFILE

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the friendly community, variety of opportunities offered to students, and the possibilities available to me within the Health Studies program.

Why did you major in Health Studies?

When I chose to major in Health Studies, I didn't realize how passionate I would become about the field. I always knew I wanted to go into health and possibly be a physician, therefore, I wanted to choose a major that wasn't hard science but still very closely associated with health. When I started learning about the determinants of health, preventative medicine, and health promotion, I was pleasantly surprised at how much this major had to offer.

What do you consider to be the greatest strength of Health Studies?

The program's multidisciplinary nature. The program requirements really allow students to choose their own adventure in terms of choosing classes, which was very helpful for me. In four years, I was able to take classes ranging from infectious disease to counseling to substance abuse, and they all counted towards the major.

In addition, we have some of the most helpful and supportive professors in our program. Especially as a graduating senior, they have done so much for me in terms of writing letters of recommendation, preparing me for interviews, and proofreading personal statements and cover letters. Having them available as mentors really helps when making big decisions about next steps after graduation.

Did you complete an internship?

The summer after my sophomore year I was given the opportunity

to travel to Nicaragua with a group of 14 other interns and work with the nonprofit organization, Global Brigades. This opportunity allowed me to actively apply what I was learning in my core classes to a real life situation. I completed needs assessments and wrote technical reports that I later presented to the program coordinators. Traveling to a new country not only taught me cultural competence but also let me improve my Spanish as well.

Any advice for majors?

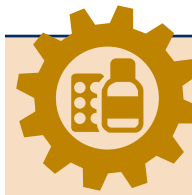
Use all of the resources available to you through the program and through URI. There are so many people that are available to help make you successful whether it be through advising, mentoring, or advocating for you. As far as picking the right classes to take, don't be afraid to explore an area you aren't familiar with. If it wasn't for my choice to take an infectious disease class, I would have never been inspired to travel to Nicaragua.

What surprised you the most about URI?

The overwhelming sense of community here. At first, I was far from home and didn't know any other students attending here. It wasn't until I broke out of my shell and joined many clubs and activities that I realized the number of networks I quickly became a part of and opportunities available to me.

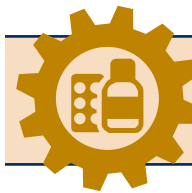
What's next?

In a couple of years, I will be applying to MD/MPH dual degree programs. Ultimately, my dream is to work with children in primary care. Directly after graduation, I hope to find a position that pushes me to work hard and learn new things. Since I have a lot of experience in clinical medicine, I hope to find a position focusing on elements of public health or research.



HEALTH
STUDIES
ACTION
BOARD

This past Spring marked the beginning of a Health Studies student action board, a group comprised of juniors and seniors who have shown dedication to the major and are committed to helping the program grow. The students serve as ambassadors for the Health Studies program and to take a leadership role in the program, including organized activities to provide peer support to fellow Health Studies students, creating materials to support program activities, working on fundraising efforts for Health Studies students and programs, and promoting Health Studies events.



GMAT
WAIVER

The URI College of Business and Health Studies is pleased to announce that for URI Health Studies students/alumni interested in applying to the URI One Year full-time MBA in Strategic Innovation or the Evening part-time MBA can waive the GMAT requirement if overall GPA is 3.6 or higher.



STUDENT RESEARCH

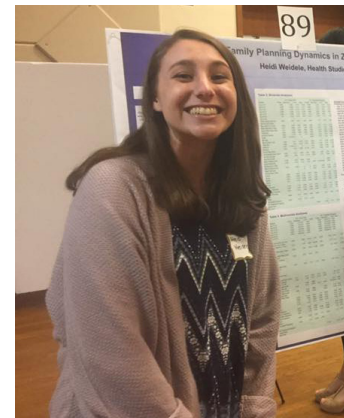
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models were used to display the associations between vision loss and depression, while accounting for confounders and complex sampling using SPSS. Results showed a statistically significant association between adults with low vision and their depression score, with the association being stronger among men. This fall Ariana will present her research at the American Public Health Association Conference.

Heidi conducted a detailed analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data exploring the relationships between socioeconomic and demographic factors and family

planning needs in Zimbabwean females. Heidi's analysis revealed that low socioeconomic status was the strongest indicator of unmet need for family planning—the gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behaviors or ability to obtain contraception. She also found that older and richer women living in urban areas were more likely to have terminated their unwanted pregnancies than other women. Heidi notes that future analyses could lead to tailoring interventions and programs designed to reduce socioeconomic disparities in unmet need and ensure that all populations who want contraception can access

it. Heidi will be attending the MPH program at Brown University.



Heidi Weidele

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Maya Byrne '17 traveled to Lafayette, Louisiana with 23 other URI students to be part of an alternative spring break to provide flood relief. The URI volunteers partnered with Habitat for Humanity and other local volunteer organizations to build houses destroyed by flooding, work in a food bank, plant trees, and more. URI Service Corps planned the alternative spring break. This trip was Maya's third year of being part of an alternative spring break trip with the URI Service Corps.



