

**Office of Public Health Practice**  
**San Antonio Regional Campus**  
**Student Practicum Evaluations**  
**AY 2007-08**

**INTRODUCTION**

A practicum is a planned, supervised, and evaluated “hands-on” experience that allows students to use the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom. The practicum is directly related to the academic goals and professional interests of the students. The practicum is population based and addresses a need identified by the host organization. The practicum is an essential part of the curriculum and is a requirement of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the accrediting body of Schools of Public Health.

During the 2007-2008 academic year, 27 students from the San Antonio regional campus completed a practicum evaluation. Students and community preceptors completed evaluations at the end of the semester. About two weeks before the end of the semester, Survey Monkey™ formatted evaluation forms were sent to students and community preceptors via email. The average annual response rates for students and community preceptors were 96% and 88% respectively.

In an effort to increase response rates, students and preceptors were contacted three times after the electronic evaluations were distributed

**STUDENT RESPONSES**

**Primary Campus Location**

San Antonio (n = 27)

**Type of Organization**

- 44.4% University/College
- 14.8% Hospital/Clinic
- 14.8% International
- 7.4% Government
- 7.4% State/Regional Health Department
- 3.7% Business/Corporate
- 3.7% Foundation
- 3.7% Local Health Department

**Sites**

- University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, School of Public Health
- Christus Santa Rosa Children's Hospital
- Project Working On Real Teen Health (WORTH)
- Greater Edward's Aquifer Alliance (GEAA)
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Baptist Health System
- University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Dental

- International Child Care/Grace Children's Hospital
- South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER)
- Horn of Africa Ministries
- Texas Department of State Health Services Region 8
- United States Air Force (USAF)

### **Practicum Topics**

- Community Health Assessment in Comal County
- Program Evaluation
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Mercury Contamination of the Edwards Aquifer
- Educating Stakeholders on Preventable Hospitalization Conditions
- Policy Analysis and Program Development
- Oral Health & Nutrition in Toddlers
- Barriers For Caring Seriously Ill Children
- Needs Assessment
- Implementation of the Chronic Care Model
- Public Health and Medical Issues Along the Texas-Mexico Border
- Environmental Health in the Lower Rio Grande Valley
- Learn About Issues Affecting the Health of Border Populations
- Learn About Border Health and Environment
- Teach About the Local Environmental Health Concerns in Laredo area
- Assist with Current Pilot Program
- Pediatric Screening Outreach in Ethiopia
- Disaster Preparedness Planning and Execution Activities
- Influenza Pandemic Surveillance
- Public Health Airmen of United States Air Force

### **Final Product**

- 63.0% Report
- 14.8% Presentation
- 11.1% Instrument/Protocol
- 7.4% Thesis
- 3.7% Training/Procedure Manual

### **Weekly Time Commitment by Student (Hours/Week)**

- 89% of students enrolled at the San Antonio regional campus spent 12 hours or more per a week working on practicum related activities
- 92% of students enrolled at the San Antonio regional campus counted their practicum experience for 3 credit hours or more

**Source for Locating Practicum**

Faculty	16
Office of Public Health Practice	3
Self Developed	3
Current Employer	2
Friend/Colleague	2
Others	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>

**Effectiveness of Learning Experience**

As indicated in the table below, students reported that their practicum provided an effective learning experience across eight competencies

Question	Rating on a scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Developing skills to work as a team member	4.33	4.53
Navigating work environment to accomplish objectives	4.12	4.47
Developing problem-solving skills	4.12	4.44
Working with diverse groups and cultures	4.58	4.44
Understanding the structure of the community organization	4.74	4.46
Formulating an idea from conception to completion	3.93	4.43
Developing an understanding of public health practice	4.70	4.44
Developing leadership skills	4.08	4.23

**Student Satisfaction with Practicum**

- All students reported that the practicum experience was effective, with 74% indicating that the practicum was very effective
- 82% of students reported that their practicum prepared them for job opportunities
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**Recommendation of Site**

- All students reported that they would recommend their community site, with 52% reporting that they would highly recommend their community site

**Student Contact with Preceptors during Practice Experience**

- 63% of students met with their community preceptor 10 times or more
- Face-to-face was the most common form of communication
- All students reported that the weekly commitment was appropriate

**Community Preceptor Attributes**

Question	Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Experienced in his/her field of work	4.74	4.77
Flexible and open to making changes to suit my needs as a student	4.59	4.69
Willing to offer suggestions and directions when needed	4.63	4.65
Available to answer questions and provide support	4.70	4.67
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.59	4.57
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.44	4.59

**Student Satisfaction with Community Preceptors**

- All community preceptors were rated as above average, with 74% rated as very good

**Faculty Sponsor Attributes**

Question	Rating on a Scale of 5.00 Average	SPH Average
Flexible to suit my needs as a student	4.44	4.52
Willing to offer suggestions when needed	4.52	4.51
Available to provide useful feedback concerning my work	4.30	4.44
Helpful in accomplishing project milestones	4.22	4.34

**Student Satisfaction with Faculty Sponsors**

- All faculty sponsors were rated as above average, with 67% rated as very good

## CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation demonstrates the win-win nature of applying classroom learning to the “real world.” Students overwhelmingly reported that the practice experience helped them develop problem solving skills and become more familiar with public health practice. Community preceptors were highly impressed with the students’ skills, motivation, maturity, and initiative. Overall, all the community preceptors reported that they would be willing to accept students for future practice experiences; and 82% of the students believed their practice experience was complimentary in preparing them for the job market.