Professor William Cockerham leads publication of first authoritative reference on health, behavior, illness and society

A collaborative effort among faculty from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) has produced the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary and international reference work on all aspects of the social scientific study of health and illness. Distinguished Professor William Cockerham, Ph.D., chair of the UAB Department of Sociology, is editor-in-chief for "The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior and Society," which is available in a five-volume set.

"Beginning soon, you will see numerous citations of the encyclopedia's entries in scholarly works, as it provides authoritative definitions and discussions of major topics in medical sociology, medical anthropology, medical geography, health psychology, behavioral medicine and public health,"
Cockerham said.

This is first and foremost a sociology effort, but contributors include faculty from several UAB departments and schools, including anthropology, social work, public health and medicine.

"I'm very pleased, especially since it showcases the quality of social and behavioral sciences in the health field at UAB," Cockerham said. "The encyclopedia was headquartered in the sociology department at UAB. My co-editors Robert Dingwall and Stella Quah were in England and Singapore, contributors were worldwide, and the publishers were in Oxford, England. Copy editors were in England and France, production took place in Hong Kong, and the books are printed and distributed out of Singapore. It is truly a global work with UAB at the center."

It grew out of conversations that began more than two years ago when Cockerham first was approached by Oxford, UK, publisher Wiley Blackwell with the idea. Cockerham previously edited "The Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology" in 2004 and its revision in 2010. This encyclopedia spans many topics, from medical sociology to public health.

"The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior and Society," will be translated into multiple languages and sent to academic institutions and public libraries worldwide. It also will be published online and updated annually.

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