F2. Student Involvement in Community and Professional Service

Community and professional service opportunities, in addition to those used to satisfy Criterion D4, are available to all students. Experiences should help students to gain an understanding of the contexts in which public health work is performed outside of an academic setting and the importance of learning and contributing to professional advancement in the field.

1) Describe how students are introduced to service, community engagement and professional development activities and how they are encouraged to participate.

Students are notified of college-wide opportunities to get involved in community and public health-related professional service, as well as opportunities within their own departments. The college has supported an active chapter of Delta Omega, the Public Health Honorary Society, since 2010. Each year, the chapter executive committee plans service events that are advertised through the listserv and are open to all students in the college, regardless of membership. A benefit of these Delta Omega activities is that students interact with alumni and gain informal mentoring through that process. In addition, there are active chapters of the student-run Public Health Student Association (PHSA) for graduate public health students, and the Undergraduate Public Health Association (UPHA). These organizations are open to any student with an interest in public health and each group participates in community service and professional development activities. These activities are also shared through the college listserv.

Departments also support and encourage community and professional service. The Biostatistics Student Organization introduces students to service and professional development activities. All students in the department are encouraged to become involved with the organization, through which they also have opportunities for community engagement. Furthermore, the department provides support to PhD students attending scientific meetings at a national level to further their professional development. Students are also encouraged to attend frequent department seminars presented by well-known biostatisticians and collaborators.

Students in the PhD in Public Health Program (Environmental Health and One Health concentrations) are introduced to service, community engagement and professional development through the departmental student council. The student council is made up of the department chair, the academic coordinator and a group of student leaders who help coordinate service and community engagement activities and organize professional development events. Students are encouraged to participate in these activities by their peers as well as their advisors. The activities are well advertised through email, flyers and announcements during the department’s weekly seminar series.

All PhD in Epidemiology and MS in Epidemiology students are encouraged to attend the professional development activities offered through the department and to attend MPH activities and other academic health center activities as interest allows. The program staff send out announcements of possible interest throughout the semester; these come in from all over the university and the world. Students are strongly encouraged to attend these events by the program directors and their advisor/mentor teams. In addition, students are invited to meet with visiting seminar speakers as a professional development opportunity.

Social responsibility (which incorporates service and community engagement) and professionalism are covered throughout the Master of Health Administration curriculum in both class lecture content and projects. MHA students participate in Putting Families First during their first year, which is an interdisciplinary, service-based community engagement project. In addition, the Health Administration Student Association (HASA) engages in community service activities each year. In 2019-2020, HASA participated in an Alachua County Habitat for Humanity Workday and a Heart Walk. Many students also are involved in organizational service and community engagement activities during their 400-hour internship.
Professional development activities are a critical part of the core curriculum. MHA students participate in a three-semester Professional Skills Seminar (HSA 6105) in which they complete varied professional development activities, listen and interact with health care managers, and visit health care organizations. PhD students are introduced to professionalism through professional issues coursework and mentorship. In addition, they complete an individual development plan encompassing professional development. Most PhD students also participate in at least one national or international research conference a year to present their own work and/or collaborative work with faculty members. They also participate in multiple annual college events, such as PHHP Research Day, Diversity Day and the department's Gator Healthcare Forum.

Within the MPH program, students are encouraged to participate in community service through the new APE model. Students may accrue up to 50 APE hours outside of a formal internship by volunteering in the community. APE opportunities are identified by the program and by students, and group opportunities are advertised through the MPH student listserv.

2) Provide examples of professional and community service opportunities in which public health students have participated in the last three years.

Donations to the community
Students have participated in multiple opportunities to raise donations for the community over the past three years. Although students are always welcome to make donations to these causes, there are opportunities to be involved without having to provide monetary support. These opportunities have included the Food4Kids program that collects non-perishable foods and prepares backpacks of foods for kids to take home over a weekend, the annual diaper drive for Healthy Start of North Central Florida Coalition, and the annual book drive to donate children's books to a local school in conjunction with Project Makeover (see below).

