RESULTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND FAMILY HEALTH’S PHD ALUMNI SURVEY

YEARS 2005-2014

March 13, 2015

SUBMITTED BY:

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Introduction

A major way of assessing the efficacy of a higher education program is evaluation of the professional development and employment status of its graduates. The purpose of this study was to determine the employment settings and titles of PhD graduates from 2005-2014 (10 years) from the University of South Florida College of Public Health (COPH), Department of Community and Family Health (CFH).

Methods

Dr. Karen Liller requested a listing of graduates and their major professors for the last ten years from the COPH Office of Academic and Student Affairs. After receiving this information in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (along with gender, graduation dates, and dissertation titles), she sent the list to all faculty within the Department and asked them to indicate the employment setting and job title of the graduates. Faculty often possess this information because many graduates regularly correspond with their major professors and/or committee members throughout their professional careers. Dr. Liller sent reminders to the faculty bi-weekly. Dr. Kay Perrin and her assistant helped by searching social media to locate graduates of whom the faculty had no information and update information on several graduates. Dr. Liller also searched social media and other sources. She then enlisted the support of Morgan Lee, a PhD/MPH student form the Department of Psychology who also is a member of the Department’s Curriculum Committee, to continue using social media and other search engines to locate the graduates’ employment information and help analyze the completed dataset using SPSS Version 22.

Results

A total of 60 graduates (100%) were located through the various methods described above. As shown in Figure 1, nearly half (48.3%; n=29) of the graduates are working in academic settings, 28.3% (n=17) are working in research settings (including CDC, HRSA, and NORC). It is impressive that six graduates are
research scientists as CDC (35% of research settings). Nearly one-quarter (23.3%; n=14) of the graduates are working for private/public health agencies or in the private sector in leadership positions.¹

In terms of the 29 faculty positions, over 17% (N=5) are research assistant professors. The academic institutions where the graduates (both those in academics and research) are employed are largely highly regarded research universities, including, but not limited to, Yale University, Columbia University, University of Alabama, University of South Florida, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, Morehouse College, and East Carolina University.

As shown in Figure 2, the proportions of graduates working in-state versus out-of-state are nearly equal. A total of 31 graduates (51.7%) are employed in Florida, while 29 (48.3%) are employed out-of-state. Finally, as shown in Figure 3, nearly a quarter of the graduates (23.3%; n=14) are currently employed at USF entities. Eighty-five percent of all the graduates are female (N=51).

These findings demonstrate that the graduates are entering a mixture of positions and that research figures prominently into their decision-making. Since a large proportion of the graduates are employed in research universities, they will be required to use and continue to expand their academic research skills. The complete Excel spreadsheet with detailed information is available upon request.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The results of this study demonstrate that the Department of Community and Family Health’s doctoral graduates are finding employment in myriad settings where they are using their academic and research skills for advancement. We may now pursue the email addresses of the graduates so that we can follow up with them for more information pertaining to the specifics of their present employment, including publications and presentations. It is recommended that an analysis of the alumni’s employment be
conducted annually to continue to evaluate the professional trajectory of the Department’s PhD graduates.

**Footnotes**

1The “other” category includes one recent graduate who is currently seeking employment.
Figure 1. Percentages of USF COPH CFH graduates’ work settings (N=60).
Figure 2. Percentages of USF COPH CFH graduates’ current location (N=60).
Figure 3. Percentages of USF COPH CFH graduates’ current USF employment status (N=60).