Health Services Management & Community Development (HSMCD)

Alumni Career Profiles

Whether you are a first year student exploring career and major options or an alumnus who is thinking about a job change, alumni career profiles provide opportunities to learn about a professional’s career path and decision-making process. Alumni career profiles are provided for students exploring degree options or alumni who are considering a job transition to learn more about the career paths taken by our program graduates. The profiles provide a glimpse of the wide range of careers available to Health Services Management and Community Development Professionals.

Alumni Career Snapshot

- Samuel Ofei-Dodo, Class of 2007
- Research Assistant, Wichita State University (WSU)
- 2008 Lee Holder Award for Excellence in Graduate Allied Health Education Recipient
- Wichita, Kansas

“I would tell a student interested in health services management and community development that you have made a good decision to enter the HSMCD program. When you are done, you can be assured of getting a good job and being able to beat the competition in the market right now.”

Why did you choose to major in HSMCD? If you were starting out again, what would you do differently?
I am from a third world country where health is a major issue. I came to WSU with the intention of majoring in pre-med, but midway realized that could be very difficult. I wasn’t interested in dealing with some of the things associated with primary healthcare delivery, but wanted to stay in the healthcare field. I learned about the HSMCD program from a faculty member and became interested in this field.

Describe your career path since graduation.
Very simple. I was admitted to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at WSU even before I graduated from the HSMCD program. I will graduate in Fall 2009 with an MPA degree with graduate certificates in City/County Management and Public Finance. My ultimate goal is to be a hospital administrator in the near future.

What advice would you give to someone just starting the HSMCD program?
Work closely with the faculty. Talk to them. Go to them whenever you need help. I was always in the faculty’s offices. They offer good advice and help you with what you need.

What did you enjoy most about the HSMCD program?
It’s hard to single one thing out. I loved everything, especially the “Role of Culture” course. It has prepared me for what’s going on right now. This course prepared me for how to talk about such things as minority health. As a member of the student organization, Health Education Advocates for Leadership, Teamwork and Health (HEALTH), I worked on a policy initiative for smoke-free residence halls at WSU.
Where did you do your practicum and what did you learn from it?
Foundation Properties. This is an organization which owns fourteen long-term care and assisted living facilities. I learned a lot from them. I worked first-hand with the directors and administrators and had the opportunity to go through the facilities financials and day-to-day operations of providing care for older adults. It brought to my attention the challenges minorities in the healthcare field face. For my graduate project, I am working on the retention of certified nurse assistants (CNAs) for the long-term care center where I completed my undergraduate practicum.

What is your current position and how long have you been with your employer?
I am a graduate assistant with the Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) program with the WSU Center for Urban Studies. REAP’s mission is to guide state and national actions that affect economic development in South Central Kansas. I have been here since January 2008.

Describe the main responsibilities of your position.
REAP has four standing committees. I work primarily with a water resource committee to identify and coordinate collaborative efforts on regional issues of water quality and supply in South Central Kansas. The committee also ensures that by 2050 we will still have water for rural Kansas. I meet with a lot of city and county officials. Currently, I am involved in public finance projects. For more information about REAP, visit our webpage http://www.reap-ks.org/.

What are some of the things you like to do in your work?
I love everything, but what I love most is talking to the people who work in city and county administration. I prepare biographical sketches for conferences and other events. I am involved in a lot of conference planning. We just held the 13th Annual Public Finance conference.

What do you find most challenging about your job/graduate program?
Be prepared for a lot of reading in the MPA program and a lot of case studies. One of the challenging aspects of my work is you must meet deadlines and always be on time.

What skills are most important for your kind of work?
People skills. You deal with a lot of people. You must be able to relate well with people.

Where, in your opinion, is the best place to look for a job in this field?
Everywhere. There are people working in healthcare facilities, communities and government settings. You can go anywhere and still find a job.

What job search methods did you use to obtain your current position?
I went in and talked with the director of the program. I took my resume and my transcript with me. “The Role of Culture in Health Care” course on my transcript caught his attention. We began talking about how the U.S. is becoming more diverse and how we have to be able to understand people from diverse backgrounds. The tobacco project with HEALTH also helped me. When he saw I had been involved in policy work, he invited me to his office a second time.

What professional organizations do you belong to? Should a student join them now?
Yes. I belong to the Hugo Wall Public Administration Society and I have been invited to become this organization’s Vice-President. I received the 2008 Lee Holder Award for Excellence in Graduate Allied Health Education. This is a national award presented by the Alpha Eta National Allied Health Honor Society.

How well did your experiences at WSU prepare you for your current job?
The courses which stand out in preparing me include: Strategic Management, Finance and The Role of Culture. The HSMCD program is well-rounded and the courses prepared me well for where I work.