

# APEX Student Testimonials

**Below are excerpts from APEX students about their partnership experience.**

“One experience from this APEX that stands out to me is the opportunity I had to research the HPV Cancer Free campaign. This "deep-dive" included interviews and meetings. I then had the opportunity to help present what I had learned at the local health center to the nurses and nurses' aides. This was a really special moment for me because I felt like an "expert" and was able to explain the details of what [the partner organization] does in terms of HPV cancers. Spreading accurate health information is so important, and in today's world, can sometimes be hard to find.”

“The passion I feel and what so many others feel, towards public health reminds me of what a faculty would say in my undergraduate honors chemistry class, which I absolutely hated. The faculty would say he was preparing us for a marathon, not a sprint. I hate marathons and I hated chemistry. But, it's true, it's the endurance, the work over time, the collective that moves the dial. And, it's impossible to not look on in awe of marathon competitors. I think public health is a marathon, and one I'm excited to be training for.”

“The best part about this APEX course has been reading through the discussions from classmates. I am so thankful to have such thoughtful and passionate individuals committed to public health.”

"After listening to other student's experience in the outbreak this morning, it sounds like COVID-19 gave all of us the runaround on trying to stay up-to-date on major policies and developments. That experience is a solid reminder that we can't lose hope or motivation in our personal lives just because a project that we are passionate about faces delays or unexpected challenges."

“Remote work allowed me to meet with people all over the [health] district. Given that the district is larger than my home state.”

“I have been working on the PHAB materials. This includes a guide, the steps to accreditation and a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet breaks down the domains and measures needed for PHAB accreditation. Using this spreadsheet, you should be able to keep track of the documentation needed to complete each measure as well as examples and additional information needed to complete accreditation. I very qualified to explain what a health department needs to be accredited. I worked on communication skills as well as analysis and being able to break it down for all audiences. This will all be relevant and helpful in the public health field. I even applied to a job at the end of my 100 hours with PHAB!”



“I am looking forward to engaging in similar work in the future to impact the health and wellbeing of communities. My APEX experience has affirmed that public health is the right field for me to be in.”

“I took a class called Leadership and Advocacy, where I learned about my personality and how to deal with conflict in a team. Until today, I never really understood why this class was given and why leadership was before advocacy. From this experience, I understood that leadership is an interpersonal skill where you need to know yourself and your team so you can lead or be led by them to follow a shared vision. Only when you become a leader can you advocate for a cause. I will always carry this APEX experience with me throughout my career. I practiced listening even when I disagreed with others’ opinions and dealt efficiently with a team member’s conflict.”

“I learned that my analytical skills, while often beneficial, can be a drawback. While coding data from CHIPs, I spent quite some time deliberating on how some of the data should be coded. Some of how the data should be coded was up to interpretation, and I am glad I got to experience my difficulties with interpreting it so that I could work through it and talk through the deliberation I experienced with [my preceptor].”

“The most important thing I have learned about my skills/abilities during my time at [the partner organization] is that I need to have more confidence in myself and take charge when I need to. I definitely lack some confidence and can convince myself that I don’t know enough or don’t have enough experience to do something or make important decisions. This experience has been very beneficial for me to be put into a real-world job situation and get more comfortable with what it’s like to work in a professional public health environment. I have been able to apply skills/knowledge I’ve learned in class to tasks presented to me during the APEX.”

“I was trained to understand different cultures in the United States. I now realize my education as limited to only the varying differences in the American culture.”

“I feel having inside knowledge of a county is an important skill to have while working in rural health. I feel that if I was to apply for a position with a rural health department or rural health system, I would make sure to conduct a lot of information, tour the communities, speak with local community members, and use all available resources to adequately understand the community prior to accepting a position.”

“My passion for and commitment to public health has increased an immeasurable amount after completing my APEX. I have learned so much about public health and what goes on in a health department and there is so much that the public does not know about that goes into the work and products that these public health professionals create. Everyone I have met at the health



department has a passion and drive to create a better community and improve the health of the city and county.”

“Interacting and communicating with my preceptor and other collaborators was an incredibly valuable experience. It taught me to be more conscientious and aware of how I acted and presented myself to others. I became mindful of habits like email etiquette, being on time for meetings, being present and responsive, and demonstrating willingness and adaptability.”

“I believe that doing my APEX with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Rural Fellows team made it a much better experience than I may have had in a “traditional” APEX. It enabled me to use my other skills I have developed over my life to further integrate everything I know in making me better suited for public health work.”

“Regardless of one’s skill set, the virtues of humility, veracity, and compassion come in to play with every human interaction. I hope that I espouse these practices yet, it will be important for me to remember to always start by listening.”

“Every time I have an exposure to public health, including with coursework and classmates, I reinforce my commitment to changing careers. I think those of us in primary care are perhaps the closest to seeing the importance of public health and perhaps by being that close, also experience more burnout than many specialties.”

“I think it was important for me to realize that my APEX learning experiences don’t have to be isolated to Public Health. While I did get insight and experience regarding certain Public Health competencies, learning about how to react and go with the flow when things aren’t what you expected could potentially be more beneficial to my future occupational success, particularly when working in interprofessional settings or with large teams.”

“I am young and have always had some amount of insecurity regarding my career direction and worrying about having a lack of experience in particular fields to even begin my career. I switched my career goals from my undergraduate studies and got my master’s in environmental public health to help me be more prepared and experienced. After completing my APEX and Capstone project this Summer, I’ve gained substantially more confidence in myself and in my skills/abilities in this field. I know that I have what it takes to work in environmental public health, and I know that I will be a real asset to any future organizations to that I have the ability to contribute.”

“I would say it was definitely the overall collective experience that contributed to these feelings, both good and bad. There wasn’t one particular moment that resulted in an emotional breakthrough for me, but just the gradual experience from choosing a public health entity, to completing the APEX experience that affected how I feel about public health in general.”