

February 11, 2021

Dear COPH Students, Staff, and Faculty,

We have made it through our first month of 2021!

First, I wish to congratulate our newest cohorts of *guardians of health* from this past December. We warmly welcome you into our alumni family! While the commencement was virtual, the accomplishments of each and every one of our students is very real and I cannot wait to see the impact you will have on improving the health and quality of populations far and wide.

The Fall 2020 Semester may have looked a little different this year with remote learning and in-class social distancing, but even with all those challenges, the College of Public Health thrived. I thank each and every one of you for welcoming the challenge, adapting to change, and guiding our students to achieve great success.

Our new enrollment was a 94% increase from the previous year and of these new enrollees, 21% were underrepresented minorities (URM). In addition, the College enrolled our first class of 6 students in the new Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) – Public Health Practice degree that began in our current Spring 2021 Semester.

Congratulations to Dr. Regina Idoate for receiving the 2020 New Investigator Award and Dr. Jesse Bell receiving the 2020 Distinguished Scientist Award! These awards are a testament to their outstanding achievements and contributions to UNMC. I look forward to celebrating with them at the 'virtual' awards ceremony on February 23rd.

Welcome to our new team members Dr. Ronnie Horner – Professor and Chair, HSRA and Ms. Hillary Peshek – Student Affairs Associate, Office of Educational Services.

February marks Black History Month, and UNMC has a number of events planned to [celebrate and educate](#). Please make time to stop by one of these events and enjoy the fabulous food trucks that will be offered on campus.

As we continue to find our footing in 2021, I am confident and hopeful the College of Public Health will continue to thrive and that our cadre of amazing talent will continue to make a positive impact on communities near and far. I wish everyone a successful Spring semester and year!

Always listening and learning,

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**University of Nebraska
Medical Center**
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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