Time flies. I’m starting my fourth summer semester as the Academic Head. The activities of the faculty and staff in this department are impressive—they range from being excellent teachers and mentors, to having a major impact on state and federal initiatives, as well as completing scholarly initiatives. Several exciting things have taken place:

- Effective July 1, 2014 the Bachelor of Community Health will now be called the Bachelor of Public Health;
- The MPH has a new concentration: Health Management, Administration and Policy (HMAP). As with the Bachelor of Public Health, it will be officially entered into the 2014-15 Graduate Catalogue;
- President Obama appointed one of our faculty members to serve on US/Mexico Border Health Commission;
- Two faculty members have been promoted;
- The Graduate Certificate in Public Health was approved and is in place. This 15-hour certificate is a way to ease professionals into public health training. There are opportunities for those hours to be transferred into the MPH should the individual decide to continue;
- At the recent Fall Convocation the Department was noted for having more than 46% of the publications in the college; 47% of the national presentations in the college came from our department; 7 funding awards have been received by the department, totaling over $1.9 M.

I have worked with some outstanding professionals in my career, but collectively this is, by far, the best group I have ever worked with.
For the second year Eta Sigma Gamma oversaw the selection of the Jo Hill Teaching Excellence Award for the Department. The Jo Hill Teaching Excellence Award, named after the late Jo Hill, was created to acknowledge outstanding teaching in the Department. The process is complex and involves not only student input, but a thorough analysis of quality instruction.

Drs. Chuck Kozel (left) and Joseph Gladstone (right) were recognized as finalists for the award, with Dr. Satya Rao being selected as the 2014 recipient. Congratulations to all three, with special kudos to Dr. Rao.

In October 2013 long-time Administrative Assistant Bertha Perez announced that she had taken a new position in the Registrar’s office. After an exhausting search headed by Academic Advisor Letty Gallegos and Assistant Professor Cindy Kratzke, the Department was pleased to announce that Stephanie Caballero was selected as the Department’s new Administrative Assistant. Stephanie, who comes to us from the Las Cruces Public School District, started on December 15, 2013 and has made an immediate impact on the department.

Stephanie is married to Eddie Caballero and they have a 9 year old step-daughter (Savannah) and an 8 year old daughter (Maliah). Stephanie is also a junior in the Family and Consumer Sciences program (she had considered public health but realized she had to have biostatistics!). She enjoys spending time with family, cooking, and reading (outside of course work). Her favorite thing to cook is Mexican and breakfast foods (although she has yet to bring any into the office for a taste test). Besides biostatistics, she is afraid of the dark and snakes.

Despite her fears, the Department is thrilled at Stephanie’s arrival, her professionalism and her skills.
At the Spring Convocation Dr. Rebecca Palacios (right) received the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Research and Dr. Chuck Kozel (left) received the Excellence in College Service Award. In addition, at the University Convocation in January, Dr. Chuck received the prestigious Donald Roush Award for Teaching Excellence. The annual Roush awards, named for a former New Mexico State University executive vice president in recognition of his 35 years of teaching improvement in New Mexico, are based on information from students, department heads, deans and community campus directors.

Dr. Susan Wilson was recently informed that the Board of Directors for the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), "A Worldwide Organization for the Applied Social Sciences," elected her to be a Fellow of the SfAA.

Dr. Susan Cardenas was recently selected to serve as a reviewer for the prestigious American Journal of Sexuality Education.

Our students have also received numerous awards.

- Corinna Sabaque (Bachelor in Community Health) received the Native American Award outstanding award for a graduating undergraduate;
- Twin sisters Ruby and Cristal Aguayo graduated from NMSU’s undergraduate program in community health. The twins from Palomas, Chihuahua, Mexico overcame major barriers to earn their degrees. While attending K-12 school, both had to cross the border each day (into Columbus, NM) to catch a 45 minute bus ride for school. More information about the Aguayo sisters can be found at http://tinyurl.com/nl8vq8t.
- Michaela Hulder was a recipient of the New Mexico State University Roberts Memorial Student Awards for 2014. This marks the 35th year these awards have been given. Hulder, a senior majoring in community health, received the second-place award. Two awards are presented each spring to the NMSU students who have “made the greatest contribution toward enhancing the university’s quality of life.” The endowment for the awards was established by George and the late Bernice Roberts of Las Cruces, NM in memory of their sons, Stephen W. and Robert Roberts, who were killed in an automobile accident on July 8, 1978. Stephen graduated from NMSU in 1974 and Robert was enrolled at the university at the time of the accident.
- Ruby Aguayo received the first Daniel Marks Reyna Memorial Scholarship in Fall, 2013. Reyna was a beloved leader in improving border health. His premature death in 2011 led to an endowed scholarship for students majoring in public health. More information can be found at http://tinyurl.com/mllyyxen (go to slide 11).

