Affiliate Faculty Profile: Andrea Fenaughty, PhD

Each affiliate faculty member for the UAA’s Master of Public Health program has a special area of interest, such as preventing infectious diseases, family violence, or social marketing. One of the newest affiliate faculty, Dr. Andrea Fenaughty, loves data. Data are real, she said. Data are the hard facts. “I think if you can get that right, you build the rest of it around that.” Working with data, she said, means you are building a strong foundation for projects designed to improve public health.

For almost a decade, Dr. Fenaughty has worked as a chronic disease epidemiologist for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. She now works with the Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, working with data from tobacco, obesity, heart disease and stroke, and other prevention programs to monitor chronic disease burden. Dr. Fenaughty also conducts evaluations of programs that address chronic diseases and health risk factors. She uses numbers to help explain the direction in which a health problem is going; for example, a reduction in teen smoking in Alaska during the past decade, or a slight reduction of childhood obesity among students in Alaska’s largest school districts. Dr. Fenaughty has called Alaska home for almost 20 years – the longest stretch she’s spent in one place. She grew up in Connecticut and later Florida, where she began her college education. Dr. Fenaughty earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, as well as master’s and doctorate degrees in social psychology from Arizona State University. Immediately following, she moved to Anchorage to complete post doctorate work funded through the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study HIV and AIDS among drug users. She later became an affiliate faculty member for the UAA’s Psychology Department, teaching classes focused on social psychology, biostatistics, health psychology, and other subjects.

Dr. Fenaughty said studying chronic diseases in Alaska, and the risk factors associated with them, is her central focus. She is also excited to see that “social determinants of health” (improving the economic and educational status of Alaskans) is among the top 25 priority areas for Healthy Alaskans 2020. “It’s getting people to understand these are health issues.”

Data are real... Data are the hard facts. “I think if you can get that right, you build the rest of it around that.”

Continued back page
MPH Alumni Updates

Lisa McGuire ’09
(Anchorage, AK)
Congratulations to Lisa McGuire who was recently promoted to Chief of Programs for the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. The Division is within the Department of Health and Social Services, and is part of the leadership team that includes the Director, Deputy Director, and Chief of Quality. Senior and Disabilities Services promotes health, well-being, and safety for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and vulnerable adults. It facilitates access to quality services that foster independence, personal choice, and dignity. The overarching vision of the division is “choice, safety, independence and dignity in home and community-based living.”

Alumni Profile: Sarah Grosshuesch
Sarah Grosshuesch and her family relocated to rural Wisconsin in 2009, but she returned to Alaska last spring to defend her practicum project. For her project, she built on her experience and relationships with the public health breastfeeding community and conducted a secondary data analysis of the CDC’s Infant Feeding Practices II study to evaluate the training of breastfeeding peer counselors in Wisconsin.

After a brief stint as a WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor/stay-at-home-parent, Sarah returned full-time to public health work as the Health Officer for Adams County. Adams County is a rural county with health factors and outcomes that rank among the bottom five counties in the state. Sarah spends much of her time building capacity to address the county’s health disparities, while also being a strong advocate.

MPH Alumnus Dr. Mark Peterson Featured in Green & Gold for Work in Antarctica
Dr. Mark Peterson, UAA MPH Alumnus, recently worked as lead physician at McMurdo Station, the largest community in Antarctica, which houses the only medical facility on the continent. Read more about Dr. Peterson’s adventures in the UAA Green and Gold article:
“Dr. Antarctica”
November 12, 2014
greenandgold.uaa.alaska.edu/blog/29183/ant

Save the Date!
16th International Congress on Circumpolar Health
June 8-12th, 2015 in Oulu, Finland
http://icch16.oulu.fi/

During her time as Health Officer, Sarah responded to a military jet crash, investigated several disease outbreaks, and was involved in state policy related to the impact of nitrates and manure on water quality. She is currently working to integrate “Health in All Policies” and the social determinants of health into regional practice. Local public health can never be described as boring!

Although they miss Anchorage, Sarah and her family enjoy rural living. Each summer they plant a garden with a local farmer and take care of a small apple orchard. In addition, living across from a state park provides great opportunities for biking, skiing, and running. Since completing her MPH, Sarah has focused on her to-do list, including learning to play the guitar and finishing her first quilt.
Alumni Profile: Kerry Pride

After completing her MPH in 2010, Kerry Pride was accepted into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Fellowship. For the two-year assignment, she was stationed at the Wyoming Department of Public Health in Cheyenne working on many outbreaks across Wyoming.

Kerry also completed an environmental health study describing the respiratory health effects of ground-level ozone during winter months in a rural area. This was the first published study to show wintertime ozone health effects in a frontier location. The study was a finalist for the J. Virgil Peavy Memorial Award at the EIS Conference in 2013, which recognizes a current EIS officer for the presentation that best exemplifies the effective and innovative application of statistics and epidemiologic methods in an investigation or study.

