

CAAS MPH NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2023
VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3



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College of Agriculture & Applied Sciences
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A LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

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Hello, I hope this message finds you well. We are eager to share some of our program highlights with you in our February newsletter.

As you may recall, the CAAS MPH program is an applicant for accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). We are working diligently to align our curriculum and program requirements with CEPH criteria and competencies. Through this process, we are seeking valuable input from our students, faculty/staff, and stakeholders to help ensure that our graduates are entering the workforce with the skills and expertise that meet the diverse needs of public health organizations across the country and worldwide. Thank you to the many of you who have already engaged in this process! We hope you will continue to be willing to participate in our program evaluation efforts as we move forward. Your insights and perspectives are incredibly beneficial and very much appreciated. We are looking forward to our CEPH Consult Visit on June 22, 2023. This is an exciting opportunity for us to learn about how we can continue to improve the program and successfully move forward with the accreditation process.

We are excited to announce that we have our first scholarship that is specific for CAAS MPH Nutrition students! This \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a student for the first time during this current scholarship cycle (2023-2024 academic year). We hope it is the first of many CAAS MPH scholarships to come! Lastly, we are thrilled to have welcome Dr. Palak Gupta to our team of faculty this spring semester! You can read more about her in this issue of the MPH newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about our program highlights and current events in this issue. If you have any questions about the CAAS MPH program, please feel free to reach out to me anytime.

Take care,

Mateja R. Savoie Roskos PhD, MPH, RD, FAND
Associate Professor; MPH Program Director;

Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Student Services
College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences



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FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

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Dr. Palak Gupta, PhD, MPH, CPH



Q: What is your position within the MPH program?

A: "I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Sciences, and an Extension Specialist for Hunger Solutions. In the MPH program, I teach a variety of classes, including Program Planning and Evaluation, a required course for MPH students. As an Extension Specialist, I lead Utah's Food Security Council created under the Senate Bill 133 to coordinate state efforts in addressing food security. This council is housed in Utah State University's Hunger Solution Institute which provides technical expertise on food security and related issues. My role in academics as well as Extension creates many opportunities for bringing learning into practice, and providing research-based knowledge to people around the state."

Q: What about public health interests you?

A: "Everything about public health interests me. Although my career is shaped in the field of public health, this wasn't the way I started. I started with education focused on clinical nutrition, but I did a lot of my fieldwork in public health and fell in love with it. I later took a deeper dive and did my PhD in Public Health Nutrition and a Master's in Public Health. What echoes with me the most is the ability of public health to serve at the population level instead of the individual level, and it has a direct impact on the world."

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. PALAK GUPTA

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Q: What kind of research topics are you interested in?

A: "I am passionate about issues related to hunger, food insecurity and social determinants of health. Food insecurity, which means having limited or uncertain access to adequate food, is associated with poorer health outcomes and higher odds of chronic illness. It is influenced by several factors related to social determinants of health, including income, employment, race/ethnicity, and disability. I enjoy that my work has so many facets and opportunities for applied research, which can positively change lives of people."

Q: Any advice to offer current MPH students?

A: "My advice to current students is that this is the time to seek new experiences to learn from. It is the time to branch out and learn what fascinates you most in public health. Don't be afraid to ask questions to your mentor and faculty. Network with other students and professionals to gain insight into the field. Public health is one area where no one can work in isolation, we must collaborate, and this is the time to build those connections. At the end, remember the work you do can make positive difference in someone's life. So, stay humble and give yourself appreciation."



We are so glad to have Dr. Gupta join our faculty this semester, and look forward to seeing her contributions to our program and university!

PROGRAM UPDATES: STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

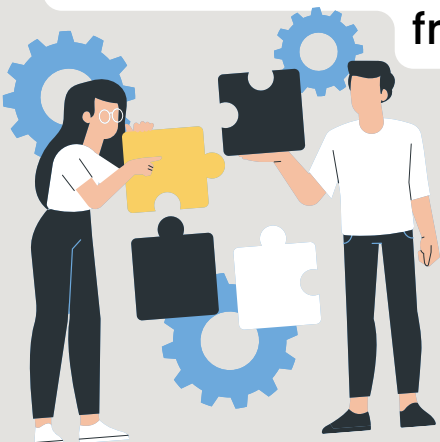
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As our MPH program continues to expand and evolve, we have implemented several new components to ensure our growth is focused and aligned with the needs of our students and the dynamic field of public health. Below are some of the exciting additions during this academic year.

CAAS MPH Student Advisory Board

The CAAS MPH Student Advisory Board (SAB) was created during the Fall 2022 semester with representation of students from both the Nutrition and Veterinary concentrations. The primary role of the SAB is to provide student feedback, suggestions, and insights on various issues, topics, questions, and concerns determined by MPH directors and faculty with the purpose of improving the program. Students can also bring their own topics for discussion within meetings. A recent example of the SAB's is that students were asked to provide their thoughts on the mission and vision statement, and the guiding values for the CAAS MPH program. Students provided very insightful feedback that was then used in conjunction with input from the General Advisory Board to revise these statements. SAB members have also been very forthcoming with their feedback and vision for how the program can better address diversity, equity, and inclusion in a multitude of ways. Having the feedback and participation of these students has already been highly valuable to the MPH program and we look forward to continuing to work with and learn from these great student leaders.

