

**EVALUATION OF A CURRICULUM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING  
PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE U.S.**

BY

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B.A., University of the South, 1990  
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PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE U.S.**

BY

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Degree to be awarded: M.P.H.  
Career MPH

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## Education and Training

### Master's Degree in Public Health

Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Expected Dec. 2013

*Practicum Site: Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health Unit, CARE, Sept. 2011-March 2012*

Provide research, writing and editing services related to CARE's work on sexual, reproductive and maternal health in developing countries.

### Master's Degree in Teaching ESL/Applied Linguistics

Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, January 1997

### Bachelor's Degree in English

University of the South, Sewanee, TN, May 1990

## Professional Experience

### International Student Program Associate

*Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Aug. 2011-Present*

- Provide international MPH students through classroom and one-on-one instruction and support in academic reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.
- Manage a student services team to implement the annual Rollins International Orientation.
- Develop and coordinate programs and events to strengthen international students' academic, social and career skills.
- Sit on the Student Leadership Team and Honor Code committees and liaison with the International Student and Scholar Services office.

### King Abdullah Fellowship (KAF) Program Associate

*Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Aug. 2011-March 2013*

- Provided academic and language support individually and in group settings to Fellows.
- Assisted Fellows in editing written assignments.
- Traveled to Saudi Arabia (6/12) to provide ESL instruction and cultural/academic orientation to incoming Fellows.
- Traveled to Saudi Arabia (1/13) to assist incoming Fellows with the university application process and provide language/cultural/academic orientation.

### Executive Director

*English for Successful Living, Atlanta, GA, April 2010-Present*

- Worked with the Board of Directors to lead the organization in all areas of administration, including: programming; strategic planning; communications and marketing; and budgeting and finance.
- Led all fundraising efforts, including: researching and writing grant proposals; leading the Annual Fund and special donor appeal efforts; and planning and implementing the program's fundraising events.
- Garnered support from key stakeholders, and increase visibility of the organization within both the immigrant and broader Atlanta communities.

### **Writer/Editor**

#### ***HandsOn Network/Points of Light Institute, Atlanta, GA, Feb. 2009-April 2010***

- Wrote and edited copy used for marketing collateral, the website and annual reports, as well as speeches, video scripts and other communications from the executive director to the organization's stakeholders.
- In collaboration with a group of advisors representing volunteer mobilizing organizations -- including the American Red Cross and the Corporation for National and Community Service -- developed informational materials and website content promoting skilled-based volunteering as a way to address issues of community health and development.

### **Researcher/Writer**

#### ***CARE, Resource Development Communications Department, Atlanta, GA, Sept. 2008-June 2009***

- Served as lead researcher, writer and editor on a variety of grant proposals and reports. Gathered a wide array of information on CARE's programs worldwide and processed program-related materials used for website content, annual report copy and direct marketing appeals.
- In collaboration with a project officer and other CARE staff, developed CARE's *Key Resources for Project Managers* manual (published in July 2009), which instructs project managers in the field (Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East) how to effectively identify, compile and present relevant information on development projects.
- Traveled to Nicaragua to interview program participants and write a piece for CARE's *I am Powerful* magazine on CARE Nicaragua's educational programming for working children.

### **Program Manager**

#### ***Latin American Association, Education and Language Services Dpt., Atlanta, GA, June 2003-Sept. 2008***

- Designed, implemented, coordinated and provided technical support to all aspects of the education and language services programs.
- Serves as liaison to and worked with individuals and groups participating in the program or seeking knowledge of the program.
- Supervised a staff of 20 professional instructors and trained the volunteer teaching assistants.
- Represented the organization at meetings and conferences and networked with affiliated groups.
- Created teaching and training materials and implemented ongoing training events for students, volunteers and staff.

### **Language Instructor**

#### ***Latin American Association, Education and Language Services Dpt., Atlanta, GA, June 2000-June 2003***

- Translated approximately 100 Spanish-to-English documents per month. Wrote and edited content for the organization, including website content and newsletter articles.
- Taught English and Spanish to adults in the education department.
- Translated Spanish to English documents for clients, including legal, medical and academic documents.
- Developed curricula for workplace English and Spanish courses, as well as volunteer training classes.

### **Researcher/Writer**

#### ***Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ, March 1995-Aug. 1998***

- Researched topics and wrote reading comprehension questions for the international Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

Hundreds of thousands of international students come to the U.S. to study every year. Many of these students are enrolled in schools of public health, which educate professionals in health promotion and disease prevention. While their financial contributions (e.g., tuition payments, living expenses) make a positive impact on the U.S. economy and on universities' budgets, their presence in the classroom helps prepare American students for interacting in a globally connected world. However, when international students arrive in the U.S., they are met with a broad set of challenges, including the pressure to perform academically while at the same time learning to communicate effectively in a foreign language, adapt to a different culture, and study in an unfamiliar environment. Providing resources that address these challenges furthers universities' goal of ensuring that international students succeed in school and contribute to high quality public health practice in the U.S. and around the world. To this end, *Studying Public Health in the U.S.A.: A Guide for International Students* was developed, with the objective of providing answers to the most common questions posed by international students of public health and offering information and recommendations that will help guide them toward the achievement of their academic, social and career goals. To determine how well the *Guide* meets its objectives, a formative evaluation of the curriculum was conducted with expert reviewers – international students and university staff. The results of the evaluation revealed that extensive changes need to be made to the content in order to ensure that the curriculum is comprehensive and that all of the information in the *Guide* is accurate.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over the last several decades, the number of international students coming to the U.S. to study has continued to grow. In the 2011-2012 academic year, more than 760,000 international students were enrolled in American universities, with the largest populations coming from China, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Canada (IIE, 2012). The steady rise in the number of students coming from China (as a result of a growing middle class in that country) and from Saudi Arabia (through a scholarship program established by King Abdullah in 2005) is largely responsible for the recent growth in international enrollments (see Table 1).

The impact of the steady stream of international students arriving in the country each year can be felt throughout the U.S. According to the Association of International Educators, international students and their dependents contributed approximately \$21.81 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2011-2012 academic year through payments such as tuition, fees and living expenses (NAFSA, 2013). For the universities enrolling these students, the benefits are even more readily apparent; international students generally pay full tuition, as they are not eligible for most scholarships offered by American universities.

| <b>Rank</b> | <b>Place of Origin</b> | <b>2011/12</b> | <b>% of Total</b> |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1           | China                  | 194,029        | 25.4              |
| 2           | India                  | 100,270        | 13.1              |
| 3           | South Korea            | 72,295         | 9.5               |
| 4           | Saudi Arabia           | 34,139         | 4.5               |
| 5           | Canada                 | 26,821         | 3.5               |
| 6           | Taiwan                 | 23,250         | 3                 |
| 7           | Japan                  | 19,966         | 2.6               |
| 8           | Vietnam                | 15,572         | 2                 |
| 9           | Mexico                 | 13,893         | 1.8               |
| 10          | Turkey                 | 11,973         | 1.6               |

Inside the classroom, international students contribute a diversity of perspectives to class discussions, help build understanding and relationships among members of different cultural groups, and prepare domestic students for working in a globally integrated environment.

The economic and educational benefits of international students in the U.S. are not lost on America's leaders; according to the *Chronical of Higher Education*, the Obama administration has actively supported bringing more international students to the U.S., especially from Latin America and the Caribbean. The administration also wants to strengthen connections with educational institutions in countries that currently send large numbers of students to the U.S., such as India and China (CHE, 2012).

#### *Schools of Public Health*

Each year, thousands of international students are accepted into the 50 accredited schools of public health throughout the country. Originating as medical schools or as autonomous units within universities, these schools have been educating professionals in health control and disease prevention since the beginning of the twentieth century (ASPH, 2012).

Guided by a mission set forth by the Council on Education of Public Health (CEPH), schools of public health seek to “enhance health in human populations

#### **Ikechukwu "Ike" Ogbuanu, MD, MPH, PhD**

Growing up in Africa, I was constantly surrounded by the triad of poverty, ignorance, and disease. I am no stranger to the negative impacts of disease in today's society, and I have suffered my own share of disability and neglect. Those personal experiences have contributed to bringing me to this point in my career. My determination to make a difference in the health field first started in my early childhood as a game, part of my repertoire of elaborate role-plays and childhood amusements. An imaginary stethoscope, a sick doll, and a “syringe” all sufficed to make the practice of medicine real in my imagination. It was, therefore, no surprise to my family and friends when I chose medicine as a career.

Nevertheless, as a physician practicing among disadvantaged communities in Nigeria, it soon became clear to me how limited my impact was, just treating patients one at a time. The infants who left the hospital smiling soon came back with another bout of malaria, or a new attack of acute gastroenteritis or sometimes in anemic heart failure. At the population level, my skills as a physician were very limited in realizing my life-long dream of making a real difference. This was the beginning of my interest in Public Health.

*ASPH 2013*

through organized community effort.” Specifically, these schools train public health practitioners to identify and assess the needs of populations; plan, implement and evaluate programs that address those needs; and help establish the conditions that protect and promote the health of populations (CEPH, 2013). International students – recent college graduates and mid-career professionals from both developed and developing countries– choose training in public health for a variety of reasons, including the desire to address specific health problems in their countries of origin and to promote the prevention of disease and injury at the population level.

### *Purpose of Thesis*

Many international students experience notable stress and anxiety as they endeavor to make the transition to American culture and a new academic environment. As in all cultures, many of the norms and expectations that govern life in American academia – such as the importance of being a good team member on a project or asking an instructor questions when information is unclear – are often unwritten and learned primarily through experience. This is experience that international students, new to the U.S. and to the American education system, simply don’t have. Thus, providing a comprehensive orientation to the U.S. and to life in its universities can be of great value to this population. Researchers Poyrazli and Grahame (2007) note that international students understand they must adapt to their new surroundings, but they also see the institution as having a responsibility to facilitate their adjustment through providing appropriate resources for their academic, social and psychological well-being. Zhai (2004) points out that student orientation is, in fact, a continuous process that begins before students arrive and continues throughout their stay, and he suggests that information be provided to international students before they leave home so they are better prepared for the transition.

Universities do provide students with orientation materials through their websites and other sources; however, much of the information is specific to the institution and is often confined to answers to students' logistical questions. Given the numerous, shared challenges borne by the international student population from the time they prepare to travel to the U.S., throughout their academic studies, and as they seek career opportunities, this population would benefit from a resource that offers information and guidance addressing this entire range of issues. To this end, *Studying Public Health in the U.S.A.: A Guide for International Students* was developed. The objective of the curriculum is to provide answers to the most common questions posed by international students of public health and offer information and recommendations that will help guide this group toward achievement of their personal, academic and career goals. To determine the degree to which the *Guide* accomplishes these objectives requires an evaluation by expert reviewers with experience working with international students, as well as in-depth knowledge of the specific needs and concerns of this population. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to conduct an evaluation of the quality of the *Guide* as a resource for international students embarking on graduate study of public health in the U.S.

### ***Research Questions***

The primary research questions are:

1. What additions should be made to the content of the *Guide* to ensure that it addresses all of the major issues faced by international students of public health?
2. What corrections need to be made to ensure the accuracy of the information in the *Guide*?

### ***Definition of Terms***

Academic Culture: The shared values and practices that characterize an educational institution.

Affect, Behavior and Cognitions: As described by Ward, Bochner, & Furnham (2001) in the context of cultural integration, “affect” is as a set of negative emotions arising from encountering a strange new environment; “behavior” is cultural learning in which newcomers acquire an understanding of the norms and assumptions that regulate interpersonal interactions, and “cognitions” constitute knowledge of the shared meanings of interpersonal, institutional and spiritual events in a culture.

