The Office of Student Affairs presents

**Annual Practicum/Internship Symposium | December 5, 2014**

**Program of Events & Resources**

12:30 p.m. | **Making the Most Out of Your Practicum or Internship Experience** Workshop by Robin Leaf, MEd, Educational Programs Coordinator

1 p.m. | **Student Panel** moderated by Eleanor Feingold, PhD, Associate Dean of Education

- Maria Abunto, MPH candidate – MMPH | Bridging the Gaps
- Tim Brandon, MPH candidate – EPIDEM | State Department of Health
- Alyssa Landen, MPH candidate – HPM | Allegheny County Health Department
- Kirsten Lunn, MPH candidate – HPM | State Department of Health
- Jessica White, DrPH candidate – EPIDEM | Allegheny County Health Department

1:45 p.m. | **Tips on Reaching Out to Potential Sites**, Thistle Elias, DrPH, Director Bridging the Gaps

2:00 p.m. | **Opportunities with Bridging the Gaps**, Thistle Elias, DrPH, Director Bridging the Gaps

2:15 p.m. | **Opportunities with the State Department of Health**, Gerry Barron, MPH, Director HPM MPH Program

2:30 p.m. | **Opportunities with Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD)**, Ron Voorhees, MD, MPH, Director of ACHD Pittsburgh Summer Institute and Jamie Sokol, MPH, Workforce Development & Training at ACHD

2:45 p.m. | **Wrap-Up from Selected MPH Program Directors**

3 p.m. | **Mini Poster session with BCHS MPH students**

**Students Presenting Posters**

- Courtney Chorba, MPH | “Counseling at Planned Parenthood”
- Makeda Vanderpuije, MPH | “Social Support in Pregnant Teens: Eliminating Disparities through Supportive Interventions”

Tell us what you thought about today by completing a short survey at: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FeedbackDec5](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FeedbackDec5)
How to apply for internships with the county and state health departments and Bridging the Gaps

Information and applications are available on My Public Health at: http://mypublichealth.pitt.edu/Students/Academics-and-Student-Services/MPH-Practicum-Internship-Opportunities.

More information about state and county positions and applications:

- Projects are available in all fields of public health.
- A few projects are paid positions; most are not.
- Some state projects require full-time residence in Harrisburg. Accommodations are available at the International House. Other projects may be possible to do from other sites, with only occasional travel to Harrisburg.
- Application deadlines will be in mid-January
- Descriptions of specific projects with the state will be available (on the web page above) before break. County descriptions will be available by January 6th at the latest.
- Full application forms and instructions will be available by January 6th.
- Applications will require a resume/CV and a personal statement, and possibly an informal transcript.
- There will probably be a single combined application for all state and county positions that will give you the opportunity to rank all projects that you are interested in.

Other useful resources:
Audio recordings of today’s sessions will be available on the MPH Practicum Internship Opportunities page on My Public Health.

Career Services Internships and Fellowships page on My Public Health https://my.publichealth.pitt.edu/Students/Career-Services/Internships-and-Fellowships

Contact an alumnus in the Alumni-Student Mentoring Program. Details on My Public Health https://my.publichealth.pitt.edu/Students/Career-Services/Alumni-Student-Mentoring-Program

Pitt Bridges One Click Search for Practica/ Internship Experiences https://pittbridges.experience.com/experience/login


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Making the Most of Your Practicum/Internship Experience

Robin Leaf, MEd, Educational Programs Coordinator
Pitt Public Health Office of Student Affairs and Education

Workshop developed by Joan Anson, Director of Career Services and Robin Leaf in 2013
How to make the most...

Before
✓ How to find site that is a good fit for you
✓ Benefits to you

During
✓ Expectations of you & your site
✓ Develop your professional image
✓ Connect with people at your site/ networking
✓ Navigate the work environment of your site

After
✓ Your post experience tasks
✓ Network and keep in touch
✓ Recommendations
✓ Job opportunities
BEFORE | How to find a site

- Talk to your advisor
- Talk to student services liaison
- Review school requirements
- Review department procedures and manual
- Talk with senior students
- Ask where others have gone
How to find a site... cont.

- Research what you are interested in
  - Google
  - Web sites (see handout of resources)
- Use LinkedIn Groups
  - Current research
  - Connect with Pitt Public Health alumni
- Be creative

Benefits to you

- Contribute to a community resource or program
- Develop practical skills in a public health setting
- Develop personal confidence as a public health professional
- Provide glimpse of future career and setting
  - Insights
  - Experiences

Applying for a practicum

- Cover Letter Basics: To whom are you writing?

