Letter from the Director:

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The Interdisciplinary Health Studies faculty, staff and students have been movin’ and groovin’ this year, committed to making our major bigger, stronger, and a HUGE success!

One of the most notable successes is our first graduating class – graduating a year earlier than originally anticipated! A small, but talented and passionate group of young professionals, they have set the bar high for their underclassmen by earning campus awards and nominations, engaging in impactful internship and research experiences, and being extremely successful in a competitive job market.

We have also been extremely successful in growing the program, anticipating enrollment of over 200 majors in the Fall 2013 semester. This enrollment is triple the original expectations and doesn’t appear to be slowing any time soon.

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In addition to the quantity of majors, the quality of our students is also impressive – several students are actively engaged in the URI Honors Program, taking advantage of international study and volunteer experiences, and over 80% report that they intend to apply to graduate or health professional school.

Within this newsletter, you will learn a little bit more about who are students are, how some of our students are already making an impact, how to get involved as an internship site or career mentor and celebrate student and faculty successes.

Thank you for your continued interest and support for the program! We look forward to working with you to transform health and change lives for many more years to come!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fallon, Ph.D.

External Advisory Board

- Richard Esposito, RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH)
- Candice Fioravanti, Provant Health Solutions
- JoAnna Hillman, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Public Health Informatics
- Robert Marshall, RI Department of Health
- Ana Novais, RI Department of Health
- Edward Quinlan, Hospital Association of Rhode Island
- Kurt Rix, The Wellness Company

Thank you to our External Advisory Board members. Your time, passion and wisdom are essential to the success of our program, our graduates, and our state and national health systems.

Launched in Spring 2013, the Rhode Island Health Care Matters website is intended to help community members and policy makers learn about the health of the community.

The site aims to support the development of community health assessments and community health improvement plans by hospitals and health departments, but its content is also relevant for anyone interested in assessing and improving the health of communities.

Website: www.rihealthcarematters.org
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Interdisciplinary Health Studies?

It is an innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate major designed to prepare students for non-clinical careers in public health, health education and promotion, health services management, and health-related research in hospitals, for-profit companies, not-for-profit organizations, and community health agencies. For more information, visit our website: www.uri.edu/hss/health/

What kinds of courses does the Health Studies curriculum require?

All students take courses in statistics, ethics, and epidemiology. Core courses also focus on the interdisciplinary research and practice process, professional writing and verbal communication. See more at: www.uri.edu/hss/health/academics

Do the students have any kind of “specialization?”

Students specialize in health promotion, global health, or health services. They also have the opportunity to double major, or select a minor to enhance their skill set.

Who are the students enrolling in Health Studies?

We are proud to say that we have one of the most diverse majors on campus, with 36% reporting to be of racial/ethnic minority, and 78% women.

What is the earning potential for Health Studies students?

Because the program is new, we don’t have data specific to our students. A 2005 national survey of public health professionals shows salaries range from $30K - $150K, depending on chosen field, job-related experience, management experience, and earning a graduate degree.

How can I become an internship site for URI Health Studies students?

You don’t have to wait for graduation to take advantage of our students’ skills, youthful enthusiasm and innovative point of view. Many are interested in earning course credit for internships within health agencies.

To learn more about hiring an intern visit the office of experiential learning website (www.uri.edu/internships/), and post your internship announcement to RhodyNet.

“If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.”

- Hippocrates
2012-2013 Student Highlights

Congratulations Class of 2013!

"I've been very impressed by the professionalism, enthusiasm, and quality of the faculty and students involved in the program. This includes the faster than anticipated growth of student enrollment.

It's a very exciting time for the program and the University! I'm proud to have played a small part in it as an external advisory board member!"

Kurt A. Rix  
Program Director - WellSolutions

Student Excellence

Lauren Fiske (bottom, right; Class of 2015) and Rebecca Piette (left; Class of 2013) presented their research posters at the College of Human Science and Services Research Night.

James Carrier (top, right; Class of 2013) was a finalist for the URI Rainville Employee of the Year Award.
1. What topic and with whom did you do your research?
   I worked with Dr. Elizabeth Fallon to evaluate empirical research reporting the US population prevalence of body dissatisfaction.

2. Why is this research important to you?
   This research hits close to home. Poor body image affects many people I encounter - from women battling eating disorders to people who avoid going to the beach or a yoga class because of their body insecurities. Because of the numerous mental and physical health problems influenced by a persons' body dissatisfaction, there is great need to conduct high quality epidemiological research examining the US prevalence of body dissatisfaction.

