



XAVIER
UNIVERSITY *of* LOUISIANA

12th HEALTH DISPARITIES CONFERENCE

APRIL 8-10, 2019 • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

**Linking Upstream Determinants
to Downstream Interventions —
Targeting Health Disparities
& Health Equity**

Conference Participant Testimonials



The Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education in the College of Pharmacy presents

12th HEALTH DISPARITIES CONFERENCE

Linking Upstream Determinants to Downstream Interventions — Targeting Health Disparities & Health Equity



PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Shagufta N. Ali, MD, FACP

2017 Podium Presenter

McLaren Healthcare, Flint / Michigan State University

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Clinical Associate Professor at Michigan State University. Where are you now?

I am still working at same organization, McLaren healthcare, Flint as core faculty and assistant program director for IM residency and also serve as Clinical Associate Professor at Michigan State University.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

I really liked the format of this meeting and the enthusiasm of the organizers. I have started working on another research project since then which also target the health disparities due to patients being obese. I continue to conduct a health disparities workshop for my IM residency program. I am planning to submit my research abstract for 2019 conference again.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The focus of conference being on less privileged populations and nationwide scholarly representation at the conference. Multiple members of healthcare team were able to showcase their work including RNs, SWs and Nps. Overseas doctors were also present and their work was awesome.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

This was one of the best conference when I searched for something focused on health disparities. I liked the agenda and content of scholarly work from previous conferences.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

You will be amazed when you attend this conference, all the abstracts focus on population health and practical solutions. The food was very authentic New Orleans cuisine and I loved it.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Gail Brekke, MAAEL

2017 Podium Presenter

Prairie View A&M University

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Faculty at Prairie View A&M University. Where are you now?

I am still Faculty at Prairie View A&M University.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Participating in the Health Disparities Conference not only provided new and current information in my field, but also enabled me to establish new contacts (and friends!) who are leaders in their fields.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The XULA Health Disparities Conference stood out to me because everyone who participated was knowledgeable and friendly. It was exciting to work with the young people as they prepared their posters!

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

I attended the conference to learn more about this critical topic, and to meet other professionals in the field.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Talk to other presenters and attendees, and exchange information. Bring your business cards!



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Kendra Driver, MSc

2017 John Ruffin Young Investigator

University of Georgia

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were a student within the Clinical Research Center of Morehouse School of Medicine. Where are you now?

Since the completion of the conference, I have graduated from Morehouse School of Medicine with my MSc in Clinical Research. At this time I am a PhD Students in Health Promotion and Behavior, with a focus on Global Health, at the University of Georgia in Athens, GA. I also am a full-time government contracted research fellow.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Participating in the XULA health Disparities conference was an excellent opportunity as not only was I able to attend discussions and panels that centered around disparities research, but that I also had the privilege of networking with some of the greatest minds in the field. I truly cherished my time at the conference and actually plan on attending 2019!

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The XULA conference stands out because it focuses on not just the research, but the people served by the research. It is too often that conferences discuss issues and propose solutions, but never

actually implement said strategies. The presenters and facilitators at the XULA Health Disparities Conference are some of the most brilliant minds in Health who are committed to service. This within itself is nothing short of amazing!

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

The presenters and panels from previous years and the diversity of the conference and its research focus.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Be sure to take advantage of the sessions and panel discussions. My colleagues and I learned so much from the previous conference's presenters. Additionally, I would also say make sure to network with others at the conference. I cherish the connections that I had the opportunity to be a part of and cannot wait to make more.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Margarita Echeverri, PhD

2017 Podium Presenter

Xavier University of Louisiana

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Assistant Professor at Xavier University of Louisiana. Where are you now?

I was promoted to Associate Professor and hold a tenure rank position since Aug 2017.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

I have submitted abstracts almost each year and have been fortunate to be selected for several poster presentations. However, what have helped me more in advancing my research in cancer disparities was the opportunity to have a podium presentation. Discussions with attendees have allowed me to highlight the contributions of my research in decreasing health disparities and advancing health equity. The most important experiences have been when colleagues make points that I have not considered, make recommendations to improve the research, or want to replicate my studies and/or collaborate in future projects.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

Although I have the opportunity to attend several conferences along the year, if I were giving the option to attend only one, I am sure I would opt for the XULA Health Disparities Conference. Some people could think that I say this because I am a

XULA faculty but the truth is that this Conference is so focused on the specific theme that every event is of high importance and relevance to me.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

As explained above this is my #1 conference to attend. First, the themes each year, instead of becoming repetitive, they build on each other creating a sensation of continuity towards the main goal of addressing health disparities. Second, the learning objectives are so clear and consistent that I feel like instead of attending a conference, I am taking an annual course. Third, I see that each “annual course” is so well connected with the previous ones that they could be considered as prerequisites for the new years and I definitely do not want to miss the links.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

The Conference is hosted in New Orleans, so it is really tempting to miss a session and experience the French Quarter or a festival. I suggest scheduling free days before and/or after the conference to get the full benefit of learning during the conference and enjoy the city on the other days. If your abstract is selected, make contacts with authors of other abstracts in your category. You will see how amazing and easy is to get new contacts and collaborations.



