

**University of Texas School of Public Health  
Practicum Evaluation  
Executive Summary – Fall 2011**

**Introduction**

One hundred eighteen students from all four degree programs completed a practicum experience during the Fall 2011 semester with three additional students from the occupational medicine program. Students and community preceptors were asked to complete an evaluation through Survey Monkey™. Student and preceptor response rates were 91% and 92%, respectively. The key findings are listed below.

**Primary Campus and Division**

- 75% Houston, 25% regional campuses
- 33% Epidemiology; 22% Management, Policy & Community Health; 17% Health Promotion & Behavioral Sciences; 15% General program; 7% Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences; 6% Biostatistics

**Students**

- Locations: University/college system (31%), hospital/clinic (26%), health departments (8%), community service organizations (8%), foundation (6%), business/corporate (5%), government (5%), more than one (5%), international (1%), federal (1%), primary/secondary education (1%)
- 87% of students thought the practicum was very effective (65%) or effective (22%) as a learning experience
- Final products: report (36), more than one product (23%), journal article (12%), presentation (10%), instrument/protocol (7%), training/procedure manual (5%), promotional material (5%), or thesis (2%)
- The practicum was very effective (61%) or effective (28%) in giving students a better understanding of public health practice
- 86% of students registered for 3 credit hours or more (registrar's data)
- Student hours per week: 16 or more (38%), 12-15 hours (39%); 92% considered the weekly hours to be appropriate
- 54% of students reported contact with their preceptor 14 or more times
- Overall ratings of preceptors were positive: 80% very good and 15% good
- 90% of students highly recommend (59%) or recommend (31%) their community preceptors
- 91% of students highly recommend (46%) or recommend (45%) their faculty sponsor
- 86% of students highly recommend (42%) or recommend (44%) their practicum site

**Community Preceptors**

- 84% of preceptors rated their student's final product as excellent (45%) or above average (38%); 5% of students had an incomplete mainly because the final product was a publication
- 96% reported that student proficiency in using appropriate methods was very effective (68%) or effective (28%)
- Preceptors rated overall student performance as very good (80%) or good (13%)
- 72% of preceptors reported meeting with the student 10 times or more
- 95% of preceptors found the student's weekly time commitment was appropriate
- 95% of preceptors are willing to accept another student

### **Student Comments**

- Excellent preceptor -- I hope she continues to mentor students in practicum settings.
- Outstanding preceptor, mentor, and leader!
- Provided solid guidance, support, and feedback throughout practicum experience.
- She was very helpful in connecting me with other members of the department to help in areas in which I was really needed.
- Very well organized. Provided great insight into the workings of government. Truly made me feel like a member of the team.

### **My community preceptor was...**

- A great person to observe and work with. She is well admired in the field and it was a great opportunity for me to network under her wing.
- Absolutely accommodating! She was very supportive of my educational pursuits and was a former UTSPH graduate
- He gives you the opportunity to develop your own project, allows you to work independently, but is always willing to help and give ideas if you need them.
- An exception teacher and mentor who helped me a lot during my practicum. It was a life time experience to work with Dr. DuPont.
- Dr. Steen Ethelberg is an expert in his field (microbiology) and is SSI's department head for outbreak investigations. In addition, he manages information for public health alerts for Denmark. His team works jointly with EU partners, European Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC), and the World Health Organization, as required. Working with Dr. Ethelberg and his team was an opportunity of a lifetime and I am positive that this experience has improved my public health knowledge and skills while providing a global health perspective.
- Very dedicated to community service and always put the community first. He is a prime example of what we need in Public Health. He is very inspiring and is a great preceptor. I plan to continue to work with him and volunteer at the agency after my practicum is over.

### **Community Preceptor Comments**

- This student is a great example of a model UT student!
- This student was an excellent addition to our team - we were glad to have her! In fact, we have now hired her as a part-time research assistant.
- I must reiterate that this student impacted our organization in ways that will translate to better coping skills for our families who accept the task of working with children who present with many challenges. She brought invaluable skills to our organization and we are grateful.
- It was a pleasure working with the student, as I not only was able to mentor her but also learn new trends from her as well.
- Thank you for this opportunity! She was a valuable asset to our team and organization. We look forward to another semester of working with graduate students from the UT School of Public Health.

### **Acknowledgements**

On behalf of the University of Texas Health Science Center School of Public Health, the Office of Public Health Practice extends our warmest gratitude to the organizations and community preceptors who graciously allowed our students to gain practice experience. Without your continued support and feedback, we would not be able to offer this invaluable experience to our students.