

## An Active Policy Participant, at Home and Abroad

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE **PETER LONG** NEVER HAD A MOMENT to second-guess his decision to forgo medical school in favor of public health. Long, a history major as an undergraduate, quickly became a participant in momentous events.

While a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in the early 1990s, Long served as a health policy analyst for the Kaiser Commission on the Future of Medicaid in Washington, D.C., which put him in the midst of the national debate over health care reform during the Clinton administration. Among other things, Long prepared briefing notebooks for then-First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and was a frequent source providing analysis for news media articles.

A year later, he found himself in a completely different – but no less historic – environment, working as a legislative analyst for South Africa’s leading health care advocacy organization during the country’s transition to democracy. In his role as the first American ever hired by the indigenous National Progressive Primary Health Care Network, Long served as a delegate to the constitutional assembly.

“It was incredible to be in a foreign country sitting in the parliamentary chambers as they were crafting the health rights to go in the new constitution,” Long says. “The beauty of that experience was that one day I would be sitting with national parliamentarians, and the next I would be in a rural village of 400 people asking them what the national health act should look like in a workshop that represented the first time these

people had been asked about anything the government did for them.”

As he nears completion of his doctoral dissertation at the UCLA School of Public Health, Long is also a senior program officer at The California Endowment, where he is leading the foundation’s grant-making, policy and advocacy, and research efforts to ensure universal coverage for the state’s children. One day, he hopes to run a foundation of his own. “I really enjoy this environment,” Long says. “It’s a great position from which to influence policy, yet to be nimble, innovative and able to think about interesting, cutting-edge topics.”

For his dissertation research, Long has compared the impact of health insurance with that of behavioral factors such as smoking, physical activity and nutrition on the health of average-risk adults. His data, based on 35-year follow-up studies, suggest that while health insurance and access to a regular physician might be very important to patients who need chronic disease management, for average-risk adults the impacts of smoking and obesity are greater. “Right now we’re allocating about 95 percent of our health spending to medical care and 5 percent to non-personal health interventions,” Long says. “I’m not saying we shouldn’t be concerned about the 43 million people who don’t have insurance, but with limited resources it’s important to at least see where the best investments are.”

In addition to his dissertation research, Long has participated in several projects with faculty in the Department of Health Services, and says he has benefited greatly from the interactions. “The projects I’ve worked on have all included outside-the-box thinking about big questions,” he says. “UCLA has given me the rounding out of my public health education so that I will be not just a health policy person, but a full-service public health professional.”



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—Peter Long

## Journey on Behalf of Reproductive Health and Family Planning in Developing Nations Includes Unusual Stops

AFTER SPENDING A NUMBER OF YEARS working in business, **TARANEH R. SALKE** changed course. “I decided to follow my heart,” she says. That path led her to the UCLA School of Public Health, where she completed her M.P.H. this year.

Taraneh has long been interested in social issues, having first become involved as a teen working for Greenpeace. She became passionate about reproductive health and family planning in developing countries through her studies and activities related to the environment. “I learned about the effects of overpopulation and how low fertility could improve people’s lives, particularly women in developing countries,” she says. “I strongly believe that access to reproductive health and family planning services is a fundamental public health right, is the main factor in decreasing maternal mortality and morbidity and improving child survival, and is the prerequisite for social and economic development in developing countries. Women in these countries face many obstacles and need assistance, and I hope that I can be a small part of providing that.”

Through studies of a wide variety of populations in several countries, Taraneh has gained firsthand knowledge of the issues that concern her — and has gone to great lengths in the process. As a UCLA undergraduate in the summer of 2000, she spent two months in Iran conducting field research on the health practices of, and available services for, a semi-nomadic Kurdish community in the mountains of Kurdistan. She was permitted to set up her own tent and live as a member of the community, walking to the stream for water and fighting the elements — including extreme heat and dust, a sandstorm, and encounters with wolves.

While a student at the UCLA School of Public Health she received funding from the Bixby Program in Population & Reproductive Health for overseas trips to Afghanistan and Iran. In Afghanistan, Taraneh conducted an assessment of reproductive health programs, making recommendations to Afghan non-governmental organizations and establishing links between the school and these organizations. In Iran, she attended and presented at a first-of-its-kind National Seminar on Abortion. Taraneh, who grew up in Iran, spent the summer of 2002 working at the Family Planning Association in Iran, an affiliate of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. There, she developed proposals for health intervention programs for submission to international funding agencies, and worked on evaluating reproductive health programs for the Afghan refugees in Iran.

Last year she spent six weeks living with local families in a blue-collar section of Cairo. Taraneh visited Egypt’s Family Planning Association and women’s clinics, interviewing staff and health workers, and contacted a number of non-governmental organizations active in reproductive health projects to learn about their activities and programs. She also attended an intensive Arabic language program at a school run by religious Muslims.

She believes her diverse experiences will contribute greatly to her ability to be an effective public health professional. “I have gotten an in-depth look at other ways of life and thought processes,” says Taraneh, who, since graduating in December, has been working as a consultant to the Bixby program and International Medical Corp. “One thing I learned was that not everything we in the Western world consider health problems are considered problems by other populations, and vice versa.”

