

Winter 12-1-2016

Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester Summer Internships Program Clark University 2016 Report

Hannah Silverfine

Clark University, hsilverfine@clarku.edu

Recommended Citation

Silverfine, Hannah, "Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester Summer Internships Program Clark University 2016 Report" (2016). *Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise*. 67.
<https://commons.clarku.edu/mosakowskiinstitute/67>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Academic Departments, Centers & Programs at Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact mkrikonis@clarku.edu, jodolan@clarku.edu.

Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester Summer Internships Program Clark University 2016 Report

Abstract

In the past few years, many people and institutions in the city of Worcester have begun to recognize the necessity of achieving improvements in health. In 2015, the Worcester Division of Public Health (WDPH) and Clark University's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise began a partnership known as the Worcester Academic Health Department (WAHD). In addition to joining a university and a public health agency, this partnership sought to connect students interested in the public health field with opportunities to engage in practical application of skills and knowledge acquisition. The current Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester (AHCW) evolved from the WAHD, and represents the far-reaching connections of the public health initiatives throughout Worcester between medical centers, universities, and the WDPH. The vision of the AHCW is to "deploy, share, and leverage the resources of the region's health and academic institutions to make the Greater Worcester area the healthiest region in New England by 2020." The AHCW's summer internship program is structured around long-term, sustainable projects rather than one-time events and is a key component in the success of the Collaborative. By supporting the WDPH with a variety of essential projects, students have been able to take part in research and project implementation that improves community health in the city of Worcester.

Keywords

Public Health, Summer Internships, WDPH, Clark University

Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester Summer Internships Program Clark University 2016 Report



Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise
Clark University, 950 Main Street, Worcester MA 01610
<http://www.clarku.edu/research/mosakowskiinstitute/>
Prepared Fall 2016 by Hannah Silverfine, Graduate Research Assistant

Clark University Report 2016

Worcester Division of Public Health

Summer Internship Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester	3-4
2016 Intern Projects: Overview	5
Community Outreach	6
Qualitative Behavioral Health	7
Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation	7
Youth Substance Abuse Prevention	8
Geographic Information Science	9
Mass in Motion Healthy Markets	10
Internship Impact and Looking Forward	11-12
Acknowledgements	13

ACADEMIC HEALTH COLLABORATIVE OF WORCESTER

In the past few years, many people and institutions in the city of Worcester have begun to recognize the necessity of achieving improvements in health. In 2015, the Worcester Division of Public Health (WDPH) and Clark University's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise began a partnership known as the Worcester Academic Health Department (WAHD). In addition to joining a university and a public health agency, this partnership sought to connect students interested in the public health field with opportunities to engage in practical application of skills and knowledge acquisition.

The current Academic Health Collaborative of Worcester (AHCW) evolved from the WAHD, and represents the far-reaching connections of the public health initiatives throughout Worcester between medical centers, universities, and the WDPH. The vision of the AHCW is to "deploy, share, and leverage the resources of the region's health and academic institutions to make the Greater Worcester area the healthiest region in New England by 2020." The AHCW's summer internship program is structured around long-term, sustainable projects rather than one-time events and is a key component in the success of the Collaborative. By supporting the WDPH with a variety of essential projects, students have been able to take part in research and project implementation that improves community health in the city of Worcester.



"Students became part of our team and were exposed to a broad array of public health issues. I was very impressed with how Clark University students were able to successfully complete a range of projects across departments such as: community outreach and audit of local summer events, developing standard operating procedures for the Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation and creating a Youth Health Action Committee to work on the division's substance use prevention efforts. Many students from Clark were so committed to the work they started over the summer that they have chosen to extend their time with DPH into the academic year. We truly appreciate the value each student contributed to the Division's priorities for community health improvement, and their passion for social justice."

-Alexis Travis, WDPH Chief of Community Health

Worcester Division of Public Health

The Division of Public Health in Worcester is the lead agency of the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance. In addition to the city of Worcester, the WDPH serves the towns of Grafton, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, Shrewsbury and West Boylston. The WDPH works to protect the health of the community, prevent disease and injury, and promote improvements within all social, economic, and environmental determinants of health. In the spring of 2016, the WDPH became the first nationally accredited public health department in Massachusetts. Out of the 5,000 public health departments in the nation, Worcester is now one of only 117 with the accreditation.