3. What did you like best about your research experience?
   I loved digging in to the library’s archives to find original articles from the 70’s and 80’s and converting the microfiche film into digital copies.

4. What was the most unexpected thing you learned during your research experience?
   There are many body image interventions targeting children and adolescents, but very few for adults (aged 20 and up).

5. What advice would you give another student who is thinking about doing research?
   **Stay organized.** From the very beginning, back up your files. Flash drives, external hard drives, and excel spreadsheets are your new best friends. Learn to love them and use them to boost your efficiency and peace of mind.

   **Keep your eye on the prize.** As simple as it sounds, having a to-do list with a clear focus and set of goals, both long-term and short term will save you time and energy.

   **Lean on others for support.** Find a mentor you can connect with and feel comfortable turning to for advice and questions throughout your research process.

6. How does your research relate to your future career ambitions?
   After URI, I plan to pursue a Masters in Public Health & a Masters in Business Administration. I would like to design and implement innovative solutions to public health concerns and work with a non-profit organization that promotes healthy behaviors.
1. Where and with whom did you do your internship?

I completed my internship in the Division of Infectious Disease and Epidemiology at the Rhode Island Department of Health, specifically working with the Tuberculosis (TB) and Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) programs.

2. What did you like best about your internship experience?

I was able to experience a wide range of activities from administrative program support to data entry, analysis and report generation. I also got to see how clinicians, laboratories, and public health officials work together to protect the public.

3. How do your internship and classroom experiences complement one another?

During my internship I was able to put into practice many of the topics and lessons I learned in the classroom. My classroom experiences were a great complement to my internship activities and they prepared me well to complete all of the projects and activities I was assigned.

4. What was the most unexpected thing you learned during your internship experience?

I was surprised to discover that I was more prepared than I initially thought and was able to complete all of my assigned work quickly and thoroughly.

5. What advice would you give another student who is thinking about doing an internship?

Internships are a great complement to any curriculum and every student should consider completing an internship if possible.

Make sure to let people know that you are there to learn and try to gain as much experience as possible during your internship. Both the knowledge and experience gained through an internship are invaluable resources in any student’s professional development.
Internal Advisory Board Members

- Sue Adams, Human Development & Family Services
- Patricia Burbank, Nursing
- Stephanie Champlin, Health Studies/Kinesiology
- Phil Clark, Gerontology
- Geoff Greene, Nutrition
- Anne Hubbard, General Studies (Feinstein Providence Campus)
- Steve Kogut, Pharmacy Practice
- Kathy Meier, URI Cancer Prevention Research Center
- Patricia Morokoff, Psychology
- Ellen Reynolds, URI Health Services
- Deb Riebe, Kinesiology
- Andrea Rusnock, History
- Abran Salazar, Communication Studies
- Donna Schwartz-Barcott, Nursing
- Alison Tovar, Nutrition
- Tony Wheeler, URI Labor Research Center

Thank you to our Internal Advisory Board Members, who generously donate their time to create and guide this program, as well as provide the high quality educational and research foundation from which we will launch the next generation of health professionals.

Health Studies Faculty Interdisciplinary Research Highlights: 2012-2013


Announcements & Current Events

➢ **Recent Institute of Medicine reports** – [http://www.iom.edu/Reports.aspx](http://www.iom.edu/Reports.aspx)
  • Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School (May 2013)
  • Interprofessional Education for Collaboration: Learning How to Improve Health from Interprofessional Models across the Continuum of Education to Practice – Workshop Summary (May 2013)
  • Best Care at Lower Cost: The Path to Continuously Learning Health Care in America (September 2012)

➢ **Upcoming Regional Conferences** -
  • American Public Health Association annual meeting is in Boston - November 2-6, 2013. [http://www.apha.org/meetings/AnnualMeeting/](http://www.apha.org/meetings/AnnualMeeting/)

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Interdisciplinary Health Studies Program
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Website: [http://www.uri.edu/hss/health/index.html](http://www.uri.edu/hss/health/index.html)

Become part of the URI Career Mentor Network
This network offers alumni to the opportunity to share their career experiences and wisdom with current students and fellow alumni.

To learn more, go to [www.career.uri.edu/alumni_mentor.shtml](http://www.career.uri.edu/alumni_mentor.shtml)