On January 27th, three Community Health Education students took advantage of the opportunity to attend the NC State Health Directors’ conference. The students were invited to attend this meeting because of our work with campus tobacco policy as part of the Tobacco Free Colleges Initiative. The conference included a town hall meeting titled “What It Will Take to Keep Our Kids (and Grandkids) Tobacco Free.” Several key speakers, including Dr. Jeffrey Engel, NC’s State Health Director, shared their research and experience in tobacco control specifically with regard to prevention of tobacco use among youth and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. The resulting Call to Action was to extend this knowledge to our legislators and other advocates asking for their support for continued funding of programming.

Students were also given the opportunity to discuss their tobacco policy work with the US Surgeon General, Dr. Regina Benjamin. Dr. Benjamin was the opening speaker of the conference and brought home the value and necessity of tobacco prevention programs. Students were then able to participate in a teleconference hosted by Dr. Benjamin aimed to youth tobacco prevention advocates statewide. The biggest message for our students was that we are not alone in the policy work being done on NC college campuses. Decreasing the smoking rates among youth and exposure to secondhand smoke is a priority in NC and will continue to be. Our campus and the work our students are doing with other NC campuses is being noticed. The CHE students attending this conference were proud to represent our program, our School, and our College, in addition to being a part of a State and Nationwide initiative.

By, Lindsay Tujillo
Recreation Therapy Student Awarded Grant

Amanda Palm (pictured), a junior in RT, has begun collecting data for her departmental honor’s project after she and her advisor, Dr. Ashton, received the Diversity in Sport and Physical Activity Grant, funded by the Laboratory for Diversity in Sport at Texas A&M University. It was the only proposal funded by the laboratory. Her study uses grounded theory and associated methods of data collection and analysis to investigate the experiences of LGBT university students in sport and physical activity over their life course. In-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a theoretical sample of approximately 30 self-identified LGBT students recruited through the LGBTQIA Resource Office at UNCW. The avenues of inquiry will focus on the participants’ history with sport and physical activity involvement, the meanings of those experiences for them, and ways they have negotiated their participation in sport and physical activity.

The implications for this study are far reaching. It is common knowledge that regular participation in physical activity is essential for a healthy lifestyle and reduces the incidences many chronic diseases. However, current research suggests that lesbians are more likely to be overweight or obese than heterosexual peers, putting them at a greater risk for cardiovascular disease (Roberts, Dibble, Nussey, & Casey, 2003). Knowing some of the barriers to participation in sport and physical activity faced by lesbians may help turn this trend around. In addition, because this study is being conducted with LGBT university students, it can inform campus recreation programs and other student services throughout the U.S. and assist them in being able to provide better services and activities to LGBT students.

A unique aspect of this study is that it is being conducted by a recreation therapy faculty member and student, thus implications for recreation therapy services will be made. Recreation therapy often uses sport and physical activity as treatment for functional intervention, leisure education, or recreation participation in both health care and community-based services. However, there is little to no research in the recreation therapy literature regarding using sport and physical activity interventions for LGBT individuals who may be seen in acute care hospitals, rehabilitation centers, mental health facilities, or other health-care settings; or LGBT individuals with disabilities who participate in community recreation programs and sport organizations. This issue is especially timely as the Joint Commission just issued a guide, Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community: A Field Guide, urging U.S. hospitals to create a more welcoming, safe and inclusive environment that will contribute to improved health care for LGBT. The guide can be accessed at http://www.jointcommission.org/Advancing_Effective_Communication/

Funding for this research will provide small monetary incentives for the participants and help with other costs associated with conducting the project. If you know someone interested in being a participant in this study, have them contact Candy Ashton at ashtong@uncw.edu or Amanda Palm at amp2082@uncw.edu.
Recreation, Sport Leadership and Tourism Management Students Participate in Undergraduate Research Projects

Undergraduate students in the Recreation, Sport Leadership and Tourism Management program have been active in several research opportunities in the past year. Two of these were community wide events: the Azalea Festival and the Moore’s Creek National Battlefield Anniversary Celebration. Student volunteers lent a hand in the data collection for both events. Students spent time training on how to approach a potential survey participant and learned first-hand the art of applied research and how it applies to their professional careers. “By working with the Azalea Festival” senior Will Futrelle stated, “I began to see and understand the reason for collecting data. It is so events can be improved, run smoother and bring in more people.”