Cover letter is the place to demonstrate that you WANT to be engaged in …

-CV or Resume? For whom are you writing?
CV or Resume demonstrates that you have capacity or transferable skills to add value to their organization.
Interview prep

- Research organization
- Telephone or Skype?
- Practice answering typical interview questions and behavioral questions
- Develop questions for the interviewer(s)
- Know location of interview and arrive early
- Dress professionally
- Bring typed list of at minimum 3 professional references

DURING | Expectations of you and your site

- SITE
  - “Real world” experience

-PRECEPTOR
  - Feedback
  - Learning opportunities

- YOU
  - Be a part of the team and become engaged
  - Act with public health ethics and standards in mind
  - Professional image
  - Set goals

Goal Setting at the Site

- Two major areas for which you can have multiple goals:
  - Developing/ increasing competence: hard and soft skills
  - Developing growing community: peers, bosses, colleagues, mentors, those whom you would like to know and those whom you might help

- You may not have an end-goal in mind when starting the practicum but setting goals related to each of these will allow you to practice leading in any environment and increase your impact on your circle of influence.
Developing Competencies

- Increasing one’s competency or profile in a particular area also lays the groundwork for promotion
- Look for opportunities to grown your own skills as well as solve someone else’s problem
- Is there an opportunity to:
  - Collaborate on a research project
  - Publish an article or contribute to a book
  - Present at a professional meeting
  - Take a class or teach another
Developing Community

- Make the most of your practicum connections
- Community requires communicating 😊
- How is this different from networking?
- You need relationships with peers, bosses, and would-be collaborators as well as folks whom you admire in your field
Navigate the work environment

- Develop professional image
- Rembert to always act professionally
- Don’t expect everything to be prepared for you when you arrive on first day
- Set-up a system for staying up-to-date on project developments and for your accomplishments and tasks

Navigate the work environment... Cont.

- Make daily notes of your tasks and accomplishments
- Offer to share ideas
- Be observant
- Be willing to do work outside of your project
- Compile observations and consider providing them to your supervisor in a written report
Navigate the work environment... Cont.

- Have regular meetings with your supervisor
- Tackle all tasks with enthusiasm and a positive attitude
- Avoid negativity
- Never shun a chance to learn more about the site
- Get as much exposure as possible
It’s Your Experience!

- Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- Take initiative
- Find a mentor
- Network, network, network
- Leave with tangible accomplishments
- Enjoy yourself

AFTER | Post-practicum tasks

- Evaluate experience
- Practicum forms
- Save notes for yourself to recall experience
- Thank you notes
- Ask for recommendation letter
- Update your resume
- Update your LinkedIn profile and connect with those from practicum
- Stay connected to practicum organization
- Job opportunities
Any questions?
Other ideas to share?

Don’t forget to visit the Career Services Office for resume and interview assistance!
Making the Most Out of Your Practicum/Internship Experience

Sources


• The New Professional Image in Public Health, Betty Addison, John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health


Workshop developed by Joan Anson, MSEd, Director of Career Services and Robin Leaf, MEd, Educational Programs Coordinator, 2013
You know about the practicum requirement, you have some sense of the expectations, but how best to get started? Here are four sets of activities that should help.

1. **Do a personal inventory**
   - Is there a particular place you’d like to be?
     - a state? a country? local?
     - near family or other personal connections?
   - Is there an environment you would really like to experience?
     - a state health department? the CDC? a small, community based organization? a national or international research or advocacy organization?
   - Are you hoping your practicum will transfer to an essay or thesis, or are you flexible on this?
   - Are you hoping for a paid practicum? Most practica are not! Can you plan accordingly?

2. **Do a professional inventory**
   - What past experience do you have already?
   - What experience(s) do you need to supplement your experience and coursework so far?
   - What skills do you have already?
   - What skills do you want to develop?
   - How are your “people skills” – communicating, working on teams, do you enjoy working with people?
   - How are your computer skills, quantitative skills, research skills, writing skills? Which of these do you bring to the table, which do you want to improve, and which do you hope to avoid?
   - Are you interested in a particular disease or condition? a particular segment of the population? a particular region of the world? a particular intersection of any of these?

Be **HONEST** with yourself – a practicum is your opportunity to explore and develop! No one practicum is going to do everything that you hope, but your first challenge is to prioritize what it is you hope for.

3. **Network**
   - Everyone says it but it’s not so easy – touch base with faculty to see what and whom they know, including other faculty who might have other contacts and ideas, but only AFTER you’ve done your inventories so you can give them better information, yes, but also:
4. COLD CALL
- yes, cold call – or cold email. That means you may not have any contact at an organization whatsoever.
- First do a thorough web search based on your personal and professional needs. Identify the possibilities! Then reach out and share:
  - That you are a graduate student interested in gaining more experience in ..... 
  - That you bring certain skills such as ...
  - That you thought of their organization because ...
  - Indicate your flexibility, enthusiasm, strengths and – if applicable – your willingness to work without pay

This is where having been honest with yourself you can be honest and clear with them!
Do NOT exaggerate your skills or experience – you risk disappointing them, stressing yourself out, and maybe most importantly, cheating yourself of the opportunity to make the most of a practicum
Do NOT underestimate yourself! You were accepted into and are progressing through a well-established, recognized and respected school! You are offering to assist and share, as well as to learn.

5. Final thoughts based on 17 years of guiding students to and through practica

Be flexible and make the most of your opportunities! Again, no one practicum will do everything for you, but once you have a practicum, you should squeeze every bit of relevance and opportunity out of it. Use this as an opportunity to explore and develop.
(And by the way, if it turns out you really dislike the practicum you take on, now you know you don’t want to do that type of work in that type of environment! Even then you are ahead - some people don’t figure that out until five years into a job!)