

Peru Trip Fosters Global Cooperation

July 02, 2009 12:15 PM

Arthur Nead anead@tulane.edu

Stephanie Baus, a clinical assistant professor of social work, is new to global research. The world of international research opened to her when she joined a dozen Tulane University researchers who traveled to Lima, Peru, for the first global health immersion workshop sponsored by the Tulane Office of Global Health.



Tulane researchers walk together as they tour Lima, Peru, where they attended the university's first global health immersion workshop on performing international research. (Photo by Dr. Domnica Fotino)

"I thought it was useful to hear perspectives from local people in Peru as well as to see the research station that was in operation," Baus says. "For me it was a general education in terms of establishing partnerships, collaborating, linking with communities and benefiting communities, and seeing examples of successful global research partnerships on the ground."

For the first of three annual workshops, faculty members from five participating schools across Tulane — the schools of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Science and Engineering, Liberal Arts, Medicine and Social Work — were invited to apply. Ten faculty members were selected from different disciplines, all interested in developing or strengthening their research in global health.

The National Institutes of Health provided funding through a Framework for Global Health grant. The three-day workshop was packed with a combination of field visits and panel discussions. Participants learned about successful collaborations at the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, with discussions co-hosted by that university's global health program, and visited the university's research labs, the Tropical Medicine Institute, a large Lima public hospital and a health research post in an extensive shantytown at the outskirts of Lima.

They also learned about setting up research projects, finding mentoring and developing research networks.

"The intent of these workshops is to train junior faculty to develop international collaborative research efforts in global health," says Dr. Richard Oberhelman, professor of tropical medicine and

Tulane University

acting chair of the Department of Tropical Medicine, who helped lead some of the discussions.

It was inspiring to see positive examples of groups working together on international projects, says workshop attendee Dr. Domnica Fotino, instructor of medicine. "I'm finishing work on my MPH (master's degree in public health), and I have become interested in looking at cardiovascular disease □ I'm also particularly interested in nutrition," she says. "So my motivation for going to this conference was to see if there is any way to collaborate with people internationally on nutrition. What I liked was the spirit of true collaboration, which from my understanding is sometimes hard to come by in research."

The mission of the [Office of Global Health](#) is to promote global health research on a universitywide basis, says Valerie Paz-Soldan, deputy director of the office, who organized and attended the workshop. Dr. Pierre Buekens, dean of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, who is principal investigator of the grant, also attended the Peru meetings.