Health Studies Program Newsletter for 2018

URI Health Studies Program

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Dear Colleagues and Friends:
This past year has been a period of continued growth for Health Studies, with over 420 majors! Our students are active learners and engaged in the University of Rhode Island (URI) community and beyond. Our graduates are working to promote health and well-being across Rhode Island and the country.

When we ask our majors what they like most about Health Studies, they overwhelmingly report that they value the interdisciplinary curriculum that allows them the flexibility to further develop their interests. We are indebted to the departments and colleges across URI that provide our majors the opportunity to create truly interdisciplinary programs of studies.

In addition to the URI faculty, I would like to acknowledge and thank all the organizations that have offered our students internship opportunities. Health Studies majors have completed internships at departments of health, hospitals, nursing homes, insurance companies, community-based organizations, and wellness companies, to name a few internship locations. These experiences are so empowering to students who benefit greatly from “hands on” experiences. Thank you!

Thank you for your interest and support of Health Studies! We are all proud of the growth and strength of the program and look forward to the future.

Sincerely,

Molly Greaney, PhD, MPH

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Health Studies hosted its first colloquium this spring. Lisa Quintiliani, PhD, RD, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Medicine, was the featured speaker and discussed her research about a weight management intervention she designed for residents of low-income public housing sites.
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 community 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.

Do the students have any kind of “specialization”?
Yes, students can specialize in health promotion, global health, or health services.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Health Studies majors have received awards and recognition, been actively engaged in the URI community, served as volunteers, conducted research, and completed January semester travel trips. A few of their experiences are highlighted below.

KUDOS

Georgina Miranda ‘19 will attend the prestigious Future Public Health Leaders Program at the University of Michigan School of Public Health (UM-SPH) this summer. The 10-week program will help participants learn about careers in public health and offer leadership training, orientation to the public health disciplines, and real-world work experience.

Bri Castro ‘18, a member of the URI Softball team, played in the Pan American Championship for Team Colombia last summer. Bri was eligible to play for the team as her dad is originally from Colombia. Of 20 teams playing, Team Colombia earned the silver medal.

De’Von McGriff ‘20, a member of the URI men’s track team, earned all east region; in the 400m/500m in indoor track. This summer De’Von will be completing an internship at Memorial Sloan Kettering.
Dr. Cohen, along with Health Studies faculty co-authors Dr. Sabik, and Dr. Greaney, received the Aging and Public Health Rural and Environmental Research Award from the American Public Health Association (APHA) for the manuscript “Assessment of dietary patterns, physical activity and obesity from a national survey: Rural-urban health disparities in older adults.”

Dr. Cohen, with co-author Dr. Sabik, published a paper in the Journal of Rural Health examining the characteristics of rural life that contribute to rural-urban health disparities among older adults in November 2017. In addition, Dr. Cohen co-authored three papers, two of which focused on obesity in older adults and one examined health disparities among informal caregivers to older adults. Dr. Cohen also presented or co-authored six presentations at two international conferences during the past year, many in collaboration with Dr. Sabik and/or Dr. Greaney. He was also an invited speaker at a career development webinar from the APHA Aging and Public Health Section and Student Assembly in October 2017, and concluded a two-year term as an APHA Governing Councilor.

Dr. Greaney was the first author on a paper published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity and a paper published in Health Education & Behavior. She also was named an associate editor of BMC Public Health.

Dr. Meucci was the first author on a paper published in Home Healthcare Services Quarterly, which provides an overview of Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS) for older adults and individuals with physical disabilities by describing eligibility criteria, availability, and types of services available in each state. She has also given multiple presentations of her work evaluating the “Culture of Collaboration” established by the State Innovation Model (SIM) Initiative for healthcare transformation in RI at various statewide healthcare stakeholder meetings.

Dr. Sabik was the first author on a paper published in the Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research that examined the associations between body image, stress, and mental health. In addition, Dr. Sabik received the Teaching Resources Award from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and is presenting research this summer at two psychology conferences.

URI offers many J-Term classes, including several that take place abroad. A number of Health Studies majors were able to enroll in these opportunities. Below is sample of their experiences.