The work of the WDPH is guided by the Greater Worcester Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which compiles research from more than one hundred community partners and stakeholders to set an agenda for improving health in the region. This agenda is articulated through prioritized and measurable outcomes. The CHIP was created in 2012 in partnership with UMass Memorial Medical Center, and was fully updated in 2016 based on findings from the 2015 Community Health Assessment (CHA). The 2016 CHIP was consolidated into one goal, three core principles, and nine priority areas (for more information visit <http://www.worcesterma.gov/ocm/public-health/greater-worcester-chip>). Each of the summer internship projects advanced work within a priority area, and ultimately contributed to the one overarching goal, health equity.

Clark University's Mosakowski Institute

The Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise is dedicated to producing and disseminating usable knowledge on issues of public concern. The Institute emphasizes conducting research in actual context through partnerships with practitioners, and maintains a focus on specific outcomes for public policy improvements. The Institute's work aligns strongly with Clark University's model of Liberal Education and Effective Practice (LEEP). The LEEP framework encourages students to go beyond traditional classroom learning and to experience education through "real-life" application of skills and community connections. The Institute's support for internship opportunities for Clark students to become directly involved with WDPH activity thus advances the missions of both parties.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



2016 SUMMER INTERNS

Clark University

Internship Overview

Ten students from Clark University interned for the WDPH this summer, and each was paired with a WDPH staff member working on an ongoing project. Both undergraduate and graduate students took part in the program, bringing a range of experiences and skills to the team. The six projects, spread across multiple departments in the Division, included: *Community Outreach, Youth Substance Abuse Prevention, Qualitative Behavioral Health, Healthy Markets, Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, and Geographic Information Science.*

The summer began with a “bootcamp” run by the coordinator of the Academic Health Collaborative, Dr. Marianne Sarkis. Over the course of three days, interns met with a variety of professionals from the public health sector. They participated in workshops and attended sessions that provided a background for the purpose and context of their projects. Interns working in the Behavioral Health Department were also invited to participate in the New England Institute of Addiction and Prevention Studies conference, which exposed them to specific issues addressed in the field.

Throughout the summer, interns continued to learn about the public health system through hands-on experiences, community events, and inter-departmental opportunities. Weekly check-ins between interns and staff were also essential to the structure of the internship, and feedback guided the progression of each project to reach the final presentations at the end of the summer.

“Having the Clark students this summer was great, as always. Every year that we host Clark interns I am more and more impressed by the passion and expertise they bring to our work. Clark students are not only bringing additional hands to move the work forward, but also expanding the capacity of WDPH by bringing to bear skills that complement and enhance those of the staff here.”

-Zachary Dyer, WDPH Deputy Director



Clark interns helping out at the 2016 CHIP release

Community Outreach Internship

WDPH interns supported the Behavior Health department of the Division in outreach and planning efforts with community based organizations. They worked specifically with populations of high need for access to services, but also improved overall information accessibility in the city. Interns also assessed the role of the WDPH in providing public health resources in Worcester, and identified gaps in the current system.

Summer interns were involved in projects directly related to state-wide improvements in the behavioral health system. Tobacco legislation was a central topic of concern this summer, and interns provided key support for improvements in the city’s tobacco ordinance. The city ultimately decided to raise the legal age of purchase from 18 to 21, marking a significant policy change. In 2012, Massachusetts banned the disposal of hypodermic needles in household trash cans. City and town health departments subsequently implemented sharps container locations and disposal education. WDPH interns distributed informational pamphlets about safe use of prescription drugs and safe needle disposal to a wide variety of health organizations and pharmacies in Worcester. Additionally, interns collected data at each pharmacy about narcan supplies (narcan is also known as naxalone and is used to reverse the effects of opioid overdose). This information is vital to the WDPH in addressing the current opioid crisis in Worcester. Weekly visits to farmers markets and community events were also an important part of the Community Outreach internship. Through their outreach, interns were able to share critical information about health service resources throughout the Greater Worcester area.



“One takeaway I had from this internship was how imperative public health is to a population, especially in a place with a lot of need for health equity and improvement of access to information and services, such as the city of Worcester. Public health is an infrastructural necessity in order for a city to flourish.”