New Mexico Public Health Association

Drs. Sue Forster-Cox and Satya Rao have been elected co-presidents of the New Mexico Public Health Association. NMPHA is the largest public health organization in the state and has participation from all major universities, state agencies, and the state Department of Health. The mission of the New Mexico Public Health Association is to promote public health practice, policies, and systems that support health equity in New Mexico. NMPHA accomplishes their mission by providing a forum for sharing research and practices, and serving as a base for leadership development, networking, and action (http://nmpha.org).

Sue and Satya will take office immediately as co-presidents elect, assuming presidency in May 2015.
Faculty Promotions

The Provost announced in April that Dr. Rebecca Palacios received promotion to Associate Professor with tenure and Dr. Satya Rao received promotion to Full Professor. Both appointments take place August 15, 2014.

Dr. Palacios has been active in obtaining outside funding, publications and presentations at various national conferences. Dr. Rebecca Palacios is part of the NMSU-FHRC Partnership for the Advancement of Cancer Research supported by a $9 million award from the NCI. Dr. Palacios and Dr. Beti Thompson (FHCRC) are the leads for the Outreach Core of this project, which is responsible for conducting cancer health education with underserved populations in NM. More information about this grant can be found on page 7.

Outstanding Adjuncts

The Department is proud of the many adjuncts who help deliver our courses. Such faculty include Bruce Ragon, Karen Rishel, Robert McDermott, Dhitinut Ratnapradipa, Dale Ritzel, Tami Ford, Jeff Brandon, Teresa Brandon, Tom Ruiz, Letty Gallegos, Don Little, Heidi Uperesea, Katy Redd, Kathleen Thompson, Nicole Thomas, Karl Larson, Genevieve Garrett, Mai Oushy, Estala Hartley, Liz England-Kennedy, Priya Banerjee, Jagan Butler, and Amy Collins.

Presence at APHA

The Department resumed a long time attendance at the American Public Health Association’s November 2013 Conference in Boston. The world’s largest public health expo is a great way to showcase the outstanding programs in public health that NMSU offers. Academic Advisor Letty Gallegos and College Associate Professor Susan Cardenas did the bulk of staffing with some relief from Dr. Kittleson. Plans are being made to have a booth at the 2014 Convention in New Orleans.

President Obama Appoints Dr. Sue Forster-Cox

Dr. Sue Forster-Cox received a presidential appointment to the prestigious U.S./Mexico Border Health Commission. Two U.S. representatives from the four bordering states, along with 2 Mexican representatives from their respective states, comprise the Commission. The bi-national presidential commission is co-chaired by the Secretaries of Health of the U.S. and Mexico. The goal of the commission is to provide international leadership to improve health and quality of life along the border.

According to a U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission press release, President Obama said, “The extraordinary dedication these men and women bring to their new roles will greatly serve the American people. I am grateful they have agreed to serve in this administration and I look forward to working with them in the months and years to come.” (http://tinyurl.com/k9fjqn2)

Undergraduate Major’s Name is Changed

Effective July 1, 2014 the Bachelor of Community Health will be formally changed to the Bachelor of Public Health. There are no curriculum changes but the name reflects more accurately the focus in the major. In addition, it articulates well with Dona Ana Community College’s Associate in Public Health.

The current BCH has received national approval status from the SOPHE-AAHE Baccalaureate Program Approval Committee (SABPAC).

Department Moves to New Offices

January 2014 saw the Department’s Administration Offices move from the first floor to the third floor. Logistically this makes great sense since all faculty offices are on the third floor. Letty Gallegos, Stephanie Caballero and our student receptionist Taryn Israelson (above right) were instrumental in making this a smooth transition. The new offices feature a conference room, open reception area, along with student work-stations. In addition, a microwave is available for students and faculty use.
This year at the New Mexico Public Health Association’s annual conference in Albuquerque, Eta Sigma Gamma students were invited to volunteer and also attend the conference. A group of 8 students including both graduate and undergraduate members of ESG attended and volunteered their time and efforts during the conference. Included were graduate students Mayra Lovas, Swati Somuri, Alex Rios, Candyce Luna (not pictured) and undergraduates, ESG president Dillon Trujillo and Elise Williams (not pictured).

ESG Faculty Advisor Dr. Karen Rishel accompanied the students and helped to coordinate volunteering. The students impressed NMPHA leaders with their tireless hours of volunteering alongside the UNM MPH students to coordinate and run the Silent Auction, help as Breakout Session Monitors and even mediate several of the conference sessions.

