We are all happy and thriving at the CRWG, continuing to engage in national and international research projects, as well as program and community outreach activities. The CRWG as always has had a productive year. All of our programs are flourishing.

Our five year, $1.5 million grant from Office on Women’s Health of the US Department of Health and Human Services to improve cardiovascular health for women living in rural Illinois is entering its third year. To date we have recruited seven churches to collaborate in promoting sustainable community based health programs.

Our NIH-funded Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) program has been funded for another five years and currently has eight scholars and associates from the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, the School of Public Health, and the Cancer Center. Our BIRCWH scholars and graduates have brought in over $6 million in grant funding since the program began in 2007.

Our Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program has continued its wide range of programming for STEM women students, including the WISE peer mentoring program, the WISE Wing floor in UIC Housing, and both educational and networking events. In addition, WISE has a new partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, an opportunity to raise awareness about career opportunities at the Federal Reserve for computer science students.

This fall we bid goodbye to Dr. Manu Khare as she takes a faculty position at the UIC College of Medicine in Rockford, and welcomed Dr. Heather Risser to our CRWG family as lead evaluator. We proudly recognize Kris Zimmermann receiving the UIC CAPE award in recognition of her exemplary service to CRWG and the UIC community.

I am always impressed with the great activity and enthusiasm of the CRWG faculty and staff and I hope you enjoy reading about the wonderful accomplishments of our Center in this edition of the BRC.

My best,

Stacie Geller
Natasha Devroye joined the UIC community in 2009. She is an assistant professor in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The official title of her research focus is “multi-user information theory and applications to cognitive and software-defined radio, radar, two-way and wireless communications in general,” but CRWG assistant director, Veronica Arreola, wanted to find out what that really means to our everyday lives.

Our lives have become more dependent on electronic communications than we dare to admit. We have email, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and countless text messages. The story of how we got to this point, as compared to the fact we could boil an egg while waiting for a document to download in 1996, is the focus of Devroye’s work. Her theoretical work on wireless communications is pushing the boundaries of how fast our text messages get to us and how quickly online music streams into our ears.

Have you ever been at a festival or sporting event, gone to check in on FourSquare, and discovered that your phone cannot connect to the network? Devroye’s work seeks to solve this issue. She focuses on improving how many connections a wireless tower can handle and the efficacy of data transmission. Her field is what took us from dial-up to high-speed internet connections.

One part of Devroye’s work deals with cognitive radio, or smart radio waves. The reason we lose WBEZ’s signal on a road trip is that radio waves can only travel so far before losing strength. We also know that WBEZ is at 91.5 – that is its position on the FM frequency. Cognitive radio waves can think, and if a frequency is occupied, they can jump to a different frequency. Remember when we could listen in on neighbors via baby monitors? That was because those monitors had set frequencies and, thus, if our neighbors’ monitor had the same frequency as our monitor, we could sometimes eavesdrop. Devroye says today’s monitors know to avoid that situation.

From Wikileaks to Edward Snowden, privacy and telecommunications are a hot topic. While there are some privacy issues to worry about, there are others such as our everyday conversations that Devroye says are protected. She claims that while we are talking on our phones, anyone can hear our conversations, but they need the encryption key. Encryption is the key to our privacy, and, thus why Devroye does not worry about her privacy.

Devroye grew up in Canada, which seems to mirror the US in its “Land of Immigrants” history, yet somehow Canada does not stereotype girls’ abilities in math and science. Devroye stated that while growing up in Canada, she did not get the message that that
women are not suited for science and engineering, which she thinks far too many girls in the US receive. In fact, she cannot recall being in, or knowing of any, women in science clubs as a kid.* That said, Devroye has been active with the UIC Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program, and is very supportive of its mission. One reason Devroye and her husband chose to come to UIC was because of the particularly friendly environment for women faculty members. The longer she is here, and the more she talks with colleagues at other institutions, the more Devroye knows they made the right choice, stating, “women have noticed the changes.” She especially likes to gather with other women STEM faculty.

While her department at UIC, Electrical and Chemical Engineering, has the lowest percentage of women undergraduate students, outside of UIC, Devroye's subfield, information engineering, is popular for women. She believes this is because information engineering is mostly theoretical. All one needs is a computer to get work done. There is no need to stay late to complete lab experiments. Devroye feels that it is a very family-friendly field.

