INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Interdisciplinary Exploration of Alaska’s Critical Behavioral Health Issues

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BACKGROUND

In 2013, with funding from the University of Alaska Anchorage College of Health’s Interdisciplinary Education Award, the Departments of Psychology, Health Sciences, and Human Services; the Schools of Social Work and Nursing; the Center for Human Development; and the Justice Center collaborated in the design, development, and instruction of a new interdisciplinary course.

The interdisciplinary faculty aimed to expand a one-credit course offered in 2012 to a three-credit upper division undergraduate/graduate course. Following approval by the COH Curriculum committee and the Graduate Academic Board, a permanent course number was obtained.

METHODS

It was unprecedented work to develop a course involving multiple units within the College of Health and College of Arts and Sciences. Interdisciplinary faculty faced the following challenges:

- Professionals in curriculum development were unfamiliar with cross-listing a course between colleges and multiple academic units.
- The curriculum handbook did not offer details for developing a step-by-step process incorporating multiple academic units and colleges.
- The time frame to complete the curriculum review process was much longer than anticipated.

TOPOICAL CONTENT

- Interdisciplinary approach and practice
- Social determinants of health
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and trauma-informed services
- Domestic violence/sexual assault
- Suicide
- Mental Health First Aid
- Substance abuse

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

“Course material so closely aligned with my interest in behavioral health”

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Broaden student participation from additional academic units to strengthen an interdisciplinary focus in the health professions.
- Promote new interdisciplinary academic experiences for students planning to practice in Alaska.

“Interdisciplinary approach and the training is invaluable to us as future professionals”