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Mandy Hill, DrPH, MPH

2017 Health Equity Champion

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, McGovern Medical School

When we last connected with you as a Health Equity Champion, you were Associate Professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, McGovern Medical School. Where are you now?

I am still at this institution in the same role.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Participating in the Health Disparities Conference has enhanced my health promotion and public health intervention efforts by informing me of the social conditions of vulnerable populations nationwide. Demonstration of needs to narrow the gap in health disparities to vulnerable populations shapes my research agenda and informs my priority areas.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The XULA Health Disparities Conference offers an intimate environment whereby conference attendees can establish long standing relationships.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

1) Affordable, 2) Relevance to my research agenda and public health practice efforts and 3) the opportunities to network and make meaningful connections.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Prioritize this conference. Attend annually. Make the most of every interaction while there.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Douglas Landsittel, PhD

2018 Podium Presenter
University of Pittsburgh

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Professor at University of Pittsburgh. Where are you now?

I am still a Professor of Biomedical Informatics, with secondary appointments in Biostatistics and Clinical and Translational Science, at the University of Pittsburgh.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

The Health Disparities Conference provided an excellent forum to disseminate results from our Expanding National Capacity in PCOR through Training (ENACT) Program, which is being conducted in partnership with the Universities of Hawaii and Puerto Rico, Howard and Charles R Drew University, Meharry Medical College, and Morehouse School of Medicine. A number of contacts were made with researchers at those and other institutions.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The conference had a very local feel, in beautiful New Orleans, but also pulled in attendees from a wide range of institutions nationally.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

Professional networking and disseminating findings of our ENACT Program in patient-centered outcomes research.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Take advantage of all events but also take time to enjoy the local sites in New Orleans.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Mary Mays, PhD, MSHI, MPH, MBA, RD

2018 Podium Presenter

Puerto Rico Clinical and Translational Research Consortium

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Core Lead, Biomedical Informatics at Puerto Rico Clinical and Translational Research Consortium. Where are you now?

I am still in this position.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

I was able to make a number of beneficial, professional connections for potential collaboration in developing future research studies. Also, several of the presentations were on topics germane to my areas of research interest.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The topics were timely, well organized, and the choice of keynote speakers was excellent!

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

1.) Focus on minority health disparities. 2) Focus on health equity. 3) Focus on young and new investigators.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

I don't know that I have any specific advice, other than to attend and submit. This may be seen as a 'small conference' but I think it has significant impact.



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M. Lisa McGee, MEd

2017 Podium Presenter

Meharry Medical College

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Director, HBCU Wellness Project at Meharry Medical College. Where are you now?

I continue to provide direction and management to the HBCU Wellness Project at Meharry Medical College. I am also providing “coaching” to individuals seeking to further develop their goals and gain momentum towards advancing personal and professional outcomes.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Having the opportunity to network with other healthcare providers and educators is always an invaluable experience as we learn and grow from sharing “real world” experiences.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

XULA is a relevant and dynamic resource for healthcare providers/educators/researchers/students. It consistently creates needed forums for the exchange of ideas and is outcome focused to ensure that participants leave with “something more” as they seek ways to improve health related strategies.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

The students from our participating HBCUs are always invited to share their IRB approved health disparity projects focusing on community engagement and strategic community based partnerships. The environment provides a stimulus for learning and our students meet experts from around the country who are always willing to mentor their efforts and provide feedback on their student research.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

To make sure that their work demonstrates true community engagement and that they have an open mind for learning from professionals as well as our future healthcare professionals who are daring to dream and do.



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Joseph McGraw, PharmD, MPH, PhD

2018 Podium Presenter

Concordia University WI

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Associate Professor at Concordia University Wisconsin. Where are you now?

I'm still at CUW.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

I met great potential collaborators and learned about other colleagues' efforts to combat health disparities.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

It's a great location with connections to key thought leaders in the field of health disparities research and policy.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

Other attendees, great location, and existing collaborator at Xavier.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Try to meet as many other attendees as you can, there are many great potential collaborators.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Roslyn Moore

2017 Podium Presenter

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Public Health Advisor, DSSI at SAMHSA. Where are you now?

Senior Public Health Analyst, Office of Behavioral Health Equity, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced my efforts in advancing health equity related research by offering a dynamic, multifaceted environment for learning from and with a diverse group of professionals. The formal and informal sessions were “content rich” and designed to highlight emerging data, research and practices for improving the health outcomes of under-served populations. The quality and timeliness of the information presented made it easy to align with broader contexts for promoting health equity.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

The XULA Health Disparities Conference stands out because it is:

Authentic - Participants are actively and directly engaged in efforts to address health disparities which underscores the meeting’s authenticity and relevance.