The portability of Devroye's field flies in the face of the stereotype of engineering. Often, we consider engineering to be a field where people are building things, yet Devroye does not build nor get her hands dirty in nitty-gritty work. It is important for young women and girls who meet Devroye to see that engineering is a diverse field where people who like to get grease under their fingernails work with those who can work from anywhere there is a Wi-Fi signal.

Devroye is a new mom and when she is not working to speed up our Twitter feed, she enjoys hiking with her family.

*For the record, there is the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology, which was founded in 1981. You can find them at http://www.scwist.ca/

2013 Dan Dissertation Award Winners

The CRWG is pleased to announce the 2013 Alice J. Dan Dissertation Research Award winners.

The first place winners are Amy Brainer (Department of Sociology) for her research entitled “Sexuality and Family Relations in Taiwan,” Camille Quinn (College of Social Work) for her research entitled, “Exploring Gender Differences in Juvenile Offenders: Understanding Girls on Probation,” and Rachel Allison (Department of Sociology) for her research entitled “Gender and the Organization of Women’s Professional Soccer.”

The second place award was given to Smita Das (Department of English) for her research entitled “Coolie Empire: Narratives of Race, Gender, and Sexuality.”

The Annual Dan Dissertation Award is named after the founding director of the CRWG and long-time faculty member in the College of Nursing, Alice J. Dan, PhD. The Award encourages original and significant research about gender and/or women by UIC doctoral students. Recipients are awarded monetary support to assist with their research. The award is open to UIC doctoral students in any field who have completed the requirements for candidacy and have an approved dissertation proposal by the application deadline.

To support the Dan Dissertation Award, visit http://www.uic.edu/depts/crwg/give.shtml to make a secure, tax deductible donation online.
Marriage rates have been declining among adults age 25 to 34 during the past decade and the decline has accelerated since the onset of the recession, according to Population Reference Bureau’s analysis of new data from the US Census Bureau’s 2009 American Community Survey and 2010 Current Population Survey. Research shows that for Black women, the marriage rate is exceptionally low. To illustrate, in 2009 an episode of American Broadcasting Corporation’s (ABC) Nightline reported that “approximately 42% of African-American women have never been married, which is double the number of never married white women” (ABC Nightline, December 22, 2009). The report concluded that there are “1.8 million more Black women than Black men; therefore, if every Black man in America married a Black woman today, one out of 12 Black women still wouldn’t be married if they hoped to marry a Black man” (ABC Nightline, December 22, 2009).

This perceived difficulty that African-American women have in getting married has been described as the “Black girl curse” (ABC Nightline, December, 22, 2009). Essence, a prominent Black magazine, also cited that 70% of professional African-American women with academic degrees (e.g., BAs, MDs, and JDs) are “still without the most elusive title: M-R-S.” So how does one explain why marriage rates in the Black community fall so much shorter than those of other communities?

Some experts believe that lower marriage rates among Black people have nothing to do with race, and everything to do with educational and income disparities between Black women and Black men. Economic issues, incarceration rates, and the increasing number of Black women getting baccalaureate and advanced college degrees compared to Black men all affect the stability or likelihood of Black marriage. African-American women typically outnumber men because of higher rates of incarceration and premature death among African-American men. In addition, African-American women’s reluctance to date men of other races may also contribute to lower marriage rates. An increase in Black men’s interracial marriage rates is also associated with declining rates of Black women’s marriage rates. Stanford law professor Ralph Richard Banks, author of the book, Is Marriage for White People? How the African-American Marriage Decline Affects Everyone, conducted roughly 100 interviews with African Americans about their marriage, and dating ideals and experiences. Dr. Banks’ explanation as to why marriage rates are so low among Black Americans is that there is a shortage of eligible Black men.

The shortage of eligible men may have the potential to affect the romantic partnerships and sexual decision-making of African-American women. A perceived shortage of African-American men may decrease women’s agency and power in their sexual relationships and increase women’s acceptance of concurrent partnerships. Thus, a relative shortage of African-American men may make women more willing to engage in risky sexual behaviors to please their partners and to accept their partners’
risks behaviors in order to preserve the relationship. Although the potential impact of the shortage of men on sexual behavior is often noted, supporting evidence on its relationship to concurrent partnerships is scarce. Some studies, however, have examined the sex ratio among Black people as a potential determinant of concurrent partnerships, and HIV and sexual transmitted infection (STI) risk. These studies suggest that male shortage, as well as high rates of incarceration, unemployment, and poverty, with roots in racial discrimination, support partnership concurrency and lead to denser sexual networks and higher rates of HIV/STI transmission.

