Dear Incoming Student:

I would like to personally welcome you to Loyola University Chicago's Master of Public Health program. You are the fifth class of students to enter our program, and we are very excited you are joining us. Our students are the reason our program exists. Teaching is where all other aspects of life at the university come together, and a place where we can teach others to do what we do.

Each year we attract better and better students, and this incoming class is no different. We admitted fewer than half of all applicants. You are here because you show clear promise as a graduate student and, ultimately, as a public health professional. We have complete faith in your abilities to succeed in our program and go on to do great things.

This year brings several exciting changes to the program. First, we have hired two new faculty members, Lara Dugas and Ruth Kafensztok. While both have been associated with the program for many years (even longer than I have been at Loyola!), they are now full-time members of the Department of Public Health Sciences and will play an even greater role in the MPH program. Dr. Kafensztok is a public health practitioner who has taught our Introduction to Public Health course for several years, and she will continue in this role. Dr. Dugas is an exercise physiologist and epidemiologist who will be developing new coursework in nutrition and physical activity epidemiology.

Second, we have increased the number of course offerings. In Epidemiology, we have new courses in Cancer Prevention (taught by Dr. Kate Wolin), Global Health Epidemiology (Dr. Amy Luke, fall), and SAS programming (Dr. Liping Tong, fall). In Public Health Policy and Management, we have two new courses in Health Services and Policy Research (HSPR I and II, taught by Dr. Talar Markossian). Dr. Markossian will also teach a Stata programming class in the spring of 2015. Both the SAS and Stata programming courses are open to Epidemiology students and Policy students who wish to focus on Health Services and Policy Research.

Third, we are on track toward obtaining accreditation. We are submitting our Preliminary Self Study document on September 9th, and will be visited by representatives of the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) in February of 2015. The final accreditation decision will be made in Fall of 2015. We will be calling on all of you to give us...
Continued Growth and Development of Public Health Sciences

It is a pleasure to welcome you to you to another academic year with the Department of Public Health Sciences. Our mission is to prepare public health leaders to improve global health, with a focus on eliminating health inequities, through a transformative education, rigorous research, and active community engagement. I am pleased to report continued growth and development within the department, towards this mission.

The MPH Program is now in the process of applying for accreditation: Sept 9th is the date when all the application materials will be submitted. While this has been a laborious and time-consuming task, it is essential for the future of the program. We have added new courses and hired new faculty, and look forward to development of the health services/health policy track. The new “strategic plan” from the Loyola medical school places considerable emphasis on focal areas for our MPH—particularly population health, outcomes research, and disparities—so we anticipate further integration into the medical school as a whole.

Faculty in PHS have continued to work hard at broadening our research program. A major grant application on vitamin D is being prepared by Drs. Durazo and Kramer. This project would extend their work on vitamin D metabolism in persons of African descent in the US. We are also still working hard to move our project on sickle cell disease forward. A trial on treatment with a commonly used drug in the US, Hydroxyurea, is underway in Nigeria. Another important new topic involves the study of microorganisms that inhabit the human gastrointestinal tract—the “microbiome”—and a project on this topic is being developed.

As many of you may know, there have been extensive discussions about the possibility of developing a full-fledged School of Public Health on the Loyola medical campus. At the present time no specific plans have been made, and it appears that a focused program on population health, with emphasis on data mining, health services, and disparities would be a more appropriate next step. The Institute of Public Health that was established last year within PHS would lead these efforts. International health would also be an important concentration for research and teaching.

We have many learning opportunities to offer. Please do not hesitate to get involved or reach out for assistance. I wish you all an excellent semester!

Richard Cooper, MD
Chair of the Department of Public Health Sciences
Get Involved in Student Assembly

The 2014–2015 academic year will see the establishment of a new student body within the MPH, called the Loyola Master of Public Health Student Assembly (LMSA). LMSA seeks to build a community of students, faculty, and alumni that will work toward promoting opportunities and providing services that improve the quality of education for MPH students. With an unprecedented breadth of resources available, navigating and sifting through possible capstone, practicum, and career opportunities has never been more important, and perhaps never more difficult. The Assembly is intended to help students with the process of reaching such crucial educational and professional milestones, and to foster the continued involvement of MPH alumni, who can serve both as mentors and as valuable professional liaisons for current students. In addition, LMSA will promote and organize community service activities which will further connect the program to the surrounding community in Maywood and the greater Chicago area.