Collectivist Culture: Culture that emphasizes family and group goals, interdependence, harmony with others and group membership.

Cultural Adjustment: The transitional process in which an individual develops familiarity with and understanding of the customs, beliefs and values of another culture.

Foreign Language Anxiety: Apprehension about communicating in foreign language.

Individualistic Culture: Culture that emphasizes personal achievement, individualism, self-reliance and independence.

International Student: Individual who is enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school in the U.S. and who is on a temporary student visa.

Limited English Proficiency: Level of English language fluency of non-native English speakers that is inadequate for some communication purposes.

Social Support: A network of relationships that helps individuals cope with stress and its causes.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### *Overview*

Universities have recognized for some time that, in addition to representing a significant source of revenue, international students enrich the learning environment and raise the overall quality of higher education in the U.S. (Andrade, 2006; Komegah, 2006; Olivas & Li, 2006; Yangyi, 2009; Wan, Chapman, & Briggs, 1992; Zhang & Goodson, 2011; Zimmerman, 1995). In fact, promoting diversity within the student population is acknowledged as an effective approach to achieving an important goal: preparing individuals to interact in a culturally competent way with people from different backgrounds (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005; Zimmerman, 1995). However, to ensure that this population receives as much benefit from the educational experience as they bring to it, universities must both recognize and make efforts to address the unique issues that international students face. No matter what their country of origin, international students confront a similar set of challenges, including: communicating effectively in a foreign language; living in a culture with different social norms and behaviors; forming new relationships and support systems; and meeting a set of academic expectations that are sometimes unfamiliar (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Andrade, 2006; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Mori, 2000; Olivas & Li, 2006; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Zhai, 2004; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011).

Although the transition to college life can be demanding for all university students, research shows that international students often have a more difficult time making the transition to university life than domestic students (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Klomegah, 2006; Lin, 2012; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Olivas & Li, 2006). Far from home, often for the first time, many international students report feelings of sadness, anxiety and isolation, and they often experience disappointment, as high expectations held prior to arrival are



not always met (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Yan & Berliner, 2011). These feelings cut across cultures and are experienced by students coming from countries that are both similar and very different from the U.S. Thus, it is insufficient to look at the difficulties that international students encounter as merely a case of individual level problems, but rather, universities must address the different elements that foster or inhibit these students' adjustment as a population (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). This is especially true in graduate school, which is generally more stressful than undergraduate school, demanding a higher level of academic performance. In fact, graduate students have been shown to experience greater difficulty making the adjustment than undergraduate students (Yangyi, 2009). In addition, international graduate students are frequently older than domestic graduate students and are often professionals in their native countries; therefore, in addition to the other challenges, these students also experience a loss of status upon entering the university (Al-Sharideh & Goe, 1998; Lacina, 2002).

In attempting to intervene at the population level to facilitate international students' transition, schools often provide orientation and on-going educational programs that address four barriers to successful adaptation: culture shock, minimal exposure to the American system of education, limited English proficiency, and lack of social support. These four areas are among those most often identified by international students as obstacles to both social integration and high academic performance.

### ***Culture Shock***

It is widely understood that, like other sojourners, international students often experience *culture shock* when they arrive in the U.S. (Cheng & Erben, 2012; Lin, 2012). The term, first introduced by anthropologist Kalervo Oberg in 1960, is commonly understood as the negative feelings that individuals experience upon finding themselves in an unfamiliar setting, such as when traveling to a foreign country (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). These feelings include annoyance, confusion, disorientation and bewilderment – essentially a sense of being overwhelmed by an environment characterized by real or perceived differences. More recently, in *The Psychology of Culture Shock* (2001), Ward, Bochner and Furnham expand on this definition by identifying three components of culture shock that they view not simply as a set of emotions experienced in a singular moment of time, but as an ongoing process of adaptation. They refer to these elements as *affect*, *behavior* and *cognitions*. Affect is closely related to the original definition of culture shock – negative emotions that arise from encountering a strange new environment. Behavior is associated with the idea of cultural learning, in which newcomers acquire an understanding of the norms and assumptions that regulate interpersonal interactions, while the closely related concept of cognitions has to do with knowing the shared meanings of interpersonal, institutional and spiritual events in a culture (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Looking at culture shock through this framework, the goal of resources designed for international students can be to help them recognize their negative feelings and seek to make adjustments, modify their behavior in order to adequately negotiate interpersonal interactions, and build cognitions related to the new culture and its shared meanings in order to increase understanding.

### ***Unfamiliar Academic Culture***

Understanding the academic culture in which they must operate – including how to interact appropriately and effectively with university faculty, staff and other students – represents a significant hurdle that international students must overcome (Andrade, 2006; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Zhai, 2004; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011; Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992). Of particular note is the approach to teaching and learning in the U.S. – including the expectation that students will participate in class discussions, work together in small groups, and think critically about others' work – which is often entirely new to international students. Many students come from regions of the world where academic learning occurs primarily through taking extensive notes in class, memorizing the information, and taking final exams in which the information is regurgitated verbatim. Thus, these students have little experience with the various task-oriented components of the educational system in the U.S., such as writing papers, working on projects and doing homework (Mori, 2000). In fact, the overall classroom environment itself may be very foreign to many international students. For example, Chen (1999) points out that:

Contrary to the more open and relaxed ways of classroom teaching and learning on North American campuses, Asian universities usually are more rigid in classroom regulations. Influenced by Confucian philosophy of 'teacher is the teacher, and student is the student,' the Asian system carries a strong notion of distance between professor and student to emphasize respect and order. In Asian cultures, instructional structure basically follows a professor-providing and student-receiving model, and there is a set of strict classroom rules for students to follow. Therefore, Asian students may feel very puzzled and confused when they face frequent classroom discussions and student presentations. (p. 54)

Likewise, Huang (2012), in his review of the literature on challenges faced by Chinese graduate students, notes that “learning in a foreign environment is multifold, including learning about cultural taboos, social expectations, learning approaches, and the subject matter. What a domestic student is assumed to know as an adult learner may be alien to international students” (p. 143). Compounding the problem is the fact that international students are often accustomed to reaching the highest levels of academic achievement in their own countries, making the adjustment to a new academic environment that much more difficult (Chen, 1999; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Mori, 2000).

Differences in academic culture are not unique to Asian students however. Zhou, Frey, & Bang’s (2011) interviews with international graduate students revealed that academic challenges related to factors such as unfamiliar classroom activities and assignments were stressful to all of the students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds. In addition, the academic workload presented a problem, as the students in general were “not used to the intensive work in U.S. graduate education” (p. 85.) Likewise, Yangyi’s (2009) study of international students at an urban university found that classroom participation was difficult for students from many different countries, so that international students “appear to be quite silent compared with native speakers” (p. 1025). Unfortunately, the stress brought on by the academic adjustment can negatively affect not only international students’ academic performance, but their attitude toward domestic students and their overall satisfaction with the experience (Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992).

### ***Lack of Social Support***

Challenges such as learning new information in an unfamiliar educational environment can impact international students’ mental health, making the achievement of academic and social

success even more difficult. International students have less social support than domestic students (Andrade, 2006; Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Lin, 2012) and experience more homesickness (Andre de Araujo, 2011). In fact, research has shown that international students' level of social support is a significant predictor of the amount of acculturative stress they experience (Andre de Araujo, 2011). And as researchers Wan, Chapman & Biggs (1992) point out, "While stress can be an important component for personal and professional development, too much can negatively affect international students' social adaptation, personal development, and academic attainment" (p. 608). Ultimately, international students' lack of a social support system can produce negative psychological outcomes, including homesickness, isolation, depression, and insomnia (Chen, 1999; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Lacina, 2002; Lin, 2012; Mori, 2000; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Yangy, 2009; Zhai, 2004; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011).

One of the challenges international students face in creating a social support network that can mitigate feelings of isolation and depression is limited social interaction with Americans, one of the chief factors identified as a predictor of socio-cultural adjustment difficulties (Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Students who spend most of their time with peers from their own countries report feeling more alienated and less well-adjusted than those who form friendships with domestic students (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002). In her interviews with international students at a Midwestern university, Zimmerman (1995) found that "the most important factor in international students' adjustment to American culture was frequency of interactions with American students" (p. 329). Likewise, forming relationships with domestic students and faculty have been shown to lower international students' stress levels and help them adapt socially and academically (Andrade, 2006; Andre de Araujo, 2011; Olivas & Li,

2006; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Yangyi, 2009; Zhai, 2004; Zhang and Goodson, 2011; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Unfortunately, a lack of English proficiency and comfort with speaking English, especially with native English speaking students, has been found to be a barrier to this type of interaction (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2011). As Wan, Chapman and Biggs (1992) write:

For some international students, the new educational environment is so confusing, ambiguous, and overwhelming that they tend to wrap themselves up in their academic struggles and appear indifferent to other aspects of academic life on campus. Their academic stress is, then, further compounded by the isolation from the campus community as they overlook the support available to them. (p. 620)

While making friends with Americans can help students improve their English language skills, students often have difficulty finding opportunities to initiate friendships. For example, while Asian students typically socialize after class, domestic students often leave immediately afterwards, leaving Asian students with the impression that Americans are aloof and difficult to approach (Lin, 2012). When they are able to interact with Americans, Zhou, Frey, & Bang (2011) found that international students had both positive and negative experiences, and that the differences tended to correspond with the culture of origin of the students. Those from more collectivist cultures found that their American peers were “not approachable” outside of class, while participants from individualistic cultures were generally able to establish friendships with American students (p. 83).

The challenge of creating new social networks may be compounded by the perception of discrimination on the part of international students. Perceived discrimination is one of the factors that has been studied as a predictor of socio-cultural adjustment difficulties and stress

(Chen, 1999; Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and perceived prejudice increases the likelihood of international students' cultural segregation (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Zhou, Frey, & Bang (2011) found that international graduate students sensed that they were discriminated against during their interactions with people at school, and these feelings negatively impacted both their mental health and learning behaviors.

### ***Limited English Language Proficiency***

Although international students struggle with a number of academic, social and psychological issues, research has identified limited English language skills, as well as a lack of confidence in those skills, as among the most significant variables related to the adjustment of international students (Andrade, 2006; Andre de Araujo, 2011; Chen, 1999; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Lin, 2012; Mori, 2000; Zhai, 2004; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). Language difficulties are often international students' primary concern (Olivia & Li, 2006; Poyrali and Graham, 2007), and can hinder their ability to carry out common academic tasks, such as taking notes, participating in class and writing papers (Mori, 2000). Likewise, one of the most frequently reported predictors of both socio-cultural adjustment and stress levels is English proficiency (Zhang and Goodson, 2011) and communication effectiveness has been found to be a strong predictor of how well international students are able to handle stress (Redmond & Bunyi, 1993). Zhou, Frey, & Bang (2011) found that students with better academic English skills experienced fewer psychological problems during the transition than other international students. However, it is often the case that it is a student's level of confidence or self-efficacy, rather than their actual level of proficiency in English, that affects their adjustment (Lin & Betz, 2009). Yangyi (2009) found that their perceptions of their level of English proficiency had a significant impact on the feelings of international students; the better they perceived their language abilities to be, the less isolated

and intimidated they felt in class. Conversely, limited English proficiency, or the perception of it, creates a negative cycle than impedes international students' ability to adapt. As mentioned previously, a lack of English language proficiency often limits a student's social interaction, and this contributes to a negative self-concept of the student, which in turn affects their tendency to seek out social interaction, which then limits their ability to gain the knowledge and experience and language skills they need to adapt to the new culture (Chen, 1999; Olivas & Li, 2006; Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). In their interviews with Chinese international students, Yan & Berliner (2011) give an account of a female chemistry student who reported:

*It is just a cycle of stress and frustration. In the hope of improving my English language skills, I sought out opportunities and initiate communications with Americans. However, it is difficult to engage in successful communication with Americans due to my language and cultural deficiencies. After many "communication breakdowns" or "communication disruptions," I became frustrated and tended to retreat back to my "Chinese circle." Then I increasingly interacted with Chinese students. It is so much easier to express thoughts and feelings in Chinese. I enjoyed talking in Chinese with fellow Chinese students, but at the same time I felt guilty since my English language proficiency has not improved as expected. Over the years, the tension between improving my English skills and connecting interpersonally and intrapersonally through my native language still haunts me and makes me feel stressed. (p. 180)*

Students are not the only ones who recognize the challenges that language difficulties present; faculty often perceive insufficient English language skills to be international student's primary difficulty and an impediment to academic achievement (Andrade, 2006). In addition, while they are often encouraged to "get to know" their professors, international students are often reluctant



to initiate conversation, as they are unclear about the norms related to professor-student interactions (Yan & Berliner, 2011).

