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Spring 2012

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"Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Magazine" (2012). *Public Health Magazine*. 2.
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Changing Rural Public Health and Supporting Health Equity



Volume 2, No. 1 SPRING 2012

Jiann-Ping Hsu

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Giann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH)

We exist to enhance health and eliminate health disparities of rural communities and underserved populations in Georgia, the Southeastern region, the nation and the world through excellence in public health workforce development, research, professional service and community engagement.



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Sustaining Our Efforts to Meet our Mission

From the time the College was conceptualized and the efforts were underway to build a College of Public Health that could earn and sustain accreditation, we have focused on using our resources effectively.

We invested in activities that facilitated meeting our goals for research, service and workforce development.

We received support - both philosophical and tangible - from Georgia Southern University. Support came from the whole continuum of stakeholders, upper administration, faculty and our dedicated staff as well as community stakeholders.

We used these resources to build a College that can and will enhance the health of the public, especially those in rural and underserved areas.

No one has supported the development of our College as much as Dr. Karl E. Peace. Dr. Peace recently stated, "The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health is making a difference in our region. We have made much progress in the 7 years of our existence, and being accredited by CEPH a year ago attests to that. I am thankful and I know 'JP' (Dr. Jiann-Ping Hsu) would be thankful and humbled by the efforts of administration, faculty, staff, students, advisers and benefactors in advancing the College that bears her name."



JPHCOPH '12

**A message from the Interim Dean,
Dr. Lynn Woodhouse**



JPHCOPH Staff with Interim Dean Lynn Woodhouse

It has been such a rewarding experience to provide leadership for our young and vibrant College of Public Health during this busy first year after receiving our CEPH accreditation. I thank the Provost, Dr. Moore, and the JPHCOPH faculty for entrusting me with this opportunity. Though our college and the University are challenged by budget constraints, our energetic, talented and dedicated faculty, students and staff members are pushing ahead. With the accreditation in hand, we are indeed impacting public health in more ways than we could have ever imagined!

Over the last year we expanded our efforts to collaborate with other Georgia Southern Colleges, partner with public health agencies, other universities and communities across the state, the nation and the world. We targeted our efforts to meet our goals, further our mission and expand our organizational capacity. We are proud of the broad impact we have had through our research, service and workforce development.

The JPHCOPH activities highlighted in this publication provide only a snapshot of research and service initiatives in which JPHCOPH faculty and students are engaged. Clearly, earning the accreditation opened doors and allowed us to expand on our opportunities to improve rural public health and support health equity. I am proud of the role I played as Associate Dean, for 4 years, and Interim Dean, this past year, to help build a sustainable College of Public Health.

Our new Dean, Dr. Evans, will take over on April 1. This summer I will transition to my position as a tenured, full professor of community health. After five years of leading the College accreditation efforts, I am pleased to be able to dedicate time to my externally funded research, such as the asthma evaluation project and support the important work of the Georgia Public Health Practice Based Research Network. I am also looking forward to continuing professional service, building the collaboration with public health in India – and student dissertation research! Thank you to everyone who continues to help JPHCOPH accomplish our goals.



*Dr. Warren, Interim Dean Dr. Lynn Woodhouse,
Dr. Peace*

**A Message from the New Dean,
Dr. Gregory Evans**



Dr. Evans is coming to JPHCOPH from Saint Louis University School of Public Health. When asked about his thoughts about this new opportunity, Dr. Evans said, "It is with great anticipation that I join Georgia Southern University as dean of the JPHCOPH. The school, despite its relative newness, already has an impressive teaching and research record. I plan to capitalize on these strengths to help increase national recognition for the school, while simultaneously recognizing the importance of service to the College, University, community, and the field of Public Health.

To this end, it is crucial that I partner with faculty, staff and students of the school to develop a school culture based on shared values, goals, and sense of purpose. It will be a culture of encouragement and empowerment: A culture in which all stake-holders have a voice: A culture that understands the importance of meeting the needs of faculty and staff so that they can provide the best public health education available to our students.

