

APRIL 2024

CAAS MPH NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4



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College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences
UtahStateUniversity

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WELCOME LETTER

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Hello, I hope this message finds you well. It's hard to believe we are at the end of the 2023-2024 academic year. It has been a busy and exciting year for students, faculty, and staff in the Master of Public Health program in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (CAAS)!

As you may recall, the CAAS MPH program is an applicant for accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). We have been working diligently to align our curriculum and program requirements with CEPH criteria and competencies. This process has been an insightful and valuable one. We want to thank those of you who have engaged in this process by providing us with feedback through our various stakeholder evaluations, participating in our advisory boards, and/or reviewing our self-study materials. Your feedback has resulted in some important changes to our curriculum and overall student experience. We appreciate your time and expertise.

This time of year is also exciting because we get the chance to celebrate our program graduates! This academic year (summer 2023-spring 2024) we have 19 students graduating from the CAAS MPH program—a new record! I hope you take a few minutes to read about some of our program graduates and their MPH projects! We are also excited about new faculty, new courses, and other program updates! We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the CAAS MPH newsletter. If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.



**Mateja Savoie-Roskos,
PhD, MPH, RD, FAND**

**Master of Public Health (MPH) Program Director,
Associate Dean for Academic Programs and
Student Services**

GRADUATING STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

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Madi Gunter
Public Health Nutrition

I have loved being a part of Utah State University's (USU) Master of Public Health program and am so excited to be graduating with my master's degree this May! Being a registered dietitian with an interest in sports nutrition, I focused my Applied Practice Experience on developing evidence-based nutrition resources for recreational runners. Partnering with USU Extension, I conducted a needs assessment survey among recreational runners who participated in Utah races during 2023 to guide the development of these resources. Upon completion, the nutrition resources were piloted among the target population to gather evaluation data and published on USU Extension's website.

Overall, the project was very successful, and I am so grateful for all of the help I received from my preceptor and advisor to make it happen! After graduating, I will be working as a Private Practice Fellow for All Access Dietitians, where I will get to conduct one-on-one nutrition counseling sessions with clients and learn how to start my own private practice in the future. I'm sad my time at USU has come to an end, especially because I was blessed to work with such amazing faculty and mentors, but I am so excited for the future!

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GRADUATING STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

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Sandra Quiroz Elizondo

Public Health Nutrition

Sandra's APE project was completed by taking the opportunity to participate in a graduate assistantship and conducting research alongside Dr. Durward and Dr. Savoie-Roskos. The research project's goal was to gather information about participants' experiences using Utah's Double Up Food Bucks Program at farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). During the APE, Sandra was able to contribute to the recruitment process and development of the letter of information, IRB proposal, quantitative survey, annotated bibliography, and qualitative interviews with participants. As a registered dietitian, her plans after graduation include working on opening and growing her nutrition and wellness private practice focusing on women.

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The MPH nutrition program provided me the opportunity to work with the Utah Regional Leadership for Neurodevelopmental Disabilities to complete my APE project. Together we connected with the type 1 diabetes community to identify what needs were not currently being met by hospitals or other diabetes care organizations. This collaboration resulted in a printable PDF resource title "Adjusting to Life with Type 1 Diabetes," that included helpful information on what to prepare when traveling on an airplane, helpful financial resources, how to safely participate in extracurricular activities, how to create a 504 plan, and beyond.



Karli Breinholt
Public Health Nutrition

Post graduation, I will be dedicating my time to launching Red Rock Nutrition and Dietetics, a telehealth dietitian practice geared toward helping individuals across Western Colorado access nutrition services. Additionally, my husband and I will be welcoming our first child, a baby boy, in July!

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Throughout my studies in the Master of Public Health Nutrition program, I have been especially interested in the intersections between nutrition and medicine, and how food insecurity can affect dietary quality and health. For my Applied Practice Experience, I worked with Dr. Carrie Durward and the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (UDHHS) on the Produce Rx program, which provides patients at low-income health clinics around Salt Lake County with vouchers to redeem for fresh produce. Participants in the program completed surveys regarding their demographics, diet, health status, and results of participation in the program.



Maddi Creer
Public Health Nutrition

We analyzed this data to create a report for the UDHHS evaluating the strengths and areas for improvement in the program. Additionally, I created an impact report to share with program stakeholders. After graduation, I will be taking a few months off to relax before starting medical school at the University of Utah. I am excited to use what I learned in this program to better the health of my future patients as well as my community!

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Amria Farnsworth
Public Health Nutrition

Amria partnered with Intermountain Health for her APE project. Intermountain Health has recently been working to integrate social determinants of health screenings into clinical care. Additionally, Intermountain Health's Clinical Nutrition Department hosts an Oncology Lead Team that's currently working on standardizing malnutrition screening practices amongst the outpatient oncology dietitians. Because patients in the oncology population are especially at risk for malnutrition and their complex disease states can present incredible multifaceted burdens related to social determinants of health, Amria saw a need to include screening questions for etiology of malnutrition. For her project, she worked with the region's Nutrition Security Patient Pillar and reviewed validated screening tools for both malnutrition and food security status for the adult oncology population.

Findings of her comprehensive literature review were presented to key Intermountain Health leadership to consider for use within this vulnerable population. Amria is looking forward to graduation, after which she will move from St. George to Salt Lake City, Utah where she hopes to continue working towards closing the gap between public health and clinical care.

