

Health Comm Connect

HSPH's Health Communication Concentration (HCC) Newsletter

Alum Spotlight



Justin Kaplan, MPH
Science Writer
Division of Philanthropy
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Q: Please describe your position in a few sentences.

A: As a Science Writer in the Division of Philanthropy, my job involves compiling complex research and clinical updates and translating them into palatable reports for high level donors. A lot of my time is spent interviewing Dana-Farber physicians and scientists about their incredible work—much of which is funded by donors—as well as keeping up-to-date with current events in the ever-changing world of cancer medicine. When I'm not interviewing, researching, editing, or writing, I also assist colleagues in the Division who do not have a science background with understanding and contextualizing recent research.

Q: How do you use health communication in your position?

A: My training in health communication has been vital to my success as a Science Writer. Whenever I am drafting prose for a lay audience, I think critically about the key message I am trying to convey, how to minimize academic jargon, and what framing would be most meaningful to donors.

Q: What advice would you give to students interested in health communication?

A: Use your time at Harvard wisely—especially your time outside the classroom. Research and work opportunities are ample at Chan, and much of my most salient learning happened while working on extracurricular projects with professors (like Andy Tan!). Graduate school is the perfect time to explore new areas of interest while simultaneously developing marketable skills.

Also, I highly recommend reflecting on your post-Harvard goals early and often. If you have a career path in mind, pursue opportunities that bolster your relevant job experience. Do not spend all your time studying. A great GPA, while nice, is meaningless if you have no work experience!

Upcoming HCC Events

- The HCC Fall Reception will take place Tuesday, November 12th from 4:00-5:15pm in Kresge 202A. Light refreshments will be provided. Please [RSVP here](#).
- Speaker Series: Dr. Danielle Blanch Hartigan will be speaking on Tuesday, November 26th from 1:00 - 1:50pm in Kresge 502. A healthy lunch will be provided. Please [RSVP here](#) by November 24th.

Job Postings

- HCC is hiring a part-time coordinator! Apply by November 15th. [Click here](#) for more information.
- [Maternal and Child Health Information Specialist IV](#), State of Texas Health & Human Services
- [Research Program Manager](#), Center for Health Equity Transformation, University of Kentucky
- [More job postings](#) are on the HCC website!

Submit your Intent to Concentrate Form!

Concentrating in health communication and graduating in December? Make sure to submit your [Intent to Concentrate Form](#) to hcc@hsph.harvard.edu by December 1, 2019. Questions? Send us an e-mail!

Questions? Comments? Contact Sitara Mahtani at hcc@hsph.harvard.edu.