The decline in Black marriage rates may be a complex response to a wide variety of changes in the economic, social and cultural circumstances facing young Black Americans as they decide when and whether to marry. Additional research is needed to further explore the individual, social and contextual factors influencing marriage and concurrent partnerships among African Americans, and whether and how these relationships impact health. Without more data, the debate on whether there really is a shortage of marriageable Black men in America continues.

Chisina Kapungu, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the UIC College of Medicine.

Collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Fall 2013 brings a new partner, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, to the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Program. We will kick-off our partnership with an event at the Federal Reserve specifically aimed at our computer science and computer engineering students. In addition to this event, WISE and other UIC units such as the Department of Computer Science will be working with the Federal Reserve to produce a shadow day and bring a speaker to campus for a mentoring dinner. Also through the partnership, computer science students in our WISE peer mentoring program will have an opportunity to receive mentorship from women working at the Federal Reserve. This collaboration was created in an effort to increase awareness of career opportunities for these students at the Federal Reserve. For more information, follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/uicwise or on Twitter at https://twitter.com/uicwise

2013 “WISE Wing” Students

WISE Peer Mentor Program

This year, WISE has initiated 24 mentoring pairs! From Biological Sciences to Chemical Engineering, our mentors are ready to help our new students find their place in the UIC community. Interestingly, during the WISE self-assessment conducted earlier this year (more details will be presented in a future newsletter), we discovered that women who participate in WISE’s mentoring programs have a higher 4-year graduation rate than WISE women who do not participate in mentoring. All of our mentors are volunteers, and their commitment to the program is a sign that they are leaders on campus and are excited to give back.

Pre-College Outreach

Over the summer, WISE welcomed the incoming ninth grade class from Young Women's Leadership Charter School for a tour of campus, including a peek at campus housing. They also had the honor of hearing Dr. Julienne N. Rutherford talk about her work on stillbirth and marmoset monkeys. One young woman said she woke up that morning unexcited about the event, but by the end of the event was curious about considering science as a career option.

WISE will continue to host schools and community groups. In fact, Santiago Elementary School’s third grade class is scheduled to visit in early October. They will hear from UIC Alumna and WISE Advisory Board member, Dr. Patricia Frank.

WISE Advisory Board

The WISE Advisory Board meets semiannually and has been an invaluable sounding board for the WISE director. If you are interested in being a member of the WISE Advisory board, please contact Veronica I. Arreola at via@uic.edu.
Approximately 10-20% of women experience clinical depression during pregnancy or the first 12 months postpartum, but fewer than 24% of these women are diagnosed. A recent report from Michelle Kominiarek, MD, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UIC, shows that in a racial-ethnic minority population, obese women are less likely to be assessed for perinatal depression as part of their routine prenatal care compared to women who are not obese. To address that discrepancy, Dr. Kominiarek, along with Pauline Maki, PhD, Senior Director of Research at the CRWG, are leading a new interdisciplinary research project using funding from the Chancellor’s Discovery Fund for Multidisciplinary Pilot Research.

The goals of the research study are two-fold. First, Drs. Kominiarek and Maki aim to conduct a pilot randomized clinical trial of an evidence-based training program for prenatal care providers. The training program incorporates an assessment of perinatal depression into routine clinical visits and was shown in initial studies to raise screening rates to 95% and assessment rates by 75%. The second goal is to capitalize on the UIC Clinical Research Data Warehouse to establish a research database linking newly acquired diagnoses of perinatal depression, perinatal medical records, and a biorepository of blood samples from routine perinatal clinic visits at UIC.

Two pilot projects are planned to demonstrate the potential impact of the proposed database. The first focuses on gestational weight gain (GWG) and risk for postpartum depression. One third of women who deliver at UIC are obese and 55% of them exceed the GWG guidelines. Depression and anxiety are linked to excessive GWG and increased food intake. A second and related project examines leptin as a potential biomarker for perinatal depression. Leptin is a hormone that plays a key role in regulating energy, appetite, and metabolism and is linked to preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and abnormal fetal growth. High leptin levels at entry to prenatal care are associated with increased GWG, increased risk of obesity and postpartum depression. The pilot project will examine leptin and depression at entry into prenatal care to evaluate leptin as a potential early biomarker for perinatal depression.

