

A Community-Academic Partnership Linking the Family  
Planning Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania & Drexel  
University's School of Public Health (1996 - present)

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# Integrated Public Health Curriculum

- ✿ Human rights and social justice framework
- ✿ Interdisciplinary learning
- ✿ Problem-Based Learning (PBL) pedagogy
- ✿ Service-Learning ethos
- ✿ Applied orientation

# What is Problem-Based Learning (PBL)?

- ✿ Inquiry-driven instructional method
- ✿ Critical thinking
- ✿ Synthesis
- ✿ Problem-solving skills
- ✿ Concepts applied to 'real world'
- ✿ Team work & communication are critical

# Drexel's SPH Community-Based Learning

- Community partners suggest projects
- Shared decision-making
- Structured action & reflection
- Delivery of concrete product(s) to partners
- Evaluation

# Preparation for Immersion in the Community (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

- ✿ Public health & human rights
- ✿ Health disparities as social injustice
- ✿ Empowerment & engagement
- ✿ Community-Based Participatory Research
- ✿ Resource sessions

# 1<sup>st</sup> Year Practicum (120 Hours)

- ✿ Supervised, hands-on experience
- ✿ Concepts applied to specific need
- ✿ Professional activities enhanced
- ✿ Poster exhibit
- ✿ Evaluation

# Universal Competencies (1<sup>st</sup> Year)

- ✿ Self-awareness
- ✿ Self-directed learning
- ✿ Communication
- ✿ Team work
- ✿ Capacity working in/with communities

# Community-Based Master's Project (2<sup>nd</sup> Year/480 Hours)

- Learner-driven skill development
- Partner-identified focus
- Meets partners' objectives/interests
- Manuscript development
- Poster session
- Supervision and evaluation

# Universal Competencies (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)

- ✿ Concepts applied to community needs
- ✿ Appreciation for depth & breadth
- ✿ Role of learning objectives
- ✿ Sensitivity to community needs
- ✿ Different products to different audiences

# What is Learned?

- ✿ Engagement in lives of real people
- ✿ Interest in/value of learning as a process
- ✿ Interest in/value of context
- ✿ Complexity of issues
- ✿ Increasing understanding & curiosity
- ✿ Increasing motivation to learn
- ✿ Capacity for more complex understanding

# What is the Family Planning Council?

- ✿ Private, not-for-profit
- ✿ Focus on policy & planning
- ✿ Governed by Board of Directors
- ✿ Supports reproductive health services
- ✿ Links with 26 agencies & 84 clinics
- ✿ Serves 145,000 clients annually

# Partnership with Drexel School of Public Health

- ✿ Student placement site since 1997
- ✿ Submission of grant applications
- ✿ Guest lecturers & adjunct faculty
- ✿ Drexel faculty sit on Board

# Benefits of Partnerships for Students

## ☀ Living experience in Public Health

- Direct Service
- Leadership
- Policy
- Coalition building
- Relationship management
- Advocacy
- Role models
- Career opportunities

# Benefits of Partnership Family Planning Council

- ✿ Assets to complete projects
- ✿ Staff & Board Development
- ✿ Mentorship roles
- ✿ Planning & evaluation
- ✿ Evidence-based approaches
- ✿ Teaching opportunities
- ✿ Access to library resources

# Benefits of Partnership

## Drexel School of Public Health

- ✿ Assets to complete projects
- ✿ Ties & access to the community
- ✿ Experienced adjunct faculty
- ✿ Collaborate on cutting edge & timely issues (e.g. HPV vaccine, expanded Medicaid coverage)

# Successes Reported by Adjunct Faculty

- ✿ Enhance learning with public health experience
- ✿ Technology transfer to work setting to complete projects
- ✿ Ongoing relationships that facilitate employment opportunities for students

# Challenges Faced by Adjunct Faculty

- ✿ Lack of knowledge of Drexel University's system
- ✿ Competing priorities
- ✿ Limited presence on campus
- ✿ Scheduling challenges

# Challenges Faced by Community Partners

- ✿ Space
- ✿ Tools
- ✿ Identifying multiple preceptors to accommodate multiple students

# Challenges for Preceptors

- ✿ Underestimated time commitment
- ✿ Competing priorities
- ✿ Lack of contact with Drexel faculty advisors
- ✿ Conflicting IRB requirements
- ✿ Administrative paperwork
- ✿ Differing timelines

# Challenges for Preceptors (cont'd)

- ✿ Limiting beliefs of FPC Staff
  - Apprehensive about working with individuals with advanced degrees
  - More comfortable working with qualitative vs. quantitative projects
  - Struggles with students' idealism (textbook vs. reality)

# Successes Reported by Community Partners

- ✿ Preceptors pleased to serve as mentors to students
- ✿ High quality outcomes derived from student projects
- ✿ Drexel University's expanded orientation to Service-Learning

# Keys to Partnership

- ✿ Commitment to Public Health
- ✿ Trust
- ✿ Respect
- ✿ Equality
- ✿ Reciprocity