SUNY Downstate SPH Student Spotlight

What brought you to the field of Public Health and prompted you to pursue a DrPH degree?

While doing my undergraduate degree at SUNY Stony Brook I took a class in Women's Studies, where I learned about the sexual violence that women face on a daily basis. The class had a strong impact on me because I have many friends who have been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives. I became passionate about improving the health of women, which lead me to pursue a major in Women's Studies with a focus on Gender, Sexuality, and Public Health. I supplemented that with an additional major in Health Sciences, concentrating in Public Health and Community Health Education. I went on to pursue an MPH in Global Health Practice from the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. There I conducted research and directed my studies on women's sexual and reproductive health abroad. I conducted my field work in Udaipur, India where I worked with an NGO evaluating a post-natal care intervention and the use of Depo-Provera injectable contraceptive.

I decided to come to SUNY Downstate to pursue a DrPH degree in order to develop the skills I will need to advance the sexual and reproductive health of women in New York City and around the world. Specifically, I chose the DrPH because it focuses on the application of research. Working intimately with faculty on their research, as well as performing my own, will give me the opportunity for applied learning and experience in the field.

What made you choose SUNY Downstate?

I chose SUNY Downstate for a few reasons: reputation, location, and affordability. SUNY Downstate is a renowned medical institution and learning center, and it's reputation proceeds itself. The exceptional work of the faculty and staff of the SPH translate this reputation for excellence. After speaking with the faculty in the Department of Community Health Sciences it was very evident that the faculty's passion for their student's success and areas of research fueled the excellence of the school. In my time in the DrPH program I have come to see that this passion leads the faculty to work intimately with and truly mentor the students and help them advance their careers and education. SUNY Downstate also has a prime location in central Brooklyn. It is very accessible for all areas of New York City, and gave me the opportunity to pursue a higher degree while remaining close to home and my family. Similarly, despite its excellent reputation and prime location Downstate remains affordable and will leave me in the strongest possible financial position upon graduation.

What would you say to a student considering the program?

I would tell someone who is considering the program to be passionate about hands-on application of public health principles. That means a having genuine commitment

to helping a community, and it means being willing to challenge yourself in your coursework and research.