Membership in the LMSA will be open to students, faculty, and alumni of the MPH program, as well as to Loyola graduate students outside the program who are nonetheless interested in public health. There is no cost to join. Assembly officers will be elected each spring semester from amongst the membership. The President, Vice President, and Treasurer must be second-year students in the MPH, so if you’re interested in serving as an officer, it’s important get involved early! Therefore, we encourage anyone interested in helping to chart the course for the Program to join, whether you’re an incoming student or an old hand.

For more information regarding the functions of the LMSA, upcoming events, or to join the Student Assembly, please contact President Helen Nde at hnde@luc.edu. Those wishing to join should provide the following information:

- Name
- Student Status (incoming/returning)
- Track (Epidemiology/Policy & Management)
- Preferred Email
- Contact Phone

We look forward to meeting you!

Community Engagement

Community engagement is another foundation of public health. Involving community members and using the community’s resources and assets as the basis for designing, implementing, and evaluating solutions to the health problems they face is a sure way to achieve maximum impact when planning interventions. As part of the Loyola University Maywood Campus, the department of Public Health Sciences is dedicated to and actively engaged in providing the residents of Maywood, IL, the community that houses us, with our support. We collaborate with the following organizations:

- Maywood Fine Arts Association http://www.maywoodfinearts.org/
- West Suburban PADS – http://www.westsuburbanpads.org/who/our-story

Visit our website for more information on how to get involved: http://stritch.luc.edu/mph/content/research-practicum-service-opportunities.
St. Albert’s Day

St. Albert’s day is a celebration of research, discovery and innovation held annually at the Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Campus to honor the Great St. Albert (Albertus Magnus). This year we again encourage MPH students to present their research projects on St. Albert’s Day.

St. Albert was born in Lauingen an der Donau, Germany in 1206 and died at the age of 74 in Cologne, Germany. A brilliant Dominican philosopher and theologian, he was known as the “teacher of everything there is to know,” and “Doctor Universalis” (Universal Doctor and Doctor of Science). He mastered the works of Aristotle and strove to put into practice the principles of natural philosophy, confident that science and faith are not in conflict.

Albert wrote extensive notes on many branches of science, made maps and charts, and experimented with plants and chemicals. He is attributed with the discovery of the element arsenic. He also wrote commentaries on the Bible and a number of works in which he developed his own philosophical-scientific-theological vision. Albert took his degree as master of theology in 1245. St. Thomas Aquinas became his student in 1245 and remained under Albert’s direction for three years. Albert outlived Thomas, and as an old man came to the defense of his student when Thomas’ thought was brought under criticism. In 1931, Pope Pius XI declared Albert both a saint and a Doctor of the Church. In 1941, Pope Pius XII declared Albert the patron saint of the natural sciences.

The 35th Annual St. Albert’s Day at Loyola will be held on October 30, 2014 at 10 a.m. For more information on abstract submission and display, visit http://hsd.luc.edu/research_services/content/st-alberts-day.

MPH Leadership Day

Watch out for the announcement of the date for this semester’s Leadership Day workshop. The MPH Leadership Day features experts in the field of public health joining us to discuss effective public health communication, job searches, developing skill sets, and more. Participation in at least one Leadership Day workshop is required for new students, starting with the academic year 2014/2015. Participation is not mandatory for returning students, but they are nonetheless strongly encouraged to attend.

Start Preparing for Your Practicum Now!

The MPH practicum is a requirement for graduation for all Epidemiology and Policy track students. The practicum gives students the opportunity to engage in activities aligned with their career goals and which can demonstrate their ability to apply public health concepts and critical thinking to public health issues. Practicums provide students with the chance to document a portfolio of skills which they can present to employers. Consult the MPH Practicum Manual for more detailed information.

It is important to start seeking out practicum opportunities as soon as possible, and to avoid waiting until the very last moment. The Department of Public Health Sciences has forged partnerships with the American Medical Association, Youth Outreach Services, Maywood Fine Arts/Fit & Fun Program, and the North Shore Mosquito Abatement Program, through which students can complete a practicum.

Contact Ms. Karen Tate, kcoline@luc.edu or Dr. Justin Harbison iharbison@luc.edu to discuss the opportunities available to you.