Professional - Presenters are well-prepared and focused on meaningful interactions with participants and represent a cadre of professionals too often absent in mainstream meetings. **Culturally appropriate** - Information is tailored for populations who are most vulnerable for negative health outcomes and proven-effective with under-served communities.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

My attendance and participation was prompted by: wanting to participate in a learning community that was designed to meeting the needs of under-served populations; trusting the information shared by presenters would be of high quality and easily transferred from the meeting environment into “real-world” settings; and looking for ways to expand the collaborative network that supports my work and for opportunities to mentor others involved with addressing health disparities.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Potential attendees and those interested in submitting an abstract need to be prepared for substantial learning experience that is marked by structured and unstructured opportunities for gaining new knowledge. The meeting is more than a “meet and greet” and offers an un-duplicated opportunity for testing new ideas while learning from peers.



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Melody Robinson, MPH

2017 Podium Presenter

Louisiana Public Health Institute

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were Program Manager Clinical Transformation at Louisiana Public Health Institute. Where are you now?

I am still employed with Louisiana Public Health Institute.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

I enjoy the selection of speaker, it is not limited to local presenters but open to presenters from across the country. It has a small conference feel but exposes attendees to national efforts to address equity.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

I am a Xavier Grad, so it is nice to show how the education I received at Xavier is making a difference in the community. The experience of attending is great, and I get a chance to reconnect with classmates.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

The audience of the conference is very diverse and cuts across multi professional sectors. Presenters should bring their “A game.”



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Alicia Smith, MPH, CPH

2017 & 2018 Doctoral Student Poster Competition Winner

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

When we last connected with you as a poster competition winner, you were Chronic Disease Prevention Director at the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. Where are you now?

I am still there in the same position!!

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity-related research?

Participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced by efforts in advancing health equity-related research by connecting me with new researchers and helping me to further refine my area of research interests.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

I am always eager to meet, connect and learn from colleagues in this space who look like me and come from the communities that have long suffered from neglect and trauma.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

It is a rewarding experience to learn about new ways to share qualitative data that will help shape and share the stories from people representing disadvantaged populations and I am so motivated to continue pressing forward in my research areas after meeting so many talented individuals working in similar spaces.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

Don't be afraid to fill out the form and put yourself out there; there's much to be learned throughout all stages of the research process and no new found wonder is too small not to be shared!



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Janay Smith

2018 Undergraduate Poster Competition Winner

Lane College graduate

When we last connected with you as a poster competition winner, you were a Student Health Ambassador at Lane College. Where are you now?

Since my last visit to the XULA conference, I have graduated and I currently working as an Patient Care Assistant. While working I'm in the process of applying to Graduate schools for my Masters in Public health. Some of the schools that I'm applying to are East Tennessee State University, Indiana Bloomington University, and Xavier University of Louisiana.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity related research?

Participating in the conference gave me innovative ideas on how to go back to my community an implement my research projects. It was wonderful to see what the experts in the field were doing in the community for their research. I've held valuable conversations with several professionals that are in the field that I'm going to pursue. I got the chance to pick their brains on the true meaning of what health equity was an what it mean to lower income communities.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

Longevity, Location, and Exposure. Longevity because the Conference has been in existence for more than 10 years. Location of because of New Orleans captivating city, rich history, amazing music and cuisine. Exposure because being in the same facility with men and women from different ethnicities and backgrounds that share a common goal within the healthcare industry was life changing for me.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

Experience and Location.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

The advice I would give to new attendees and abstract submitters would be to always trust in your advisors, your methods and trust in your data.



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PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT

Hannah Sullivan

2018 John Ruffin Young Investigator

Behavioral Health Network

When we last connected with you as a podium presenter, you were interning at Visionary Consulting Partners, LLC. Where are you now?

After graduating from Tulane University with my MPH, I moved back home to Springfield, Massachusetts and accepted a full-time position as a Quality Coordinator at Behavioral Health Network.

How has participating in the Health Disparities Conference enhanced your efforts in advancing health equity-related research?

After participating in the 11th Health Disparities Conference, I gained a profound respect and understanding of the many challenges associated with conducting health equity related research. It helped me conceptualize the difficulty of formulating a qualitative study, including creating non-biased survey questions and fairly analyzing survey responses.

What makes the XULA Health Disparities Conference stand out to you?

I really enjoyed participating in the XULA Health Disparities Conference and appreciated how the conference actively sought out diverse perspectives on a multitude of issues plaguing our healthcare system.

What were your top 2–3 reasons for attending and participating in the conference?

My top reasons for attending and participating in the XULA Health Disparities Conference were to gain research experience, attend a professional conference in my field, and network with health professionals in my field.

What advice would you give potential conference attendees and abstract submitters?

To anyone interested in participating in future conferences I would say definitely go for it! Pay attention to deadlines and reach out to your advisors for feedback when preparing your abstract.