

Academic Health Department Activities

Academic and health department partnerships add value to public health system in Texas. We can expand the effectiveness and efficiency of our individual work by combining our strengths in education and learning, research, and public health service. This is accomplished through activities outlined below.

Goals:

1. Build a public health workforce sufficient in quantity, composition, and competencies
2. Produce, advance, and disseminate public health research and best practices
3. Implement evidence-based policies and practice into Texas communities

ADMINISTRATION

Activities	Short Description
UTSPH and DSHS Coordinating Committee <i>Status: Potential</i>	Responsible for oversight of the Academic Health Department, including monitoring workplan activities, goals, performance measures, quality improvement efforts, and other activities related to the success and growth of the partnership. Integrate student input through appointment of a student liaison for this committee. Possible joint Graduate Assistant position dedicated to the Academic Health Department.
Communication Plan <i>Status: Potential</i>	Develop a strong communications strategy to inform, update, highlight, and facilitate opportunities between UTSPH and DSHS. (Website, listserv, social media, etc.)

FACULTY/STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Activities	Short Description
Adjunct Faculty and DSHS Affiliate Appointments <i>Status: Current/In Development</i>	<p>DSHS staff provide guest lectures, integrate real-world classroom projects, career mentoring, and consulting on curriculum development</p> <p>UTSPH staff and faculty “rotate” through different DSHS programs, consult on projects, provide academic perspective and resources to real public health challenges. (IRB Members)</p> <p>Identify “academic liaisons” for the DSHS Regional offices and DSHS Divisions and identify “practice liaisons” at UTSPH locations.</p>

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Activities	Short Description
Student Practicum and Field Projects <i>Status: Current</i>	Continue to develop and increase the number of student practicum and field projects.
UTSPH ACTION Lab <i>Status: In Development</i>	<p>The School of Public Health ACTION Lab is intentionally designed to 1) prepare School of Public Health students for meaningful community engagement and 2) connect them to short-term projects that could be used for a practicum, ILE, or student research. With a focus on topics critical to preparing students for real-world public health settings, the lab serves to train students on how to advocate alongside others on issues of significance to local communities, connect students to service-learning opportunities, and transform the way students view their role in public health (i.e. ACT). The ACTION Lab is still under initial development and consideration and hopes to launch in fall 2021.</p>

	DSHS and UTSPH will work to identify suitable opportunities to offer through the ACTION Lab within DSHS offices or relevant initiatives throughout the state.
UTSPH Listening Sessions <i>Status: Potential</i>	Focus group/listening sessions for current UTSPH students to share ideas on what opportunities they would like see to better build their skills or experience in public health practice.

RESEARCH/TEACHING/PRACTICE

Activities	Short Description
Public Health Residency/Fellowships <i>Status: Current/In Development</i>	Pipeline to train medical, doctoral or post-doctoral candidates in public health practice and leadership. Enhances the ability of DSHS to attract skilled labor for important projects.
Curriculum Projects <i>Status: Current</i>	Integrate a real world public health problem, challenge, case study into a classroom assignment or as part of curriculum. Allow students to contribute to possible solutions, test ideas, and gain practical experience.
Joint Grants, Research Projects, and Publications <i>Status: Current/In Development</i>	Encourage and foster regular collaborations in research and practice.
Public Health Practice and Research Seminar Series <i>Status: Potential</i>	Regularly scheduled oral presentations on potential or ongoing collaborative work between DSHS and UTSPH. Platform can be used for students, faculty, and staff to “pitch” project and research ideas or areas where help from the partner institution is sought.
Data Discovery Workshops/Education	Education on DSHS Data. Expand workshop currently presented by the Center for Health Statistics to encompass all DSHS data and how to get

<p><i>Status: Current/In Development</i></p>	<p>access. Make these opportunities available to UTSPH faculty, staff, and students. Alternative: create a user-friendly and easily available inventory/website.</p> <p>DSHS could provide UTSPH students with ad-hoc opportunities to “practice” working with larger datasets. This could benefit future employment where students can note on resume/CV their experience working with specific DSHS datasets and programs.</p>
<p>COVID-19 Related Projects and Initiatives <i>Status: Current/In Development</i></p>	<p>Research and funded initiatives that SPH faculty can help coordinate and participate in (e.g., genome sequencing on COVID variants)</p>

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Activities	Short Description
<p>Workforce Needs Assessment <i>Status: Potential</i></p>	<p>Conduct a needs assessment for DSHS, regional offices, and local health departments to create a list of projects that need technical support. This would help UTSPH students and faculty quickly identify practicum/collaboration topics and health department contacts.</p>
<p>Public Health Volunteer Corps / other “Surge Capacity” Initiatives <i>Status: Potential</i></p>	<p>UTSPH and DSHS could help with surge capacity is partnering with faculty who teach certain courses relevant to potential surge capacity needs (disaster response, etc.).</p> <p>For example, a Field Epidemiology course could also be compressed into a one-week “boot camp” for currently employed public health staff for quick training. Or students completing that same field epi course could be “certified” to participate in related public health work. This could be during a disaster or could be part of the curriculum where they practice their training at a local health dept or with a DSHS program.</p>

	<p>DSHS could provide faculty/academic institutions with the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) that are needed in different surge capacity situations and faculty can align curriculum and training appropriately. Professors could attest to the KSA's that students have achieved in university coursework if surge capacity is needed.</p>
<p>Workforce Training Initiatives <i>Status: Current/In Development</i></p>	<p>Develop joint training initiatives based on public health workforce challenges and needs. For example, Public Health 101 Curriculum project, grant writing workshop, a new certificate program, etc.</p>