Public Health Faculty Member Meets with the President of Tanzania

On June 22nd 2014, the Kentucky Institute for International Studies (KIIS) Tanzania Program had the opportunity to meet with the President of Tanzania, His Excellency Dr. Jakaya Kikwete during the program’s 2014 summer session in Tanzania.

In the meeting, President Kikwete held a brief discussion with the group about its activities and future aspirations in the public health arena in Tanzania. The summer program was held from June 12th to July 16th 2014 and offered courses in different health-related fields including Global & Public Health, Nursing, Service-Learning, and Comparative Healthcare Systems. Dr. William Mkanta, an associate professor of Healthcare Administration at WKU who is originally from Tanzania, is the director of the study abroad program.

The meeting between the 21-strong student team including six WKU students and the Tanzanian President took place at the State House in Dar es Salaam during a memorable night in Tanzania when the African premiere of the a social and public health relevant documentary entitled Tanzania: A Journey Within was held. Also in attendance at the event were the US Ambassador to Tanzania Mr. Mark Childress, several Tanzanian cabinet ministers and other invited dignitaries.

“He met with the group briefly to share his passion to work with KIIS; he is happy that KIIS is working towards establishing itself as the leading American entity in addressing the issue of maternal and child health in Tanzania. We have got a friend in President Kikwete,” remarked Dr. Mkanta.

WKU Senior, Trevor Davis (Louisville, KY) shared his thoughts about meeting the President, “It was a great privilege to be invited to the State House in Tanzania to watch the documentary, A Journey Within, with President Jakaya Kikwete,” he said. Trevor went on to elaborate on the documentary: “It is about two friends from the United States who visited Tanzania together. The man in the film, Venance Ndibalema, is a Tanzanian native who is visiting his home country with his American friend, Kristen Kenney. Kristen enters Tanzania with the expectation of experiencing a primitive culture. She discovered that her expectations of Africa were merely fallacious. The documentary takes the viewer through a vast array of Kristen's experiences from life in the city to rural villages which ultimately change her perspective not only of Africa, but her perception of human interaction.” Overall, the documentary was a great summary of what students in KIIS-Tanzania program experienced: culture shock, adjustments to the environment, new friendships and fun-filled excursions. At the end of it all everyone in the group would have learned and appreciate life in a whole new way.

KIIS-Tanzania is the only program in sub-Saharan Africa among 24 programs offered by the KIIS consortium in over 20 countries worldwide. The five-week program focuses on
public health and community services for students in majors such as public health, health administration, nursing, pre-professional programs, social work, biology, environmental health and related health sciences. It provides students with the opportunity to learn and practice their knowledge and skills in the African setting. Moreover, the program aims at providing the students with a platform for global learning and for developing awareness, knowledge and appreciation of diversity.

For more information about summer 2015 program you may contact Dr. Mkanta through william.mkanta@wku.edu or visit the program website at http://www.kiis.org/go/Tanzania.php

Pictured above: KIIS Tanzania Program Director Dr. William Mkanta and his wife Susan in a group picture with President Kikwete together with 21 students including WKU students: Senior Trevor Davis of Louisville KY, Shantera Rice of Munfordville KY, Samantha Holmes of Bloomington IL, Jasmon Harris of Nashville TN, Kaleiah Brown of Gary IN, and Asia Larkin of Nashville TN.
In this photo, President Kikwete (2nd left) is flanked by Dr. and Mrs. Mkanta and the Tanzanian Minister of Health, Hon. Dr. Rashid at the end of the premiere.

**Poster by CHHS Faculty & Staff Members designated as Meritorious Poster Submission**

Four faculty and staff members of CHHS were authors of a 2014 ASHA Convention Poster presentation titled “Directing an Interprofessional Service Learning Study Abroad Program”. Ms. Janice Sandidge in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Dr. Joseph Evans in the Department of Allied Health along with Dr. Daniel Carter & Ms. Bonny Petty of the Institute for Rural Health are the authors of the poster. The poster was designated as a Meritorious Poster Submission and they are scheduled to present it at the ASHA Convention in November.