It is important to start seeking out practicum opportunities as soon as possible, and to avoid waiting until the very last moment.
Research Opportunities

Research is one of the cornerstones of public health as a discipline. A thorough understanding of the determinants of health is essential to preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health in any given population. This is particularly true considering the changes which occur on a continuous basis within populations. These changes modify the dynamics of familiar health states or present new challenges that need to be addressed. It is important that public health professionals keep track of these changes and know the forces at work in each health state they deal with. Research is one of the major ways by which Public Health professionals acquire this much needed knowledge. Without access to quality data and sound analyses produced by carefully planned and executed research, public health decision-makers would be seriously handicapped.

As students of the Loyola MPH program, we have access to faculty who are actively engaged in research and welcome student participation. Signing on to a research project is a great way to apply the material taught in courses to real issues and learn new skills. You benefit from the mentorship and guidance of faculty with experience and interest in seeing you succeed. Participation in research is not only fun, it also could easily translate into a Capstone Project. Research in Public Health can be quantitative or qualitative and the projects presented below cover the range of possibilities. Contact the listed individuals to find out more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ramon Durazo-Arvizu</td>
<td>Vitamin D and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rdurazo@luc.edu">rdurazo@luc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Justin Harbison</td>
<td>Surveillance of West Nile Virus and Other Mosquito-related Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:jharbison@luc.edu">jharbison@luc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ruth Kafensztok</td>
<td>Emergency Medical Services for Children</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:rkafens@luc.edu">rkafens@luc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Amy Luke</td>
<td>Sleep and Health Outcomes in 5 Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:aluke@luc.edu">aluke@luc.edu</a></td>
<td>Diet, Physical Activity, and Weight Gain in 5 Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Talar Markossian</td>
<td>Incentivized Health Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:tmarkossian@luc.edu">tmarkossian@luc.edu</a></td>
<td>Electronic Medical Records and Readmissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Lara Dugas</td>
<td>Incentivized Health Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ldugas@luc.edu">ldugas@luc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. David Shoham</td>
<td>Social Networks in Health Care Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:dshoham@luc.edu">dshoham@luc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Richard Cooper</td>
<td>Race Differentials in Health</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:rcooper@luc.edu">rcooper@luc.edu</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Jennifer Layden</td>
<td>Hepatitis B/C in West Africa</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jlayden@luc.edu">jlayden@luc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Frances Weaver</td>
<td>Health Services Research at Hines VA</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:fweaver@luc.edu">fweaver@luc.edu</a></td>
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Faculty Profile: Lara R. Dugas

Courses Taught

Epidemiology of Obesity (elective)

What were the driving factors in your decision to join the LUC faculty?

I joined Loyola University Chicago in 2007 as a Research Assistant Professor working on our large multi-country studies focusing on the role of energy expenditure, including physical activity on obesity and health. These studies use the geographic model to study the effects of the epidemiologic transition, and is particularly unique to the PHS department. Now as PHS faculty, I am especially excited that I can continue to use this unique model for my own research.

Is there anecdotal evidence you feel contributed to this desire?

Growing up in South Africa during the 80's & 90's instilled a keen interest in the effects of socioeconomic policy and social justice on the health of populations, as well as a love for international travel.

What’s your teaching philosophy or your outlook on higher education?

I definitely believe in guiding and mentoring students to help them discover what makes them excited.

What aspects of your coursework/research are particularly meaningful to you personally?

How do you feel it benefits your students? As a physical activity expert, I'm very interested in the role of physical activity and health, and what constitutes meaningful physical activity in our day-to-day lives.

What is the main focus of your coursework/research right now?

Any opportunities for student involvement and how? I'm studying the role of the gut microbiota in the development of obesity and insulin resistance across the epidemiologic transition and there is always a paper to be written. If any students are keen to get involved with papers, they should definitely contact me.

What do you love most about your job at Loyola University, and your work through the Department?

Truthfully, I love all aspects of my job. I love the day-to-day interactions with the international sites, where we currently are maintaining our research projects. I love working with students, mentoring them and helping find what’s meaningful and rewarding to them.

What are you most looking forward to in the next year?

This coming year, I have a hiatus from teaching to go to some of international sites to collect gut microbiome samples. I will be traveling to South Africa, Jamaica and the Seychelles. I can’t wait!

What did you worry about most as a graduate student?

What advice would you give yourself?

I worried most about time management and trying to figure out how to keep all aspects of my life current and up to date. For the most part as a graduate student, you also have a full-time job, and probably a young family too, so the juggle can be quite tricky.

