

F2. Student Involvement in Community and Professional Service

Community and professional service opportunities, in addition to those used to satisfy Criterion D4, are available to all students. Experiences should help students to gain an understanding of the contexts in which public health work is performed outside of an academic setting and the importance of learning and contributing to professional advancement in the field.

- 1) *Describe how students are introduced to service, community engagement and professional development activities and how they are encouraged to participate.*

As service and community engagement are core tenets of the school's strategic plan, they are highlighted on the school's website, on social media and during recruitment activities. During New Student Orientation, students are introduced to members of PHSA who discuss the organization's professional development activities. Weekly student newsletters publish upcoming service and community engagement opportunities. University broadcast emails encourage participation in service activities coordinated by the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service.

Students learn of opportunities through academic advising and required coursework. All GWSPH students are required to complete eight hours of [professional enhancement](#) (PE) activities. Students meet this requirement by attending webinars and workshops outside of the classroom. All MPH students are required to engage in one IPE activity and are encouraged to participate in more than one activity or a long-term activity to gain additional interprofessional skills. Students are introduced to UHP during interactions with the Office of Applied Public Health. UHP offers students the opportunity to apply skills learned in the classroom in the real world while engaging the community.

Undergraduate students are encouraged to join [TEAM Milken](#), an initiative designed to help students succeed in classes and prepare for their future careers. TEAM Milken members engage in programming, receive academic resources, and are paired with faculty and staff mentors, who bolster academic, professional and personal success. This unique undergraduate experience is designed to truly support students as they enter college and the field of public health while setting them up for academic and professional success. Recent experiences have included:

- Milk n' Cookies (drop-in event to encourage peer-to-peer networking over a snack of milk and cookies)
- Lunches/meet and greets with undergraduate professors
- Self-care bingo at midterms/finals
- Various events surrounding the mentorship program such as mentor/mentee check-ins, structured programming and more
- Drop-in advising events with healthy snacks
- On-campus resource tabling to highlight resources available to undergraduate students (e.g., health center, writing center, Academic Commons)

- 2) *Provide examples of professional and community service opportunities in which public health students have participated in the last three years.*

Example No. 1: GWSPH has very active student-led organizations, the largest of which is the PHSA. Every year, these organizations coordinate numerous activities related to community engagement and professional development. These activities include résumé-building workshops, professional headshots (photographs) and salary-negotiation workshops.

Student Attendance at Student-Led Professional Development Activities	
<i>2022-2023</i>	<i>N</i>
Maternal and Child Health Résumé-Building Workshop	7
Professional Headshots	15
Salary-Negotiation Workshop	14
<i>2023-2024 (YTD)</i>	<i>N</i>
Professional Headshots	100
Winter Banquet (networking)	200

COVID-19 closed the Foggy Bottom campus from March 2020 to August 2021. While campus reopened in fall 2021 and programming increased, the uncertainty of planning in-person events and lack of experienced student leaders led to decreased activities and student engagement.

Example No. 2: In 2022-2023, students in UHP served six learning communities at three community partners. At Jackson-Reed High School, GWSPH students implemented a Healthy Teen Scholars program, which focused on having mental health discussions with high school students. Most topics discussed were chosen by the high school students. Another UHP team implemented a series of adult health literacy discussion at our Housing Up community partners. These sessions promoted health habits and discussed chronic disease prevention. Topics were participant-suggested and included sleep, hygiene, benefits of exercise, cancer awareness and diabetes (see ERF > Criterion F > Criterion F2 > F2.2: Community service_e.g).

Example No. 3: In March 2023, the Center of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health hosted [Working Towards Birthing Justice](#) in partnership with a Women in The Room Productions. At this PE-eligible event, over 70 attendees screened Women in The Room’s film *Birthing Justice: Every Woman Deserves a Beautiful Birth Story* and heard from a panel moderated by a MCH student. The film focused on the experiences of Black women in the US during their pregnancy and postpartum periods and highlighted the need for community engagement. The panelists (some of whom were featured in the film) discussed the burden of maternal mortality on Black women and communities and how to advocate and address these issues.

Example No. 4: In July 2020, the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service partnered with Alice Deal Middle School to offer virtual programming. GWSPH student Nikki Vivekanandan participated in [SummerTrek Changemakers Program](#), where she was able to facilitate DC middle schoolers’ research and advocacy projects addressing community issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, racism and climate change. Nikki’s group of middle schoolers put together a presentation on myths versus facts around the COVID-19 virus. She taught them how to research credible sources and translate scientific information for the lay audience.

3) *If applicable, assess strengths and weaknesses related to this criterion and plans for improvement in this area.*

Strengths

- All students participate in professional development opportunities to meet their PE requirements. This participation often leads students to seek out additional opportunities for community and professional service.
- Students have multiple opportunities to engage in community service through student organizations, GWSPH partnerships and connections or university-led activities. Plus, the DC metro area is ripe with opportunities for students to explore on their own.

- GWSPH offers field experiences for undergraduates in Exercise Science, connecting them to internships and connections for post-graduation work, especially for those planning to apply to medical school, physical therapy school, etc.
- The university-led Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service is a wonderful partner to GWSPH and an incredible resource. It works closely with GWSPH students, faculty and staff, offering both service and learning opportunities. "The mission of the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service is to integrate civic engagement into George Washington University's educational work. [They] promote equity and active citizenship in a diverse democracy, focus GW's resources to address community needs through reciprocal partnerships beyond the campus, and enhance teaching, learning, and scholarship at GW."⁹⁸

Challenges

- Resuming in-person opportunities with partners following COVID-19 has encountered various health and related issues depending on the needs and policies/protocols of partner organizations and institutions.

Future Plans

- GWSPH plans to continue to expand service-learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students as well as opportunities for cross-degree level student engagement.
- GWSPH plans to continue to grow and expand the number of students participating in UHP as well as with the community partners we work with through this program.
- GWSPH aims to support faculty training and engagement in service learning so that they may engage students in and outside of the classroom, bolstering student participation in community service.

⁹⁸ Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service. (n.d.). About Our Office. *The George Washington University*. <https://serve.gwu.edu/about-our-office>