At the same time, a dean must know how to lead from the middle, advocating for all those who serve and are served by the College, while also understanding the needs and realities of the University administration. I plan to spend much of my first few months at the school meeting with faculty, staff, students, as well as members of the administration, to learn from them, and to help lay the groundwork for a strategic plan that will take us to the forefront of schools of public health across the country.

In preparation for this journey, I offer this vision. Over the next 5 to 7 years, the JPHCOPH will build upon our unique cross-disciplinary research assets and multidisciplinary and energetic faculty to create cutting-edge translational research. The College will enhance its teaching, continuing to develop our top-notch program that draws the best students.

During this period the College will focus on expanding its research for enhancing the health of rural communities, and helping to eliminate health disparities among underserved populations. We will also expand into new research initiatives that reflect the interest and expertise of both junior and veteran faculty.

I look forward to this opportunity to help create a College of Public Health of which we can all be proud, and to work with faculty, students, staff, and administration, to lead the JPHCOPH into a future of success and inspiration."

Dr. Evans served as founding director of the Institute of Biosecurity at Saint Louis University School of Public Health. He arrived at JPHCOPH on April 1.

A Closer Look

Dr. Karl E. Peace: In January 2012, the American Statistical Association announced the establishment of the Karl E. Peace Award for Outstanding Statistical Contributions for the Betterment of Society to honor JPHCOPH professor and benefactor, Karl E. Peace, Ph.D., whose gift in 2004 established the JPHCOPH.



The award will be presented annually to recognize statisticians who make substantial contributions to the statistical profession and to society. The award was established by Dr. Peace's son, Christopher K. Peace, on behalf of the Peace family to honor the life work of his father. Among many other recent achievements, Dr. Peace has also contributed his time, talent and treasure to improve student achievement at the Bulloch County Boys & Girls Club and enabled JPHCOPH to receive a gift from Dr. Marvin Zelen at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. To recognize his many achievements, he recently received the USG Foundation Board of Trustees 2012 Regent's Hall of Fame Alumni Award. We are so proud of Karl and his many contributions to improve education and health in Georgia!

Dr. Moya Alfonso, Assistant Professor of Community Health, facilitates a coalition of faculty and students from JPHCOPH, faculty from Georgia Southern University, community leaders, volunteers, and lead

community partner, Statesboro's Boys and Girls Club, to introduce a physical activity program called VERB™ Summer Scorecard (VSS). To combat childhood obesity, the program is funded to expand physical activity. VSS targets children aged eight to thirteen, "tweens," as obesity in this age group increased by 23% over the last three years. Participants in the program record their activities and receive points to earn prizes donated by local businesses. Dr. Alfonso says, "The overall focus is wellness and prevention, and for youth to try new physical activities."

Dr. Talar Markossian, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management, researches health outcomes and economic evaluation of public health programs and policies. Dr. Markossian examines the efficacy and cost effectiveness of cancer navigation programs. Patient navigation is a process to guide traditionally underserved patients through the intricacies of the health care system when they receive cancer screenings of concern. In addition, using secondary data analyses, she examines the efficiency and effectiveness of some aspects of the U.S. healthcare system. She says, "Researching about mechanisms through which effective, efficient, and equitable healthcare is delivered for all, empowers my passion and bolsters my sense of responsibility as a public health academician."

Dr. John "Juan" S. Luque, Assistant Professor of Community Health, focuses

his research on assessing the effectiveness of community health worker programs for cancer prevention and control in minority populations and for occupational health and safety among migrant farmworkers. His commitment to underserved communities runs deep. For the past few years, students from JPHCOPH have been involved in a campaign to collect critical items to be distributed at migrant farmworker mobile health clinics in the spring. Dr. Luque embodies the vision and mission of our college through community service and service learning.



Dr. Luque and Dr. Eremeeva at PHSA's Ugly Sweater Party

Dr. Carlos A. Reyes-Ortiz joined JPHCOPH in fall 2011 as an Associate Professor in Community Health from the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. His clinical background includes being a family physician and geriatrician. His aging research includes understanding falls/fear of falling, depression, dementia, and cancer screening among elderly Hispanics. Dr. Reyes-Ortiz says, "The aging

population is growing continually, creating a global public health concern. The Hispanic populations being the largest minority group, representing small communities, are in great need of improved public health services." He is currently collaborating with other U.S. researchers on Hispanic aging/cancer as well as with other geriatricians from Spain, Mexico, and Colombia.



Dr. Reyes-Ortiz and Dr. Markossian



Dr. Gulzar H. Shah, Associate Professor at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Mr. Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman, Education Minister, Punjab, Pakistan, Dr. Ronald C. Merrell, Emeritus Professor of Surgery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Dr. Esther Ogara, Director eHealth, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Mr. Hani Farouk, eHealth Regional Focal Point for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Egypt, Ms. Bushra Shah, Staff Sociologist, Punjab Economic Research Institut.

Photo taken while Dr. Gulzar Shah was in Pakistan where he served as a Keynote Speaker for the Third International eHealth Conference.

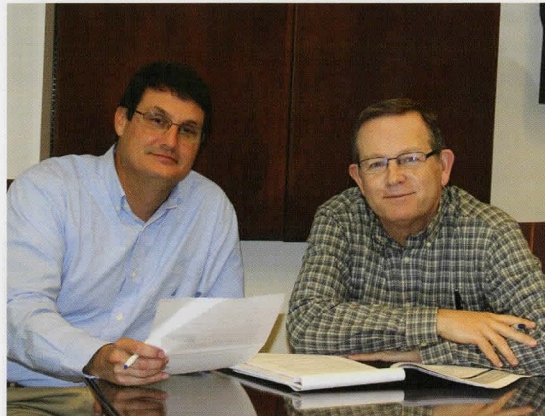
Dr. Gulzar H. Shah, PhD, MStat, MS, joined JPHCOPH in January 2012 as an Associate Professor in Health Policy and Management. He comes to JPHCOPH from the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) where he was lead scientist. He has strong interdisciplinary training and experience - his career has spanned appointments with national and international public health practice agencies and academic institutions. According to Dr. Shah, "I believe in practice-relevant research and teaching, aimed at contributing to the ultimate public health goal of improved health, equity, and well-being for all people." His areas of expertise include practice-based public health systems and services research, research methods, demography, quality of and access to healthcare services and maternal and child health.



Dr. Lawrence and Dr. Alfonso

Dr. Raymona H. Lawrence, Assistant Professor of Community Health, has a passion for the social and behavioral aspects of genomics. This passion has earned her a position in the 2012 cohort of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute-sponsored PRIDE-Functional and Applied Genomics of Blood Disorders Program. The program trains participants in lab science and grant writing, pairs them with mentors who are experts in the field and brings participants to the National Institutes of Health for networking and further development in the field of genomics. "This program will give me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of lab science and to establish the foundation to contribute as an expert in the field of social and behavioral genomics. As a new professor, it feels great to sit at the table with well-established experts across the country and represent the JPHCOPH and Georgia Southern University."

Empowering Communities while Enhancing Rural Public Health



Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Tedders and Russ Toal, Director of the Center for Rural Health Research

The Center for Rural Health and Research (CRHR) at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) engages in efforts to improve the health status of rural and underserved communities through effective application of best practices and applied prevention research. CRHR was founded in the early 1990s and moved to JPHCOPH in 2006. It has continually served as a vital resource to rural Georgians by engaging in projects that improve the health status of rural and underserved communities. Dr. Stuart Tedders served as Director until spring 2011. During this time the CRHR functioned as a clearinghouse for rural health information and conducted numerous health program evaluations for cancer screening, HIV, asthma and perinatal health. The CRHR is currently directed by Mr. Russ Toal. Under his leadership, the center continues to provide clients and communities with high-level technical assistance, educational interventions, public health research, and program evaluation. Projects involving public health professionals, students and faculty include EMS assessment, emergency preparedness assessment, assessment for the development of health information exchange and expanding efforts to provide assessment and evaluation for rural hospitals. According to Mr. Toal, "because of our emphasis on building partnerships and collaborating with communities, the CRHR will continue to provide an important mechanism to develop and deliver best practice focused interventions that improve the health of rural communities in Georgia and beyond."

Center for Addiction Recovery— a Steady Climb to Success



Since 2008, The Center for Addiction Recovery (CAR) in JPHCOPH quickly grew to become one of the most successful centers of its kind in the U.S. CAR serves the unique needs of students in recovery from substance-use disorders. The average GPA of all CAR students is above a 3.7 - 98% of students have remained in college throughout their tenure in the Center. The Willingway Foundation, a Statesboro non-profit organization, donates significant funding every year to support operational costs, the director salary and student service awards.

CAR has a growing emphasis on research in prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies. The Research Chair, Dr. Moya Alfonso, along with the Director of CAR, Emily Eisenhart Moore, recently received funding to adapt the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program to work for alcoholics struggling with overweight/obesity. They are also facilitating a Photovoice project to examine barriers and supports to recovery through the eyes of the CAR students.

CAR is dedicated to the JPHCOPH mission to empower rural communities and underserved populations and address public health issues. The CAR student participants' curriculum is grounded in recovery through service-learning, which improves long-term sobriety outcomes. This summer, two CAR students will be accompanying the Director on a pilot study abroad trip to Ghana in order to share resources to Ghanaians living in remote areas who are struggling with substance-use disorders. Last semester, the students raised significant funding in a community event to benefit CAR students and the Boys & Girls Club of Bulloch County. Students are involved in a book drive to benefit inmates in the mental health wing of the Rogers State Prison in Reidsville, Georgia. The students' dedication and steady climb to academic, professional, and personal success is evidence that the CAR program is an important part of meeting the JPHCOPH mission.



Dr. Mooney, Chairman of the Board for Willingway Hospital, Emily Eisenhart Moore, Director of CAR, Interim Dean Lynn Woodhouse

Partnering with Research and Practice

The Georgia Public Health Practice Based Research Network

The Georgia Public Health Practice Based Research Network (GA PH PBRN) was formed in December, 2010, with 8 of Georgia's health districts collaborating with the JPHCOPH, and we have continued to grow. The GA PH PBRN is an affiliate member of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) funded network of state level research networks, focusing on public health systems and services research, coordinated through the Coordinating Center at the University of Kentucky School of Public Health. The GA PH PBRN conducted its first study in 2011 with funding from the RWJF. The study included 13 of the Health Districts and 104 of GA's 159 counties and focused on the unique but critical role that Georgia's health districts have on delivering essential public health services.

The RWJF supported Public Health PBRN initiative is intended to link academic researchers and public health practitioners to focus

research on real life issues facing public health practitioners. Bill Livingood, a JPHCOPH clinical professor, who has been a lead principal investigator for the RWJ funded studies said, "This collaboration with local and state public health in Georgia provides a major opportunity to engage in naturally occurring experiments on real life issues facing local public health systems." The State Coordinating Center for the GA PH PBRN is housed within the JPHCOPH. The PBRN continues to expand the involvement of public health practitioners, working with the Health District leadership. The academic research capacity was expanded with the addition of Dr. Gulzar Shah, formerly a lead scientist with the National Association of City and County Health Officials.

The GA PH PBRN was recently awarded a second grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation titled, "Expanding the Evidence



for Local Public Health QI & QA." This grant enabled the PBRN to contract with Dr. Bill Riley, a national Quality Improvement (QI) expert, to support internal QI training and education as well as to support strategic planning of Georgia's public health systems and the PBRN. Dr. Riley spent 2 days at JPHCOPH interacting with not only GA PH PBRN members and public health officials, but also with Georgia Southern faculty, staff and students. These efforts included curriculum development to infuse more QI specific competencies for all JPHCOPH students.

The GA PH PBRN also complements the mission of the JPHCOPH to develop a diverse workforce. Nandi Marshall, MPH, a DrPH

candidate at the JPHCOPH, was selected by the PBRN, expanding her professional development through this research opportunity as a Co-PI on the most recent grant supported study. Nandi said, "I have learned an incredible amount being active with the GA PH PBRN. Having the unique opportunity to be a Co-PI on a RWJF grant has been an awesome experience."