Upon finishing the EIS Fellowship, Kerry completed CDC’s Preventive Medicine Fellowship (PMF) at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). During the PMF, she completed the first Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Preparedness (CASPER) in a frontier location and led the first US study to assess post-Q fever fatigue syndrome in persons diagnosed with Q fever.

Kerry left CDC, but stayed with the Montana DPHHS where she works on improving local public health systems, providing epidemiology support and veterinary public health expertise, and leading and co-chairing many task forces. Kerry is also adjunct faculty at UAA and is teaching Introduction to Epidemiology this spring.

Kerry and her husband live in Silver Star, Montana where they have a small zoo of animals, including horses, dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, peacocks, and a goose! They enjoy spending time in Montana’s backcountry. Kerry competes in barrel racing, gardens, and practices veterinary medicine part-time.

Alumni Profile: Jami Warrick

Jami Warrick graduated in May 2014 from the UAA MPH program. She was honored to be one of two students inducted into the Gamma Iota Chapter of the Delta Omega Honor Society in Public Health.

After completing a BS in Biochemistry from Western Washington University in 1997, Jami took time off to work and start a family. She began her graduate studies in 2008 while working at UAF as the Laboratory Safety/Operations Manager for the Institute of Arctic Biology, where she continues to work today.

Jami’s practicum project focused on public health department accreditation. She completed her project within the Fairbanks Regional Public Health Center, allowing for an in-depth look at the policies and practices of the Interior Region of the State of Alaska Section of Public Health Nursing. It also provided her with the opportunity to assess the Interior’s overall readiness for a voluntary accreditation effort. Jamie was invited to present the results of her project at the 2014 Alaska Public Health Nursing Conference in Anchorage.

Inspired by all she learned about public health nursing while working on her practicum, Jami is now taking additional classes to determine whether nursing is the right career path for her.

In addition to work and school, Jami enjoys reading, traveling, and spending time with family, friends, and her new puppy.
As the light returns to the North, let me add my good wishes for the new year! As most of you know, we had a successful re-accreditation site visit in September 2014, with a positive report from the site visit team. It was clear in their official draft assessment that we met (or met with commentary) all criteria, which is the best possible outcome from the site visit! We will have the opportunity to respond to their site visit report (including correcting any errors and providing any updates) by April 2015. The report and our response will be presented to the decision-making councilors at their June 2015 meeting. The final re-accreditation decision will be made by July 2015. Until then, we will retain our full accreditation status. The typical accreditation term is seven years from initial accreditation, so it should be several more years before our next site visit. Thanks to everyone who participated in this intensive self-study process. It was a great way to cap our tenth year as an academic program!

The MPH program is undergoing another transition. After ten years in the role of MPH Program Coordinator, and nine years as Department Chair, I will be transitioning to “just” Professor of Public Health this spring. I am pleased to report that our college has moved to a model of rotating chairs. So, in January 2015, Dr. Jenny Miller became our new Department Chair and Dr. Liz Snyder is our new MPH Program Coordinator. Please join me in welcoming them to their new roles. We are fortunate to have their leadership, expertise, and passion to guide our department and program. This will be my last column as coordinator; Dr. Snyder will take over next issue.

We were happy to see many of you at the UAA Alumni and Friends Meet and Greet at the Captain Cook on Monday, January 26. At this event, we inducted the following outstanding alumni into our local chapter of the Delta Omega Public Health honor society: Amanda Cooper (2012), Carol McCarty (2013), Marcy Rein (2012), Wendy Rainey (2008), and Marina Vinnikova (2014). We also recognized Dr. Brian Saylor with an Honorary Delta Omega membership for his many years of passionate public health leadership.

Drop a line when you get a chance. We love to hear from you.

Rhonda M. Johnson, DrPH, MPH, FNP
MPH Program Coordinator (2004-2014)
Professor of Public Health
Rhonda.Johnson@uaa.alaska.edu
907-786-6545

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Although Dr. Fenaughty is not teaching courses right now through the public health program, she is able to help students with their practicum projects, as well as assist students and alumni in a number of public health areas. She has done research, taught, analyzed data, and worked in public health practice for almost two decades. Her broad public health perspective might be useful to students and alumni who have not had years of experience in the field.

Dr. Fenaughty, a mother of a teenager and a new homeowner, is committed to Alaska. “I like the public health environment up here actually—a small enough place that you can make a difference.” She is also a board member for the Alaska Public Health Association.

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Congratulations to Our Summer & Spring Graduates!

Summer 2014
- Christie Flanagan
- Eric Lespin
- Joy Britt
- Carole Knuth
- Marina Vinnikova
- Shaina Seidner

Spring 2014
- Sarah Grosshuesch
- Marylynne Kostick
- Michelle Rizzo
- Liza Root
- Sheila J Soule
- Rebecca Sprague
- Jami Warrick