In many cases, it is not the lack of English proficiency or perception of it, per se, that limits communication, but general *foreign language anxiety*. Horwitz et al. (1986) described foreign language anxiety as comprising communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Horwitz et. al, 1986, cited in Cheng & Erben, 2012). As adults, international students often find it frustrating and embarrassing to be unable to express themselves as well as they do in their first language and fear making a negative social impression. They feel that their performance in English is constantly being evaluated by their professors and the other students, resulting in the experience of a kind of “test anxiety,” even during regular, day-to-day interactions in English. As a result, international students frequently choose to avoid class activities and remain silent in the classroom (Cheng & Erben, 2012). Ultimately, language anxiety interferes with learning and can have a negative impact on students’ performance and academic achievement.

To counteract the negative effects of limited English, international students often seek to improve their language skills through a concerted effort to practice with native English speakers; however, their efforts may be thwarted by a lack of interest on the part of domestic students (Yuan, 2011). Hayes and Lin (1994) point out that “host nationals generally recognize that international students have language difficulties but ... are often insensitive to the need of the international student for conversation” (p. 11). This, coupled with the fact that university students are, in general, burdened with busy schedules and a significant academic workload, means that international students have a difficult time taking advantage of interaction with domestic students as a resource for improving their language skills.

### ***Key Population: Chinese Students***

As the largest group of international students in the U.S., Chinese (here referring to both Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese) students merit additional attention from universities seeking to assist international students in their transition. Chinese students make an important contribution to the U.S. economy (Yan & Berliner, 2011), and while the number of students from countries like India and Japan are declining due to financial limitations, China's one-child-only policy means that parents of Chinese students are more often in a position to pay high university tuition and fees (CHE, 2012). Learning about the experience of Chinese students at the graduate school level is of particular importance, as most Chinese international students pursue graduate degrees, and universities are seeing a significant increase in admissions of Chinese graduate students (Huang, 2012).

Among the reasons universities embrace international students from China is that Chinese students are widely perceived to be diligent and focused. Chinese culture is known for prioritizing academic achievement in young people, which not only provides them with personal satisfaction and high social status, but also brings honor to their families. Chinese students have high parental expectations and constant pressure to do well. Therefore, they are generally willing to work hard and risk social isolation in order to attain academic excellence. Their dedication to their studies reflects a strong desire to avoid failure, which is seen as bringing disgrace to themselves and their families (Yan & Berliner, 2011).

Unfortunately, once they are in American classrooms, Chinese students are often seen as disengaged and lacking in creativity. In many cases, however, they simply have little experience contributing to open-ended discussions, asking questions in class and participating in activities that require critical thinking and argumentation. Likewise, the information and examples used in

class are often presented in a context that is unfamiliar to them (Huang, 2012; Lin, 2012). In addition, many Chinese students are younger than their American counterparts and have less work and life experience, limiting the amount of context in which to place new information. Huang (2012) explains that most Chinese graduate students have little or no work experience because of Chinese tradition, according to which young people are expected to complete formal higher education and begin their career early in their adulthood. In fact, he reports that “most Chinese graduate school admissions and scholarship applications have (maximum) age restrictions...Chinese students who want to pursue graduate degrees are usually under pressure to complete the degree as early as possible. Therefore, most Chinese graduate students are in their 20s and early 30s, and have not left formal education most of their lives” (p. 142). Thus, when they come to an American university, Chinese students find that for the first time in their lives they are expected not only to work hard, but to practice self-management and to be self-directed. Raised in a system of more rigorous structure and discipline, they are often overwhelmed by the decisions they must make in an academic system in which they not told how to proceed, but are encouraged to explore their own interests and determine a path to their own future (Yan & Berliner, 2011). While they may appreciate their newfound freedom, the pressure to act independently also contributes to their already high level of stress (Swagler & Ellis, 2003).

The majority of the Chinese students face the same challenges as other international students: they want greater contact with Americans but find the process of making American friends difficult; they have difficulty interpreting the rules and norms of discourse and social engagement; and they are challenged by creating new support networks to help them adjust to the new culture (Swagler& Ellis, 2003; Yan & Berliner, 2011). However, while most international students struggle to some degree with unfamiliar academic culture and expectations

in American universities, research has shown that Asian students experience greater difficulties in making the adjustment than other ethnic groups (Wang et al., 2012; Yan & Berliner, 2001; Yangyi, 2009). The cultural distance between the two cultures often causes Chinese students' experience in the U.S. to be "one of confusion, uncertainty and hastened adjustment" (Yan & Berliner, 2011, p. 178). Griffiths, Winstanley and Gabriel (2005) describe the encounters as "experiences of acute frustration, confusion and anxiety experienced by some students, who find themselves exposed to unfamiliar learning and teaching methods, bombarded by unexpected and disorienting clues, and subjected to ambiguous and conflicting expectations" (Griffiths, Winstanley, & Gabriel, 2005, cited in Huang, 2012, p. 143). That Chinese students face difficulties adjusting should not be surprising, given that, as Yan & Berliner (2011) point out, research has shown that international students who come from developing countries, non-European countries and/or Eastern countries tend to experience additional stress. China, of course, meets all three criteria.

Like their counterparts from other countries, Yan & Berliner (2011) found that – although research suggests that interaction with domestic students is the single best predictor of successful adaptation – the Chinese students they interviewed said that they met their social and emotional needs through relationships with other Chinese students. Most acknowledged that their tendency to confine themselves to this social network, further isolating them from Americans, which negatively impacted their cultural adjustment and limited their English language improvement. However, the tendency to remain within a limited group of peers who share a common language and culture is, as noted above, not necessarily a reflection of a lack of interest or effort on the part of Chinese students. Like other international students, Chinese students report that developing relationships with American students is often an unforeseen challenge. Sun & Chen

(1999) explain that, “In China, the collectivist lifestyle in school and workplace provides people with an opportunity to develop an intimate interpersonal relationship...In contrast, American people tend to be much more individualistic. Their emphasis on privacy often prevents them from establishing friendships” (p. 26). Likewise, in their article on their interviews with Taiwanese graduate students at a university in the Northeast, Swagler and Ellis (2003) quote a student who expresses a common frustration: “*Chinese friends stick together because they are afraid their English will not be understood...it would be easier if Americans took some initiative*” (p. 423).

Unfortunately, the inclination to interact almost exclusively with other students from their own country – whether intentional or not – is as much a barrier to improving English proficiency speakers for Chinese speakers as for other international students. And, like other international students, Chinese students frequently identify language barriers as one of their greatest sources of stress (Lin, 2012; Swagler & Ellis, 2003; Yan & Berliner, 2011; Yuan, 2011). Chinese students, in particular, often have limited oral communication skills in English because their language instruction focuses on reading, writing and grammar, and takes place in large classes where opportunities to practice speaking are rare (Chang & Erben, 2012; Swagler & Ellis, 2003). When faced with the demand to participate actively in social and academic environments with native English speakers, Chinese students often find that their language training has left them notably unprepared.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

In light of the obstacles identified by international students as outlined above – culture shock, lack of familiarity with American academic culture, limited English proficiency, and lack of social support – it is clear that international students would benefit from a resource

specifically targeting this population and addressing these and related issues. *Studying Public Health in the USA: A Guide for International Students* was developed to serve as this kind of resource. In addition to providing guidance for international students in general, the *Guide* offers information and recommendations in the context of the study of public health. The *Guide* is based on adult learning theory established in the late twentieth century by Malcolm Knowles – a leading practitioner and theorist of adult education – and his six principles of adult learning in particular.

These principles state that adult learners:

- are internally motivated and self-directed;
- bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences;
- are goal oriented;
- are relevancy oriented;
- are practical; and
- like to be respected (QOTFC, 2013).

This approach to instruction is appropriate for materials developed for international students who, by their nature – adults who have chosen to travel to a foreign country for an extended stay in order to earn an advanced degree – undoubtedly have a high degree of motivation to succeed and achieve specific goals. The *Guide* serves as a practical resource, with information that is clearly and directly relevant to the day-to-day needs of this population, and allows access to the different areas of information by students when they consider it useful and relevant in a self-directed manner.

Likewise, the qualitative study described in this thesis includes collecting feedback directly from the target population itself, thereby recognizing that these adult learners are able to identify what information is practical and relevant to their particular needs.

### ***Public Health Implications***

In the last academic year for which data are currently available (2010-2011) over 30,000 of the graduate students enrolled in schools of public health in the U.S. were international students (IIE, 2012). The high quality training that public health students receive in the U.S. contributes to the systematic development of a well-trained global health workforce, which is critical for creating strong health systems around the world. As the World Bank notes, “Strong health systems can make the difference between a mother who dies in childbirth at home and one who delivers safely in a clinic, a polio vaccine sitting in a vial and one protecting a child, or a family that falls into poverty due to catastrophic illness and one that has coverage to afford the care they need” (World Bank, 2013). Likewise, a robust public health workforce has been recognized as an important component of long-term socioeconomic development, contributing to the formation and preservation of human capital (Inter-American Development Bank, 2013).

As health and development become increasingly globalized, it is necessary for public health education to have a universal reach. Because many countries lack institutions for training public health professionals, the U.S. plays an important role in providing these opportunities. Graduates of U.S. schools of public health are well positioned to return to their home countries to lead the development of the kind of strong public health infrastructure that is essential for the provision of prevention and treatment services – both for emergencies and chronic threats to population health. Healthy People 2020 describes public health infrastructure as the foundation for planning, delivering, and evaluating public health, noting that it comprises three key components: a capable and qualified workforce; up-to-date data and information systems; and public health agencies capable of assessing and responding to public health needs. (Healthy People, 2020). By acquiring a solid foundation in public health disciplines – including epidemiology and biostatistics, health policy and management, public health informatics, and

behavioral science and health education – international students are able to contribute to the formation of strong public health infrastructures. These systems are then better able to work together to share information about known diseases and public health events of international concern, contributing to the prevention of the worldwide spread of disease and promoting global security.

While many international students return to work in their countries after graduation, others choose to remain in the U.S., thereby contributing to a talented and diverse professional public health workforce in this country. Some graduates pursue careers at international non-profit development agencies such as CARE, whose headquarters staff in the U.S. represents over 40 different nationalities (CARE, 2013). Others engage in research at universities throughout the U.S. or for-profit organizations that leads to the successful prevention and cure of disease and disability worldwide.



## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

*Studying Public Health in the U.S.A.: A Guide for International Students* was designed to provide international students in U.S. schools of public health with a comprehensive, accessible resource that helps to facilitate their adaptation to American culture and U.S. academic culture, improve the quality of their academic work, and strengthen their ability to compete for opportunities in the field of public health. An evaluation of the curriculum was carried out to answer the research questions:

1. Are there any additions that should be made to the content of the *Guide* to ensure that it addresses all of the key issues faced by international students of public health?
2. Are there any corrections that need to be made to ensure the accuracy of the information in the *Guide*?

This chapter will describe the target population and sample, the data collection instruments and the data analysis procedures, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the curriculum evaluation project.

### ***Target Population and Sample***

A formative evaluation of the *Guide* was conducted, and data were collected in two ways. First, data was obtained through a focus group discussion with 10 international students currently enrolled in a master's of public health program. The students were asked to participate as representatives of the target audience of the curriculum. The group consisted of four students from China, two from India, two from Japan, and one each from Pakistan and Laos. Students were recruited through an email sent to an international student listserv of approximately 90

students requesting their voluntary participation in reviewing the curriculum and participating in the focus group.

Second, key informant interviews were conducted with seven university staff members. The key informants were asked to participate based on their experience working with international students. The group was composed of:

- two English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors,
- two academic advisors,
- one global health professor,
- one associate director of international student and scholar services, and
- one career services associate.

The key informants were recruited through an email sent to 13 colleagues requesting their voluntary participation in reviewing the curriculum and participating in an interview. Letters with a description of the study and instructions (Appendices A and B) and copies of the *Guide* were made available to all of the students and the key informants.

#### *Institutional Review Board (IRB)*

Communication via email with an IRB staff member describing the project's protocol confirmed the non-Human Subject Research status of the project.

#### ***Data Collection Instruments***

##### Focus Group

A focus group is a qualitative data collection method in which a small group is guided by a facilitator to answer questions on a predetermined set of topics. This method of data collection was chosen for the evaluation project because it allowed the researcher to gather in-depth feedback on the curriculum from one group of key stakeholders – international students enrolled

in a master's of public health program in the U.S. A focus group discussion guide was developed for the researcher to facilitate the discussion (see Appendix C).

### Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are one-on-one interviews with individuals who have particular knowledge and understanding of an issue, and who can provide insight and recommendations for solutions. The key informant interview method was chosen to collect data from a second group of stakeholders – university staff who work with international students. The interview format was determined to be the most convenient for this group, as it allowed participants to review the curriculum and provide feedback at their convenience. An interview guide was developed for the interviews (see Appendix D).

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

#### Focus Group

The students were asked to review the *Guide* and participate in a group interview regarding the curriculum content, design, and potential effectiveness as a learning tool. The focus group lasted 90 minutes and one of the participants took notes during the session. The discussion was also recorded by the researcher using the iPhone Voice Memos application.

#### Key Informant Interviews

The key informants were asked to review the *Guide* and participate in an interview regarding the curriculum content, design, and potential effectiveness as a learning tool. An interview guide was developed for data collection; however, in lieu of participating in a formal interview, the reviewers chose instead to make notes throughout the *Guide* and review those notes with the researcher.

## ***Data Analysis***

The focus group discussion recording was transcribed and the notes from the key informant interviews were typed into a Word document. Recommendations from both documents were then recorded and organized in four ways:

- section of the *Guide*,
- topic,
- type (format or content), and
- addition or correction (see Appendix E) .

## ***Limitations and Delimitations***

### Limitations

Although an interview guide was developed for the collection of feedback from the key informants, the reviewers chose instead to make notes on the curriculum manuscript and review those notes with the researcher. As a result, the data collection took place in less formal manner than had been anticipated. However, the data obtained appear to be consistent with what was expected to be collected using the interview guide.

### Delimitations

This study sample comprised only students at the Rollins' School of Public Health at Emory University known by the researcher as well as colleagues of the researcher. Thus, there may have been some reluctance on the part of the reviewers to provide negative feedback on the curriculum, creating a bias in the results. In addition, while the curriculum is designed for students in schools of public health throughout the U.S., the use of a convenience sample may result in a decrease in the generalizability of the findings.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the usefulness of *Studying Public Health in the U.S.A.: A Guide for International Students* as a resource for international students seeking to earn a master's degree in public health at American universities. The primary research questions are:

1. Are there any additions that should be made to the content of the *Guide* to ensure that it addresses all of the key issues faced by international students of public health?
2. Are there any corrections that need to be made to ensure the accuracy of the information in the *Guide*?

Data collection was aimed at answering these questions by gathering feedback on the *Guide* from current international students of public health through a focus group discussion and from university staff who work with international students through individual interviews.

### ***Focus Group Results***

A total of 71 recommendations were made during the 1.5 hour long focus group discussion. The following is a typical exchange among the participants and the moderator:

***Japanese Student 2:*** *I have a suggestion, because people always access through Internet, maybe we should suggest and try to find a group of like, current students in the school, and then you should join the discussion to help you understand like weather, housing, like a lot of you know, living instructions in the school. So, like this way, so...*

***Moderator:*** *Yeah.*

**Chinese Student 3:** *Especially with current international students, so they already know how to deal with that kind of problem.*

**Moderator:** *You mean to share the information with the new students or...*

**Chinese Student 3:** *Just make all the connection, like ask them questions, international question, because a lot of us have documents and stuff and national students don't have to deal with that kind of thing.*

**Indian Student 1:** *That's interesting, that reminds me of last orientation. Um, domestic students were on the blog, asking questions, all kinds of questions, and I was looking at the international blog and there was nothing. And, I know coming from a country like India, it's sometimes, you feel apprehensive to ask questions because you don't want to sound silly.*

**Moderator:** *Right.*

**Indian Student 1:** *So, I think you kind of really stress that there is not, there is no question that is silly. If you have a question you need to ask because it's pertaining to you.*

**Moderator:** *And other people see the answer so it helps them too, yeah.*

Data from such exchanges, such as “Encourage the students to join on-line discussions before they come to the U.S.” and “Tell students to ask questions,” were recorded as recommendations.

Of the 71 recommendations made during the focus group discussion, 66 (93%) were additions to the content recommended by the students. These recommendations covered the entire range of content, including additions to all of the main sections: *Getting Ready to Go* (5), *Cultural Adaptation* (21), *Academic Skills* (28) and *Career* (11), other (2). (Typographical errors were not included in data collection or analysis.) One of the two recommended corrections to

the content was related to a term in the section on British English versus American English and the other was related to the discussion on making friends with Americans. The remaining two recommendations were format changes; one related to a concern that the title did not indicate clearly that the *Guide* was designed for “newly arrived” international students in particular, and another was a recommendation that the *Guide* be divided into only two sections – general information and academic skills. In general, the students supported and corroborated each others’ statements, which served to confirm the reliability of the group’s recommendations.

### ***Key Informant Interview Results***

The amount of data collected from the key informant interviews varied considerably among the participants, from four recommendations (career services associate) to 199 recommendations (ESL instructor II) (See Table 2 below). One hundred ninety-nine (65%) of the recommendations were related to content, while the other 108 (35%) were related to format – changes in word order/choice, grammar and punctuation, as well as changes to the order of the content. (Typographical errors were not included in data collection or analysis.) Of the 199 recommendations for changes to the content, approximately half were additions and half were corrections (99 and 100 respectively).

**Table 2: Types of Recommendations from Key Informant Interviews**

| <b>Reviewer</b>           | <b>Total Recommendations</b> | <b>Total Content</b> | <b>Total Format</b> | <b>Content Additions</b> | <b>Content Corrections</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| ISSS Assistant Director   | 5                            | 5                    | 0                   | 5                        | 0                          |
| Academic Advisor I        | 13                           | 12                   | 1                   | 12                       | 0                          |
| Academic Advisor II       | 25                           | 22                   | 3                   | 22                       | 0                          |
| ESL Instructor I          | 17                           | 15                   | 2                   | 12                       | 3                          |
| ESL Instructor II         | 207                          | 124                  | 83                  | 32                       | 92                         |
| Career Services Associate | 4                            | 3                    | 1                   | 3                        | 0                          |
| Global Health Professor   | 36                           | 18                   | 18                  | 13                       | 5                          |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>307</b>                   | <b>199</b>           | <b>108</b>          | <b>99</b>                | <b>100</b>                 |

As noted in Table 2, two thirds (195/295) of the total number of recommendations was made by the ESL instructor II, including the majority of the format recommendations (83/108 or 77%) and the majority of the content recommendations (124/199 or 62%). The notably differences in the number of recommendations made by different key informants demonstrated that they were most comfortable providing recommendations almost exclusively in their area of expertise. The exception was the ESL Instructor II who, given her experience assisting international students with the issues addressed in all sections of the *Guide*, was able to provide expert feedback on the both the format and content of the entire curriculum. The implication is that to ensure that recommendations for all aspects of a curriculum are obtained, it is important to obtain feedback from individuals with expertise in each area.



## **Chapter V: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

Below is a brief discussion of the conclusions, implications and recommendations for the curriculum based on the findings of the evaluation project.

### ***Conclusions***

The use of a mixed method approach, using both a focus group and key informant interviews to gather feedback on the curriculum, was a useful approach to collecting data that increased the validity of the evaluation's findings. The use of a focus group comprising members of the target audience gave the researcher the opportunity to obtain rich, detailed information on the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of the students regarding the topics in the *Guide*. The interaction among the participants – as illustrated by the excerpt from the focus group transcript – created a dynamic in which participants were able to remind each other of their shared experiences as incoming international students and to clarify, challenge and/or elaborate on each others' statements. Thus, the data collected from the group were more comprehensive than if it had been collected from each student individually. At the same time, the use of key informant interviews with professionals working with the target population provided data reflecting their expertise in specific areas. For example, the Associate Director of International Student and Scholar Services was able to assess the quality of the information in the section on immigration documents, while the ESL instructors were able to evaluate the sections on English grammar and writing. The feedback from these experts will be reflected in changes that will enhance the quality of the text, especially in terms of the accuracy of the information in each section.

### ***Implications***

The results of the evaluation showed that extensive changes need to be made in order to ensure that the curriculum is comprehensive and that all of the information is accurate. As members of the group targeted by the curriculum, the Students were able to offer a substantial number of recommendations, primarily additional information and recommendations that should be included in the *Guide*. Likewise, the university staff members, as experts on the academic needs of international public health students, were able to recognize where a number of corrections and changes in content would improve the quality of the information provided in the curriculum. Based on the recommendations, the entire curriculum will be revised in terms of both content and format. The changes will help to make certain that the *Guide* includes provides comprehensive and correct information that international students need to know to successfully make the transition to life as graduate students in schools of public health in the U.S.

### ***Recommendations***

Because the curriculum is intended for use by international students in schools of public health throughout the U.S, the researcher will seek feedback from staff of other universities in various parts of the country before publication. Based on this research, one change in the methodology is recommended: in lieu of preparing a guide with specific interview questions, expert reviewers will simply be asked to review the *Guide*, make notes on suggested changes, and to provide those notes to the researcher. When the *Guide* becomes available, it will be publicized to all U.S. schools of public health, along with related organizations such as the Association of Schools of Public Health and the Institute for International Education. It is recommended that a focus group subsequently be conducted with students who have used the *Guide*. Ultimately, widespread use of the *Guide* should result in a more rewarding educational

experience for international students of public health in the U.S., and ultimately, to improved public health practice in the U.S. and abroad.

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## APPENDIX A

April 5, 2013

Dear Focus Group Participant,

Thank you for participating in a focus group of experts reviewing a new resource for international students seeking to earn a master's degree in public health in the United States. The text is entitled *Studying Public Health in the USA: A Guide for International Students*, and your feedback is critical to the further design and development of these materials.