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Kristin Hoch Palmer

Public Health Nutrition

For my APE, I worked with Heidi LeBlanc and the Land Grant University Professional Development Team to look at the landscape of online nutrition education in SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programming nationwide. We conducted a survey to better understand what available and different characteristics of the program is. The survey also aimed to provide a preliminary list of programs to allow states to adapt current programming that may be used elsewhere into their state to save time and resources. My post-graduation plans are to continue in my current position as Program Coordinator for the Home and Community Department within USU Extension.

**Congratulations to these and all our other 2024 graduates!
We can't wait to see what you do next.**

CEPH THIRD PARTY COMMENT PERIOD

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The Master of Public Health program in the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (CAAS) at Utah State University is undergoing a review by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for accreditation. Part of this process includes the provision of a third-party comment period, which allows anyone, including students, alumni, faculty, staff, community and practice partners, and members of the public, to share relevant information about the CAAS Master of Public Health program directly with the CEPH.

If you have any information about the CAAS Master of Public Health program that you would like to share with CEPH to inform their review, please send your comments to submissions@ceph.org by July 24, 2024.



NEW COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIOSTATISTICS

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I am excited to introduce the new course; NDFS 6540, Introduction to Epidemiology and Biostatistics. This course will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the basic principles and methods of epidemiology and biostatistics. Students will also have the chance to demonstrate proficiency in applying statistical techniques to analyze and interpret health-related data and communicate epidemiological findings effectively to various stakeholders. The assessment methods will include assignments, quizzes, labs, and a final project where students will apply epidemiological and biostatistical methods to analyze real-world data and present their findings. I am confident that this course will equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to make meaningful contributions to the fields of public health, veterinary, and epidemiology, and I look forward to guiding you through this enriching learning journey.

Abiodun Atoloye,
Ph.D., cPHN
Assistant Professor



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FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

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Getrude Mphwanthe, Ph.D., RD, is an Assistant Professor at Utah State University. She completed a Ph.D. in Human Nutrition, supervised practice in dietetics, and did a postdoc at Michigan State University. Getrude has research interests in pre-diabetes/type 2 diabetes, food insecurity, and disease-related malnutrition in adults and older adults.

Getrude's upbringing in northern Malawi, along the shore of Lake Malawi, has shaped her perspective. She was a senior lecturer at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Malawi). Her international involvement extends to her current roles as the nominating committee chair-elect of the Global Member Interest Group and as a country representative (Malawi) of the International Affiliate of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.



Getrude Mphwanthe,
Ph.D., RD
Assistant Professor

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MPH ADVISORY BOARD

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Thank you to our 2023-2024 MPH Advisory Board!

As the academic year draws to a close, we want to thank the members of our MPH Advisory Board:

- Carrie Butler
- Linnea Fletcher
- Cmdr. Willy Lanier
- Hannah Rettler
- Dr. Ashley Yaughner
- Dr. Danilo Franco
- Dr. Amanda Price
- Lea Palmer
- Luisa Hansen

Their guidance, expertise, and dedication have played an instrumental role in shaping our program's direction and enhancing the student experience. We are extremely appreciative of each member's commitment to excellence and look forward to continued collaboration with current and future members! We are currently recruiting new members for our advisory board; read below to see how you can get involved.

Join our MPH Advisory Board!

The MPH program is looking for new members for their Advisory Board. The advisory board is comprised of professionals from across the state representing diverse disciplines in public health. Advisory board members are pivotal in ensuring our program is meeting the ever-changing needs in the field of public health. We ask for a two-year commitment and meet virtually twice per academic year. This is an excellent opportunity to help support current MPH programming and students while also expanding your professional network. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Casey at casey.coombs@usu.edu.



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MPH STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

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Thank you to our 2023-24 MPH Student Advisory Board!

- Karli Breinholt
- Amria Farnsworth
- Maddi Creer
- RG Perez
- Chandler Hughes
- Victoria Lewis
- Kayla Lane
- and more!

We appreciate your professionalism, your valuable feedback, and your capable representation of your fellow students. Thank you for your service. Best wishes to you as you move on to bigger and better things!

New Student Advisory Board Members

We are excited to announce the new members of the USU MPH Student Advisory Board for 2024-2025. Chandler Hughes and Victoria Lewis are returning with the addition of:

- Ina Wells
- Gael Pfeiffer
- Kimberlee Creech
- Cecilia Rosendo

We look forward to your input!

Do you want to serve on the MPH Student Advisory Board (SAB) next year?

This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved, learn valuable professional skills, contribute to MPH program outcomes, learn from MPH program faculty and staff, and gain leadership experience. The time commitment is minimal (2 or 3 one-hour meetings each semester) with great impact. Email natalie.dalley@usu.edu to express interest in serving on the MPH Student Advisory Board.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Utah State University Commencement

When: May 2-3, 2024

Where: Utah State University, Logan, UT

Additional information [here](#).

A panoramic view of the Chicago skyline at dusk, with the city lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange, and the buildings are illuminated with various colors.

American Society for Nutrition Annual Meeting

Where the Best in Science and Health Meet

When: June 29–July 2, 2024

Where: McCormick Place, Chicago, IL

Additional information [here](#).



Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior Annual Conference

Understanding Foodways: Learning, Growing, Sustaining

When: July 29–August 1, 2024

Where: University of Tennessee, Knoxville TN

[Additional information here.](#)



Utah One Health Symposium Call for Student Abstracts

When: November 6, 2024

Where: Viridian Event Center, West Jordan, UT

Abstract Submissions Due: September 30, 2024

Abstract Submission Form [here](#).

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Be the first to hear about everything public health related by following our social media handles! This is a great way to stay up to date on program changes, accreditation updates, public health events, job openings, project/internship opportunities, and more!



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