Faculty Spotlight – Koichiro Otani, Ph.D.

Dr. Koichiro (Ko) Otani is an Associate Professor in the College of Public Health’s Department of Health Policy and Management. Ko came to the University of Georgia from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW), where he was an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Policy and a Founding Director of the IPFW Japanese Saturday School.

Ko’s programmatic line of research focuses on patient satisfaction. Among other things, his research has shown that, in a hospital setting, patients tend to pay more attention to nursing care than physician care to determine their overall satisfaction; in an outpatient setting, the opposite is true. Ko’s research interests also include childhood immunization and childhood obesity. Specific to childhood immunization, Ko hopes to identify tailored materials to increase children’s immunization compliance rates. In the area of childhood obesity, Ko seeks to identify more efficacious intervention programs to control children’s weight. In terms of Ko’s teaching contribution to the college and university, his classes focus primarily on health administration, comparative health systems, and epidemiology.

A career in public health was not something Ko initially envisioned for himself. Originally from Kobe, Japan, Ko worked as a sales representative in various industries in Japan, including construction and pharmaceuticals.

Ko came to the United States in 1990 to pursue a career in academia. He earned his Master of Science in Administration with a specialization in Social Service Administration at Georgia Southwestern College and his Ph.D. in Health Services Research from the Saint Louis University School of Public Health. At UGA, Ko looks forward to establishing and expanding his research program and collaborating with other faculty across the university.

In his personal time, Ko enjoys spending time with his wife, Motoko, who recently finished her M.B.A. and is currently studying for her CPA. Ko also enjoys playing tennis, a sport at which he is quite accomplished; he was a tennis instructor in Japan for three years.
MARSHA DAVIS, PH.D. APPOINTED NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

In the field of public health, community engagement is essential for the core functions of research, teaching, and service. As the College of Public Health’s (CPH) Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement, Dr. Marsha Davis is building capacity to expand the outreach of the college, strengthen partnerships with UGA Public Service and Outreach (PSO) units, and foster strong relationships with the Department of Public Health, public health districts, and individual communities to improve the public’s health in Georgia.

Marsha received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Behavioral Epidemiology from the University of Minnesota where she also completed Pre-Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). While at the University of Minnesota, Marsha was involved in two landmark community studies: the Minnesota Heart Health Program—a long-term, field study of the feasibility and effectiveness of community-wide health education to lower cardiovascular disease risk, morbidity, and mortality; and CATCH—a multi-component, multi-year, school health promotion program to improve children’s diets and increase physical activity. Before coming to UGA, Marsha served on the faculty of the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University and the University of Minnesota School of Public Health.

Through partnerships with CPH faculty and PSO units on campus, the Office of Outreach and Engagement (O&E) manages several projects—evaluation of school-based health clinics, an HIV/AIDS needs assessment for Northeast Georgia Public Health District, evaluation of the Georgia SHAPE initiative, obesity prevention in Habersham County, and pregnancy and STI prevention in Sumter County. Training for the public health workforce in Georgia is also provided by O&E through the HRSA-funded Georgia Public Health Training Center (GPHTC). Signature trainings include the Public Health Leadership Academy, management and leadership, economic evaluation, and the annual State of Public Health Conference. The GPHTC also hosts a web portal to easily connect public health workers, university students, public health agencies and community-based organizations. On-line offerings include evidence-based medicine, program evaluation, and worksite wellness modules among others.

Marsha has obtained considerable external funding to support research and outreach efforts at the college. As either Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-PI, Marsha has secured over $8 million in external funds from federal agencies and private foundations. Most recently, she received a 5-year, $2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture to support a community-based childhood obesity prevention program in southwest Georgia. Through external funding and community support, the O&E employs a public health public service and outreach faculty in Colquitt County, two program coordinators, a business manager, five graduate students, and a postdoctoral research fellow.

When asked how she sees herself contributing to the college and UGA in her new position as Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement, Marsha said, “Through the work that we are doing, I hope to create healthy communities throughout Georgia; train a current and future public health workforce to embrace systems, policy, and program change; and bridge academia and practice.”


JIA-SHENG WANG, PH.D. NAMED ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PROFESSOR IN PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr. Jia-Sheng (“J.S.”) Wang, Professor and Head of the Department of Environmental Health Sciences in the University of Georgia’s College of Public Health, has been named the inaugural UGA Athletic Association Professor in Public Health. J.S. received his Ph.D. in Pathology and Immunology from the Boston University School of Medicine and his Ph.D. in Medicine, specifically Nutritional Toxicology, from Shanghai First Medical College in Shanghai, China.

In 2008, J.S. came to UGA from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, where he was Professor of Molecular Toxicology. While at Texas Tech, J.S. led both the Division of Health Sciences in the Institute of Environmental and Human Health and the Cancer Prevention and Carcinogenesis Program at the Southwest Cancer Treatment and Research Center.