### Background:

The *Guide* was originally developed as a set of materials designed to meet the needs of international students at Rollins School of Public Health. The purpose of the *Guide* is to provide key information to students that is useful to international students before they arrive, while they are in an MPH program (at Emory or at any of the other public health schools around the country), and as they begin to look for post-graduation opportunities in the field of public health. The three sections of the guide are:

- Cultural Adjustment
- Academic Skills
- Career

### Your Role:

You will participate in a focus group that will answer questions about the *Guide* related to the following three categories:

- Content
- Design
- Effectiveness as a Learning Tool

You will be given a copy of the text in advance and asked to spend approximately 30 minutes reviewing it, and to then participate in a focus group discussion that will take approximately one hour. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used to make appropriate revisions to the text. Your participation is voluntary, and *each participant will receive a \$10 Starbucks gift card.*

The focus group will take place on **Monday, April 15 that 1:00 pm in CNR 1045.**

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Holly Patrick

For more information about the *Guide* or the focus group, please contact me:

Holly Patrick, MA, MPH Candidate

[holly.patrick@emory.edu](mailto:holly.patrick@emory.edu)

404-727-2989



## APPENDIX B

April 8, 2013

Dear Reviewer,

Thank you for participating in an interview of a new resource for international students seeking to earn a master's degree in public health in the United States. The text is entitled *Studying Public Health in the USA: A Guide for International Students*, and your feedback is critical to the further design and development of these materials.

### Background:

The *Guide* was originally developed over time as materials designed to meet the needs of international students at Rollins School of Public Health. The purpose of the *Guide* is to provide key information to students that is useful to them before they arrive in the U.S., while they are in an MPH program (at Emory or at any of the other public health schools around the country), and as they begin to look for post-graduation opportunities in the field of public health. The three sections of the guide are:

- Cultural Adjustment
- Academic Skills
- Career

### Your Role:

You will be reviewing the *Guide* and participating in an interview to evaluate the text in the following three categories:

- Content
- Design
- Effectiveness as a Learning Tool

It will take approximately 30-60 minutes to review the *Guide* and 30 minutes for the interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used to make appropriate revisions to the text. Your participation is voluntary.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Holly Patrick

For more information about the *Guide* or the interview, please contact me:

Holly Patrick, MA, MPH Candidate

[holly.patrick@emory.edu](mailto:holly.patrick@emory.edu)

404-727-2989

## APPENDIX C

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

#### Introduction

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. We are very interested in hearing your valuable opinions about the Guide for International Students. The purpose of this discussion is to learn your opinion of all aspects of the Guide in order to further develop and improve it. The information you provide is completely confidential, and we will not associate your name with anything you say in the discussion. We also ask participants to respect each other's confidentiality.*

*We will be taping the discussion so that we can make sure to capture everything we hear from the group; however, no names will be attached to the focus groups and the tapes will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. You may refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the focus group at any time. The discussion will last no more than an hour and a half. Are there any questions?*

#### *Getting Ready to Go*

Let's look at the *Getting Ready to Go* section. Can you think of any information that would be helpful for international students as they prepare to come to the U.S. to study that could be added to this section?

#### *Making the Adjustment*

Let's look at the *Making the Adjustment* section. Are there other things that struck you about the U.S. when you first came? What other information should be added to this section to help international students adjust to U.S. culture?

#### *University Life*

Let's look at the *University Life* section. What other information could be added that would be helpful for international students in terms of managing the academic workload?

#### *Effective Communication*

Let's look at the *Effective Communication* section. What other suggestions for international students could be added to the *day-to-day interactions* section?

#### *Avoiding Plagiarism*

Let's look at the *Avoiding Plagiarism* section. What other information could be added to the *understanding plagiarism* page to help international students avoid plagiarism?

#### *Vocabulary*

Let's look at the *Vocabulary* section. What other issues do international students have with vocabulary that is not addressed in this section?

#### *Academic Writing*

Let's look at the *Academic Writing* section. What other issues do international students have with academic writing that are not addressed in this section?

### *Grammar and Punctuation*

Let's look at the *Grammar and Punctuation* section. Although there are many other elements of grammar that could be included here, is there anything in particular that should be added?

### *Speaking and Listening*

Let's look at the *Speaking and Listening* section. What do you think of this section? Is there anything in particular that should be added?

### *Research Papers*

Let's look at the *Research Papers* section. What do you think of this section? Is there anything in particular that should be added?

### *Career*

Let's look at the *Career* section. What other challenges do international students have with job-hunting that are not addressed in this section?

## **Conclusion**

*That concludes our focus group. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your thoughts and opinions with us.*

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Guide

#### Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am very interested in hearing your valuable opinions about the *Guide for International Students*. The purpose of this interview is to learn your opinion of all aspects of the *Guide* in order to further develop and improve it. The interview will last no more than 30 minutes. Do you have any questions?

#### *Getting Ready to Go*

What did you think of this section? What other information would be helpful for international students as they prepare to come to the US to study that could be added to this section?

Did you note any inaccuracies in any section? If so, what are they?

#### *Cultural Adaptation*

What did you think of this section? Is there any other information about the U.S. that might be new or different for international students that could be added to this section? Do you have any other suggestions for ways to successfully adapt to general culture and academic culture in the U.S.?

Did you note any inaccuracies in any section? If so, what are they?

#### *Academic Skills*

What did you think of this section? What other information that could be added to this section to help international students with their academic work?

Did you note any inaccuracies in any section? If so, what are they?

#### *Career*

What did you think of this section? What other information that could be added to this section to help international students seeking a career in public health?

Did you note any inaccuracies in any section? If so, what are they?

#### Conclusion

*That concludes the interview. Thank you so much for sharing your thoughts and opinions with me.*

## APPENDIX E

### Focus Group Results

| Section             | Topic                       | Suggestion  | Type    | Add/Corr |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------|----------|
| NA                  | NA                          | 1. Clarify in the title that the <i>Guide</i> is only for new arrivals, not all international students.   | Format  | NA       |
|                     |                             | 2. Divide the <i>Guide</i> into two sections: general and academic.   | Format  | NA       |
| Getting Ready to Go | Roommate                    | 3. Add information on how to find a roommate, including through international student groups, apartment complexes/renters, orientation blogs, ISSS office, university website. Tell students to consider proximity to shuttle routes. | Content | Add      |
|                     | Packing                     | 4. Include information on what to pack and what clothes to bring based on the weather.  | Content | Add      |
|                     | Documents                   | 5. Advise students to copy important documents and leave copies with family.  | Content | Add      |
|                     | Obtaining Information       | 6. Encourage students to join on-line discussion with current students to obtain information on what to bring, the weather, etc. Explain that they should ask questions and not to be concerned with feeling “stupid.”                | Content | Add      |
|                     | Improving English           | 7. Provide examples of TV shows and movies with English subtitles to watch and newspapers to read.  | Content | Add      |
| Cultural Adaptation | Transportation              | 8. Explain how the transportation system in the area works.   | Content | Add      |
|                     | Telephone                   | 9. Provide information on how to access phone communications immediately upon arrival.  | Content | Add      |
|                     |                             | 10. Tell students to set up voicemail when they arrive.   | Content | Add      |
|                     | Social Life                 | 11. Add information on what Americans do after school/work and what kinds of topics they talk about. Describe friendships and explain how those relationships may be different in the U.S.  | Content | Add      |
|                     |                             | 12. In explanation of why it is hard to make friends with Americans, change “They’re uncomfortable meeting new people?” to say “Some people are more introverted.”  | Content | Corr     |
|                     | Culture Shock               | 13. Put information on culture before information on culture shock.   | Format  | NA       |
|                     |                             | 14. Advise students to get involved in extra-curricular activities to cope with culture shock.  | Content | Add      |
|                     | Tipping                     | 15. Explain how much to tip and if change will be given for a tip.  | Content | Add      |
|                     | Social Events               | 16. Explain that Americans are often late.  | Content | Add      |
|                     |                             | 17. Suggest that students bring a gift from their country to social event at a person’s home.   | Content | Add      |
|                     | Interacting with Professors | 18. Explain that students do not walk behind professors, supervisors  | Content | Add      |
|                     |                             | 19. Advise students that it is not always necessary to close the door of an office.   | Content | Add      |
|                     |                             | 20. Explain that some professors will ask you to call them by their first name and it is not always necessary to say “sir” and “ma’am.”   | Content | Add      |

|  |  |  |         |      |
|--|--|--|---------|------|
|  |  | 21. Add that it is OK to disagree with professors or supervisors if you do it politely.  | Content | Add  |
|  | Daily Communication                    | 22. Add information on Americans' tendency to make eye contact and smile at people they don't know.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 23. Explain how to respond to questions such as "How are you doing?"   | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 24. Note that common idioms that have different meanings in different cultures, like "to make a move."   | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 25. Explain "political correctness" and give examples of what is correct and not correct to say.   | Content | Add  |
|  | Email                                  | 26. Add an example of an informal email.   | Content | Add  |
|  | Dates                                  | 27. Mention that the day and month are written for dates in a different order in the U.S.  | Content | Add  |
|  | Money                                  | 28. Include the names of each coin and their values.   | Content | Add  |
| Academic Skills  | Avoiding Plagiarism                    | 29. Explain that just changing one or two words is not enough to avoid plagiarism.   | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 30. Advise students to check with a T.A. or a librarian if they questions about correct citation.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 31. Explain how to include a long quotation.   | Content | Add  |
|  | Student Responsibilities               | 32. Add that it is the students' responsibility to check the syllabus, turn homework in on time and be ready for exams.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 33. Tell students that professors are more lenient with them because they are international students.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 34. Encourage students to talk to professors early on if they have a problem; professors will help but must know there is an issue.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 35. Mention that students can talk to the T.A. if they don't have any knowledge about public health so the T.C. can provide background.  | Content | Add  |
|  | Grades vs. Extra-Curricular Activities | 36. Explain that while grades are important, it is also important to do things outside of class, like volunteering. Students from other countries are taught that the GPA is the only important thing, but here it is different. Having engaged in extra-curricular activities is necessary when it is time to look for a job. | Content | Add  |
|  | General Vocabulary                     | 37. Add "inquire" and "enquire" to list of words that are confused.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 38. Include resources where students can find more information on items like idioms.   | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 39. Explain that "British English" is also called "Queen's English."   | Content | Add  |
|  | British vs. American English           | 40. Include "bike" versus "bicycle" and "WC" to the list.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 41. Add "thumb drive," "pen drive" and "flash drive" to the list.  | Content | Add  |
|  |  | 42. Change "private school" to "government school" to the list.  | Content | Corr |
|  |  | 43. Add "cupboard," which is a "closet" to the list.   | Content | Add  |
| 44. Add "full stop" and "period" to the list.  |  | Content  | Add     |      |
| 45. Add "coriander" and "cilantro" to the list.  |  | Content  | Add     |      |
| 46. Explain the differences in British and American math terms like "times" and "point." |  | Content  | Add     |      |
| 47. Add "surname" and "last name" to the list.   |  | Content  | Add     |      |

