



PLUNGING INTO THE BATTLE AGAINST HEALTH DISPARITIES

Geisel students, faculty, and staff took a mid-winter swim to raise money for the Center for Health Equity.

O N A COLD DAY IN FEBRUARY, DOZENS OF GEISEL STUDENTS, faculty, and staff took a stand—and a dive—for an important cause. As part of Dartmouth’s Winter Carnival, they plunged into the frigid waters of Occom Pond to support the proposed founding of the Center for Health Equity. The center, which recently received final approval, will combine several existing programs under one roof, including the Rural Health Scholars and Urban Health Scholars, and lead to the development of new opportunities for medical students.

Lisa Adams (’90), the director of the Center for Health Equity and the associate dean for global health at Geisel, says that it was primarily the students who drove the creation of the center. She notes that students will be able to find guidance on how to become involved in working with underserved populations, whether they are looking for their first

exposure or have years of experience and want help integrating such work into their career path. “It’s meant to be a resource center, a place for students to explore and ensure they are well prepared to undertake such opportunities,” she says.

Another part of the center’s mission will be to help connect students with faculty who are involved in projects related to health equity. “The more students can work with our faculty who are engaged in these kinds of projects, the more enriching the experiences will be,” she says.

The center will also facilitate research related to providing care to underserved populations, in part by bringing together researchers from

many different disciplines. “We know that the approaches that we’re going to have to take to address health inequities and reduce health disparities are complex,” Adams says. “Therefore the solutions are going to have to be multidisciplinary, so I would really love to see some opportunities for working across the campus with students and faculty from the college and the other professional schools.”

Adams believes that the experiences students gain through working with underserved populations will help them throughout their career, regardless of their field. “In most if not all patient interactions, there are cross-cultural differences that one should be aware of and attentive to,” she says. “We want our students to be very reflective about how they are approaching this interaction.”

Adams was among the members of the Geisel community who took part in the dive to support the center. “It was a great bonding experience,” she says. For the students who plunged into Occom Pond, taking the next step in contributing to health equity should be easy in comparison.

NEWSBRIEF



A CONTINUING EFFORT

Three years after a devastating earthquake struck Haiti, dozens of health-policy experts, government officials, and others from Haiti met with faculty and students from across Dartmouth to assess ongoing development efforts and discuss future initiatives.