Francelly Brito ’18 travelled to Cuba for 10 days. She said it “was an amazing learning experience about the culture and health care system” and that she would “suggest all students, especially Health Studies majors, …consider studying abroad and being part of a hands on learning experience.”

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Three students presented their undergraduate research at the College of Health Sciences graduate research night this past May.

Emma Billett ’18 investigated presented research investigating asthma health disparities in US, and explored best practices to use in the classroom to educate students regarding these asthma disparities, specifically at the collegiate level. This research was conducted with Dr. Adams, Professor, Human Development and Family Studies.

Brigid Keefe ’18 and Katie Florio ’18 presented their research on “old talk” among midlife women. This form of communication focuses on appearance concerns related to body image and age, and is linked to lower body satisfaction and poorer eating habits. This project was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Sabik of the Health Studies Program.

Ana Talamas ’18 examined health disparities in the gay, lesbian and bisexual community among different age cohorts including risky behaviors, depression, poor self reported health, obesity and no annual check up to name a few. This was a collaborative research project with Drs. Cohen and Sabik.

Katie Puiia ’18 was president of The i-STAND Program, which operates as part of the Bystander Intervention Training Program within Community, Equity & Diversity at URI. The mission of i-STAND is to provide education and awareness to the URI community regarding sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking, as well as to promote active bystanders to prevent these crimes. The i-STAND program hosts events every few weeks throughout the year.

Elecia Cardarelli ’18, Emily Ciano ’18, and Shannon O’Rourke ’21, implemented three sessions of the F.I.T (Framework for Integrated Teaching) Club at Champagne Heights, a subsidized family housing site in South Kingstown, RI this spring. The students joined members of the 3rd and 4th grade Homework Skills Club, run by Ms. Karen Buetens, LICSW, that offers students an opportunity to gather with friends and work on their homework in a supportive environment. The F.I.T Club curriculum incorporates reading and interactive activities to learn about physical activity, a healthy diet, and sleep. We are hoping to expand this partnership next year.

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**RESEARCH**

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**Madisyn Stevens ’18** is a co-author on several research papers that will be presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference in November 2018 on San Diego, CA. The research was done with Drs. Cohen and Dr. Greaney.

**Ana Talamas ’18** will present one oral presentation and one poster presentation on LGB health of older adults at the Gerontological Society of America’s Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston, also in November 2018. She also is a co-author on two other presentations with Drs. Sabik and Cohen. She also is a co-author on several papers that will be presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Conference in San Diego, CA this November.

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

- Brown University
- Boston University
- Emory University
- King’s College London
- New York University
- Rutgers University
- SUNY Albany
- Texas A & M
- Tufts University
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- University of Georgia
- Yale

In addition to MPH programs, majors are attending or have attended graduate programs in health administration and business (e.g., George Washington University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Salve Regina University, University of Missouri, University of Rhode Island).

Health Studies majors also are earning/earned advanced degrees from occupational therapy programs (New England Institute of Technology, NY Institute of Technology), optometry programs (Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, New England School of Optometry), physician assistant programs (Tufts University), nursing programs (Jefferson College), and social work programs (Rhode Island College, Simmons College).

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**CAREER EVENTS**

Health Studies hosted two career events. The first, **Exploring non-Clinical Health Careers**, took place in the fall and second, **Interactive Q&A Session with Health Studies Graduates**, was in the spring. This year was the first time Health Studies graduates come back as panelists! We want to thank everyone who made these events such a success – thank you!

**Exploring non-Clinical Health Careers**

- **Ms. Rachel Asselin**
  Asselin Consulting, LLC

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CAREER EVENTS

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• Jennifer Q. Hodson
  URI Health Services

• Mr. Craig Snow
  Dana-Farber Cancer Institute & Health Studies graduate

• Ariana Silvia
  UnitedHealthcare & Health Studies graduate

Interactive Q&A session with Health Studies Graduates

• Kerwin Amo ‘16
  Medical Case Manager
  Boston Medical Center

• Audrey Elois, MHA, ‘15
  Project Coordinator
  Children’s Hospital Boston

• Allison Higgins ‘16
  Clinical Research Coordinator
  Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