It was a phenomenal opportunity for students to interact and network with others in Public Health in New Mexico. Many compliments were given to the students for their hard work and dedication at the conference. Overall, it was a conference and volunteer community service opportunity that will become an ESG tradition for years to come.

Congratulations Tami Ford

Congratulations to College Assistant Professor Tami Ford for completing the Quality Matters (QM) training from Online Course Improvement Program (OCIP). In addition, Tami has become a peer-reviewed QM trainer. She joins fellow adjunct faculty member Amy Collins and Associate Professor Susan Wilson (lower right) as having this credential. In addition, Tami’s Women’s Health class has undergone a close review by the NMSU OCIP and has received rave reviews. The course is currently being reviewed by an external group of QM Trainers.

As a Fellow of the OCIP training she is required to review online courses over the next few years. Tami will be working with various Public Health faculty to review their online classes.

Ms. Ford teaches from her home base in Denver, Colorado. She has taught several semesters of Women’s Health classes.

GRADUATING STUDENTS—FALL 2013

The following students graduated from NMSU in December 2013. They are:

**Master of Public Health:**

Alma Gross, Amanda Herrera, Amy Pilley, Beth Renick

**Bachelor of Community Health:**

Audriana Barrientes, Kelsey Campbell, Lauren Cope, Nydia Del Rio, Luis Duron, Roman Garcia, Ryan Garcia, Michael Gutierrez, Jennifer Jones, Kayla Musser, Alejandra Pulido, Israel Riviere, India Rosa-Skerrett, Shelby Stringer

**Dean’s List (BCH):**

Ruby Aguayo, Derek Beckford, Lauren Cope, Luis Duon, Kindle Hein, Domonique Hernandez, Michaela Hulder, Danielle Lapiano, Kayla Musser, Stephanie Neff, Taylor Ortega, Celena Perez, Sanora Rei, Georganna Studjuhar, Valerian Ume-Ezeoke, Maria Van der Ben

GRADUATING STUDENTS—SPRING 2014

The following students graduated from NMSU on May 10, 2014. They are:

**Master of Public Health degree:**

Renae Alvarado, Hilario Armijo, Julia Boehler, Candyce Luna, Faith Motta, Alexandria Rios, Kiran Sapkota, Swati Somuri, Murad Taani

**Bachelor of Community Health degree:**


*Graduating Summer 2014

**Dean’s List (BCH):**

Natalia Afonso, Alyssa Andreis, Kirsta Bezenek, Marisol Caro, Anthony Cook, Domonique Hernandez, Tiara Jarrell, Danielle Lapiano, Selene Mata, Celena Perez, Ruth Roman, Michelle Valenzuela, Maria Van der Ben

The Department of Public Health Sciences congratulates these students on their accomplishments!
The Department of Public Health Sciences held its first graduation ceremony on Friday, May 9. The ceremony was an intimate gathering of graduating students, their family, and faculty to celebrate the accomplishments earned by the students. Nearly 100 individuals participated in the event, including 30 students earning their bachelors and masters degrees.

Dr. Dixie Dennis, Dean of the Graduate School at Austin Peay University (Clarksville, TN) gave an inspiring keynote address encouraging students to stay focused on “the main things” in their life. Dr. Dennis was a doctoral student of Dr. Kittleson’s when he was a faculty member at Southern Illinois University.

This year’s event was organized by Dr. James Robinson. Besides an opportunity to share this event with family and friends, students received pins, and those who were members of Eta Sigma Gamma were awarded a special cord to be worn at graduation. The program also saw ESG present the 2014 Jo Hill Teaching Excellence Award, which was given to Satya Rao.

For pictures of this year’s inaugural event, go to http://tinyurl.com/kdde3h2
Welcome Dr. Jill McDonald

The Department is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Jill McDonald as its epidemiologist. In addition, she has been named the College’s Stan Fulton Endowed Chair in Health Disparities Research and will serve as the Director of the Southwest Institute for Health Disparities Research (SWIHDR).

Dr. McDonald joined NMSU in the fall of 2013 after spending 18 years with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Reproductive Health, including four years in El Paso at the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission.

Dr. McDonald said the institute also is considering ways to increase the availability of and use of local health data to assess and monitor indicators of health at the community level. Training students and health decision-makers to use data could also be a role of the SWIHDR (http://tinyurl.com/l4o6u7m).

Department of Public Health Sciences Enters Agreement with Family Medicine Residency

The Department has entered into a formal agreement with the Southern New Mexico Family Medicine Residency Program (SNMFMRP) to admit the medical residents into either the Graduate Certificate in Public Health or the MPH program.

The agreement allows such residents to start earning their certificate/degree, primarily via online courses, starting their second year of residency. SNMFMRP admits six new residents each year. The agreement also allows faculty members in the Residency Program to participate in either the MPH or Graduate Certificate program.

