WELCOME NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR, KIMBER MCKAY!

Professor Kimber McKay is the new GPH Director starting Fall 2020. She has been a part of the UM community since 2000, and was instrumental in the design of the GPH minor. Her areas of expertise within global health are maternal, newborn and child health, community-based health care, the social determinants of disease, program planning, monitoring and evaluation and the role of the social and behavioral sciences in global health and public health. Professor McKay has conducted research and worked with the government and non-government sectors in Nepal and East Africa since the mid 1990s.

PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTS VALUE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY GPH PROGRAM

Now, more than ever, public health and the importance of viewing it in a global context are present in everyone's daily lives. Over the past 5 months, the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 has highlighted why the GPH program’s interdisciplinary approach to global public health is vitally important. The COVID-19 pandemic shows the depth at which all of our collegiate disciplines interconnect. This public health crisis has revealed systemic weaknesses in health care, economics, politics, and social systems. It has spurred scientific and medical innovation, and pushed computer science and data analytics into a new realm.

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SPRING GPH LECTURE SERIES

Special thanks to the speakers and attendees that made this year's lecture series a success! Even with the unexpected switch to remote lectures, we had a dynamic and interesting series. The final lecture by Dr. Joshua Christensen on the COVID-19 pandemic attracted nearly 70 participants.

We are already lining up speakers for the Spring 2021 series. Please join us just after the New Year for a wide variety of topics related to public health!
The past seven years as the founder and first director of the interdisciplinary GPH minor have been challenging and rewarding. Thankfully, I believe The University of Montana has reached a place where the fundamental importance of preparing undergraduate students across campus for understanding and proactively addressing the multiple challenges and determinants of global public health is widely recognized. Fortunately, a strong academic foundation is in place for meeting the anticipated growing participation in the minor by students from a wide variety of majors whose disciplines have been impacted by COVID-19.

Kudos to UM’s GPH graduates who already are filling much-needed health-promoting roles in Montana and around the world!

In the face of severe resource constraints over these seven years, it has been my good fortune to have outstanding support from Delyla Wilson, Kelly Yarns, the GPH External Advisory and Faculty Steering Committees, and many others, as we collectively established and grew this vital program. I look forward to continued progress for the GPH minor under Kimber McKay’s leadership.

Although I am transitioning to roles as Director of the University’s new Migration Studies Certificate program and Chair of the Political Science Department, my interest in and concern for global health, education about global health, and the contributions of the GPH minor and its graduates will never waver.
MCKAY TEACHES WINTER TERM IN ABU DHABI

Professor McKay taught a January Term course in Global Health at NYU’s Abu Dhabi campus. Entitled “Challenges in Global Health”, students from all over the world came together to learn a critical medical anthropology perspective on the global health sector, in particular challenges related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). For a week of the three-week class, students traveled to Kathmandu, Nepal, where they presented their analyses of the monitoring and evaluation data that Adara Development had collected from one of their WASH projects. To learn more about classes in global health, monitoring and evaluation, or McKay’s research in Nepal, Uganda and Montana, see her contact information and more at https://health.umt.edu/publichealth/faculty/core-faculty.php?sf=Mckay

OPPORTUNITIES

Scholarships and Awards
The Global Public Health Program has three affiliated scholarships/awards:
◊ The Peter H. Koehn & Phyllis B. Ngai Scholarship
◊ The Global Public Health External Advisory Committee Award
◊ The Global Public Health Unpaid Internship Award

GPH ALUMNI SERVE IN THE U.S. PEACE CORPS

When the Covid-19 pandemic escalated this spring, four GPH alums were applying their classroom learning to real-world experience by serving as U.S. Peace Corp Volunteers in Africa. We have been in contact with three of them. Shortly after their evacuation from Botswana, Sarah Huntting and Adam Busch joined the 2020 Spring GPH Lecture Series in a talk called “Challenges of the Modern Peace Corps.” Andrew Honken, evacuated from his posting as a Community health worker in Butunduzi, Uganda also shared his experience with students in Peter’s Issues in Global Health course. Check the GPH website for a video of Sarah, Adam, and Andrew’s talks.

Sarah was an HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Specialist with the District Health Management Team. She taught financial literacy, skill-shared with co-workers, and built and shared a data-tracking system. Adam, HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Specialist for the local government, worked with the District AIDS Coordinator’s Office alongside local NGOs. He was instrumental in building grant-writing capacity and helping to reach out to local communities. Andrew worked as a Community Health Educator with a small primary school in rural Uganda. He worked with teens on HIV prevention, was part of a Malaria Think Tank Team, and introduced climate-smart growing techniques to improve local nutrition.

In March, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Peace Corp evacuated all of its volunteers world-wide. In their GPH lecture, Adam and Sarah provide one of the first public elaborations of the evacuation process and reflect on their experiences and the evacuation’s impact on their host community and the sustainability of their initiatives.

Andrew is applying for medical school and Adam and Sarah also have graduate work in medicine and public-health on their horizons.
PEACE CORP PREP CERTIFICATE IN HEALTH!

UM and the Peace Corps have a Memorandum of Understanding that brings significant changes to UM’s Peace Corps Prep Program. UM’s PC Prep Programs specializations coincide with the Peace Corps sector specific areas. UM students can earn PC Prep certificates in the work sectors of: Health; Agriculture; Environment; Education; and/or Community Economic Development. In addition to course work, students are required to complete 50 hours of service learning that coincides with their sector-specific course work and participate in professional development. As part of their course work, PCP students take 3 intercultural competence courses.

If interested in the health specialization, contact the faculty advisor Prof. Curtis Noonan. For more information about the PC Prep program, visit the PC Prep page on the IDS website: umt.edu/Peace-CorpPrep.

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the forefront of public consciousness as thinkers across disciplines scramble to understand the coronavirus and what it means for humanity now and into the future. Today’s students need to learn skills that will enable them to contribute to this critical endeavor.

UM’s Global Public Health minor helps develop professionals from all disciplines who will address the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic and future public-health crises. Teaching the next generation of innovators how to cross boundaries with transnational competency and to collaborate when applying environmental, economic, political, and historical public-health context to their fields will create professionals prepared to thrive in the face of tomorrow’s challenges.

As many people world-wide have taken an unexpected crash course in how and why viruses spread and other global physical- and mental-health issues, GPH students already understand many of the core drivers behind the wide-spread impact of the pandemic. The GPH minor’s 2 required courses, BIOM 227 Vectors and Parasites and PSCI 321 Global Health Issues, explore topics of interest and relevance for all human beings who are concerned with preparing for, and alleviating suffering caused by, the global-health crises of today and tomorrow.

The University of Montana was visionary to establish the Global Public Health minor seven years ago. The GPH minor, available to all students, fits well with majors across campus. It is an excellent option for students of any major who want to engage with timely, global issues.

GPH graduate, Reece Brandon created a video that captures GPH alumni voices speaking to the impact that the GPH minor has made in their careers and lives. Please take 4 minutes to watch Reece’s video and share it widely with your friends, family, and colleagues. The video is posted on our YouTube channel: Global Public Health, University of Montana, https://youtu.be/544pLiIdlZq.

“"I have learned many valuable skills from being a part of the GPH Minor. I have met many like-minded people and have formed lasting friendships while in this program."" 
-GPH student