What activities were you involved with a graduate student?

I kept all my activities related to my research assistant position at Loyola University Chicago. This meant getting involved with other programs at Loyola like the Exercise Science Program at the Lakeshore campus and a Sports Medicine Epidemiology research group here at Stritch.
What are some of your favorite things to do when you’re not teaching?
Being physically active and having fun with my family, usually combined and at the same time.

What would be something that many would be surprised to know about you?
When I left high school I was hoping to study fine art and be a painter for the rest of my life.

Favorite Movie?
District 9

Favorite Song?
Bob Marley's “Is This Love?”

Favorite Spot in Chicago?
On a sailboat in Lake Michigan

Any last words?
It’s very cliché, but it’s very important to follow your own desires and aspirations; focus on what you are hoping to achieve, not what someone else wants for you.

Student Spotlight: Omar Ahmad

Why did you decide to enroll in an MPH program?
I enrolled in a Masters in Public Health at Loyola University to help further my knowledge in the medical profession from a different perspective, to help me understand the current challenges of disease prevention and healthcare policies, and to understand intuitive access to healthcare for patients.

Where are you now in the program?
I just completed my first session this summer in the Policy and Management Track. I really enjoyed the classroom dynamics and atmosphere. The institution and faculty have been great to work with, and I am looking forward to continuing my journey this coming fall.

What is your background prior to enrolling at Loyola?
Prior to joining Loyola, I completed my Doctor of Medicine this past March. I am continuing my pursuit in medicine by applying to an Internal Medicine Residency program in 2015 to complete my medical training. In the meantime, I thought it would be beneficial to seize this opportunity to educate myself in public health.

What are you hoping to do after you complete your MPH?
I am hoping to practice as an internist in a hospital or clinical setting while utilizing my MPH training to understand access to healthcare and create policies for the benefit of my patients and the community.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of public health?
My outside interests include kayaking, snorkeling, and traveling to different countries to appreciate diverse cultures. Of the different places I’ve visited, the most memorable country was the Czech Republic, and the city of Prague. I found the history and architecture fascinating, from the Prague Castle to the Charles Bridge. Prague itself reminded me of our very own Saint Augustine, Florida, which is the oldest European-established city in the United States.
Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>MPH student mixer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 6–7</td>
<td>Mid-semester break — no classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Classes resume after mid-semester break</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>35th Annual St. Albert’s Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Spring 2015 registration begins</td>
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<td>Last day to withdraw with a grade of “W”</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 26–29</td>
<td>Thanksgiving break — no classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Last day to file an application to receive a degree for May 2015 degree conferral</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Extension of time requests for Spring 2015 due at the Graduate Office, Granada Center, 4th floor, LSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8–16</td>
<td>Final exams (none on Sunday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 15</td>
<td>Last day to file a late application May 2015 degree conferral ($25 late fee)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Returning student are reminded that they need to file an application for graduation by the specified deadlines.

THIS MONTH IN PUBLIC HEALTH

On August 31, 1854, the Soho neighborhood in London was hit with a devastating cholera outbreak that would persist well into September, claiming 616 lives in all. Challenging the prevailing medical opinion that cholera was caused by odoriferous “miasma,” the physician John Snow conducted population-based studies and plotted the geographic distribution of cases in this and another outbreak, which led him to posit instead that cholera was in fact a waterborne disease, caused by ingesting water tainted with human waste. Due to his efforts, the pump at 40 Broad Street was closed, though his theory regarding the transmission route of cholera would not be accepted by mainstream science until epidemiologist William Farr invoked Snow’s methods during another cholera outbreak ten years later.

Despite the fact that his efforts and those of Soho clergyman Henry Whitehead were not fully appreciated during his lifetime, Snow’s famous “ghost map” eventually became a staple in the study of public health.

MPH STUDENT MIXER

The Student Assembly is organizing an MPH student mixer. All students are invited to meet and mingle with classmates.

When
Friday, September 12 @ 7 p.m.

Where
Avenue Ale House
825 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60304

RSVP by Thursday, September 11, to Christina Small (csmall3@luc.edu)
Officers

Helen Nde  
President

Jollyn Tyryfter  
Vice President

Jason Gantenberg  
Communication Officer

Christina Small  
Secretary

Justin Harbison  
Faculty Representative

Loyola MPH Student Assembly Newsletter

2160 S First Ave
Maywood, IL 60153

Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives