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Georgia Southern public health professor wins prestigious national award

January 10, 2019

Julie Reagan, Ph.D., J.D., M.P.H., assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy and Community Health at Georgia Southern University, was recently honored with the prestigious Jennifer Robbins Award for Practice of Public Health Law at the American Public Health Association national meeting.

“Receiving this award is a tremendous honor,” said Reagan. “It is extraordinary to receive an accolade from an organization that I admire so much. Through mentoring and guidance from fellow colleagues at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, I feel I have grown immensely as a teacher and scholar. This award, however, not only recognizes my academic accomplishments but also takes into consideration my previous career as a public health attorney. I am humbled and very grateful.”

The Jennifer Robbins award recognizes an individual for outstanding dedication and leadership in the field of public health law. The individual’s major contributions should have the potential for significant and long-term impact on the field.

The award is named in honor of Jennifer Robbins (1940-1987), a public health lawyer who practiced in the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and subsequently served as an assistant attorney general in Maryland and principal counsel for the state’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

For the majority of her career, Reagan has worked as a public health law practitioner. Following the completion of her Ph.D., she founded a consulting and research firm devoted exclusively to legal issues related to healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). Working tirelessly to promote mandatory reporting of HAIs she has served as an expert panel contributor on a national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Association of State and Territorial Health Officials advisory committee whose purpose was to advise other states about enacting HAI-related reporting laws.

Reagan has consistently contributed to the research literature in her role as a legal expert in the area of HAI-related laws. Her research contributions have shown that state laws requiring mandatory reporting of HAIs have had the result of decreasing infection rates.

An attorney with over 20 years of experience in Texas and New Mexico state government, Reagan transitioned to academia in 2014. Currently, she is conducting research about state efforts for reducing and preventing drug diversion in healthcare settings. This research involves mapping existing state laws; the legal data will then be used as a source for public health law impact studies.

The mission of Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University is to improve health, eliminate health disparities and health inequities of rural communities and underserved populations globally through excellence in teaching, public health workforce development, research, scholarship, professional service and community engagement.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research institution founded in 1906, offers 141 degree programs serving nearly 26,500 students through nine colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.