

Jon Gilbert Fox



KRISTEN JOGERST

class of 2016

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The peer advisor to the Center for Health Equity, Kristen Jogerst is helping other medical students gain valuable global health experience.

AS AN ADVENTURE-LOVING COLLEGE STUDENT IN IOWA, Kristen Jogerst knew she wanted to do three things with her life: become a doctor, work abroad, and teach. As a second-year medical student, she’s well on her way to accomplishing all three.

Jogerst started participating in her first global health experiences while an undergraduate, going on trips to Haiti to work on primary-care initiatives with the nongovernmental organization Community Health Initiative. She worked with rural populations in the mountains and countryside and fell in love with the country, its people, and the work.

Jogerst has since returned to Haiti, working as a clinic manager for Community Health Initiative, with members of Haiti’s Ministry of Health, and as part of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Infectious Disease and International Health team’s HIV care and treatment initiatives in Les Cayes.

Last summer, Jogerst witnessed first-hand the day-to-day struggles of Haitians while living and working in the community of Les Cayes. “It was really important, because being part of the community you have a better sense of the community’s needs,” she says. “This is why partnerships are so important. Otherwise, you risk giving people what you think they need, rather than what they actually need.”

The insight she gained from her experience inspired her to work toward changing the way global health opportunities are organized and to ensuring people are prepared to pursue the work. To that end, Jogerst helped launch the Center for Health Equity’s new Global Health Scholars program at Geisel last fall and is the center’s global health peer advisor.

“The center is in the process of creating a global health and health equity education program at Geisel,” Jogerst says. The goal is to consolidate fragmented opportunities and projects, to pool resources, and to partner with organizations that have ongoing sustainable projects.

In her role as peer advisor, Jogerst is strengthening Geisel student engagement in global health. She is responsible for helping to figure out sustainable opportunities for students interested in global health projects and for locating partners for projects where students can make significant progress in six to eight weeks.

Jogerst’s dedication to creating sustainable opportunities in global health work is already reaping rewards. Last fall, she was appointed to the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Education Committee. She’s the only medical student on the committee, which consists of physicians and faculty who are global health leaders at their respective universities.

“The Education Committee—along with our Global Health Competencies Subcommittee—is mapping out various core competencies that have proven to be successful in the fields of global health, such as engineering, public health, nursing, and dentistry, among others,” Jogerst says.

Jogerst’s two-year term with CUGH has long-term implications for global health education on a national level. As a result of the committee’s work, questions centered on global health competencies will be included on future state licensing medical board exams.

“We think it’s really important to promote global health education across different fields, to prepare students before going abroad, and to emphasize that no matter where medical students practice in the future, they will need to be proficient at several core competencies in global health,” she says.

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