

## Round-table Discussion - Theme E

Tuesday 10th November, 13.30 - 14.15

### Use of Internet video in distance doctoral health leadership training for working professionals

#### Professor Suzanne Hobbs

Director, Doctoral Program in Health Leadership

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA

Email: [suzanne\\_hobbs@unc.edu](mailto:suzanne_hobbs@unc.edu)

Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, MS, RD, is Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM) and the Department of Nutrition in the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Within HPM, she directs the distance Doctoral Program in Health Leadership (DrPH), a program she helped to launch while Associate Director of the program from 2004 to 2006. She has extensive experience in the application of distance technologies in higher education. Most of her classroom teaching over the past nine years has employed distance technologies, and she has held several leadership roles at UNC in the area of distance education, collaborating with colleagues on several Department, School and University committees to develop distance education at UNC and throughout the UNC 16-campus system. She also serves the Association of Schools of Public Health on the steering committee of the DrPH Subcommittee charged with developing a competencies model for the DrPH degree. A practicing dietitian, Sue holds a doctorate in health policy and administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ned Brooks, MBA, Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, Leah Masselink, BA, Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM), Gillings School of Global Public Health, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The University of North Carolina Doctoral Program in Health Leadership (DrPH) prepares mid-career professionals for senior-level positions in organizations working domestically and internationally to improve the public's health (1, 2). The three-year, cohort-based distance program confers a DrPH in Health Administration.

The purpose of the program is to produce graduates with the motivation, knowledge, and skills to become top leaders capable of improving the public's health. The program targets mid-career professionals or emerging leaders with substantial leadership responsibilities in communities, organizations and institutions. Examples include health directors, mid-career managers in government agencies, leaders within nonprofit and non-governmental organizations, program officers and other mid-level or senior managers working for foundations, and others working within the

health field, which may include entrepreneurs and individuals working in nontraditional settings affecting the health of the public.

The program emphasizes adult learning principles, using case-based and collaborative activities and extensive interaction with top-level national and international health leaders who serve as adjunct faculty, guest speakers and program advisors. The first two program years are comprised of required coursework – six credit hours per semester, including summers – totaling 36 hours and culminating in dissertation defense and completion of comprehensive exams. Dissertation is completed during the third year (15 credit hours). With the exception of three short visits to Chapel Hill in each of years one and two, learning takes place in participants' homes and offices, away from the UNC campus. Using Internet video, classes are held in real time across multiple time zones, connecting students throughout the U.S. and Hawaii and as far away as Uganda, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, France, Switzerland, Canada and Lebanon. The distance format allows working professionals to complete training while remaining in-country and continuing full-time employment. Use of high speed Internet for real-time classes increases electronic propinquity and supports rigor and quality in doctoral-level distance education. We describe program policies and procedures, program evaluations, challenges and successes after nearly five years of operation. Lessons learned may assist others as they evaluate the feasibility of creating similar programs.

We are working now to extend the program model to accelerate the pace and reach of urgently needed doctoral-level leadership training around the world. To do so, we are developing a global consortium of partner programs. We envision that consortium members will share curriculum and technology best practices, faculty and school resources, encourage student exchange, and function as a unified network, collaborating with public and private stakeholders on strategic efforts to build health leadership and management capacity within the U.S. and globally. A critical need exists for additional programs able to attract and prepare top health leaders. This is one model for what may be a new era in professional doctoral health management education.

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the UNC Doctoral Program in Health Leadership.
- Identify advantages of distance doctoral-level leadership training for mid-career health professionals around the world.

- Evaluate challenges and opportunities in creating a distance DrPH program.
- Discuss technology considerations in supporting a distance DrPH program.

1. DeClerq, Eugene; Caldwell, Karen; Hobbs, Suzanne Havala; and Guyer, Bernard. "The Changing Pattern of Doctoral Education in Public Health 1985-2005 and the Challenge of Doctoral Training for Practice and Leadership." *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(9): 10-14, September 2008.
2. Hobbs, Suzanne Havala; Brooks, Edward; Wang, Virginia and Skinner, Asheley. "Developing Practitioner Leaders in a Distance Education Doctoral Program: Challenges and Opportunities." *Journal of Health Administration Education*, 24(3): 283-300, Summer 2007.