|                 |   |   |         |     |
|-----------------|---|---|---------|-----|
|                 |   | 48. Mention that saying “double” letter confuses Americans.   | Content | Add |
|                 | Writing   | 49. Mention that the general structure of a composition here is: introduction, body and conclusion.   | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 50. Explain that, unlike in some other countries, it is the quality of your writing, not the length of it, that is important.               | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 51. Include the “policy memo” as a type of writing that is common in public health classes.   | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 52. Include the “thesis format” paper as a type of writing in public health classes.  | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 53. Emphasize that using new words and phrases in writing will also help students improve their overall language skills.                    | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 54. Explain that the way to improve writing is by reading good writing.   | Content | Add |
|                 | Pronunciation   | 55. Change pronunciation section by deleting information on specific sounds and adding information on resources for pronunciation practice. | Content | Add |
|                 | Presentations   | 56. Tell them to use a professional background for slides.  | Content | Add |
|                 | Thesis  | 57. Add “conclusion” to the last part of the description of the parts of a thesis.  | Content | Add |
| Career          | Networking  | 58. Add a page on networking that explains what it is and why it is important   | Content | Add |
|                 | Elevator Speech   | 59. Include an explanation and example of an “elevator speech.”   | Content | Add |
|                 | Cover Letter  | 60. Explain the difference between a cover letter and a personal statement.   | Content | Add |
|                 | Career Services   | 61. Encourage students to take advantage of career services.  | Content | Add |
|                 | Professionalism   | 62. Encourage students to behave professionally because the U.S. is a professional society.   | Content | Add |
|                 | Interviews  | 63. Describe the different types of interviews (phone, Skype) and   | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 64. Tell students to make sure they don’t have something inappropriate in the background during a Skype interview.                          | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 65. Describe the different types of interview questions, such as STAR questions (situation, etc.)   | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 66. Describe the different types of dress (“business casual,” “business professional,” cocktail,” “black tie”)                              | Content | Add |
|                 |   | 67. Mention that some questions are illegal for employers to ask in an interview.   | Content | Add |
|                 | 68. Explain that students are expected to ask questions during an interview to show interest. | Content   | Add     |     |
| Work Experience | 69. Explain that it is important to do internships and volunteer work to gain experience.     | Content   | Add     |     |
| Other           | Having Fun  | 70. Tell students to have fun, travel while they are here.  | Content | Add |
|                 | Sharing Culture   | 71. Add a note about the importance of maintaining and sharing one’s culture while in the U.S.  | Content | Add |

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Results

**Expert Reviewer: Associate Director, International Student and Scholars Services (ISSS)**

| <b>Section</b>      | <b>Topic</b>            | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Type</b> | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| GettingReadytoGo    | Documents               | 1. Add explanation of how document is compiled in introduction or reference page, providing full credit to sources.  | Format      | Add             |
|                     | Food                    | 2. Add discussion of food.   | Content     | Add             |
|                     | FaithInstitutions       | 3. Address faith, as it may become both a source of strength and a cause of conflict.  | Content     | Add             |
|                     | Immigration Status      | 4. Address issues involved in maintaining non-immigrant status and/or obtaining benefits pertaining to the status granted; in general, international students are not permitted to work off-campus. Every exception requires permission from either the U.S government or, while studying, a Designated School Official (F-1) or Responsible Officer (J-2), and even changing to another non-immigrant or immigrant status will involve guidance from these officials. Explain that all international students should stay in close contact with the office of International Student and Scholar Services.             | Content     | Add             |
| Cultural Adaptation | Day-to-Day Interactions | 5. Address the fact that students coming from various countries/cultures have different attitudes toward the modes of communication. For example, some students expect all formal communication to take place via written (on paper) documents and see email messages as carrying lesser import. Explain that banks, government agencies, university offices, potential employers and others may use email messages to communicate very important information that may not be transmitted through any other channels. Also, robo-calls or other unsolicited telephone communications may be unimportant or even scams. | Content     | Add             |



**Expert Reviewer: Assistant Director of Academic Programs (ADAP) I**

| <b>Section</b>      | <b>Topic</b>          | <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Type</b>  | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| GettingReadytoGo    | ImprovingYour English | 1. Add another way to improve English is to join “meet ups” or conversation clubs.  | Content  | Add             |
| Cultural Adaptation | Culture Shock         | 2. Encourage students to find a place where they can feel “at home,” such as a restaurant that serves food from their country or listen to a radio station that plays music from their country. | Content  | Add             |
|                     |                       | 3. Encourage students to bring and share elements of their culture to the U.S. and bridge the gap between their values and U.S. values.   | Content  | Add             |
|                     |                       | 4. Explain that it is common to feel embarrassed about “losing face,” such as when doing a presentation, but that people will help you if you let them know you are struggling.                 | Content  | Add             |
|                     | Email Communication   | 5. Stress that email communication is important in the U.S., more that person-to-person chatting.   | Content  | Add             |
|                     |                       | 6. Stress that it is the student’s responsibility to read and comply with rules found in documents and emails; they must read and follow directions.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     | AcademicChallenges    | 7. Encourage students to follow up if they do not understand instructions.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     |                       | 8. Add that typically one hour of class = two hours of study outside of class and an extra hour for non-native speakers.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     |                       | 9. Recommend that students audiotape classes.   | Content  | Add             |
|                     | GettingInvolved       | 10. Stress the importance of getting to know classmates through student groups, etc.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     | Email                 | 11. Tell students to use email to ask specific questions of professors, T.A.s.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     | Courtesy              | 12. Add ways to describe members of different religions to descriptions of people.  | Content  | Add             |
|                     | Resources             | NA  | 13. Change the names of resources so they don’t look like links. | Format          |

**Expert Reviewer: Assistant Director of Academic Programs (ADAP) II**

| Section   | Topic                   | Recommendation   | Type    | Add/Corr |
|---|-------------------------|--|---------|----------|
| GettingReadytoGo  | What toBring            | 1. Tell students they will be expected to have laptops.  | Content | Add      |
| Cultural Adaptation   | Names                   | 2. Give examples of nicknames; suggest that students choose a nickname if their name is hard to pronounce.   | Content | Add      |
|   | Communication           | 3. Tell students that when being introduced, default to formality; use formal address until instructed otherwise.  | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 4. Tell students to use eye contact and smile.   | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 5. Explain how to introduce a third party.   | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 6. Tell students not to use too informal words in emails to staff/professors, like “wanna” and “hiya.” American students’ emails are not always a model for international students’ writing. | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 7. Talk about Facebook and Linked in and how to be thoughtful/sensitive about posts, photos, etc.  | Content | Add      |
|   | Conversation            | 8. Add to politics to list of taboo conversation topics.   | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 9. Add “Where are you from?” to conversation starters.   | Content | Add      |
|   | TAs                     | 10. Encourage students to take advantage of TAs and all other resources; it is up to them to utilize what is offered to help them.   | Content | Add      |
|   | Making a GoodImpression | 11. Add “technology” section about etiquette with technology (i.e., Don’t answer the phone, text during class, conversations)  | Content | Add      |
| AcademicSkills  | Plagiarism              | 12. Explain that, regarding plagiarism, it is not about intent; it is about action. Even if you didn’t mean to cheat, it is cheating.  | Content | Add      |
|   | Honor and ConductCodes  | 13. Tell students to make sure they have everything they need when they go to take an exam; don’t ask other students for pens, erasers, etc.   | Content | Add      |
|   | Citation                | 14. Tell students to ask about citations if they are unclear.  | Content | Add      |
|   | Grades                  | 15. Tell students not to be a “grade grubber.” Don’t quibble over 1 point on test; don’t worry about exact grade so much; look at the big picture.   | Content | Add      |
|   | Online Tools            | 16. Add information on Blackboard and other online tools.  | Content | Add      |
|   | StudentResponsibilities | 17. Tell students to notify the professor if they expect to be absent and know that they are responsible for material missed.  | Content | Add      |
|   | ClassParticipation      | 18. Americans will talk fast during classroom/small group discussions; advise students to be prepared for that and let the professor know they are trying to keep up.                        | Content | Add      |
|   | Writing                 | 19. Add to the Writing Checklist: Use grammar and spellcheck. Leave time forproofing.  | Content | Add      |
| 20. Sometimes length of paper is in terms of pages, sometimes words; tell students to check for what kind of spacing is expected. |                         | Content  | Add     |          |
| Career  | Interviews              | 21. Tell students to do research on the person interviewing them; find out title, research, etc.   | Content | Add      |
|   |                         | 22. Tell students to send an informal thank you email immediately after interview, in addition to card.  | Content | Add      |
| NA  | NA                      | 23. Use tabs or colors to indicate sections.   | Format  | NA       |
|   |                         | 24. Changebracketedtitles.   | Format  | NA       |
|   |                         | 25. Add blurbs saying where more information can be found on each topic throughout the Guide.  | Format  | NA       |

**Expert Reviewer: Intensive English Program (IEP) Instructor I**

| <b>Section</b>        | <b>Section</b>  | <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Type</b>        | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|-----------------------|---|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| Making the Adjustment | Communication   | 1. Talk about how to address professors and staff (use formal address until told otherwise).  | Content            | Add             |
|                       | American Culture  | 2. Regarding consumerism, explain that although we throw things away, we also use Craig's List, etc. Also tell them to be careful when using these methods. | Content            | Add             |
|                       | Hygiene   | 3. Talk about using toilets correctly.  | Content            | Add             |
|                       | Education System  | 4. Change information on public schools; at the university level, some public schools are as good as private ones.  | Content            | Corr            |
|                       | Holidays  | 5. Change Memorial Day; it is in May, not August.   | Content            | Corr            |
|                       | Making a Good Impression  | 6. Tell students to stay until the end of class.  | Content            | Add             |
|                       | Counseling  | 7. Change the fragment in the last sentence about counseling.   | Format             | NA              |
|                       | Student Responsibilities  | 8. Talk about taking initiative.  | Content            | Add             |
|                       | Courtesy  | 9. Add information about using the word "Asian," not "Oriental."<br>10. Add information about LGBTQ.  | Content<br>Content | Add<br>Add      |
| Academic Skills       | Paraphrasing  | 11. Talk about writing idea without looking at original sentence.   | Content            | Add             |
|                       | Word Choice   | 12. Check the explanation about pandemic vs epidemic.   | Content            | Corr            |
|                       |   | 13. Add explanation of imminent vs eminent.   | Content            | Add             |
|                       | British vs. American English  | 14. Add WC for bathroom in list of British English words.   | Content            | Add             |
| Capitalization Rules  | 15. Add nationalities and ethnicities to list of words needing to be capitalized. | Content   | Add                |                 |
| Career                | Networking  | 16. Add section on networking.  | Content            | Add             |
| NA                    | NA  | 17. Use consistent voice ("we" and "you")   | Format             |                 |