Funding for many of the projects associated with the GA PH PBRN is made possible by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Inc.



GA PH PBRN faculty, students and staff: Raymona Lawrence, Nandi Marshall, Bill Livingood, Dayna Alexander, Kellie Penix, Lynn Woodhouse, DeAnna Keene, Russ Toal, Angie Peden and Stuart Tedders

JPHCOPH Now



Sarah Peterson, Coordinator of Student Services, works diligently to provide leadership to students and help develop systems to meet the needs of our growing student body. She notes, "This academic year, as the JPHCOPH has been building on our recent accreditation, we transitioned to the Schools of Public Health Application System (SOPHAS). The SOPHAS application system allows prospective students to apply to Council of Public Health Education (CEPH) Accredited Schools of Public Health. We are now one of the 39 accredited schools participating in SOPHAS."



Continuing to focus our College on meeting our mission, goals and objectives, JPHCOPH had a record student enrollment in fall 2011. Our overall student body grew at the planned rate of 20% from 2009 to 2011. Both the DrPH and the MPH program experienced a 30% increase during this same time period. We are moving our DrPH in Public Health Leadership to a totally blended format, allowing more professionals in public health to access this doctoral level training while continuing to work in their full time positions. The expanding student body and growing academic program options are creating more opportunities for us to impact the size and influence of public health workforce in our region.



One of the early successes of JPHCOPH is the growing diversity of our student body. Forty five percent of our student body is made up of underrepresented populations within the region. JPHCOPH is proud to be attracting a diverse student body and to be focused on contributing to the diversity of the future public health workforce.

Student Engagement



Public Health Student Association (PHSA) president, Kevin Wiley says, "I have always been excited about JPHCOPH's contributions to public health through our involvement in the community and to my successes as a student." JPHCOPH and PHSA members work together each year to provide community support through our involvement in World AIDS Day, National Public Health Week, the Cancer Society and with Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) to increase public health awareness.



The Dean's Student Advisory Committee (DSAC) at JPHCOPH functions to gain valuable insight from our students to make JPHCOPH the best it can be. According to Joanna Spencer, current DSAC chair, "We involve students in solutions for student issues ranging from building access to advisement; we have even been given the opportunity to provide input for curriculum development. Overall, students believe the DSAC is a treasured asset to the JPHCOPH students." The DSAC was instrumental in the CEPH accreditation efforts.



Delta Omega: After receiving our accreditation, JPHCOPH was awarded a charter to establish the Gamma Theta Chapter of Delta Omega. Founded in 1924, Delta Omega is a national honor society established to encourage research and scholarship among graduate students of public health and honor achievement in the field of public health. This spring, the Gamma Theta chapter will hold its first induction of students, faculty, alumni and honorary members based on high academic standards and outstanding performance in scholarship, teaching and community service for public health. Nandi Marshall, MPH, DrPH candidate, is the first President of our Chapter.

Golden Opportunities

Ryan Butterfield, M.P.H., DrPH candidate, speaks highly of JPHCOPH, “The appeal of the college lies in its ability to provide hands on experience vs. a purely theoretical approach.” When talking about his experiences in the College and with the Biostatistics faculty, Ryan says, “The education I am receiving is invaluable, not just in the facts of statistics, which formula goes where, but rather, and more importantly, I learn how to think through and around a problem until a solution is reached. Education that allows you to take knowledge from the classroom and

face problems in the real world is priceless.” Ryan gained invaluable experience as an intern, working with public health researchers at the Duval County Health Department Institute for Public Health Informatics and Research in Jacksonville, FL. While there, he assisted in a study about high school youth risk behaviors. The results are in press in Preventing Chronic Disease, “Policy Implications for Local Application of YRBS.” Ryan, with Dr. William Livingood and others at the Institute, made up one of the first groups to look at the YRBS data on an intra-county level. Ryan is now completing his dissertation and working at the Center for Health Equity and Quality Research, University of Florida, College of Medicine, Jacksonville, which partners with the Duval County Health Department.

