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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2008). *Newsroom*. 356.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/356>

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Georgia Southern University's College of Public Health Reaches Milestones

NOVEMBER 21, 2008



The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University has reached two major milestones toward becoming what is called a "sustainable and accredited College of Public Health," announced Charles Hardy, Founding Dean of the College.

The first milestone is the College's acceptance as an applicant for accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), the national accrediting body of public health schools and programs. According to Dr. Hardy, "The College is now on target to meet our goal of earning full accreditation by the year 2011." There are currently only 40 accredited schools or colleges of public health in North America.

The other major milestone reached by the College is receiving an invitation to become an associate member of the Association of Schools of Public Health. Membership in this organization is only offered to Schools or Colleges that are accepted as applicants for or are accredited by CEPH.

"Reaching these milestones is a significant achievement in our growth as a college of public health and reflects most positively on our students, faculty and administration, but would not have been possible without the leadership of Dr. Hardy and Dr. Lynne Woodhouse (Associate Dean of JPHCOPH)," says Dr. Karl Peace.

Dean Hardy describes the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health as an educational institution that is committed to increasing the capacity of the public health workforce. He says, "We are focused on enhancing health equity through improving public health practice. Our mission is to enhance health

and eliminate health disparities of rural communities and underserved populations in Georgia and the southeastern region, the nation and the world through excellence in public health education, workforce development, research, professional service and community engagement.”

Located in rural Southeast Georgia, 45 minutes from Savannah, the College is partnering with an expanding array of rural communities through its Public Health Practice Advisory Board. They have 28 talented faculty members who are engaging with multiple community and public health agencies to document best practices and increase health equity in rural communities. Their research and service efforts emphasize applied, collaborative projects that engage stakeholders and provide students with real-world experiences.

An important goal of the rapidly-growing College is to increase the diversity of the faculty, graduates and students because increasing health equity and rural public health will require a diverse workforce a workforce that is comfortable working in underserved, rural settings. This fall the College implemented a new, practice-focused curriculum designed to build strong skills in core public health disciplines while emphasizing competencies for improving health equity and rural public health.

The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health grew from two Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) programs developed by Dr. Hardy and Dr. Peace and approved in 1998 and 2000 community health education and biostatistics. The College was first established as a School in 2004 by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. At that time it was the first School of Public Health in the state system.

The establishment of the School was made possible by a generous gift from Dr. Karl E. Peace. Dr. Peace is an alumnus of Georgia Southern College, a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Cancer Scholar, the architect of the M.P.H. in Biostatistics, and the founder of the Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics at Georgia Southern University. He endowed the school in honor and memory of his wife, Dr. Jiann-Ping Hsu, as an enduring celebration of her life.

The School was supported by the University System of Georgia to address the important and increasingly severe public health concerns in Georgia. Justification for selection of a School of Public Health at Georgia Southern University was directly related to the potential impact this institution will have on health equity among rural and underserved residents of the state and region. On January 1, 2006, the School transitioned to the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health.

The Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health offers the M.P.H. in Biostatistics, Community Health, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, and Health Policy and Management, and the Master of Health Services Administration (M.H.S.A.). In addition, the College offers the Doctor of Public Health (Dr.P.H.) degree in Biostatistics, Community Health Behavior and Education, and Public Health

Leadership. The College is also home to several public health practice and research centers as well as the Karl E. Peace Center for Biostatistics, and is the home of the Executive Office of the International Chinese Statistical Association.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers more than 110 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.