Volunteering
Students have participated in numerous volunteering opportunities, including:

- Multiple opportunities at GRACE Marketplace, a one-stop homeless resource center, that have included painting dormitories, providing meals and tending the Grace Grows garden.
- Taking the required BPH Service Learning course, which offers undergraduate students the opportunity to work with community partners to identify critical needs while providing meaningful and purposeful service that integrates reflection, social context and social justice. By identifying and addressing real community problems, students strengthen their skills in civic responsibility and learn to apply classroom learning in the real world.
- Participating in Project Makeover, a UF student-led initiative to create vibrant and dynamic learning environments in elementary schools.
- Assisting with HealthStreet’s Night of Dance to spread the word about community health resources while celebrating the art of dance.
- Volunteering at the Equal Access Clinic, a student-run clinic that provides health care services to low-income and uninsured residents of the county.
- Participating in the Alachua County Health Promotion and Wellness Coalition DEA Drug Take Back Event.
- Volunteering at the Cade Museum for Creativity & Invention to guide children in Science Camp with small science inventions and experiments.
- Assisting with Florida Department of Health contact tracing and campus contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Participating in multiple projects through the COVID-19 Student Service Corps. These projects include writing letters to health care workers, sewing masks and doing outreach to homeless populations in the mobile testing unit.
- Assisting at COVID-19 testing collection sites.
- Preparing and testing samples for COVID-19 for the Emerging Pathogens Institute Testing Center.
Professional Development

- Students in the college participate in multiple opportunities to gain experience in presenting their research locally. These opportunities include the annual PHHP Research Day, PHHP Diversity Day poster session, College of Medicine Celebration of Research, Gator Healthcare Forum, UF Graduate Student Research Day and department seminars.

- Doctoral students are required to complete an Independent Development Plan (IDP) that they discuss with their research mentor. The IDP guides the student's professional development by helping them identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and implement actions to leverage strengths and improve weaknesses.

- Students in the PhD in Public Health program as well as in the health professions doctoral programs take a course in College Classroom Teaching to prepare them to be effective educators.

- Students in the Public Health PhD programs take a research grant writing course.

- Professional Development is an integral part of the required MPH capstone course, which covers topics such as leadership, conflict management, negotiation and mediation, communication skills and networking.

- Both PHSA and UPHA have hosted several panel discussions on careers in public health for students.

- The MPH program implemented an Alumni Seminar Series in 2018. Alumni speakers are invited to campus to meet with current students, discuss their own career path and provide advice on careers in public health.

- The annual Clarion Competition provides UF students with an opportunity to work with an interprofessional team to provide recommendations surrounding an extensive health care case. The winning team earns an all-expense paid trip to the national competition at the University of Minnesota. PHHP students participate in the local Clarion Competition every year; in 2016 the UF student team, consisting of BHS, MPH and MBA students, placed first at nationals.

- The PHHP liaison to the Career Connections Center offers seminars on professional development topics such as writing curriculum vitae and cover letters, managing job searches, interviewing for faculty positions and other topics of interest to students.

- Students may participate in hands-on community engagement (CE) through the HealthStreet program, which assesses people's health in their communities. Through HealthStreet, master's and doctoral students have gained skills in CE work, including having their CE work published in The Practical Playbook through Duke University. Students have also mentored undergraduates, learning this professional skill at the sides of their own mentors. This mentoring mosaic approach helps teach future researchers skills that they will need in their own careers.

3) If applicable, assess strengths and weaknesses related to this criterion and plans for improvement in this area.

Strengths:

- Students have access to multiple community and professional service opportunities within the UF academic center, the university community and the Gainesville area, including opportunities that allow for interprofessional learning and interactions with faculty and alumni. These opportunities provide exposure to a wide variety of public health initiatives outside of the academic setting.

- The required BPH Service Learning course and the MPH Capstone course provide a set of community engagement and professional development opportunities for students in these programs.

- Students in doctoral programs in the college complete IDPs tailored to their own unique professional development needs.

Weaknesses:

- None identified