J.S. has 35 years of research and teaching experience in toxicology, chemical carcinogenesis, molecular epidemiology, and cancer chemoprevention. He is a Georgia Research Alliance Distinguished Cancer Scientist and also serves as a faculty member in the UGA Interdisciplinary Toxicology Program, the UGA Cancer Center, and the UGA Center for Food Safety. His current research focuses on the impact of environmental toxins on the formation of liver and esophageal cancers. J.S. is a world leader in exploring the role that natural products and dietary supplements can play in preventing cancer in vulnerable populations. He also plays a key role in creating stronger ties between UGA and public health institutions in China, particularly UGA’s joint research agreement with the Wuxi Center for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the most progressive regional divisions of the Chinese Centers for Disease Control.

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Recent Representative Publications


RECENT CPH FACULTY RECIPIENTS OF EXTERNAL FUNDING


Naeher, L. (PI). Potential fire mediated flux to air and inhalation exposure to radionuclides from contaminated forest wetlands at the Savannah River Site, SC. US Department of Agriculture 13CS11083601005, 2013-2014, $34,935.


THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH’S OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The College of Public Health’s Office of Information Technology (“CPHOIT”) is currently staffed by three people who provide computer and IT support to the college. The person with whom most of us interact is IT Professional Ben Morrison (pictured bottom right). Ben provides technical support for over 800 devices college-wide while simultaneously managing the college’s instructional labs and classrooms, overseeing regular software updates, and devoting several significantly demanding weeks to poster production each term. He has the primary role with new computer system setup and updating the college’s IT-use and inventory records. Ben is also an accomplished songwriter and guitarist who performs after hours in local venues and occasionally at college events.

Wayne Crotts (pictured bottom center), System Administrator, came from UGA’s College of Agriculture where he kept their research sites across the state linked to the central program on campus. He oversees the college’s central server, servers of other units in the college (including the recent migration of the Department of Health Policy and Management and the Institute for Disaster Management to central oversight), the imaging server for loading software systems for new and rebuilt computers, and requests for large data project servers of individual faculty. Wayne is also involved in the long-term planning for such resources as a new video conference management system and the secure server room located in Rhodes Hall. He also spends considerable time defending college computers from virus attacks - ask him about the new threat of illegal encryption of files held for ransom by third parties. Outside of work, Wayne is interested in star-gazing and travelling. He is looking forward to visiting the Lemmon Sky Center Observatory in Tucson, Arizona this spring.

IT Director Maria Cleghorne’s (pictured bottom left) prior experience at several other UGA units has allowed her to build a network of IT contacts across campus that have proven invaluable as our college evolves. Her responsibilities include overall CPHOIT personnel and budget management (she trained Ben for his role and hired Wayne), the negotiation and oversight for all IT maintenance, warranty, and licensing agreements (such as the new license agreement allowing free access to Adobe software), preparing the college's proposals for annual tech fee allocation and purchase (including the annual large special project requests like the recent upgrades at the college's Department of Environmental Health Science), and representing CPHOIT interests at the university level, often in the context of IT policies and directives. While operating in her executive role, Maria also provides direct, hands-on service in support of Ben and Wayne when they confront heavy workloads. Outside of work she is devoted to her family and, in particular, her daughter Nicole who recently graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Sciences.
NEW CPH GRANT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES - EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2013

The CPH Research Office implemented new Grant Submission Guidelines effective December 1, 2013. These Guidelines are intended to facilitate grant submission efforts, ensure that grants are submitted in a timely manner, and increase the likelihood that applications submitted are reviewed favorably. Below is a summary of the new Guidelines:

2 to 3 Months Prior to Grant Submission Deadline:
Submit a copy of the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), program announcement (PA), or request for application (RFA) to the CPH Grants Manager, Chryssi Laguines at claguine@uga.edu.

3 Weeks Prior to Grant Submission Deadline:
Submit a draft budget and budget justification to the CPH Research Office administrator with whom you are collaborating.

2 Weeks Prior to Grant Submission Deadline:
Submit a completed/revised budget, budget justification, and abstract to your CPH Research Office administrator.

5 or More Business Days Prior to Grant Submission Deadline:
Submit the final and complete version of your application to your CPH Research Office administrator. An application will be considered “complete” when all required sections and documents have been submitted to the CPH Research Office.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

Funding Opportunities from All Federal Government Agencies
http://www.grants.gov

NIH K-Awards Kiosk
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide

New Facilities and Administrative Cost Rates for Proposals and Awards
http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/osp/frequent-info

New eResearch Portal for Grants and Awards
http://grant.ovpr.uga.edu

THE CPH RESEARCH OFFICE HAS MOVED

In October 2013, the CPH Research Office moved into its new office space in historic Rhodes Hall located on the University of Georgia's Health Sciences Campus - the site of the former Navy Supply Corps School. Our new address is:

104 Rhodes Hall, Health Sciences Campus
105 Spear Road (shipping)
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602