Maya Byrne

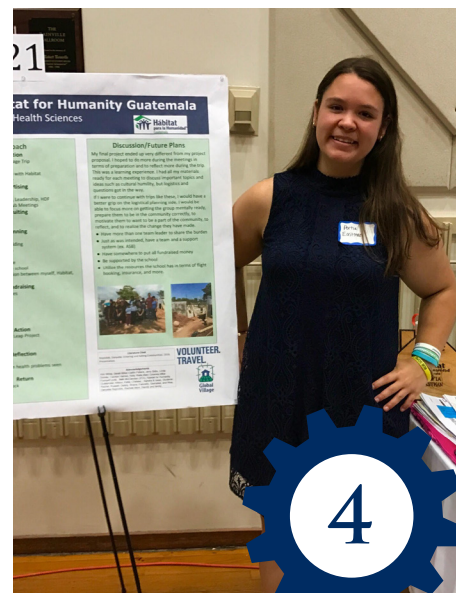


Pasco Cardillo

Pasco Cardillo '17 was a member of the planning committee for the 2017 AIDS Walk For Life "Fighting HIV One Step at a Time" along with other public health advocates from Rhode Island community and local health organizations. Pasco reached out to all of Rhode Island's higher education institutes, to recruit volunteers. Pasco was an intern with AIDS Project Rhode Island for a year and was recently offered a full-time position with the non-profit.

Portia Eastman '17 coordinated a trip with URI the Global Village Program to Retalhuleu, Guatemala this past January as her honors project. Portia explained that when developing her project "I made sure make sure my project directly involved the local community, was culturally immersive, physically and mentally challenging, and presented

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Portia Eastman

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

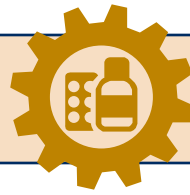
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a real-life public health situation. During their time in Guatemala, the URI team helped build one house as well as 2 smokeless stoves.”

Terry Rajsombath '17, photographer, veteran, and Purple Heart recipient, brought Help-Portrait to Providence, Rhode Island. Help-Portrait is a global movement of photographers, hairstylists and makeup artists using their time, tools and expertise to give back to those in need. Individuals and families attending the event participated in a portrait session and received a copy of their photograph. Terry explained “we want to provide a memorable experience. At Help-Portrait Providence, we wanted guests to be present, in the moment and enjoy the experience of a photo-shoot, live music, food, and even an inflatable t-rex, all so they can forget about their troubles, if only for a few hours.”



Terry Rajsombath

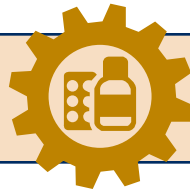


GRADUATE SCHOOL

Many Health Studies majors are pursuing graduate school and /or have earned an advanced degree with the masters of public health being the most pursued degree. Health Studies graduates are attending or attended the following MPH programs:

- Brown University
- Boston University
- Emory

- King's College London
- SUNY Albany
- Texas A & M
- Tufts University
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- University of Georgia
- Yale



FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Sabik was the invited speaker for the Dana Shughar Colloquium: Lectures in Gender & Women's Studies at the University of Rhode Island. She spoke about feminist approaches to the study of women's health and well-being on February 7th. In addition, Dr. Sabik published a cross-sectional study (n=123) in the *Journal of Women & Aging*. Her study determined that specific age-relevant aspects of body satisfaction are linked to social behavior and depression among aging women, and reduced body satisfaction may lead to lower social engagement and, consequently, impact health and well-being.

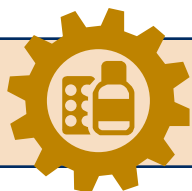
Dr. Cohen published an article in the *Journal of Rural Health* examining rural-urban disparities in obesity in older adults using data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. He also published a paper on the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* exploring the connections between caregiving and quality of life in a nationally

representative sample of family caregivers to older adults. He also co-authored two additional articles, one exploring adverse childhood experiences and HIV, the other on acute kidney injuries during hospitalization. In addition, Dr. Cohen began serving a two-year term as a member of the Governing Council of the American Public Health Association.

Dr. Greaney published several papers examining physical activity and feeding practices among Latino families with colleagues. She also conducted a study examining the use of community-based resources and physical activity participations that was published in *Transitional Behavioral Medicine*.

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HEALTH STUDIES ADVISORY BOARDS

Health Studies has two advisory boards, and we would like to thank board members for their guidance and effort on the behalf of Health Studies. This year we welcomed Dr. Jervis and Lohman-Payne to the internal advisory board.

INTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Sue Adams	Human Development & Family Studies
Dr. Philip Clark	Gerontology
Dr. Geoffrey Greene	Human Nutrition & Food Sciences
Dr. Kathryn Jarvis	College of Business Administration
Dr. Barbara Lohman-Payne	Institute for Immunology and Informatics
Ms. Kathryn Meier	Cancer Prevention Research Center
Ms. Rita Marcoux	Pharmacy
Dr. Patricia Morokoff	Psychology
Ms. Ellen Reynolds	URI Health Services
Dr. Deb Riebe	Kinesiology
Dr. Andrea Rusnock	History
Dr. Abran Salazar	Communication Studies
Dr. Donna Schwartz-Barcott	Nursing
Dr. Alison Tovar	Nutrition and Food Sciences

EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD

Ms. Candice Fioravanti	Consumers Medical
Ms. JoAnna Hillman, MPH	Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance
Dr. Robert Marshall	Rhode Island Health Department (Retired)
Dr. Ana Novais	Rhode Island Department of Health
Mr. Edward Quinlan	Hospital Association of Rhode Island (Retired)
Mr. Kurt Rix	The Wellness Company

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

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Dr. Meucci published a paper in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society investigating the association between sociodemographic and economic factors and the presence of simple home modifications among older adults in the US. She also presented the preliminary results of her work on the effectiveness of home health services after total hip replacement at preventing

30-day rehospitalization and death among Medicare beneficiaries at the The Center on Health Services Training and Research Summer Institute.

STUDENT INTERNSHIPS

Students have completed internships at a variety of locations and settings, including the Rhode Island Department of Health, Planned Parenthood, Naval Station Newport, and South County Hospital.

