**Advice from Current Students – SPPH MSc & PhD Information Session**

**Friday, November 19 from 3pm to 3pm**

**Summary:** A panel discussion with three SPPH students. We discussed what student life is like at SPPH, tips for applying to SPPH, and what everyone should know about the MSc and PhD programs.

**Session Takeaways:**

**Student Experience at SPPH & UBC**

1. **SPPH returned to in-person learning in Fall 2021.**
   - Students started in 2020 online, but still made connections with others in their cohorts.
   - There are now events at SPPH for students in-person, as well as some online or hybrid events.

2. **SPPH is very diverse.**
   - There are lots of different elective courses to choose from on a lot of different topics.
   - Students study different topics related to population and public health.
   - Faculty members at SPPH have different areas of expertise.

3. **TAPPHS is the student organization at SPPH.**
   - TAPPHS hosts events like study sessions, journal clubs, or wellness workshops.
   - Any student at SPPH can be a part of TAPPHS or join TAPPHS events.

4. **Students also work as research assistants, play sports with other students, or get involved in residence life.**

5. **UBC has lots of resources.**
   - Mike Marin, SPPH stats professor, has a great [YouTube channel](#).
   - There is a graduate student forum for all graduate students.
   - International students can get extra help with English skills through the UBC library.

**Application Advice**

6. **Start early**
   - You can start reaching out to potential supervisors now. A supervisor can offer you more advice on your application.
   - Write a draft of your letter of intent now. You can keep re-writing and proofreading to make it better and better. Share it with others to help make it better.
   - Start thinking about who might be the best references now – give your references plenty of time to write and upload their reference letters.

7. **Everyone first connected with their supervisor via email.**
   - Do your research to find a professor who has similar research interests.
   - Write an email from the heart that explains why you want to do an MSc or PhD and why you want to work with that professor.
   - Don’t attach your CV or resume to your first email. Instead, offer to send it if the faculty member is interested in working with you.

8. **Be prepared to answer questions from potential supervisors.**
   - Supervisors want to know why you want to pursue an MSc or PhD.
   - Supervisors want to know why you want to work with them.
Other Topics

9. What is the difference in undergraduate and graduate courses?
   a. Graduate courses expect you to apply the information you have learned – it isn’t enough to memorize the information, you must know how to think critically
   b. Graduate courses expect you to come to class prepared. There are fewer lectures and more in-class discussion and application of learning.