The ultimate aim of this project is to improve clinical care for women and to create a rich database of medical records, biological specimens, and mental health data to mine in order to determine who is at risk for perinatal depression and who we should target in our future intervention trials.

1. Kominiarek MA, Rankin K, Handler A. Provider Adherence to Recommended Prenatal Care Content: Does It Differ for Obese Women? [Published online ahead of print August 4 2013]. Matern Child Health J.
Reproductive dysfunction (i.e., infertility and pregnancy loss) affects millions of women around the world each year. Current clinical models for diagnosis and treatment do not typically look beyond a woman’s adult health status, behaviors and socioeconomic status. Fetal programming theory proposes that this approach may be short-sighted. Fetal programming theory suggests that the intrauterine environment and early developmental conditions impact female reproductive function in adulthood. For example, maternal birth weight is associated with the birth weight of her offspring, as well as preterm birth and infant and perinatal mortality. Although research has demonstrated that developmental trajectories set into motion during the fetal period play an important role in shaping women’s reproductive health in adulthood, the mechanisms are currently unknown.

Julienne Rutherford, PhD, a biological anthropologist and assistant professor of Women, Children, and Family Health Science in the UIC College of Nursing, has been awarded a five-year research grant from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to elucidate the relationship between intrauterine environment and subsequent adult reproductive function. Dr. Rutherford’s study “Womb to Womb: Programming Reproductive Development in the Female Marmoset Monkey” explores the central hypothesis that female marmosets who experience restricted intrauterine development (e.g. low birth weight, high litter size, low maternal prepregnant weight) experience impaired allocation of resources for reproductive development within the womb, and therefore will have impaired reproductive function in adulthood.

Dr. Rutherford will use a nonhuman primate model that is particularly well-suited for studying reproductive biology in multiple generations. Marmoset monkeys achieve sexual maturity at approximately 15 months of age and can produce offspring twice a year, making it possible to study three generations of monkeys within the five year study period. Dr. Rutherford will focus on two aspects of marmoset reproductive function: litter size and placental function. Marmosets typically give birth to either twins or triplets and the variation in litter size is directly related to maternal body mass, such that larger maternal size is associated with triplet pregnancies. In the womb, despite having heavier mothers than twins, triplet fetuses experience restricted growth and lower birth weights.

Dr. Rutherford’s lab has already demonstrated that a female’s litter size at birth is a key predictor of the number of stillbirths she will
produce as an adult. In addition to considering litter size and birth weight as markers of the stress a fetus experiences in the womb, Dr. Rutherford will examine placental structure and function, as the placenta is the link between maternal ecology and fetal growth and development. In this study, it will be possible to explore associations between the placenta a female marmoset was born with and the placenta that her body produces in pregnancy.

The translational potential of Dr. Rutherford’s work is tremendous. With a better understanding of the relationship between early life growth and development and adult reproductive function, we will gain insight into how adverse developmental outcomes in one generation can affect their offspring for generations. This research could help us to understand the mechanisms behind persistent racial and ethnic disparities in pregnancy complications like preterm and stillbirth.

BIRCWH Accomplishments

The CRWG is home base for the UIC Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women’s Health (BIRCWH) program, an NIH/NICHD-funded K12 institutional training grant for junior faculty working towards independent research careers in women’s health and sex/gender differences research. The BIRCWH program has provided salary support for protected time and structured mentoring to 14 current and former scholars from all six UIC health sciences colleges, the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Below are some highlights from our successful sixth year of funding:

- Former scholar Angela Black has accepted a research fellowship position in complementary and alternative medicine with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Black will begin her research fellowship in August 2013.

- Scholar Kirstie Danielson received a Campus Research Board grant from UIC Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research for her proposal “Role of the Bone Hormone Osteocalcin in Type 1 Diabetes and Islet Transplantation.”

- Former scholar Patricia Hershberger received the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) Award of Excellence in Research for 2013.

- Former scholar Michelle Kominiarek, along with BIRCWH Program Director and mentor Pauline Maki, and former scholar Leah Rubin received the 2013 Chancellor’s Discovery Fund for Multidisciplinary Research Award for their project “Enhancing Perinatal Mental Health: A Feasibility Study of Collaborative Translational Research Approach.” Their application was one of the five selected from over 30 applications.

