

# BUILDING AND CLAIMING THE FUTURE

APRIL 2008

## A New Face for Student Democracy

Student democracy may seem to be a thing of the past among many institutions of higher education today. Decisions regarding curriculum and coursework are often made without student input. Students are rarely given a forum to express their ideas and concerns regarding their degree track.

The Maternal and Child Health Student Advisory Board (MCH SAB) was created to give a voice to current MCH students at the Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Several students were eager to share their ideas and concerns in a formal setting. Students were recruited through nominations and interest on their part, and were selected by MCH faculty and staff. SAB members elected to create a governing document and conduct meetings without the presence of MCH faculty or staff. Two MCH program alumnae were asked to sit as members of the SAB.

To date, meetings have been spent reviewing curriculum competencies and developing a survey tool to gather information from other members of the student body. The SAB is honored to act as a voice for their fellow students. Karissa Page, a Master's Student working on her MPH in Maternal and Child Health describes what the SAB to her, "Embracing the musings we share in the halls and elevators, and translating them into curriculum and departmental recommendations is the primary goal of MCH Student Advisory Board."

Being given responsibility for their own degree program and the opportunity to contribute suggestions from a student point of view gave many members of the SAB a sense of empowerment. Each member has contributed personal anecdotes and offered their suggestions for MCH program track improvement. Many current student members are enthusiastic about the opportunity to address issues of concern in a formal, democratic setting.

The contributions of alumnae members are also invaluable, as it gives the board an alternative perspective. Alumnae members also aid in guiding the recommendations regarding course curriculum to be tailored towards what employers in the workplace are looking for in potential employees.

The experience of the members is a lesson in leadership and student democracy that our MCH program is proud to offer. Students are given the opportunity to actively participate in their degree program, and to offer suggestions for improvement that will benefit future students.

Ideally, this type of student governing body will be replicated throughout our department and school and will change the face of current student democracy in our institution.

## Upcoming Events

- April 22  
Second showing of "The Business of Being Born"
- May 17  
School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine graduation



## STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

*Don't forget !*

Summer MCH  
Scholarship  
Applications are  
due April 21st.

Contact Jenny at  
jhixon@tulane.edu for more  
information.

1440 Canal Street  
STE 2301, TW-19  
New Orleans, LA  
70112—2824

Ph: 504-988-3539  
Fax: 504-988-3540  
E-mail: [mch@tulane.edu](mailto:mch@tulane.edu)

*We're on the  
web!*

[www.sph.tulane.edu](http://www.sph.tulane.edu)  
[/mch](http://www.sph.tulane.edu/mch)

### Thank You

to our MCPHLT  
Executive Committee  
Members and staff for  
your work and support!

Maya Begalieva, MD, PhD  
Neil Boris, MD  
Mark Dal Corso, MD,  
MPH  
Tom Farley, MD, MPH  
Carolyn Johnson, PhD  
Gretchen Clum, PhD  
Jeanette Magnus, MD,  
PhD

Jenny Hixon, MPH  
Shokufeh Ramirez,  
MPH

## Fostering Leadership Development

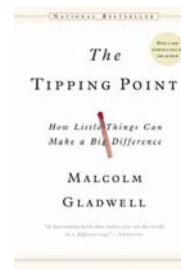
The primary goal of the Tulane University SPHTM Maternal and Child Public Health Leadership Training Program is to train future leaders in the MCH field. Offering scholarships to exceptional students is one way we are accomplishing this goal. This Spring we are pleased to announce 10 Maternal and Child Health Leadership Scholarships. Students will work throughout the Summer for a minimum of 300 in various public health capacities in either community field work positions or research assistantships. Students may also use these positions for their practicum and Community Health Project Thesis, a 300 hour internship requirement to graduate with a Master's in Public Health. These scholarships are providing students with

not only employment opportunities, but are also designed to facilitate leadership development. Scholarship recipients will be required to develop a leadership development plan, as well as, research a leadership topic and write a report for the MCPHLT staff. Students who receive scholarships will be working at the Mary Amelia Douglas-Whited Community Women's Health Education Center, Common Ground Clinic, Women With A Vision Inc., with Department of Community Health Science's faculty members, and working on statewide breastfeeding policy issues. The MCPHLT program is excited about offering these opportunities to our students and fostering leadership development through practical public health

## The Tipping Point

This month the MCPHLT program held its very first leadership book group discussion. Last Fall students voted on choices of books related to leadership that they would like to discuss. One of these choices was "The Tipping Point" by Malcolm Gladwell. Gladwell introduces this idea of a "tipping point," a point in time during which something switches from mundane and common place to an epidemic. The author discusses the type of people that cause these radical changes in society as identifies them as connectors, mavens, and salesmen. He also examines what he considers two points crucial to an idea being spread: the "stickiness factor" and the "power of context". This concept of epidemics is not a foreign one

to public health. However, we often view the word, epidemic, in a negative light and think if it in terms of disease or outbreak. The Tipping Point offers insight into how we as public health professionals can promote our ideals and practices in such a way to make them appeal to the masses. While taking into consideration the context of our surrounding environment, we can find "the tipping point" for a positive public health epidemic. The key is in realizing the mantra of the book "how little things can make a big difference."



## Student Advisory Board Members

- **Cassandra Burrows** is working on her last semester towards a dual degree in Maternal and Child Health and Epidemiology
- **Lillian Funke** is working her last semester towards her degree in Maternal and Child Health with an emphasis in epidemiology.
- **Lauren Futrell** is currently in her last semester at Tulane working towards a Master's in Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition.
- **Alanna Higgins** is a Tulane Medical Student who is in the joint MD/MPH program with a focus in Maternal and Child Health
- **Cara Locklin** is a graduate of Tulane with a degree in Maternal and Child Health and Epidemiology. She is currently working for the Louisiana Office of Public Health
- **Aaron Miller** is currently in his second semester working on his MPH in Maternal and Child Health
- **Karissa Page** is also currently in her second semester working on her MPH in Maternal and Child Health
- **Tamanna Patel** is an alum of the Maternal and Child Health program and is currently working at the Louisiana Public Health Institute on their Tobacco Free Living Campaign
- **Onajite Phido** is currently working on her MPH in Global and Maternal Child Health. This is a dual degree in both Maternal and Child and International Health.