PURPOSE: The UAA Department of Health Sciences Master of Public Health (MPH) Sponsorship Program is a MPH Student Advisory Council (SAC) program that is designed to support new MPH graduate students pursuing a master degree in Public Health Practice. A systematic process is provided to help the SAC members exercise their basic responsibility to successfully assist new students with their integration into the University of Alaska Anchorage MPH Program and minimize students’ questions/concerns for the staff and faculty during their initial semester.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Assist the Department of Health Sciences and MPH staff, faculty members, and administrative personnel for student integration into the UAA MPH Program and help develop policy guidance to implement the MPH Sponsorship Program.

2. Appoint a SAC member to coordinate and manage the sponsorship program.

3. Establish policy, procedures, and administrative controls for the program.

4. Monitor and evaluate the program. Surveys and feedback reports may be used.

5. The SAC will ensure instructions are issued to new MPH students with sufficient lead-time to appoint appropriate sponsors, per requirements of the MPH program through coordination with the Health Sciences Department Chair, the MPH Program Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant of the Department of Health Sciences.

6. Ensure all participants understand the MPH Sponsorship Program is voluntary for both sponsors and students being sponsored.

7. The SAC is responsible for assigning sponsors to new students accepting participation in the sponsorship program and management of the program.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM VOLUNTEER:

Volunteers can be any MPH student in good academic standing with an interest in supporting new students and their integration into the MPH graduate program. Volunteers must be dependable, resourceful, and willing to provide informational support in a timely manner.

1. Volunteer sponsors must participate in a brief orientation to the MPH program (by faculty and staff) to ensure they are providing consistent and accurate information. The orientation includes FAQs about the MPH program, UAA Resources, and service and research opportunities.

2. Volunteer sponsors are encouraged to direct students to IT and other UAA resources for technical Blackboard/Gmail issues, and to focus on orienting them to MPH Home Base,
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UAA MPH program website, and the MPH Friends Facebook group as primary sources of general program information. Academic advisors should be the primary source of individualized academic information.

3. At your discretion, provide your personal contact information (via email) to your assigned sponsored new MPH student. The sponsor must be readily available to respond to email and phone calls from the student in a timely manner (typically within 24 hours).

4. Confirm that each new student has had the opportunity to accept or decline an assigned sponsor or offer each student the option of a personal sponsor during their initial semester to field questions on MPH courses and other academic procedures within the MPH Program.

5. Provide technical assistance (Blackboard, Gmail, etc.) throughout the student’s transition. Encourage the student to contact his/her academic advisor for specific questions/concerns pertaining to academic curriculum guidance.

6. Provide a summary of sponsorship issues and common questions to the SAC Chair. The SAC Chair will then summarize all issues for the Health Sciences Department Chair, and the Public Health MPH Program Coordinator at the conclusion of each semester.

7. Ensure each student is knowledgeable of all available academic resources to augment degree goals.

RESPONSIBILITIES/OPTIONS FOR SPONSORED STUDENTS:

1. Sponsored students must respond to their assigned sponsor’s initial email and accept or decline sponsorship. NOTE that only students who have expressed initial interest in sponsorship to the administrative staff will be contacted. Sponsored students may request a new sponsor at any time by submitting a request to the SAC Chair.

2. Sponsored students may report any inappropriate or unwanted contact or incidents to the Health Sciences Department Chair, the Public Health MPH Program Coordinator, or the SAC Chair at any time.

3. Sponsored students are encouraged to submit feedback about their experiences to the SAC Chair or the MPH Program Coordinator. For contact information, please see references.

STANDARDS OF SERVICE FOR THE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM:

1. It is the responsibility of the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Health Sciences to provide email contact of new students who have expressed interest in being sponsored to the SAC Chair in order to appoint new students with volunteer sponsors.

2. New students will receive the MPH Sponsorship program reference document with their initial
welcome letter from the UAA Department of Health Sciences MPH Program Coordinator.

3. Sponsors will be appointed new students to sponsor no later than 10 days before courses begin. New students should contact the SAC Chair if there has been no contact with his/her sponsor prior to the start of the academic semester. Sponsors are only intended to support new MPH students during their initial academic semester.

4. Sponsors can be any student who is in good academic standing in the MPH program who has completed the appropriate orientation. SAC Members are expected to be sponsors for new students.

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM PROCESS:

1. Upon a student’s acceptance into the UAA Department of Health Sciences MPH Graduate Program, the Administrative Assistant of the Department of Health Sciences will notify the SAC chair of any new students who would like a sponsor. The student’s email information will be the only personal information provided to the sponsor at the student’s consent and acceptance of the sponsored service.

2. The SAC will coordinate, organize, record, and allocate each sponsor to each new student.

3. The appointed sponsor will attend a MPH orientation by the MPH Program Coordinator and/or staff.

4. The sponsor will send an email to the new student no later than 10 days before courses begin. As a sponsor you will provide the following information in your initial email to the new student:
   a. An introduction of yourself as a sponsor highlighting your responsibilities and purpose.
   b. A copy of the UAA Department of Health Sciences MPH Sponsorship Program.
   c. An explanation to the new student that the MPH Sponsorship Program is optional and they can also request a new sponsor at any time.
   d. Appropriate contact information to continue sponsoring.

5. The sponsor will provide feedback to the SAC Chair after completion of the sponsored semester period.

6. The SAC will submit a summary to the Health Sciences Department Chair and the Public Health MPH Program Coordinator at the conclusion of the semester to determine if further adjustments to the UAA Department of Health Sciences MPH Sponsorship Program are needed.
REFERENCES:
The following personnel can be contacted through these UAA websites:

1. Public Health MPH Program Coordinator: Dr. Rhonda Johnson
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/index.cfm

2. Administrative Assistant of the Department of Health Sciences: Katie Frost
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/facultyandstaff/staff.cfm

3. Full-time MPH Faculty
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/facultyandstaff/faculty.cfm

4. Student Advisory Council Chair and Members
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/mph/sac/members.cfm

5. Affiliate Faculty
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/facultyandstaff/affiliate.cfm

6. UAA MPH Alumni members
   http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/healthsciences/mph/alumni/names.cfm