**Expert Reviewer: Intensive English Program (IEP) Instructor II**

| <b>Section</b>      | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Type</b> | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|---------------------|---------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Table of Contents   | NA            | 1. Change to “Reading” to “Academic Reading.”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 2. Clarify “courtesy.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 3. Change “Expression” to “Expressing.”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 4. Change order of grammatical Types: articles, prepositions, modals. Articles are least important.  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 5. Change “Conversation Questions to “Questions for Conversation Practice.”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 6. Change “Presentations” to “Presentation Skills.”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 7. Add CVs to “Seeking Opportunities” section.   | Content     | Add             |
| Introduction        |               | 8. Change the introduction so it is the introduction to the entire book, not just the culture section.                                     | Format      | NA              |
| Getting Ready to Go | Housing       | 9. Change “Wherever you live” to “The place you live.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 10. Change period to question mark for the question “Is the apartment furnished or unfurnished?”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 11. Put a space between “How” and “long” after “Lease.”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 12. Add “If not included” to section on cable TV.  | Format      | NA              |
|                     | Arrival       | 13. Change (“taxi, shuttle, subway”) to “Some typical options are taxi, shuttle (van service), public transportation (bus or train), etc.” | Format      | NA              |
| Cultural Adaptation | Culture Shock | 1. Change “will add to the amount” to “may amount to...”   | Content     | Corr            |
|                     |               | 2. Make introduction to “Culture Shock” section into one sentence, using “which is.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 3. Change “This is especially” to “This experience can be especially.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 4. Move “Eating/Drinking” up one line.   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 5. Reference “Oberg” in mentioning “honeymoon period.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 6. Change “adopt” to “adapt to.”   | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 7. Add “all, many or most” to “Finally, international students find...”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 8. Change “it is even more important to form” to “It is also very important to form...”  | Format      | NA              |
|                     |               | 9. Delete “and” in “This will help you to and feel more comfortable.”  | Format      | NA              |

|            |   |         |      |
|------------|---|---------|------|
| US Culture | 10. Give source for statement “some general cultural values, attitudes and behaviors that typify U.S. culture.”                     | Format  | NA   |
|            | 11. Add periods to US Culture title.  | Format  | NA   |
|            | 12. Clarify “Americans move around a lot.”<br>Can say “from place to place.”  | Content | Corr |
|            | 13. Change “other countries” to “some other countries” in section on Informality.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 14. Clarify the part about not hurting people’s feelings in the section on directness.  | Content | Add  |
|            | 15. Change italics of “disposable income” to regular text in the section about consumerism.   | Format  | NA   |
|            | 16. Need a source for discussion about families.  | Format  | NA   |
|            | 17. Change explanation about families to “Americans may not define family the same way that…”                                       | Content | Corr |
|            | 18. Need source in discussion of friendship.  | Format  | NA   |
|            | 19. Change explanation to “May spend more time with friends” in the section on family life.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 20. Change “is not strong” to “should not be too strong” in section on personal hygiene.  | Format  | Corr |
|            | 21. Add “religion” and “politics” to types of questions that are generally considered inappropriate.                                | Content | Add  |
|            | 22. Delete “are related to” in section on conversation topics.  | Format  | NA   |
|            | 23. Change “most restaurants” to “many restaurants” in section on meal times.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 24. Change elementary 5 or 6 and middle school to 2 or 3 in section on the education system.  | Content | Corr |
|            | 25. Add “a required number” to section on majors.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 26. Clarify discussion of public schools at the university level.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 27. Add “on campus” before “buildings” in section dormitories.  | Content | Corr |
|            | 28. Add “various” or “many different” before holidays in section on holidays.   | Content | Corr |
|            | 29. Clarify explanation of holidays falling on certain days.  | Content | Corr |
|            | 30. Add explanation of why were those four holidays were chosen to describe.  | Content | Add  |
|            | 31. Change “other hobbies or responsibilities” or “extracurricular activities” to “outside responsibilities” in section on students | Content | Corr |

|                               |     |   |         |      |
|-------------------------------|-----|---|---------|------|
|                               |     | being busy.   |         |      |
| Making Friends with Americans | 32. | Include a source for the assertion that classmates are not interested in what students have to say than how they say it.                      | Format  | NA   |
| Language Anxiety              | 33. | Change “and or” to and/or” in graphic.  | Format  | NA   |
| Making a Good Impression      | 34. | Move “Electronic Devices” section out of the TA section.  | Format  | NA   |
| Health Insurance              | 35. | Add “immediate” to payment paid in co-pay section.  | Content | Corr |
| Managing the Workload         | 36. | Change “doing” to “completing.”   | Content | Corr |
|                               | 37. | Add the maximum number of credit hours.   | Content | Add  |
|                               | 38. | Change “feel you accomplished something” to “have a sense of accomplishment.”   | Format  | NA   |
| Academic Challenges           | 39. | Suggest that int’l students write down questions to ask in class to show participation and preparation.                                       | Content | Add  |
| Reading Assignments           | 40. | Change “your assignment” to “an assignment.”  | Content | Corr |
| Class Participation           | 41. | Delete colon after “giving your own opinion.”   | Format  | NA   |
|                               | 42. | Explain how to ask for repetition i.e., “Be as specific as possible about what was unclear and/or paraphrase.”                                | Content | Add  |
| Getting Involved              | 43. | Add “in a variety of contexts” to “Communicate effectively with a variety of people.”   | Content | Corr |
|                               | 44. | Add other organizations to examples of volunteer organizations.   | Content | Add  |
|                               | 45. | Add “often” to “it’s all about who you know.”   | Content | Corr |
| Day-to-Day Interactions       | 46. | Delete “what” and “are” in title.   | Format  | NA   |
|                               | 47. | Add “can” to “both men and women shake hands.”  | Content | Corr |
|                               | 48. | Rewrite telephone communication to say “When a person first answers the phone, say: Hi. This is X. May I speak to...?”                        | Content | Corr |
|                               | 49. | Tell students to leave a message by speaking slowly and pausing at appropriate places and spelling words when necessary and include a script. | Content | Add  |
|                               | 50. | In section on RSVP, add “if” to “let them know you” and “positively” to “you have RSVP’ed.”   | Content | Corr |
| Common Idioms                 | 51. | Change “Common Idioms” to “Common Expressions” as many are phrasal verbs.   | Content | Corr |
|                               | 52. | Delete “of the most” in title.  | Content | Corr |
| Courtesy                      | 53. | Change example of “I’m afraid that” to  | Content | Corr |

|   |                          |   |         |      |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------|------|
|   |                          | “I’m afraid that I won’t know my schedule until next week.”   |         |      |
|   |                          | 54. Add “related to gender identity” to discussion of sexual orientation.   | Content | Corr |
| Academic Skills   | Understanding Plagiarism | 55. Change “or” to “and” in “Copying sections of the text.”   | Content | Corr |
|   |                          | 56. Make all bullets the same size.   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Citations and References | 57. Add “sentences or” to “instead of entire paragraphs.”   | Content | Corr |
|   |                          | 58. Add “within your text” to “cite those sources.”   | Content | Corr |
|   |                          | 59. Delete extra space in “the field of public health.”   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Parenthetical Citation   | 60. Delete the first “style” in title.  | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 61. Add in discussion of citing a source a second time: “For instance, you would then write “Ramachandran also notes that...”   | Content | Corr |
|   |                          | 62. Check the final quotation; it should not be a direct quote.   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Paraphrasing             | 63. Add citation to paraphrase example.   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Non-Count Nouns          | 64. Change bolded “o” in title.   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Collocations             | 65. Change slash to commas.   | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 66. Add information on sources for collocations.  | Content | Add  |
|   | Word Choice              | 67. Change “good” in title to “effective” or “skilled.”   | Content | Corr |
|   |                          | 68. Define “insure” first since it is listed first.   | Format  | NA   |
|   | Public Health Terms      | 69. Change title of section on public health terms to “The public health terms below have related, yet distinct, meanings”  | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 70. Move “Equality” to front.   | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 71. Change “endemic” to “epidemic.”   | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 72. Add example sentences to demonstrate use of public health terms.  | Content | Add  |
|   | More Idioms              | 73. Change title to “Below are some common idioms that you may wish to study. However, due to the high number of idioms used in everyday language, the best way to learn them is through extensive exposure to the language.” | Format  | NA   |
|   |                          | 74. Delete “he” in third idiom.   | Format  | NA   |
| 75. Change definition of “cry over spilled milk” to being about something that has already happened, like “I’m sad I missed the party but there’s not use in crying over spilled milk.” |                          | Content   | Corr    |      |
| 76. Soften example about “cutting to the  |                          | Content   | Corr    |      |

|  |                              |   |         |      |
|--|------------------------------|---|---------|------|
|  |                              | chase.”   |         |      |
|  |                              | 77. Correctspelling of “Muhammed.”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 78. Change “with” to “without” in “no strings attached” example.  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 79. Change “without thinking” to “with only one’s memory” in example about “off the top of one’s head.”                                     | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 80. Move “on the go” to actions category.   | Format  | NA   |
|  | British vs. American English | 81. Delete extra space in title.  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 82. Correctspelling of “truck.”   | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 83. Add “period” and “full stop” to the list  | Content | Add  |
|  |                              | 84. Add “slacks” to the list.   | Content | Add  |
|  |                              | 85. Clarify context of “to hire” to mean a car.   | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 86. Change spelling explanation to say, “British spelling uses the suffix –our in some nouns (labour, behaviour)...”                        | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 87. Change spelling explanation to say, “British spelling uses the suffix –ise in some nouns (randomise, organise)...”                      | Content | Corr |
|  | Academic Writing             | 88. Add “provides” before “recommendations.”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 89. Change title to “Before beginning to write, you can follow these steps...”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 90. Change “good quality” to “high quality.”  | Content | Corr |
|  | Preparing to Write           | 91. Change explanation of word spacing to “use one space between words and two spaces between sentences...”                                 | Content | Corr |
|  | Academic WritingTasks        | 92. Delete “There are” in the title or change to “The following types of academic writing assignments are...”                               | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 93. Add “two main populations, which are...” to the explanation of “describe.”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 94. Add “defined as” to example for “define.”   | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 95. Change “are” to “refer to...” in example for “define.”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 96. Don’t use the verb “be” so much; use other verbs like “include” and “relate” to for variety.  | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 97. Change example for “argue/defend a position” to “Using data from prenatal clinics for surveillance purposes has several pros and cons.” | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 98. Add “was first developed by...” to example of “explain concepts.”   | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 99. Change “was” to “involved” in example of “provide examples.”  | Content | Corr |
|  | Expressing Opinion           | 100. Add “acknowledge and” to #7 in list of Op-Ed instructions.   | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 101. Delete extra space in footnote.  | Format  | NA   |



|  |   |  |                                   |        |
|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|--------|
|  |   | 102. Delete “a” in first line of policy brief explanation.   | Format                            | NA     |
|  | Making Transitions  | 103. Add “also” to list of addition transition words.  | Content                           | Add    |
|  |   | 104. Put words/phrases in order of frequency.  | Format                            | NA     |
|  |   | 105. Add “but” to list of contrast and comparison list.  | Content                           | Add    |
|  |   | 106. Delete repeated “specifically” in list of exemplification words.  | Format                            | NA     |
|  |   | 107. Add “e.g.” to list of exemplification words.  | Content                           | Add    |
|  |   | 108. Delete second example of “specifically.”  | Format                            | NA     |
|  |   | 109. Add “typically” to list of generalization words.  | Content                           | Add    |
|  |   | Using Quotations   | 110. Delete “There are” in title. | Format |
|  | 111. Change first sentence to “When a source states a fact or with direct quotations.”                |  | Content                           | Corr   |
|  | 112. Change “Dr. Carter says” to Dr. Carter said.”  |  | Content                           | Corr   |
|  | 113. Distinguish examples of interpreting the source from those for analyzing the meaning of a quote. |  | Content                           | Corr   |
|  | 114. Add “original” to “meaning of the quote in your own words.”                                      |  | Content                           | Add    |
|  | 115. Change example for i.e. as it is an example of e.g.  |  | Content                           | Corr   |
|  | Parallelism and Consistency   | 116. Change “good” to “effective.”   | Content                           | Corr   |
|  |   | 117. Change “using the same pattern of words each time” to “using parallel, or similar, structures when describing a series of items.” | Content                           | Corr   |
|  |   | 118. Underline “distances,” “transportation” and “resources.”  | Format                            | NA     |
|  |   | 119. Change “three” to “four” verbs.   | Content                           | Corr   |
|  |   | 120. Change formatting to make it more clear that slide is example of parallelism.   | Format                            | NA     |
|  |   | 121. Change “the same” to “consistent” in definition of consistency.   | Content                           | Corr   |
|  |   | 122. Note that “health care” is used much more often than “healthcare” or “health-care.”   | Content                           | Add    |
|  | Numbers and Percentages   | 123. Change “at least four digits” to “four or more digits.”   | Content                           | Corr   |