PHS Department Head Dr. Mark Kittleson and SNMFMRP Director Dr. John Andazola feel this is a first step to collaborating on future public health/medicine initiatives. Dr. Satya Rao is serving as the Graduate Certificate coordinator. For more information, contact Dr. Rao at sakrishn@nmsu.edu.

Faculty Grants

Public Health Active in Grants

Dr. Rebecca Palacios is part of the NMSU-Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) Partnership for the Advancement of Cancer Research supported by a $9 million award from the NCI. Dr. Palacios (NMSU) and Dr. Beti Thompson (FHCRC) are the leads for the Outreach Core of this project, which is responsible for conducting cancer health education with underserved populations in NM. Additional goals of the Outreach Core include providing training on cultural sensitivity, research methods, and cancer interventions for NM medical providers and promoting partnerships between community health agencies and NMSU researchers. All grant efforts are directed at reducing cancer health disparities in underserved populations. The NMSU Outreach Core is staffed by two health educators and various student research assistants.

Dr. Susan Cardenas is the Co-PI and Project Manager of SWAG—Success With Adolescent Goals—a teen pregnancy prevention program. This project is a research initiative funded by the New Mexico Department of Health through a grant from the federal Families and Youth Services Bureau to see if the combination of a 24 hour sexuality education program and 27 hours of service-learning, along with mentoring, and parental involvement can reduce the incidence of teen pregnancies. Located in seven high-risk New Mexico counties this program is in its second year of a three year funding cycle. Approximately 600 students have participated in the program, with another 400 serving as a control group. Dr. Kittleson is the PI of the project.

Dr. Sue Forster-Cox finished her grant with the New Mexico Department of Health, in collaboration with the UNM Public Health program, offering 23 public health trainings reaching over 290 individuals throughout the state. In addition, Dr. Sue has prepared an online version of their training. This project ended September 30, 2013.

Dr. Susan Wilson has been working with various groups on campus to draft a tobacco-free policy for NMSU. This effort has been funded by the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. It is hoped that the university will adopt a tobacco-free policy sometime in the Fall 2014 semester.

Mountain West Research Consortium

New Mexico State University is one of the 13 members of Mountain West Research Consortium (MWRC) who has agreed to establish research infrastructure support mechanisms that leverage the core facilities and research support structures among members of the MWRC. The Mountain West Clinical and Translational Research Infrastructure Network (CTR-IN) was funded effective 09/15/2013 through the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, and this initial cycle will run through 06/30/2018. The mission of the CTR-IN is to increase the quantity, quality, and number of NIH supported projects in clinical and translational research, thereby accelerating the propagation of scientific discovery to improve health in the region.

The CTR-IN is offering Pilot Grant awards of up to $75,000 per year (for one or two years) to develop new clinical or translational research programs at MWRC institutions. The first round competition was announced in May 2013 and completed in August. However, in this first year CTR-IN held a second competition with applications due on November 6th. In future years the competition will be conducted in the spring. The Pilot Grant program has a goal of equitable distribution of pilot grant support across all partner institutions eligible for the award. Preference will be given to: 1) Promising New Investigators, developing clinical or translational research programs, 2) Funded basic science researchers with plans to develop new translational projects and 3) Projects focused on health issues relevant to rural and vulnerable populations.

Currently the Department has two grants from the MWRC: Dr. Anup Amatya has received a sub-award of this grant to provide Biostatistical support to any investigator who responds to Pilot Grant RFAs. This grant is a four year commitment.

Dr. Cindy Kratzke is currently working with her nursing colleagues in a pilot study to assess mobile technology use to support behavior change among adults with chronic illness in rural and underserved population. It is using local community health workers to teach the evidence-based Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program for this group.
Join the Aggie Century Club

The Aggie Century Club has been designed to allow alumni of our programs an opportunity to directly impact our current students. The Aggie Century Club is a commitment by alumni (and friends) to donate $8.50 a month (less than two lattes) to the department to help students travel to conferences, offset expenses of guest speakers, or fund other activities to enhance the students’ experience.

Giving has never been more important to universities. We are asking alumni (and friends) to donate to the Aggie Century Club. For more information, go to http://publichealth.nmsu.edu/donor

Our Mission: To provide academic, professional, and service excellence in preparing community health education professionals who will demonstrate competent leadership, innovation, and technical expertise at local, state, and national levels, with particular emphasis on border and rural health problems in communities along the U.S./Mexico border.

Have a wonderful summer!

New Mexico State University
Department of Public Health Sciences
‘We Are Public Health’

Special thanks to Dr. Susan Cardenas for her work on this newsletter

http://publichealth.nmsu.edu
575-646-4300 ph
575-646-4343 fax