

Introducing the New Class of Graduate Students

208 STUDENTS

This fall 208 new students entered the School of Public Health, representing a wide range of backgrounds and academic interests. The new class comprises 150 women and 58 men, ranging in age from 22 to 59 years old. There are 154 students working on M.P.H. degrees (24 of whom are in concurrent or joint degree programs); 8 students in the Dr.P.H. program; 11 working towards an M.A. or M.S.; and 13 Ph.D. students.

AGES 22 TO 59

58 MEN

In addition to the United States, the students come from 24 other countries: Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Jamaica, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

150 WOMEN

New Undergraduate Major...continued from page 13

With nearly 1,000 students enrolling in public health courses offered each semester at the campus's student health center, the faculty overwhelmingly approved the major when it was first discussed several years ago.

"It was time to be a bigger player in influencing the campus curriculum," said public health professor Steve Selvin, who led efforts in designing the program.

And with UC Berkeley's 1998 promise to absorb a 4,000-student enrollment jump by

2010 from the state's booming population, the program could relieve stress on heavily demanded programs including psychology and molecular and cell biology.

But this is not the program's first debut. In the 1930s, UC Berkeley undergraduates could pursue a degree in hygiene, and the School of Public Health offered a bachelor's degree in public health after its inception during World War II.

However, state budget cuts in the mid-1960s forced the school to close its doors to under-

graduates. At the time, the state Legislature transferred many public health programs to the California State University system, said public health professor emeritus William Reeves, who has taught on campus since 1934.

When discussions cropped up once more regarding the opening of an undergraduate program, the school followed the School of Social Welfare's undergraduate model, offering the degree through the College of Letters and Science.

The New Class: Selected Profiles



LeRoy Blea, M.P.H. '98, is interested in health disparities, ethics and public health practice, and politics and public health policy making. While an undergraduate at Berkeley, Blea worked as an STD medic in the Berkeley Free Clinic's Gay Men's Health Collective. After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1993, he coordinated a countywide HIV prevention program at Tri-City Health Center aimed at young gay men of color, using community-organizing models of intervention. Subsequently, he worked for the Marin AIDS Project as evaluation coordinator for two HIV intervention programs for men in San Quentin State Prison. He received his M.P.H. in community health education in 1998; his thesis examined case studies

of HIV-positive men exiting from prison and the broader social and environmental reasons that led to almost universal recidivism to prison after release. After receiving his master's degree, he was hired to direct the AIDS Office at the Berkeley Public Health Department, a position which has afforded him the opportunity to take leadership roles in several local and state HIV and STD health policy groups over the past five years. Now working toward a Dr.P.H., Blea's ongoing work as a consultant to local and state health agencies and community groups continues to inform his research. This year he was awarded the Sheldon Margen Wellness Fellowship.



As an undergraduate, **Shobha Sadasivaiah** studied human biology with a focus in environmental health. During her junior year, she studied abroad in Santiago, Chile, where she conducted research on issues related to health and air quality. It was there that she discovered her passion for international environmental health. She went on to an internship with a nonprofit organization, studying persistent organic pollutants and their effects on health. Upon graduating from Stanford University in 2000, she decided to continue her work in the international realm, specifically in Latin America. She joined the Peace Corps and was sent to El Salvador. During her two and a half years in El Salvador, she lived in a rural community and worked on issues related to water, sanitation, and health. She conducted educational outreach on

health issues such as latrine maintenance, family planning, and community organization. Currently, she is in her first year in the M.P.H. program in environmental health sciences. "I am excited to be at Berkeley and hope to one day apply the skills I gain here internationally," she says.



Madhavi Dandu, M.D., was born in a small village in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. At age two, she and her family moved to the United States. As an undergraduate at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, she studied comparative literature and biomedical sciences, and then went on to earn her medical degree there in 2000. This past July, she completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. "Though I enjoy medicine and my interactions with my patients, I have always had an interest in public health," she says, "so when I was making plans for the end of residency, I decided to go back to school to get formal public health training." Her particular area of interest is international health, especially the health effects of war. She has spent time working and studying in Ecuador, Uganda, and India and enjoys traveling abroad. She has an extensive history of working with underserved groups, including people with HIV, homeless people, and survivors of sexual assault. After completing her studies at UC Berkeley, she intends to continue her work with marginalized populations in the United States and abroad. 🌍

Degrees through the professional schools and interdisciplinary majors have grown increasingly popular in the last 15 years.

But even as programs that bridge academics and practical application face rising demand, the School of Public Health has always utilized a cross-discipline approach.

"Health is not a single entity. It is all combined," Selvin said. "The whole spectrum is important, from the scientists in labs researching vaccines to public health nurses working with teenage mothers." 🌍