

Abstract

Strengthening the public health workforce: An academic approach to recruiting and retaining new professionals

Jessica Chambliss, PhD, MPH¹, Meena Nabavi, MPH², Matthew Fifolt, PhD³ and Lisa McCormick, DrPh³
(1)The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, AL, (2)UAB SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, BIRMINGHAM, AL, (3)University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health, Birmingham, AL

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As the field of public health strives to strengthen, rebuild, and restore trust in public health and science, it is necessary for schools and programs of public health to explore opportunities to recruit, retain, and prepare the public health workforce. To address these needs, the University of Alabama at Birmingham's School of Public Health (UAB-SOPH) has developed innovative programming to provide students with opportunities to network with public health practitioners, enhance their skills related to career development, and engage in out-of-classroom experiences that reinforce real-world concepts. These educational experiences, which extend beyond the traditional classroom, significantly contribute to fulfilling the recruitment and retention needs of public health.

In this session, presenters will describe our three-pronged approach to bridging academia and practice. Conference attendees will learn about the structure of collaborative activities with state and county health departments that have led to the employment of UAB-SOPH graduates. Presenters will also provide insights about career preparation program development in partnership with the university Career Center and other employers. Lastly, presenters will detail their experience with providing co-curricular field trips to expand student knowledge, cultural humility, human rights, and systemic racism. These compilations of activities were chosen to provide students with exposure to the public health workforce, enhance their career development skills, and offer historical context of health issues and inequities to aid in their ability to address complex public health issues.

Presenters will share student feedback about their experiences and how it relates to their future careers in public health. This presentation will demonstrate how co-curricular programming by UAB-SOPH directly and indirectly contributes to the recruitment and retention of public health workforce.

Diversity and culture Public health or related education