If you have any questions about the student advisory board, please contact Hannah Aardema at Hannah.aardema@usu.edu.



PROGRAM UPDATES: GENERAL ADVISORY BOARD

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General Advisory Board

In addition to the Student Advisory Board, we also developed a General Advisory Board comprised of diverse public health leaders in Utah. The General Advisory Board meets twice a year to provide feedback on the program's guiding statements, student outcomes, curriculum, and overall program planning. Members of the board help ensure our program is aware of changing practices and research needs in public health. This feedback is then used to guide programmatic changes to best serve students and the field. If you are interested in serving on our General Advisory Board committee, please reach out to casey.coombs@usu.edu about open seats.



UPHA PARTNERSHIP: STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS

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As part of a growing partnership with the Utah Public Health Association (UPHA), we are offering all our current MPH students a membership. Below is a brief overview of the benefits our students enjoy as a UPHA member:

Job Board:

A centralized location in which employers can share openings within public health from around the state

Event Registration:

Being a member gives you the ability to register for webinars, networking nights, and conferences

Bill Tracker:

Provides you a method to track public health related bills that are being proposed along with UPHA's official stance on the bill, bill number, short title, and the sponsor of the bill. This is very active right now!

Advocacy Academy:

Webinar recordings that cover advocacy and equity content

Abstract Submissions:

If you want to present research at a conference, a UPHA membership provides you a place to apply.

We are excited to offer this opportunity for students, both in and out of the state of Utah. If you are not a current student but are interested in a UPHA membership visit their website [here](#).

If you have any questions about the UPHA student membership, please contact Megan Tassinari at megan.tassinari@usu.edu



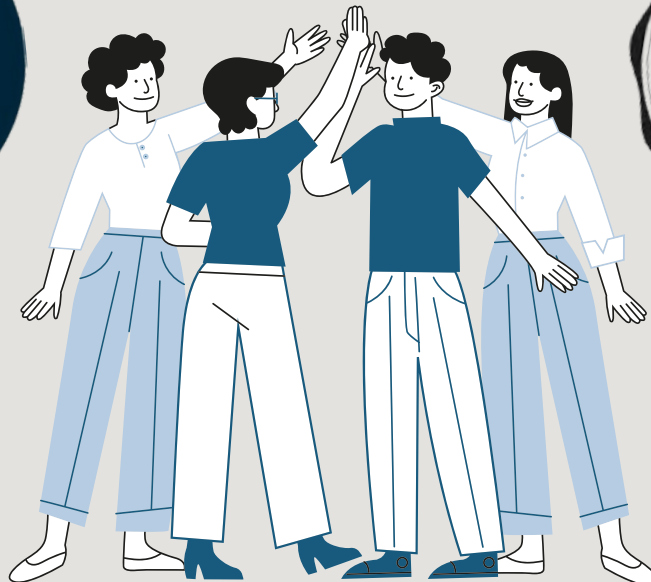
Utah
Public Health
Association

UPHA PARTNERSHIP: ACADEMIC COALITION

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Our MPH program is also involved in the UPHA Academic Coalition. There are several MPH programs in Utah, so we are combining efforts with UPHA to better serve our students and the public health field. The coalition includes members from USU, University of Utah, Westminster College, BYU, and UPHA. The Academic Coalition collaborates to offer networking and professional development opportunities to our statewide students and public health professionals.

We invite all current public health students, recent graduates, and potential employers to join us on March 14, 2023 for a virtual networking workshop. You will have the opportunity to build relationships with peers and employers to build a strong public health network. Register for this event [here](#). Spots are limited.



UTAH VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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The Utah Veterinary Medical Association is an organization dedicated to advancing the cause of veterinary medicine throughout the state. Since 1910, UVMA has served the state of Utah by developing strong roots in volunteerism and working to better the lives of animals, their owners, and fellow veterinarians. Being a member of UVMA has a wide variety of benefits, including:

Community:

Create a strong network of veterinary colleagues with a common goal, and create friendships with other vets throughout the state.

Advocacy:

Keep up to date on current legislation that may affect animal well-being, and join the fight to protect them!

Continuing Education:

Attend the yearly conference in beautiful Park City, Utah to gather with your colleagues and learn more about current topics in veterinary medicine.

News and Resources:

Get connected! Members will receive email alerts and social media access to the latest topics in veterinary medicine, as well as access to the organization directory and events calendar.

Career Center:

Job hunting? Looking to expand your practice? UVMA's career center is a great place to advertise your job opportunities, and is free for members!

Recognition:

Each year, the UVMA awards an individual the Utah Veterinarian of the Year award. Life Memberships are also awarded to those who dedicate their careers to the promotion of veterinary medicine in Utah.

Check out the UVMA website [here](#).




UPCOMING EVENTS

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UAND Annual Meeting

March 3-4, 2023
West Jordan, UT
More information [here](#).




Academic Coalition Networking Night

March 14, 2023
Virtual
Register [here](#).



SOPHE 2023 Annual Conference

March 21-24, 2023
Atlanta, GA
Register [here](#).



Utah Public Health Assoc. Conference

April 12-13, 2023
Salt Lake City, UT
Register [here](#).



UVMA Annual Conference

June 9-11, 2023
Park City, UT
Register [here](#).

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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