

Global health major advances MU's mission

Manchester's new global health major serves multiple purposes: It fills a growing need in the world. It creates another path for students interested in health-related careers. And it advances MU's mission to improve the human condition.

At its core, global health seeks health equity among all nations and all people, and addresses the limited resources available for that health care. "Global health points people in the direction of using those limited resources better," says Jeff Osborne, professor of chemistry and global health program director.

The program's broad scope will enable graduates to deal with health issues in communities, both in the United States and around the world.

Under Osborne's leadership, Manchester launched the new major last year. The program's highly interdisciplinary course work includes natural sciences, peace studies, communication studies, and economics, with options in social work, political science, psychology, exercise science and athletic training, philosophy and business.

Manchester's program is distinctive, adds Osborne, in that students take courses in dealing with conflict such as conflict resolution or mediation and conciliation and with poverty.

Faculty developed one new course specifically for the major. Global Disease examines infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, and the global burden of disease. Another new course at MU, Community Health Work, provides the curriculum for students to sit for the Indiana Community Health Workers Association certification. Manchester also recently added poverty studies to its lineup and joined the Shepherd Consortium, which provides summer internships in areas related to poverty in the United States.

Career opportunities for global health majors are varied and growing, says Osborne. They include community health

administrator, community health worker, consultant, disaster relief support technician, foundation executive, health educator, health services manager, pharmaceutical sales, policy analyst, program evaluator, public health advocate and research coordinator, among others. Global health, adds Osborne, can also provide solid preparation for professional or graduate studies.

As director of the Medical Practicum, which provides health care to underserved populations in Central America each January, Osborne has experienced global health issues firsthand. The world is becoming increasingly multicultural, says Osborne, and we need to understand multiple cultures and communicate with cultural humility in order to effectively provide health care.

Ultimately, global health study advances Manchester's mission. "We want everyone to have access to quality health care, so the idea of not simply working for one population but rather trying to make decisions that improve everyone's lot, it's in keeping with how we view the infinite worth of every individual."

By Melinda Lantz '81



Jeff Osborne, professor of chemistry and global health program director, poses with interpreters on a Medical Practicum trip.