- Former scholar Leah Rubin received an NIH/NIMH R21 grant for her project “Sex differences in cognitive response to a hydrocortisone challenge in HIV.” This proposal builds on Study 2 of Leah’s K01 award and, along with additional funding from the UIC Campus Research Board and the Developmental Center for AIDS Research Grant (D-CFAR), provides enough power to adequately address sex differences.
Former scholar **Julienne Rutherford** was awarded an R01 grant for her project “Womb to Womb: Programming Reproductive Development in Female Common Marmoset Monkeys.” This research has the potential to generate new ways to screen, diagnose, and treat human reproductive dysfunction within the context of developmental milestones.

**Julienne Rutherford** also received the American Society of Primatologists Legacy Award, which she will use to pursue novel training in fetal brain imaging. Her work will use MRI to document the growth and maturation of the brain in postmortem fetal vervet monkeys.

In addition, **Julienne Rutherford** was appointed to the Executive Board of the Biological Anthropology Section (BAS) of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in the role of Contributing Section Editor to *Anthropology News*, the monthly newsletter of AAA. Dr. Rutherford’s recent edited volume titled *Building Babies: Primate Development in Proximate and Ultimate Perspective* is one of a select list of books that will be highlighted for discussion at the 2013 ScienceOnline Conference at North Carolina State University.

**BIRCWH** associate **Lisa Tussing-Humphreys** is serving as the Assistant Director of The Diet and Behavior Shared Resource (DSBR), an initiative that aims to support the integration of behavioral and psychosocial factors into University of Illinois Cancer Center Investigator research protocols.

Former scholar **Thasarat Vajaranant** received an individual K23 award from the NIH National Eye Institute for her project “Optic Nerve Aging and Glaucoma.” This research explores the novel idea that early loss of estrogen might contribute to early aging of the optic nerve in women and thereby increase women’s risk of developing glaucoma. This work will guide further research in early glaucoma screening and treatment of women with early natural menopause (approximately 6% of women) and early bilateral oophorectomy (37% of women who undergo bilateral oophorectomy are under age 45).

**Thasarat Vajaranant** also received funding through the Women’s Health Initiative Extension Feasibility Study Funding Program and also was the first recipient of the “American Glaucoma Society - Thom J. Zimmerman, MD, PhD Memorial Award, Supported by Valeant Ophthalmics” for her proposal “A Feasibility Study to Assess the Accuracy of Self-reported Glaucoma Outcomes and Participant Interest in Participating in Ancillary Glaucoma Studies.”

Co-Investigator **Tonda Hughes** has been appointed Interim Executive Director of Global Health Leadership, UIC College of Nursing. UIC is rated #1 in the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres (WHOCCs) list of the top ten nursing schools in the US.

**Mentor Alicia Matthews, PhD,** has been appointed as the inaugural Helen K. Grace Faculty Diversity Scholar, for her internationally recognized work on physical and mental health disparities among members of marginalized social groups.
One may not associate women’s rights with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), but upon re-examination, I beg to differ. Historically for women, one stark area of inequality (although not always easily recognizable) has been the burden of, and discrimination associated with, health care costs - particularly the costs and inclusion of services in insurance policies. Traditionally, women are more likely than men to be uninsured or underinsured, and less likely to have coverage that adequately addresses health care needs. Furthermore, barriers to affordable health care have also made women more likely to forgo recommended medical tests or treatment, fill a prescription, or seek preventive services.

Women have traditionally paid higher insurance premiums than men, even when the exact same coverage plans were purchased. The National Women's Law Center estimates that this practice of gender rating was costing women $1 billion per year. Under many insurance policies, pregnancy and Cesarean sections were considered pre-existing conditions and women often had to purchase additional maternity riders to cover maternity costs.

Further evidence of discrimination could be noted in that many insurance companies often charged female non-smokers more than male smokers of the same age.

The ACA, scheduled for full implementation in 2014 (Public Law No. III-148), seeks to rectify some of the inequalities women face in health care costs and coverage. Understandably, this 2,000-plus page document is a bit overwhelming, and the language associated with the law, especially for those not working in a health-related field (and quite frankly, even for those in this field!), can be intimidating and not exactly straightforward. Given these concerns, this seems an appropriate time to highlight some benefits associated with Public Law No. III-148 as it relates to women.