• Andrew Laperche ‘16
  Credentialing Specialist
  South County Health

• Kayla Mudge ‘16
  Communications Coordinator
  Hospital Association of Rhode Island

• Kelly Serna ‘16
  Charge Capture Coordinator
  Care New England

Kayla, Mudge, Irwin Amo, Kelly Serna, Molly Greaney, Allison Higgins, Audrey Elois, and Andrew Laperche

J-TERM TRAVEL TRIPS

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Alex Gonzalez ‘18 went to Taiwan, where she took a global supply chain course with Taiwanese students. Reflecting on her experience, Alex says “It was amazing to experience a totally different culture and step out of my comfort zone. Learning about and interacting with people of different cultures is an essential tool for any student, but especially a Health Studies major.”

Miranda Peyton ‘18 travelled to Indonesia and said that “it was a truly an amazing experience to get to meet and work with some of the students at Universitas Islam Indonesia and (to) go to different health clinics to teach patients more about stroke, smoking, and hypertension. I would 100% recommend anyone interested in health care go on this trip. You learn so much about how other cultures deal with healthcare.”

Alex Gonzalez

Miranda Peyton
**STUDENT INTERNSHIPS**

Students have completed internships in a variety of organizations, including state health departments, wellness companies, hospitals, and community-based organizations. Internships can range from 10-32 hours week and can be outside of Rhode Island. Some examples included:

**Elizabeth Baez ’18** completed an internship for the Law Department for the City of Central Falls. Elizabeth loved “how much I was able to learn in such a short amount of time and the connections I have already made with people in my chosen career field. This was a great experience for me to get more familiar with the legal field before I apply to law school next fall!”

**Lindsay Tocco ’18** competed an internship at the Wellness Company, which provides health and wellness services to works sites and communities across the US. Lindsay says that her internship provided a “hands on” experience working at a wellness clinic and she had “my own project - a campaign to increase awareness of the severity and susceptibility of sedentary behaviors in the workplace!”

**Josh Fenton ’18** was an intern at the Department of Health in the Family Visiting Department. Reflecting on his experience Josh says he “learned many different things pertaining to young children and about the Department of Public Health. In my internship I am doing things such as helping with marketing, learning about infants and children, participating in focus groups, going on home visits and more!”

**HEALTH STUDIES ACTION BOARD**

This year the activity of the Health Studies Action Board really took off. The Action Board, which was started in Spring 2017 under the direction of Dr. Sabik. The Action Board is comprised of majors who serve as ambassadors for the program, created a closed Facebook group for majors, participated in student advising, and attended URI welcome day events so prospective students could get a student’s view of URI. Additionally, the Action Board hosted three coffee hours this spring; each of which had a theme (advising, internships, and graduate school). All were well attended by majors.

Thank you to our graduating Action Board members: **Francelly Brito, Halle Goldberg, Eric Haglund, Brigid Keefe, Ana Talamas**, and **Fung Thuck**! We wish you the best of luck in the next stage of life!
We would like to thank Dr. Ana Novais, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health for her service and dedication to Health Studies and the University Rhode Island as she steps down from the Advisory Board. Dr. Novais has been integral part of the Board and an active participant in our career events. We thank you!

Health Studies has two new advisory board members, Ms. Laurie Leonard from the Rhode Island Department of Health and Ms. Ariana Silvia (Health Studies graduate!) of UnitedHealthcare.

### 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 Rusnack: History
- Dr. Abran Salazar: Communication Studies
- Dr. Donna Schwartz-Barcott: Nursing
- Dr. Alison Tovar: Human Nutrition and Food Sciences

### EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD

- Ms. Candice Fioravanti: Consumers Medical
- Ms. JoAnna Hillman, MPH: Emory Centers for Training and Technical Assistance
- Ms. Laurie Leonard: Rhode Island Department of Health
- Dr. Robert Marshall: Rhode Island Department of Health (Retired)
  & Brown University School of Public Health
- Mr. Edward Quinlan: Hospital Association of Rhode Island (Retired)
- Mr. Kurt Rix: The Wellness Company
- Ms. Ariana Silvia: UnitedHealthcare

Thank you for your guidance and effort on the behalf of Health Studies. We look forward to another great year in 2018-2019!