The goal of the Azalea Festival study was to measure the economic impact the event had on the Wilmington community. This was led by a multi-disciplinary UNCW research team including Steve Meinhold, UNCW’s Associate Dean of Research, Dr. Woody Hall from the Cameron School of Business, Dr. Jim Herstine and Dr. Nancy Hritz from the Recreation, Sport Leadership and Tourism Management program. The aim of the project at Moore’s Creek National Battlefield was to create a visitor profile of travelers attending the 235th Anniversary Celebration in February, 2012. Moore’s Creek is part of the National Park System and the last study on visitors was completed back in 1993. Park staff approached faculty members to use the project as a learning experience for students.

Individual undergraduates have also had success in publishing and presenting their original research at national conferences. Mr. Zach Reynolds had his directed independent study project entitled “Motivations and lifestyles of the adventure traveler” accepted for publication in the academic Journal of Tourism Insights. His work was also selected for oral presentation at the national Resort and Commercial Recreation Association (RCRA) annual conference in Farmington, PA in November, 2011.

Honors student Rebecca Boulay is also striving for a professional presentation of her honors project “Achieving Wellness through Tourism: Comparing International and U.S. Travelers” at the national Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) conference in Virginia Beach, VA in June, 2012.

Photo: Emily Simula, Skye Collins and Mallory Peacock engage in a practice session for data collection for the Moore’s Creek Visitor Study

Gerontology Awards

Rhonda Adams Smith was the recipient of a Graduate School Summer Research Award. The award supported her research on the subjective experiences of significant others of Vietnam veterans by focusing on what they reveal about their interpersonal relationships with veterans on social networking sites.

Further, as a result of the research award, she has co-authored with Dr. Eleanor Krassen Covan a paper entitled "Digital Healing: The Value of Technology through Social Networking for Intergenerational Relationships of Vietnam Veterans”; selected for presentation at the Gerontological Society of America in Boston, MA.

Congratulations to Dr. Covan (pictured) who received the AGHE 2011 Distinguished Teacher Honor which recognizes persons whose teaching stands out as exemplary, innovative, and of impact.
Alumni Spotlight: Phillip M. Brown, Jr., MD, FACS

Phillip M. Brown, Jr., MD, FACS graduated (cum laude) from UNCW in 1988 with a B.A. degree in Physical Education. Dr. Brown has been a Vascular and General Surgeon with Wilmington Health since 2004. He also serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery at UNC Chapel Hill. Recently Phillip was elected as President of the New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society and was appointed Chair of the New Hanover Regional Medical Center Department of General Surgery.

After graduation from UNCW, Dr. Brown completed his Medical Degree from East Carolina University in 1995. He completed internship, residency and research fellowship at ECU from 1995-2001, and was a Vascular Surgery Fellow at Johns Hopkins Hospitals in Baltimore, from 2001-2002.

When asked about his special interests, Phillip reported “endovascular therapy for arterial occlusive disease, vascular access for hemodialysis, diabetic foot infection and limb salvage….. and physical fitness and outdoor fitness.”

When asked what was relevant with his time and educational opportunities spent at UNCW he stated, “it made me think back to what a solid foundation I got at UNCW. I think my PE major is much more applicable than many other choices, especially now that the whole nation is talking about preventive medicine (although what they really mean is preventive health, a semantic pet peeve I have). There is a growing movement among health care providers to recognize the role of lack of physical activity as it pertains to our overall poor national health. There might be some great opportunities for careers promoting fit lifestyles in the coming decades.”

Phillip resides in Wilmington with his wife and two children. One of his greatest pastimes is to run (half marathons). Even though he has many major responsibilities in the field of medicine as well as with his family, he was quick to say, please feel free to let me know if I can be of assistance to you and the “W” in the future.

Dr. Brown was interviewed by Dr. Combs.