–Amy Morrow, Community Outreach Intern



Amy and Emilie tabling at Worcester’s “Out to Lunch” Series

Meet the Interns:

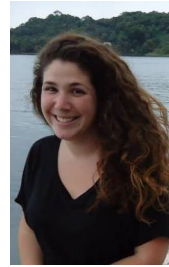
	<p>Amy Morrow</p> <p>Major: International Development and Social Change Hometown: North Haven, CT Interests: Refugee and migration studies, singing, and contra dancing</p>		<p>Emilie Smiley</p> <p>Major: Sociology, minor in Women and Gender Studies Hometown: Racine, WI Interests: Health equity, quilting, hiking, and swimming</p>
---	---	--	---

Qualitative Behavioral Health

One of the WDPH's most important partnerships is with the UMass Memorial Medical Center. This summer, the two teams joined to create a Behavioral Health survey that would help inform challenges throughout the Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance (CMRPHA) region. The survey was comprised of specific questions about the capacity, strengths, and needs of the current system of substance abuse treatment.

Kelsey supported the data collection team throughout the summer, and administered the survey to substance abuse treatment providers in the CMRPHA. She reinforced her skills of facilitation and project coordination as she conducted approximately 20 interviews with a wide range of organizations and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. This information will be used to advise resource and policy decisions at the WDPH, and contribute to the daily functions of behavioral health centers.

Meet the Intern:

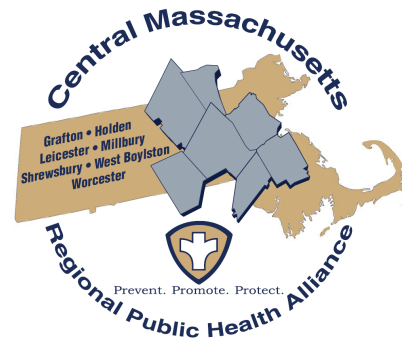


Kelsey Hopkins

Graduate Program: M.A., International Development and Social Change

Hometown: Lakeville, MA

Interests: Spending time with family and friends and healthy communities



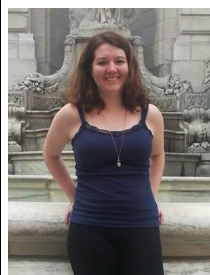
Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (WAASE)

The WAASE program was created to address sex trafficking in the greater Worcester area. WAASE seeks to improve the health and wellness of the community by developing prevention and intervention strategies. The program also emphasizes the importance of working with individuals in all types of roles relating to the issue, varying from survivors to buyers to facilitators.

This summer, the internship position was focused on supporting the expansion of the program. Claire took part in WAASE work groups to develop goals and plans for the coming year. She also gained experience with professional writing and framing by editing the organization's bylaws. Throughout the summer Claire regularly attended and actively participated in WAASE meetings. Ultimately, Claire presented her ideas and progress to the WAASE Steering Committee, and at the quarterly Alliance meeting.



Meet the Intern:



Claire Hanna

Major: Sociology and Women & Gender Studies

Hometown: Loveland, CO

Interests: Reading, musical theater, and hiking

Youth Substance Abuse Prevention

The Youth Substance Abuse Prevention internship was led by the WDPH, but carried out in partnership with other area youth agencies. Together, they implemented strategic programs throughout the city. This summer, interns were charged with creating a youth engagement committee that would develop and implement a social norms campaign in their schools to prevent underage drinking and substance abuse. To begin the process of forming a committee, interns applied the Strategic Prevention framework for preventing substance abuse and misuse. This framework was connected to the goals of the CHIP, and structured the overarching project intentions. Interns also collaborated with community coalitions, most prominently the Regional Response to Addiction Partnership (RRAP).

Halfway through the summer, the committee underwent a change in name and purpose. After extensively working with community partners for many weeks and learning about the different challenges that youth face, interns took the initiative to change the committee name to the “Youth Health Action Committee” (YHAC). The goals of the group reflected feedback interns received, and emphasized creating space for youth voice and presence in the decision-making processes of the region.



Clark interns further developed an application process for the committee, focusing on youth from a “diverse range of lived experiences”, and produced a detailed logistical outline. Both interns will be continuing their work this fall by facilitating the committee, allowing for project continuity. The curriculum is modeled on the Positive Youth Development and Social Justice Youth Development frameworks. The interns hope that the committee will undertake prevention efforts through the lens of empowerment rather than traditional shaming tactics.



“I learned that in order to develop a new program in community health, it is essential to talk to a wide range of people and to seek constructive feedback as much as possible. Sometimes, it can feel like bringing everyone to the table can slow the process down, but in the end, projects that serve the community should come FROM the community, not one or two people.”