Practicum Experiences in Ghana: All students must complete a practicum to graduate, to practice and demonstrate their skills.



Recognizing students’ goals and needs in his homeland of Ghana, Dr. Evans Afriyie-Gyawu stated, “I had a vision that it would be great for our students to gain their practical learning experiences in an environment where their contributions could help improve the health of the people; and, the students were very excited about this idea!” The program was such a success that it is being implemented again this year. Dr. Afriyie-Gyawu says, “The possibilities and benefits of this experience for our students and the people of Ghana are endless.”

JPHCOPH is able to provide funding for students who present research at the annual American Public Health Association meeting. Joseph Lowry, MPH student, says “This conference showed the true breadth and scope of public health research and practice taking place in the U.S. and throughout the world.”

Damian MacLeod, M.S., DrPH(c) of Community Health Behavior and Education says, “The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health provides students with multiple leadership opportunities that benefit and enhance the learning experience.” Damian served as the first chair of the Dean’s Student Advisory Council and on search committees for new faculty members.



The Global Reach of JPHCOPH Alumni

- 2004**

Yang Feng
MPH Biostatistics
Biostatistician II at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, MA

Eric Gillis
MPH Biostatistics
SAS programmer for LHI Contractor/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Atlanta, GA

2007

Rebecca Wilson
MPH Community Health Program Coordinator
United States Department of Health and Human Services
Rockville, MD

Jie-Hui Zhu
MPH Biostatistics
Bank of China Insurance Company L.T.D.
China

2008

Julie Bishop-Harris
MHA
Discharge Planner at East Georgia Regional Medical Center
Statesboro, GA

Lauren Milmine
JD, MPH Health Policy and
- Management
Compliance consultant for non-profit organizations
Temporary Faculty for HPM at JPHCOPH

Tiffany Maeno Jackson
MPH Environmental Health
Environmental Compliance Specialist at Effingham County Health Department
Springfield, GA

Li Shi
MPH Biostatistics
Principal Data Analyst and Certified Clinical Data Manager at Allergan Inc.
Irvine, CA

2009

Benjamin Joseph Maligag
MPH Biostatistics
SAS Programmer at Gleneagles Clinical Research Center
Singapore

Vaibhav Garg
MPH Biostatistics
Clinical Pharmacology Associate II at Vertex Pharmaceuticals
Cambridge, MA

Nidhi Patel
MPH Biostatistics
HealthCare Data Analyst I at Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island

- 2010**

Kelley Chester
MPH, DrPH
Public Health Leadership Research Scientist at the Center for the Advancement of Health IT at RTI International
Atlanta, GA

Tempest Hill
MPH Environmental Health
Environmental Health Specialist Southeast Health District, 9-2
Waycross, GA.

2011

Elizabeth Dixon
MS, DrPH Community Health Behavior and Education
Nursing and Clinical Services Director at Public Health District 9-1 Savannah, GA

Joshi Gyan
MPH Biostatistics
Biostatistician I
Clinical Monitoring Research Program, Bethesda, MD
SAIC-Frederick, Inc.



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To update your alumni information to be used in future publications and as an alumni spotlight at JPHCOPH. georgiasouthern.edu



OUR UNIVERSITY

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 117 degree programs serving more than 20,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. In 2012, the University was named one of the Top Ten most popular universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* and is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.



The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health is named in honor of Dr. Jiann-Ping Hsu, a scholar-scientist whose distinguished service in her life's work and devotion to quality and caring in all her endeavors represent the touchstones of learning and leadership in the health professions. The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health is endowed by Dr. Karl E. Peace as a tribute to his wife and an enduring celebration of her life characterized by "a zeal for excellence, consideration of others, intelligence and scholarship, honesty, kindness and humility." Dr. Peace is an alumnus of Georgia Southern College, a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Cancer Scholar, the architect of the MPH in Biostatistics, and the founder of the Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics at Georgia Southern University.

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