UNCW/paws4people™ Assistance Dog Training Program

This four-course progressive Certificate Program allows students to learn about the training and utilization of Assistance Dogs. Students who complete the Certificate Program are eligible to receive a custom-trained paws4people™ Assistance Dog to utilize in their career. This semester, the paws4people™ foundation, with the help of the students in the program, are hosting some very exciting events in the Wilmington area. An Assistance Dog graduation will be held March 31 at the Courtyard Carolina Beach Resort. This ceremony will graduate over 20 Assistance Dogs, many to North Carolina residents, as well as reunite former graduates. The next morning, April 1, a benefit 5K & 1 Mile Fun Walk will be held on the UNCW campus. For more information about the revolutionary courses, and these two fun upcoming events, please visit www.paws4people.org or email kyria.p4p@gmail.com.
Advocating for a Tobacco Free UNC

A group of Community Health Education students are taking on the impossible while gaining valuable hands-on experience by putting their Community Health Education skills into practice. They will be implementing a detailed advocacy plan this semester that would change the law in NC that says UNC campuses cannot be 100% tobacco free. All other higher education institutions in the State have the option of being 100% tobacco free while all schools in the UNC system cannot have policies stronger than a 100 foot perimeter from buildings and doorways. While perimeter policies limit the amount of secondhand smoke exposure, there are problems that still exist. Even when waste receptacles are provided (UNCW spent $10,000 on stone butt buckets last year), not all people use them. A recent butt pick up at Bladen Community College, which has a designated smoking area policy, yielded over 1,800 butts on the ground. Cigarette butts are not biodegradable and cost an average of $150,000 a year to clean-up on college campuses. Many times that cost comes from student fees. In the past five years, UNCW has had at least two fires related to butts being discarded in brush and straw.

The CHE students involved in this effort will be implementing several strategies to advocate for a policy change. Gathering data at all UNC schools will demonstrate campus support to policy makers as will petitions, letter writing campaigns, phone call, and email campaigns directed at the UNC Board of Governors. Promotional activities such as posters and presentations will be conducted on each of the 16 campuses. At the end of the semester, a Rally Day will be planned where faculty, staff, students, and administration from all UNC schools will converge on Raleigh showing support and need for a policy change.

The TRU Sustainability Grant, funded by the NC Department of Public Health, is an extension of the Tobacco Free Colleges Initiative that began in 2010. If you are interested in assisting with this project, please contact Geoff Zuckerman or Kerry Whipple.

HAHS Students in the Community

Students in HEA 304, taught by Dr. Bennett, have been partnering with Coastal Horizons to plan, implement, and evaluate a 10-lesson program titled "Safe Dates". This is a primary health prevention program being delivered in our local middle schools via our HAHS majors and in collaboration with a non-profit community health organization. It has afforded HAHS students with an excellent experience practicing all the things that they have been learning in the classroom.
The Association of Recreation Therapy Students (ARTS) will be celebrating National Recreation Therapy Month with a number of events, fundraisers, and activities that showcase the importance of recreation therapy and advocate for programs for persons with disabilities. On Feb. 18th, they will participate in the Annual Polar Plunge (http://www.plungenhc.com/) at the Boardwalk in Carolina Beach to benefit Special Olympics of New Hanover County. You can help them support Special Olympics by joining their team (contact Susana Pardo at sp9643@uncw.edu). On Feb. 23rd, RT students will be traveling to Winston-Salem to participate in the annual RT Student Professional Issues Forum. Not only will they attend sessions and social events, but a number of them will be monitoring sessions. On Feb. 25th, ARTS will conduct a fundraiser at Islands Fresh Mex Grill (http://www.islandsfreshmexgrill.com/) on Racine to raise money for the Ability Garden at the New Hanover County Arboretum (http://newhanover.ces.ncsu.edu/index.php?page=site). Join them on the 25th from 11 AM to 3 PM and 10% of everything you buy will be donated to the Ability Garden. Be sure to check out the ARTS bulletin board in Trask for other RT Month activities and events.

**Parents Night Out**

**Saturday February 18th 6-10pm at UNCW**

- **Who:** Children 4 years old (potty trained) and up
- **Where:** Hanover Gym on the UNCW campus
- **Cost:** Donations will be accepted and used to support student travel to conferences
- **How to:** Reply to elliotts@uncw.edu with the names and ages of your children. We need a firm head-count by Thursday February 16th by 5pm
- **Rules:** White-soled running shoes must be worn; Parents will sign a risk awareness form
- **Staff:** Health & Physical Education majors who have all completed background checks and are experienced in leading physical activity games with children

Drop off your children for a night of organized games and play. Activities will include dancing, parachutes, Wii, yoga, and indoor soccer.

Healthy Snacks and drinks will be provided (not dinner)