First and foremost, the ACA will end the practice of gender rating, and insurance providers will no longer be able to charge higher premiums just for being a woman. Additionally, the ACA will address the unique health care needs of women in many other ways by requiring insurance providers to cover the following services, with many at no cost:

- Annual well-women visits
- Routine preventive services, such as blood pressure and cholesterol screens, mammograms, and colorectal cancer screens
- Services to help women quit smoking
- FDA-approved birth control

Although the above list by no means encompasses all the changes that will or have taken place, it does address some of the more commonly asked questions. The following links provide additional information about the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act:

- American Public Health Association: [http://www.apha.org/advocacy/Health+Reform/ACAbasics/](http://www.apha.org/advocacy/Health+Reform/ACAbasics/)
- HealthCare.gov: [https://www.healthcare.gov/](https://www.healthcare.gov/)
- The White House: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform#healthcare-menu](http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform#healthcare-menu)

Sources:
CRWG Updates

Congratulations to Stacie Geller, UIC Researcher of the Year!

Each year, UIC honors outstanding researchers, innovators and inventors in the basic sciences, clinical sciences, the humanities and natural sciences/engineering.

CRWG Director Dr. Stacie Geller was named the 2013 Distinguished Researcher in Clinical Sciences for her research to reduce global maternal mortality and morbidity.

For more information, visit http://news.uic.edu/stacie-geller-distinguished-researcher-clinical-sciences.

Congratulations to Kris Zimmermann!

The CRWG congratulates assistant director Kris Zimmermann on being named a 2013 recipient of the Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence (CAPE) Award. The annual CAPE Award honors excellence demonstrated by academic professional employees in the areas of leadership, teamwork, contributions to the employee's department and to the University, and contributions to the employee's community and professional field.

Welcome New Staff

This semester we welcome Heather Risser, PhD, who joined the CRWG as a visiting senior research specialist. Heather is also the assistant director of UIC’s Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Violence, and she is a visiting assistant research professor in the Office of Social Science Research where she has worked for the past 5 years. Heather joined CRWG to assist with multiple program evaluations, and she is also developing her research in child abuse prevention.

We also welcome three new graduate research assistants. Christina Brennan, graduate student in the RN to MS-Nurse Practitioner program in the College of Nursing, is assisting with the BIRCWH program. Diana Rusz, master of public health student in the Health Policy and Administration division in the School of Public Health, is assisting with the Southern Seven Coalition for Women’s Health and other health outreach programs. Sana Ahmed, master of education student in the Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment program in the College of Education, is assisting with data analysis for the WISE program.

Congratulations to Manu Khare!

The CRWG congratulates Manorama Khare, PhD, on her new position as Research Assistant Professor in the Division of Health Policy and Social Science Research (HPSSR), Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine, Rockford.

In addition to continuing research on cardiovascular risk prevention in rural women, Manu will work with medical students in the James Scholar Program to mentor them on their research projects. She will also contribute her evaluation expertise to assist several rural, local health departments and agencies with evaluations and community needs assessments.

We wish Manu all the best in her new position!
The CRWG is continuing its collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Office of Women's Health as external evaluators on a recently awarded grant, Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN), from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CRWG collaborated with IDPH to develop the proposal for the WISEWOMAN program, which will provide screening, lifestyle intervention, and referral services to low-income, under-insured or uninsured women ages 40-64 who participate in the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The goal of WISEWOMAN is to improve access to cardiovascular disease-related preventive health services and lower heart disease risk in the target population. The CRWG’s evaluation will assess the efficacy of the Illinois WISEWOMAN program in improving cardiovascular disease-related indicators for the participants and the public health impact of the program across the 15 target counties.

IDPH was one of 21 states to receive the award, and has received the award for three consecutive cycles. IDPH supports breast and cervical cancer screening through the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP), which reaches 38,000 women per year. IDPH estimates that approximately 96% of IBCCP participants are at risk for heart disease and stroke, and are therefore eligible for WISEWOMAN services. Through WISEWOMAN, IDPH will partner with hospitals and local health departments across the state to provide services to 2,000 women over the next four years.

The current cycle of the Illinois WISEWOMAN program will utilize Heart Smart for Women (HSFW), an evidence-based lifestyle change curriculum. Based on the CRWG’s evaluation of the implementation of HSFW in the seven southernmost counties of Illinois, women who participated the HSFW demonstrated statistically significant improvements in physical activity and healthy eating behaviors, and also showed improvements in clinical outcomes.