|  |                         |   |         |      |
|--|-------------------------|---|---------|------|
|  |                         | 124. Add “s” to “comma.”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 125. Change “Then use the one...” to “Choose one and be consistent.”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                         | 126. Change “Here is how” to “and they should be used correctly in academic...”                                   | Content | Corr |
|  | Capitalization Rules    | 127. Add example: “Georgia is one of the states with a very high obesity rate.”                                   | Content | Corr |
|  | Writing Checklist       | 128. Put elements in order from highest to lowest impact.   | Format  | NA   |
|  | Grammar and Punctuation | 129. Change the order for grammar points to reflect degree of difficulty.   | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 130. Add some mention of word forms, since that is difficult for non-native speakers.                             | Content | Add  |
|  |                         | 131. Change “good” to “effective.”  | Content | Corr |
|  | Articles                | 132. Add “main” to “only one library.”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                         | 133. Add “any pencil would have worked” to first example in #2.   | Content | Corr |
|  |                         | 134. Change “When the noun is plural” to “When the noun is generic and plural.”                                   | Content | Corr |
|  |                         | 135. Add common public health phrases to “common expression that use <i>the</i> .”                                | Content | Add  |
|  |                         | 136. Add explanation that, as an adjective, there is no article before “U.S.” such as in “U.S. studies reveal...” | Content | Add  |
|  | Prepositions            | 137. Add suggestion to title about looking in a corpus for preposition use.                                       | Content | Add  |
|  |                         | 138. Move times over to the left.   | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 139. Add note to students that they must pay attention or use tools like a corpus to learn prepositions.          | Content | Add  |
|  | Modals                  | 140. Change the “present ability” example under “may” as it is an example of a future possibility.                | Content | Corr |
|  |                         | 141. Delete extra space between “generally” and “limit.”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 142. Add “hopes to” to expressing desires.  | Content | Add  |
|  | Quotation Marks         | 143. Add citation to example of using double quotation marks.   | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 144. Change examples of exclamation points and question marks that are more academic.                             | Content | Corr |
|  | Commas                  | 145. Put commas in bold.  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                         | 146. Use more academic examples for introductory words and clauses.   | Content | Corr |

|  |                        |   |         |      |
|--|------------------------|---|---------|------|
|  | Colons and Semicolons  | 147. Change “ideas” to “independent clauses.”   | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 148. Change “introductory phrase” to “introductory clause” because the examples are of clauses.                   | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 149. Move the second part about colons to the semicolon section.  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                        | 150. Add more examples to “however” and “meanwhile.”  | Content | Add  |
|  |                        | 151. Add example with colon and capital letter.   | Content | Add  |
|  | Dashes                 | 152. Change “are” to “can be” in first line under “Dashes” because the dashes are not required in either example. | Content | Corr |
|  | Speaking and Listening | 153. Change “many years studying grammar” to “many years reading English and studying English grammar.”           | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 154. Change “doing presentations” to “giving presentations” in both cases.  | Content | Corr |
|  | Conversation Questions | 155. Add “in an ESL class” or “with a conversation partner” to title  | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 156. Group questions by topic, language needed to answer completely, or opinion vs. narrative vs. description.    | Format  | NA   |
|  |                        | 157. Delete question “How much money did you spend yesterday?” as it is too personal or taboo.                    | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 158. Delete question “Do you ever wish you were...?” as it is too personal or too focused on appearance.          | Content | Corr |
|  | Pronunciation Issues   | 159. Change “good” to “clear” in the title.   | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 160. Change “pronunciation is one” to “Accurate pronunciation can be...”  | Content | Corr |
|  |                        | 161. Put the list of “sentence stress,” etc., in an order that reflects degree of difficulty.                     | Format  | NA   |
| 162. Give examples of words that are and are not stressed in a sentence. |                        | Content   | Add     |      |
| 163. Rewrite section on fossilization needs to make it clearer.          |                        | Content   | Corr    |      |

|        |                           |   |         |      |
|--------|---------------------------|---|---------|------|
|        |                           | 164. Add “often” to “issues depend.”  | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 165. Add diagrams for instruction on pronunciation.   | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 166. Need to distinguish /v/ from /f/ -- voiced vs. voiceless.  | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 167. Include explanation of voiced vs. voiceless for /th/.  | Content | Add  |
|        |                           | 168. Add some listening practice geared toward ESL with comprehension checks and quizzes.               | Content | Add  |
|        | Presentations             | 169. Add information about audience and purpose.  | Content | Add  |
|        |                           | 170. Use another slide example as this one has already been used.                                       | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 171. Organize useful phrases into phrases with different purposes: intro, body, transition, conclusion. | Format  | NA   |
|        | Research Resources        | 172. Change “There” to “Below” in title.  | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 173. Formatting” is misspelled.   | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 174. Add subtitle to part on PubMed, etc.   | Format  | NA   |
|        | Annotated Bibliography    | 175. Change “point” to “purpose.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 176. Add end parenthesis after “for an example.”  | Format  | NA   |
|        | Literature Review         | 177. Change “parts” to “sections.”  | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 178. Change “Correct” each time to “Example” since there are no incorrect versions of grammar points.   | Content | Corr |
|        | Thesis                    | 179. Change “chapters” to “sections.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 180. Change “next” to “previous.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 181. Delete the second “the” in “as well as the the strengths.”   | Format  | NA   |
| Career | Seeking Opportunities     | 182. Add “need to” to “job seekers be ready.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 183. Add CVs to list of topics in this section.   | Content | Add  |
|        | Formal Emails             | 184. Separate sentences in second line of “Getting Started”   | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 185. Add “please” to “feel free to contact me.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 186. Change “so” to “very” in “Thank you so much for your consideration.”                               | Content | Corr |
|        | Resumes and Cover Letters | 187. Delete the “A” at the beginning of the title.  | Format  | NA   |
|        |                           | 188. Add example of professional service volunteer work.  | Content | Add  |
|        |                           | 189. Change “Font” to “Size.”   | Content | Corr |
|        |                           | 190. Change to “Font type.”   | Content | Corr |

|  |                      |   |         |      |
|--|----------------------|---|---------|------|
|  |                      | 191. Change “you must fill the 2 <sup>nd</sup> page” to “you should...”       | Content | Corr |
|  |                      | 192. Add accent marks to “resume” in “cover letter and resume are...”         | Format  | NA   |
|  | Statement of Purpose | 193. Clarify if “statement of purpose” is the same as a “personal statement.” | Content | Corr |
|  | Interview Questions  | 194. Put interview questions into subsets of questions.                       | Format  | NA   |

**Expert Reviewer: Career Services Associate**

| <b>Section</b> | <b>Topic</b>    | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Type</b> | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|----------------|-----------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| NA             | NA              | 1. Make <i>Guide</i> shorter.  | Format      | NA              |
| Career         | Practicum       | 2. Add section on practicum.   | Content     | Add             |
|                | Career Services | 3. Encourage students to take advantage of career services.  | Content     | Add             |
|                | Communication   | 4. Explain that privacy is important in the U.S. and it is not appropriate to walk into an office without an appointment and knocking. | Content     | Add             |

**Expert Reviewer: Professor, School of Public Health, Department of Global Health**

| <b>Section</b>  | <b>Topic</b>            | <b>Recommendation</b>  | <b>Type</b>  | <b>Add/Corr</b> |
|---|-------------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Getting Ready to Go   | Improving Your English  | 1. Change “in improving your English” to “to improve.”   | Format   | NA              |
| Cultural Adaptation   | Culture Shock           | 2. Add that students can be lonely in the first stage of cultural adjustment.  | Content  | Add             |
|   |                         | 3. Change “things” in “there will be things you will miss.”  | Format   | NA              |
|   |                         | 4. Add something about how animals might help with providing support.  | Content  | Add             |
|   |                         | 5. Mention visiting places of worship.   | Content  | Add             |
|   |                         | 6. Note that many schools provide opportunities to interact, i.e., mixers, student organizations, theater, music, etc. | Content  | Add             |
|   | American Culture        | 7. Consider that Americans who are foreign born, especially in large cities, may have different values.                | Content  | Corr            |
|   |                         | 8. Add “language skills” to list of inequalities.  | Content  | Add             |
|   | Day-to-Day Interactions | 9. Change “In every culture, there” to “Every culture has” in title.   | Format   | NA              |
|   |                         | 10. Add “Request the name of the person” to section on meeting someone for the first time.                             | Content  | Add             |
|   | Academic Skills         | Citations and References   | 11. Change “There are several different styles” to “Several different styles are used” in title. | Format          |
| 12. “About” is preferred over “approximately” because it is a shorter word. |                         |  | Content  | Corr            |
| Word Choice   |                         | 13. Add “complement” vs. “compliment” to list of commonly confused words.  | Content  | Add             |
|   |                         | 14. Do not include only infectious diseases noted in definition of “elimination.”                                      | Content  | Corr            |
|   |                         | 15. “New cases” in the definition of “incidence” is the numerator only. Consider if this refers to “a population.”     | Content  | Corr            |

|  |                              |  |         |      |
|--|------------------------------|--|---------|------|
|  | British vs. American English | 16. “Autumn” and “truck” are misspelled in list.   | Format  | NA   |
|  | Making Transitions           | 17. Wording of “It is not recommended that seniors” is awkward in example of “rather.”   | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 18. Change “it is clear that vaccination coverage last year was much” to “vaccination coverage last year was clearly much.”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 19. Change “there are few options for improving” to “few options exist to improve...”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 20. “There are many ways that the surveillance system” is vague.   | Content | Corr |
|  |                              | 21. “There are two groups that are” is awkward.  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 22. “There are a few theories that” is awkward.  | Format  | NA   |
|  | Using Quotations             | 23. Change “There are a number of verbs and phrases” to “A number of verbs and phrases are” in the title.  | Format  | NA   |
|  | Prepositions                 | 24. “Prepositions” is misspelled.  | Format  | NA   |
|  | Articles                     | 25. Change “There are some common expressions that” to “Some common expressions use the article...”  | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 26. Change “There are some common expressions that” to “Some common expressions use no article...”   | Format  | NA   |
|  | Research Resources           | 27. Change “There are a few key resources that public health students and researchers use to..” to “Public health students and researchers use a few key resources...” | Format  | NA   |
|  |                              | 28. Change “There are some phrases that” to “Some phrases are...”  | Format  | NA   |
|  | Thesis                       | 29. Expand the list of items included in the “Discussion.” In “Summary of the study,” include “key findings,   | Content | Add  |



|           |                             |  |         |     |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|---------|-----|
|           |                             | uniqueness.” Compare with other studies. Include limitations.  |         |     |
|           | Literature Review           | 30. Add description of what should be included and excluded in literature review, e.g., geography, language, time period, focus of topic.                                | Content | Add |
| Career    | Practicum                   | 31. Add practicum requirement, with a range of options, e.g., last summer 100 global health students worked in a country office context with 80 different organizations. | Content | Add |
|           | Resumes and Cover Letters   | 32. Change “There are some standard sections included” to “Some standard sections are included...”   | Format  | NA  |
|           | Public Health Organizations | 33. Add “Pathfinder” and “Management Science for Health (MSH)” to list of public health organizations.   | Content | Add |
|           |                             | 34. Change “There are numerous” to “Numerous governmental...” to title.  | Format  | NA  |
|           | Interviews                  | 35. Add “What are you passionate about?” to list of interview questions.   | Content | Add |
| Resources | NA                          | 36. Add <i>Strunk and White</i> to list of useful resources.   | Content | Add |

## **APPENDIX G**

**Studying Public Health in the USA: A Guide for International Students**  
*(see separate document)*