-Katie Wallace, Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Intern

Meet the Interns:

 <p>Katie Wallace Major: International Development and Social Change Hometown: Acton, MA Interests: Feminism, performing and roadtripping</p>	 <p>Charlotte Maxwell Major: History Hometown: Brattleboro, VT Interests: Social justice, reproductive rights, improve comedy and yoga</p>
--	--

Geographic Information Science (GIS)

Meet the Interns:

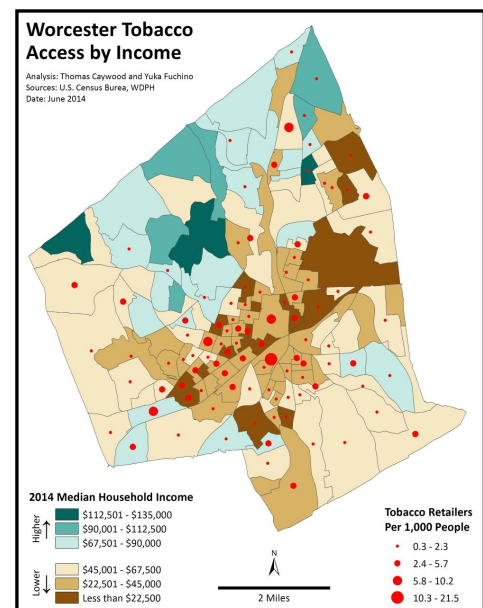
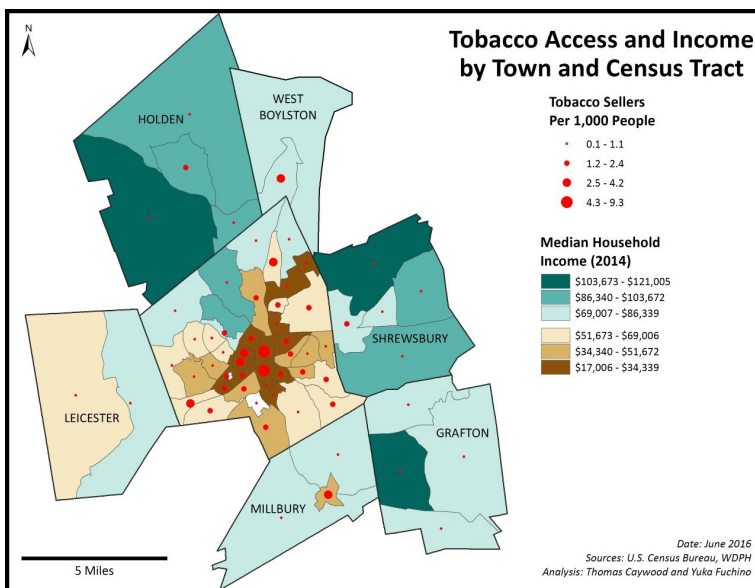
	<p>Thomas Caywood Graduate Program: M.S., Geographic Information Science for Development and Environment Hometown: Washington, D.C. Interests: Rationalism, narrative, data science, philosophy, punk rock and running</p>		<p>Yuka Fuchino Graduate Program: M.S., Geographic Information Science Hometown: North Andover, MA Interests: Climate change, conservation, volleyball, animals</p>
---	---	--	--

Geographic Information Science (GIS) is an excellent tool for analyzing data and showcasing trends through a geospatial format. GIS interns were not assigned to a particular department, but instead supported a multitude of projects by creating maps based on various data accounts.

The specific projects GIS interns completed were focused on Healthy Markets, and tobacco and alcohol outlets in the greater Worcester area. They collaborated with different project leads to create maps that would be most useful to the DPH, and the greater Worcester community. GIS interns were highly self-directed, and were challenged to synthesize information with their technical skills and present the findings in accessible and logical outputs.

One key project interns developed was the analysis of the proximity of tobacco sellers to public schools in Worcester. They found that schools in low-income neighborhoods tend to have more tobacco sales outlets around them than the more affluent neighborhoods. Furthermore, the racial composition at individual schools is moderately correlated with outlets around the schools as well. These results show a significant trend useful for understanding the socioeconomic implications of tobacco regulation.

In the study of alcohol outlets, it was clear that alcohol points of purchase (POPs) were also disproportionately located in low income and poverty areas. In addition, the majority of alcohol violations occurred in those same areas. The creation of maps and analysis of data surrounding current tobacco sales and alcohol POPs is critical to the work of the WDPH. The findings from this summer will inform policy decisions and act as a key tool for demonstrating current trends.