The Meritorious Poster Submission recognition is for proposals judged by the Convention Program Committee to show extraordinary, exceptional, and innovative work. Each Topic Committee has the option of recommending one or two top-rated posters for this special distinction. The committee received 1611 total poster submissions in 2014, and only 55 were selected for meritorious recognition. The poster from the CHHS members was among those posters that received the highest ratings from Topic Committee reviewers across both submission categories of professional education and research.
**CHHS Department of Public Health Recognized by CDD Total Worker Program**

CDC’s Total Worker Health Program recognized the efforts of WKU’s Department of Public Health in providing curriculum for students in the areas of Worksite health promotion and health protection in their August CDC-NIOSH- Total Worker Health in Action newsletter. To read the full article, The Future of Integrated Practice, Education: Western Kentucky Curriculum, please go to [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/newsletter/TWHnews_v3n3.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/newsletter/TWHnews_v3n3.html)

**Congratulations to the 2014 Gold and Silver Penguin Award Winners**

Congratulations to the **Department of Public Health** and the **Institute of Rural Health** as the CHHS Gold and Silver Penguin Awardees.

The Department of Public Health (received Gold Penguin Award) had a very successful year highlighted by:

1. Accreditation of the long term care program;
2. Accreditation of the undergraduate program in Healthcare administration;
3. KPHA Student Chapter selected as the Outstanding Public Health Student Chapter in Kentucky for the fifth year in a row (competing against UK, UofL, and EKU);
4. Four Public Health Faculty were recipients of Outstanding Faculty Awards: Emmanuel Iyiegbuniwe (Research), Ritchie Taylor (Public Service), Dana Bradley (Research - University College) and Grace Lartey (Student Advisement); and
5. Grace Lartey received the WKU award for Student Advisement.

The Institute for Rural Health (received Silver Penguin Award) also had a very successful year. Most notable accomplishments include:

1. 34% increase in the number of mobile health unit services from 2012-2013 to 2013-2104 (a total of 5732 procedures and 3,437 patient encounters in 2013-2014);
2. Student engagement hours increased from 2,296.5 hours to 2,943.75, an increase of 28%;
3. Revenue and grants increased from $78,000 in 2012-2013 to $166,488, a 112.8% increase; and
4. Publications and Presentations - see list below:

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**


**POSTER PRESENTATIONS (* denotes students)**


Nwosu*, U., Taylor, R., and Michimi, A. “Association between Fluoride in Drinking Water and Dental Caries of Children in South Central Kentucky.” 44th WKU Student Research Conference, Bowling Green, KY. (March, 2014)


Public Health Students Travel to Tanzania during Study Abroad Program

Three students from the department of public health, College of Health and Human Services recently traveled to Tanzania June to July 2014 as a part of the KIIS Study Abroad Program. Trevor Davis, senior (healthcare administration), Samantha Holmes, senior (public health), and Jasmon Harris, second year (MPH), all traveled together to study and gain practical experience in the Tanzanian healthcare system. KIIS Tanzania Program, led by Dr. William Mkanta of the department of public health offers a vast array of public health classes including; global health, nursing, comparative health systems, and women’s health in Tanzania. The program also offers up to six hours in global health service-learning practicum. All three students participated in the service-learning practicum and were able to work hands on in hospitals, clinics, orphanages, and non-governmental organizations. Each of the practicum sites offered a unique perspective that gave them the opportunity to compare the American healthcare system and public health curriculum with that of a developing country.

Samantha did most of her practicum experience with children of the Chakuwama Orphanage Center located in the city of Dar es Salaam. This center is a community-based facility, which means that the government has no involvement with the site. The orphanage is progressing as they utilize resources available to them. The home director, Mr. Hassan Hamisi informed Samantha that the basic needs of the children are all related to education. The children are in need of funding for education including money to send them to school, transportation, and school supplies. Samantha had the pleasure of donating educational materials, toys, and hygiene products. In her practicum, she taught basic math and literacy skills and informed the children of basic hygiene practices. Through the use of the toys she was able to play with the children as well as teach them concepts like sharing and teamwork skills. Samantha noticed while being around the children that they are smart and are able to apply basic structure to their daily lives. Different from Americans’ materialistic desires, the children of the Chakuwama Orphanage maintain happiness through a selfless way of life.

While in Tanzania, Trevor conducted a qualitative photo research project with the help of a non-governmental organization, WAMATA, a Swahili acronym for people in the fight against AIDS in Tanzania. It is one of the practicum sites and it helps individuals and families living with or are affected by HIV/AIDS. WAMATA’S mission is to prevent the spread of
HIV/AIDS through information, education, and communication. It also engages in counseling to minimize social, psychological, and economic effects of the pandemic by providing a forum for mutual support with the aim of attaining optimum quality of life through advocacy, counseling, treatment, and support to infected and affected people.

