



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

MPH Alumni Focus

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Issue 7

A newsletter for Master of Public Health alumni at the University of Tennessee

MPH Workshop Offers Insight on How to Find Jobs

Last fall semester, the UT Department of Public Health and Career Services presented a job search strategies workshop for thirteen current MPH students.

The workshop featured an **alumni panel** (on the right), which students rated as the most valuable part.

In addition, **32 alumni** shared their own personal job search advice via an online survey (thank you!).

Career services recommends 3 strategies:

- **Use Job boards**– cast net wide, document all applications and job descriptions, tailor resume
- **Target specific agencies**- list organizations in your area, volunteer
- **Network**– most effective strategy, uncover “hidden job market” (>50% of jobs), informal and formal networking

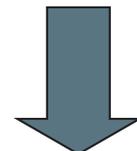


Alumni panelists at workshop

Advice from alumni surveyed and panelists includes:

- Networking has been most productive job search strategy
- Find a mentor to connect and guide you (later, be a mentor)
- Identify what drives you, boil it down to 1 sentence
- Prepare 1-2 minute elevator speech about yourself
- Start early, don't get discouraged
- Tailor resume and cover letter to each position
- Be assertive, be clear
- Join [LinkedIn](#) to broadcast your resume, **make connections**

To request a copy of the workshop handouts, email Julie at jgrubaugh@utk.edu



Connecting you with the UTK MPH Program!

The MPH Alumni Focus Newsletter keeps alumni informed about news and opportunities. The newsletter is issued every fall and spring. As graduates of the program, your continued involvement and support strengthens the foundation and traditions for MPH graduates to follow.

Send your success stories, requests for MPH interns, jobs postings for alumni, or other news to Julie Grubaugh.
Phone: 865-974-9277
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Website: publichealth.utk.edu

Awards & Recognition



ORAU project manager **Betsy Smither, MPH 08'** named in the [2015 Greater Knoxville Business Journal's 40 Under Forty](#)



UT-Knox County's **Academic Health Department** recognized among [50 Top Partnerships](#) during UT's celebration of receiving Carnegie Community Engagement

Get Social!

At your request, we created a [UT MPH Alumni LinkedIn group](#) to network, find a mentor, be a mentor, share a job, get connected!
[Click the icons below to join.](#)



MPH Alumna Manages Ebola Response Team in Liberia, West Africa

In March 2015, **Melissa (Gill) Edmiston, MPH 13'**, moved to Liberia to serve as a **Program Manager for Ebola response** with Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian humanitarian organization that provides aid to people in need around the world.

Melissa oversees a program funded through a \$2.6 million grant from the Canadian government for Ebola prevention and education. She will remain in Liberia for at least four months, focusing on the community level: educating community members about Ebola signs, symptoms, transmission and prevention and providing each household with an infection prevention kit. Melissa will also assist with case finding for people with symptoms and contact tracing for those diagnosed.

Melissa described going back to Liberia as, "an intense situation, but in some ways a public health dream." The Ebola outbreak, which started in March 2014, has resulted in over 10,000 deaths and is the largest outbreak in history. **After her first month on the ground, Melissa says the key is cultural**



competency: "understanding how Liberians learn, interact with each other and think about health and hygiene is imperative to an effective response."

This is not her first rodeo. Melissa completed a 5-month MPH field practice in Liberia through Samaritan's Purse, where she worked with community health education, including HIV prevention and testing, case mapping, and helped to implement a program to improve quality of life for people living

with HIV. Prior to that, Melissa had completed several global health mission trips to countries in Central America. She worked for a year as the Director of Community Programs for Susan G. Komen Knoxville and then relocated to St. Louis, Missouri, where she works as the Director of Development for Mavuno, a grassroots nonprofit working to improve health and agriculture in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Long term, Melissa would like to continue to work with global health issues, specifically working with qualitative evaluation, quality of life and well-being.

MPH Program Welcomes Veterinary Public Health Faculty Member



Dr. Chika Okafor joined the **UT College of Veterinary Medicine** this semester as **Assistant Professor of Food Safety & Epidemiology**. A Diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, he earned a PhD in Infectious Disease Epidemiology and MS in Food Safety (Foods of Animal Origin) from Michigan State University and DVM degree from the University of Nigeria. Prior to arriving at UT, he completed a post doctoral fellowship in Nutritional Epidemiology at the University of

Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

The courses he is teaching at UT include: Food Hygiene and Zoonoses, Descriptive and Applied Epidemiology, Epidemiology & Evidence Based Medicine and Pre-harvest Food Safety.

Dr. Okafor's primary research interest is in preventing human food safety issues originating from animals or animal husbandry activities. His family (wife and 2 sons) is enjoying Knoxville's warmth and beautiful scenery.

Did you know?

According to a recent survey of 32 alumni job search experiences:

3.9 months

average length of job search

8.15 jobs

average number of jobs applied for

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