Mass in Motion Healthy Markets

As part of a state-wide program, the Mass in Motion Healthy Markets initiative seeks to improve access to healthy foods for all populations. The Healthy Markets interns worked with corner store owners throughout Worcester to introduce fresh, locally grown produce, and healthier food options in their stores. To support the shift in purchasing and eating habits connected to convenience stores, interns coordinated various healthy market strategies. They conducted assessments of corner stores to identify eligibility, worked on outreach and marketing, and assisted corner stores with the promotion and ordering of healthy options. Interns visited 33 different corner stores, and collected information about reasons for the varying levels of interest the owners had for purchasing fresh produce.

Healthy Markets interns also spent time each week working with one of the WDPH’s partners, the Regional Environmental Council (REC). By joining in the REC’s Mobile Market activities, interns were able to experience another part of Worcester’s food system, and build connections with many individuals from the community. In all their projects, the students were challenged to use their academic knowledge and personal skills to develop strategies for addressing food system inequity. Interns produced an analysis of the Healthy Markets program in Worcester based on their findings and interactions with community members, supporting the future work of Mass in Motion in Worcester.



Hannah and Devin working with REC at Worcester’s summer “Out to Lunch” series

“A significant take away that I have learned from this internship is that individuals who may be struggling financially would love to provide healthy foods for themselves and their families, but often have issues accessing healthy produce for many reasons, such as geographical location and affordability. Everyone should support food justice organizations and initiatives to further assist and allow less fortunate individuals the opportunity to have access to fresh and healthy produce.”

-Devin Clarke, Healthy Markets Intern

Meet the Interns:

	<p>Hannah Silverfine</p> <p>Graduate Program: M.S., Environmental Science & Policy</p> <p>Hometown: Belmont, MA</p> <p>Interests: Social equity and environmental justice, running, eating fresh veggies</p>		<p>Devin Clarke</p> <p>Major: Geography, concentration in Urban Development & Social Change</p> <p>Hometown: New Haven, CT</p> <p>Interests: Urban infrastructure and social justice, public and alternate modes of transit, photography, and spontaneous adventures</p>
--	--	--	--

INTERNSHIP IMPACT

Throughout the internship program, students logged approximately 2,100 hours. Every student contributed to improving community health, and the combined implications of their projects throughout the Central Massachusetts region is profound. All interns were required to attend at least eight hours of community events, which ranged from National Night Out (police departments and community members joining to stand against crime and drugs) to weekly farmers markets, and included much more. At certain events interns distributed WDPH information and educational materials, while at others students took part in city-wide celebrations and activities.

The feedback from the Worcester Division of Public Health staff was overwhelmingly positive. The interns were a critical support to the WDPH goals and projects, as the Division’s staffing capacity would not have enabled as many projects to be carried out to the same degree. Students, in turn, were exposed to a variety of experiences that complemented their liberal arts education and provided them a real-world application of skills.

Students each brought unique skills to the program, and left with different areas of personal growth. The internship exposed students to the functions of local government and connected them to the City of Worcester and its residents. The long-term projects and interspersed events inspired critical thinking and problem-solving on a daily basis. Through their diverse tasks and trainings, students gained a stronger appreciation for responsibilities of the public health system, and the significance it holds for their surrounding communities. Interns linked their experiences to their education in a wide array of forms and concluded the summer with conceptual and practical gains in the field of public health.

What was gained?

Students	Division of Public Health	Worcester
⇒ Knowledge of the public health system, its importance, and its inner workings	⇒ Increased staffing capacity for community events and projects	⇒ Informed citizens connected to the city
⇒ Concrete skills such as: surveying, data collection, mapping, interviewing, and organizing	⇒ Written reports and analyses of current programs and opportunities for improvement	⇒ Increased program capacity and expanded reach of information
⇒ Resiliency, self-directedness, creativity, and problem-solving	⇒ Broadened project tasks, tracking, and impacts	⇒ Strengthened relationships between WDPH, universities, and varied community groups

“The Clark student interns exceeded our expectations here at the Worcester Division of Public Health. They provided specific skillsets that we lack in our department, produced high quality work and were very resourceful! I often viewed them as consultants, rather than student interns.”