Each participant in Trevor’s photo research project consented to provide their photos through WAMATA for research. They were given a digital camera and asked to capture pictures that represented stories pertaining to their life with HIV/AIDS. Trevor then sat down with a Swahili translator and interviewed over fifteen different participants. The aim of each interview was to collect demographic information, analyze and discuss each picture taken, and determine what each individual identified as challenges and barriers to their everyday life related to their disease. The information collected from each participant has been and will be shared with community and service providers both in Tanzania and the United States to help bring awareness to HIV/AIDS and explain how the disease affects families and individuals.

Students involved in the practicum course observed and had hands on experiences in local public and private hospitals in Dar es Salaam. Being engaged with these hospitals allowed the students to disperse in their specific fields and learn from doctors and nurses how the Tanzanian healthcare system works. There was dentistry, nursery, radiology, maternal and child health and many more areas the students were able to immerse themselves into. The hospitals provided an outlook of the different kinds of service delivery systems in Tanzania and how they work to create functional health practices and viable working environments for the employees. The students were also able to visit the College of Health Sciences in Zanzibar where they communicated with the students about their way of life in college. This college is the only government institution that provides education for health professionals at the diploma level within the islands; it aims at providing degree level programs in the near future. Their mission is to train health professionals by providing scientific knowledge, skills and attitudes on prevention of diseases and caring for patients/clients in all health care settings.

Traveling to Tanzania was a truly insightful experience that taught students not only about the Tanzanian healthcare system, but also about themselves. Healthcare in Tanzania is still lagging far behind that of more developed countries. For example, it lacks appropriate resources and technological advancements that are hard to come by in most African nations. Although there are weaknesses and threats inhibiting the capacity of Tanzania’s healthcare system, students learned of numerous advancements that are expediting more efficient and effective care. For instance, Kairuki Hospital, one of the leading private hospitals located in the
city of Dar es Salaam, began using computers throughout most of the hospital just last year. With the addition of computers, staff is now able to document appointments and patient records’ more efficiently as well as bill insurance companies online. Each computer is connected to the hospital’s central server and can access a database allowing patient records to be sent to any department instantaneously. Through these experiences with the health care systems in Tanzania, the students were able to learn about the value of patience and how to become more independent individuals. By immersing themselves into the culture through hands on experiences they learned to be more accepting and open to people from different cultural backgrounds. We believe this is an important aspect of care for us as future healthcare professionals in an American setting that is increasingly growing in population diversity.

KIIS Tanzania is the only KIIS program with emphasis in the field of public health. Studying healthcare in a developing country allows students the opportunity to apply critical thinking skills, use knowledge gained in the classroom, and share ideas with healthcare professionals in healthcare settings that are in need of improvement. KIIS Tanzania offers insight through appropriate classes as well as hands on experiences in the field that show numerous differences in health care between America and Tanzania. Studying and working abroad in Tanzania give participating student a strong competitive advantage in their future healthcare endeavors as they would have demonstrated their ability to successfully stay and work in rapidly changing situations, new and challenging environments.

The practicum will be offered again in Tanzania during the 2015 summer program. For more information about this course and the program in general you may contact Dr. Mkanta through william.mkanta@wku.edu or visit the program website at http://www.kiis.org/go/Tanzania.php
Samantha reading to the children at the Chakuwama Orphanage in Tanzania. (June 21, 2014)

Students and local social workers discussed the social and cultural aspects of HIV/AIDS at WAMATA in Tanzania. (June 18, 2014)
Jasmon on a practicum day in the nursery at Kairuki Hospital in Tanzania. (June 26, 2014)

Jasmon Harris, 2nd Year MPH Student, and the President of Tanzania.
Trevor Davis, HCA Senior, and the President of Tanzania

Samantha Holmes- PH Senior, and the President of Tanzania
CSD Students travel to Belgium

Students in the campus and UFT (United Federation of Teachers) program through the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders went to Gent, Belgium for two weeks. During the trip they met and worked in the field with Speech Language Pathology students from other countries. While there, the students updated their blog page with their daily adventures. To read the blog, please visit http://wkumeetsbelgium.wordpress.com/. To view photos, click "pictures" at the top of the blog.

Kimberly Green, A.B.D., CCC-SLP along with SLP students that traveled to Gent, Belgium