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# 2003-04 student awards

**Abdelmonem A. Afifi  
Student Fellowship**  
Cynthia Recio  
*Health Services*

**Agency for Healthcare  
Research and Quality  
Award**  
Nicole Bronson  
Burt Cowgill  
Janet Cummings  
Michelle Gurvitz  
Richard Hector  
Amalia Issa  
Amanda Schofield

**Atlantic Richfield Company  
Fellowship Fund**  
Myranda Austin  
*Environmental Health  
Sciences*

**Biostatistics Training  
for AIDS Research**  
Myung Shin Sim  
Li-Jung Liang  
Yan-Jung (Tina) Liu

**Fred H. Bixby Doctoral  
Fellowship Endowment**  
Allison Buttenheim  
Chi Chiao  
Yasamin Kusunoki  
*Community Health Sciences*

Astuo Coly  
*Epidemiology*

**Joseph and Celia Blann  
Fellowship**  
Lisa Diane Sabin  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

**California Endowment  
Scholarships**  
Shonali Mona  
Choudhury  
Grace Lee  
Vanessa Shaw  
*Community Health Sciences*  
Elisa Priest  
*Epidemiology*

April Bud  
Kimberly Enrad  
Tamu Jones  
Raul Sobero  
*Health Services*

**California Wellness  
Foundation Scholarships**  
Hector Lemus  
Miguel Marino  
*Biostatistics*  
Gloria Giraldo  
Rotrease Regan Yates  
*Community Health Sciences*

Mirna Ponce  
*Epidemiology*

**Chancellor's  
Fellowship**  
Ning An  
*Epidemiology*  
Amy Carroll  
*Community Health Sciences*

Hua Guo  
*Biostatistics*

Jennifer Liebeler  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

Mitsuko Yamamoto  
*Molecular Toxicology*

**Dean's Outstanding  
Student Award**  
Catherine Mary Crespi  
*Biostatistics*

Julia Prentice  
*Community Health Sciences*

Robert Phalen  
*Environmental Health  
Sciences*

Michelle Wilhelm Turner  
*Epidemiology*

Ramesh Raghavan  
*Health Services*

**Dissertation Year Fellowship**  
Catherine Mary Crespi  
*Biostatistics*  
Angelica Castaneda-  
Jimenez  
Jennifer Jones  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

Jun Wu  
*Environmental Health  
Sciences*

Nirav Shah  
Yingxu Zhao  
*Epidemiology*

**Eleanor J. De Benedictis  
Fellowship in Nutrition**  
Andrea Conner  
Constance Awuor Gewa  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program  
Endowment**  
Angelica Castaneda-  
Jimenez  
Gang Qin

**Foley & Lardner  
Fellowships  
in Health Services**  
Todd Drasin  
Genus Heidary

**L.S. Goerke  
Memorial Fellowship**  
Chuen-Yen Lau  
*Epidemiology*

**Raymond D. Goodman  
Scholarship**  
Laurie Ikuta  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

**Graduate Opportunity  
Fellowship**  
Lan Nguyen  
Elizabeth Sharp  
*Epidemiology*  
Norma Sanchez  
Sandy Li Tam  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Health Policy and  
Management Alumni  
Association Scholarship**  
Adrienne Sweet

**Gordon Hein  
Memorial Scholarship**  
Christian Shinaberger  
*Epidemiology*

**Bette & Hans Lorenz  
Endowment Fund**  
Amy Hensley  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

Xin Huang  
*Biostatistics*

Kristin Yarris  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Dr. Ursula Mandel  
Scholarship**  
Constance Awuor Gewa  
*Community Health Sciences*

Kimberly Ann Henderson  
*Molecular Toxicology*

Hsin-Ju Hsieh  
*Biostatistics*

Soon-Im Huh  
*Health Services*

**Maternal and Child  
Health Grant**  
Rupal Badani  
Diana Farid  
Yolandra Hancock  
Rekha Krishnankutty  
*Community Health Sciences*

Judith Chung  
Nicole Garro  
Kyra Samson  
Kathryn Smith  
*Health Services*

**Max Factor Family  
Foundation  
Internship Program**  
Ignacio Ferrey  
Raphael Travis  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Paulson Scholarship Fund**  
Carl Ericksson  
*Epidemiology*

**Ann G. Quealy Memorial  
Fellowship Endowment  
in Health Services**  
Genus Heidary  
Vida Montgomery

**Research Mentorship  
Program**  
Hector Lemus  
*Biostatistics*

Taigy Thomas  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Roemer Health Services  
Administration Fellowships**  
Yasser Aman  
Randal Henry  
Tom Williams

**Ruth F. Richards  
Outstanding Student Award**  
Rachel Baldwin  
*Environmental Health  
Sciences*

Lynn Salahi  
*Community Health Sciences*

Stephanie Sun  
*Epidemiology*

Janet Wang  
*Health Services*

Xiao Zhang  
*Biostatistics*

**Monica Salinas  
Internship Fund  
in Latino and Latin  
American Health**  
Kristin Yarris  
Mercedes Perez  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Charles F. Scott Fellowship**  
Sue Dao  
*Health Services*

Sarah Rothenberg  
*Environmental Science  
and Engineering Program*

**Phillip and Adia Siff  
Educational Foundation  
Scholarship**  
Melissa Hilario  
*Community Health Sciences*

**Samuel J. Tibbitts  
Fellowship**  
Gabriel Garcia  
*Community Health Sciences*

**UCLA Affiliates  
Scholarship-  
Hortense Fishbaugh  
Memorial Fellowship**  
Takahiro Higashi  
*Health Services*

Melissa Hilario  
*Community Health Sciences*

Margaret Krudysz  
*Environmental Health  
Sciences*

**Wilshire Foundation  
Endowment  
in Geriatric Medicine**  
Hsia Chai  
*Community Health Sciences*