During the academic year, the CRWG will host monthly talks by individuals who are doing research or working in areas relevant to our work.

In October, we featured Ashe Dryden, author of *The Diverse Team: Healthy Companies, Progressive Practices*, who discussed why diversity is necessary for success in technology. Dryden goes beyond counting bodies by sex and race. She challenges companies and organizations to reach for broader diversity by incorporating sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and much more.

Please save the date for our November speaker!

"Are You Ready for Some Football? Situating Women's Professional Soccer in the American Sports Landscape"

Rachel Allison, PhD Candidate, UIC Sociology Department and 2013 Alice J. Dan Dissertation Awardee, approaches the question of the center and margins of sport through the lens of women's professional soccer. She highlights how the historical development of soccer in the US has resulted in bifurcated cultural meanings for the game that map along racial, gender and class lines. These divergent meanings generate widespread uncertainty about the league’s positioning in the US sports landscape, reflecting ongoing controversy over the meanings of contemporary female athleticism.

Wednesday, November 13, 12 pm
Room BSB 4105, Behavioral Sciences Building
1007 W. Harrison St.

For more information, or to suggest a speaker, contact Veronica Arreola at via@uic.edu.
Allison Dahlke graduated in 2011 with a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree in Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology from the UIC School of Public Health. As a CRWG graduate research assistant, Allison assisted with the evaluation of the Women in Science and Engineering System Transformation (WISEST) project by summarizing quantitative and qualitative research findings and assisting with manuscript and grant writing.

Since receiving her MPH, Allison has had a variety of research experiences at Northwestern University. She started as a statistical analyst for the Health Literacy and Learning Program (HELP), where she gained valuable experience with analysis, manuscript writing, and conference presentations related to the ways in which one’s literacy level affects his or her ability to navigate the healthcare system and use information to maintain health.

Allison is currently the program manager at the Surgical Outcomes and Quality Improvement Center in Northwestern University’s Department of Surgery. Her primary project focuses on developing a website that allows patients to search for the best hospital for their specific surgeries so they can seek out the best possible care. She is also involved in hospital quality improvement projects and research related to reporting of surgical outcomes. In addition to enjoying new challenges each day, Allison reports that the best part of her job is believing the work she is doing will improve the delivery and quality of hospital care, and will therefore improve patient health across the nation.

Although Allison no longer works on projects specifically related to women and children, she continues to do research on disparities as she did at the CRWG. She believes the CRWG provided her with a strong skillset that has become the backdrop of her early career. Allison is proud to have been part of such a wonderful organization and firmly believes the work that is done at the CRWG is a gift to the city of Chicago, as well as around the world. Allison is thankful for the opportunity to have worked with such wonderful women who helped expand her knowledge, not only about research, but of the importance of teamwork and a positive attitude. She looks forward to seeing what the CRWG does in the future, and to maintaining the relationships made while there.

Rajmonda S. Caceres earned her PhD in mathematics and computer science from University of Illinois at Chicago in 2012. Her graduate research work was on characterization and identification of optimal temporal scales for analyzing temporal interaction networks. Rajmonda worked as a graduate research assistant for the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program.

Since October 2012, Rajmonda has been a member of the research staff in the Computing and Analytics Group at MIT Lincoln Laboratory. Her primary research interests are in the areas of machine learning, social network analysis, and graph theory.

Rajmonda reports, “Working with WISE has taught me several important lessons about the value of getting to know and becoming an integral part of the community of technical women. As a member of WISE, I had the opportunity to learn from great role models. From attending panel talks, conferences, to one-on-one mentoring opportunities, I relied heavily on the support and resources WISE offered, in order to achieve my professional goals. Participating in the regular WISE events allowed me to see first hand the huge impact this organization has on introducing, inspiring and encouraging women in technical fields at a large scale. I saw that as our community grew bigger and became more energized, the stories of success, of fulfilled professional aspirations became more common. As a woman research staff at MIT Lincoln laboratory, I try to apply the same lessons I learned from the WISE experience as I immerse myself in a new community.”

Rajmonda’s current research focuses on development of data-driven analytics for characterizing cyber entities and their interactions, as well as development of methods for identifying detectability bounds in massive datasets with low signal-to-noise ratio.
We would like to thank everyone who has provided support to CRWG.

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