Challenges:

When you come upon a wall, throw your hat over it, and then go get your hat.”

Background: The JMU chapter was formed in Fall, 2013 by Tim Howley, a Biology major and Carissa Jeffers, a Health Services Administration major with a Business Minor. The two undergraduates recognized a deficiency of healthcare focused inter-professional student organizations at JMU. Determined to fill the void, and create a student organization dedicated to experiential learning, mentoring, and community involvement; the James Madison University IHI Open School Chapter was born.

Membership: Over the past 2.5 years we have had over 150 people paid members committed to growing our chapter and becoming better future healthcare professionals. Additionally, we have had over 50 paid members for two consecutive semesters, resulting in over $1,500 each semester enabling us to facilitate a wide variety of programs.

Current Activities: Every Wednesday night we have a 90 minute General Body meeting and every Sunday night a 90 minute Executive Board. Each General Body meeting aims to connect current events, professional wisdom, and IHI concepts in an engaging and positive atmosphere. We have just finished a chapter wide, personal improvement project aimed to prevent the flu by improving compliance with the CDC hand washing guidelines. Additionally, we participated in The Walk to End Alzheimer’s, raising $2,500 and walking two miles with members of the community. Finally, we participated in the I-CAN Pledge-a-thon for population health, encouraging community members to fight the flu by getting the vaccine, practicing proper hygiene, and getting enough sleep.

Looking Ahead: In the upcoming semester we will be having officer transitions, recruiting local healthcare professionals to talk to our chapter, promoting teambuilding through challenges courses, conferences, and expert lead activities. Additionally, we hope to establish a strong board of advisors, consisting of faculty, senior leaders, and local professionals.

Accomplishments

• First place in Round 1 of the I-CAN Pledge-a-thon with 1,218 pledges on October 15th, 2015
• Raised $2,500 for The Walk to End Alzheimer’s
• Represented JMU at the 2013 Student Quality Leadership Academy, 2015 International Forum on Quality & Safety in Healthcare, 2015 Student Organizing Leadership Academy, and 2015 National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care
• Received a total of $4,800 from the Student Government Association to represent JMU at the 2015 International Forum on Quality & Safety in Healthcare and the 2015 National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care
• 2nd place in the 2015 JMU Dolly Awards for “Emerging Student Organization of the Year”
• JMU’s “Student Organization of the Month” for April, 2015 and November, 2015
• Helped deliver a University Health Center record number of flu vaccines over a two-day period with over 1,200 vaccinations given
• Had 20 members earn the Basic Certification in Healthcare Improvement and Patient Safety
• Co-hosted the workshop, "Diversity in Healthcare", with D.E.E.P. Impact (Diversity Excellence Education Programs) to discuss the benefits and importance of recognizing all intersecting identities to ensure a holistic approach to patient care

Leadership Board

Executive Board

- Carnissa Jeffers
- Justin L’Ecuyer
- Jake McCormick
- Sid Halim
- Isaac Yoder
- Enrique Martinez
- Jessica Mainsley
- Lennar Ashar
- Jennifer Ben

Administration Board

- Brandon Aguilar: Pre-Medicine
- Dylan Kittel: Pre-Physician Assistant
- Mary BROOKE Ramsey: Nursing
- Nick Tucker: Health Services Administration
- Nur Sheikhan: Pre-Dentistry
- Liz Pulley: Pre-Physical Therapy

Faculty Advisor(s)

- Andrew Fink was JMU’s first faculty Advisor. After receiving a double bachelor In Biology and Chemistry from the University of Virginia, Fink worked as a Patient Service Representative at Mary Washington Healthcare. He then returned to UVA to complete his Masters in Exercise Physiology and proceeded to work as a Cancer Center Exercise Physiologist for the UVA Health System. While working at UVA, he was offered a teaching position at JMU where he taught for the School of Health and Behavioral Sciences. In Fall, 2013 he became the advisor for JMU IHI Open School Chapter and remained in that role until attending Physician Assistant School at the Wake Forest School of Medicine starting in June, 2015.

- Tim Howley joined IHI as JMU’s advisor in Spring, 2015. Howley received both his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and his Master of Arts in Teaching in Health and Physical Education from JMU. He has always been committed to the Harrisonburg community reaching all the way back to his undergraduate studies, proceeding into his graduate years, and culminating in his tenure as a professor at JMI. In addition to teaching classes such as “Population Health Determinants”, “Community Health”, and “US and Global Health Systems” he advises multiple student organizations including: Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity, Reality Educators Advocating Campus Health (REACH), and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement Open School.

Successes and Challenges

Successes:

- Establishment of the first student-founded undergraduate chapter of the IHI Open School ever.
- Development of a partnership with the JMU University Health Center to fight the JMU Flu; resulting in dissemination of hand sanitizer, tissues, and informational flyers in an effort to encourage community members and students to get the flu vaccine.
- Execution of consecutive Leadership Board retreats at the beginning of the past two semesters to increase comradery, set long and short term goals, and accelerate action.

Challenges:

- Potential members have a lack of experience in healthcare and quality improvement, resulting in a lack of willingness to understand the importance of IHI and the Open School’s agenda.
- We are located in rural Harrisonburg, VA where there is one hospital, therefore there is a deficiency of opportunities for quality improvement projects.
- We do not have the professional network of clinicians and hospital members that many graduate chapters have, therefore it is difficult to establish relationships that will allow us to participate in quality improvement projects.

At the James Madison University Chapter of the IHI Open School we are dedicated to taking the idea of “educating the next generation of healthcare professionals” further than it has ever gone before. Quality improvement and patient safety competencies, like any skill, develop with time, exposure, and practice. By spreading the Open School to undergraduate students we are decreasing the burden for graduate schools and increasing our potential as future clinicians, administrators, and quality improvement scientists. Additionally, we are educating students on the subtleties of healthcare, exposing them to situations, concepts, and ideas previously reserved for graduate schools, and developing their abilities to perform with excellence in inter-professional teams. We believe that investing in undergraduates is the best way to get “ahead of the curve” and that the sooner we are exposed to the ideas, strategies, and tools for improvement, the deeper an understanding we will have and the better prepared we will be; ultimately giving us the best chance to tackle the immense challenges that face our healthcare system now as well as the ones we will face in the future.

Contact Us!

Email: hhipenschoolimu@gmail.com
Twitter & Instagram: @Hhipenschoolimu
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Hhipenschoolimu