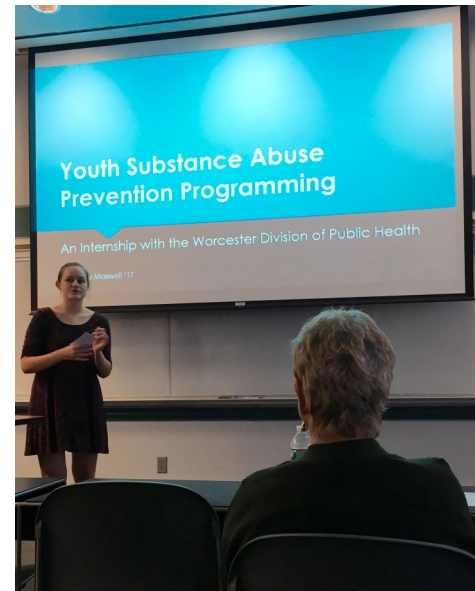
-Nikki Nixon, WDPH Chief of Epidemiology

LOOKING FORWARD

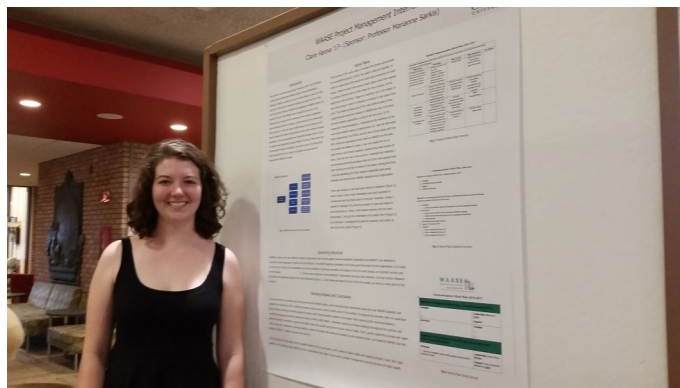
After concluding the summer internship, participants went on to present their findings and experiences at Clark University's LEEP Symposium and Fall Fest. These two academic events allowed students to share posters and oral presentations about their project activities and results with Clark students and faculty.

Multiple interns continued their work throughout the Fall semester at the DPH office, while others integrated their summer tasks into academic research projects at Clark University. A Community Research Health Group (CHRG) was also created at Clark to facilitate additional academic space for public-health related projects. Recognizing the strong student interest in the field, and the need for more trained professionals to meet the public's need, Clark will be launching a Master's degree program in Community and Global Health in the Fall of 2017.

Each year, the partnership among institutions, public offices, and health organizations in Worcester has grown stronger. The consistently positive feedback from students and staff members is an exciting affirmation of the relationship. The hard work and deep intention students contributed throughout the summer helped move public health projects forward, and was fundamental in supporting the goal of the WDPH in achieving health equity. The liberal education Clark students experience in the classroom anchors them as they apply their skills through effective practice. The internship space established by Clark University, the WDPH, and the Mosakowski Institute has opened opportunities for students to engage in an important professional field, and make a positive difference.



Charlotte Maxwell presenting her summer work at the LEEP Symposium



Claire Hanna presenting her summer work at Fall Fest

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Clark's summer internship program at the Worcester Division of Public Health would not be possible without the contributions of numerous people and institutions. UMass Memorial Health Care provided generous financial assistance through its Community Benefits program to underwrite many of the direct costs of the internship program, as well as its critical role in the Behavioral Health survey.

John G. O'Brien, Senior Fellow at the Mosakowski Institute and retired CEO of UMass Memorial Health Care, had the vision and the know-how to launch the academic health department that has matured into AHCW, and has served as mentor and guide to several of our interns. The Worcester Division of Public Health's dedicated professional staff, led by Director Karyn Clark, created a welcoming environment for the interns, put them to work on real projects, and supplied ample guidance and encouragement. Dr. Marianne Sarkis organized and presented our first-ever Public Health Research Boot Camp which gave the interns invaluable grounding before they began their projects. Clark's Liberal Education and Effective Practice office and the Mosakowski Institute's Lisa Coakley and Samantha Arsenault (an alumna of the internship program) provided invaluable administrative support for students from the application process until the internships' conclusion.

Finally and most importantly, the ten Clark interns themselves provided a powerful mixture of intelligence, skills, curiosity, leadership, teamwork, and passion. It takes a great deal of time and resources to implement a program that serves all of its stakeholders, and this summer internship program has grown each year to best support all those involved. We are already looking forward to making the program even better next year.



Devin Clarke and Hannah Silverfine join the Worcester Food Policy Council and Congressman Jim McGovern on a tour of the Daily Table in Dorchester, MA



**MOSAKOWSKI INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC ENTERPRISE**

950 Main Street | Worcester, MA 01610

508-421-3872 | clarku.edu/mosakowskiinstitute

