

September 7, 2020

Dear COPH Students, Staff, and Faculty -

Welcome back virtually and on-campus after the Labor Day weekend. I hope your first two weeks of classes are going well and everyone is adapting as best as possible in this pandemic era.

First my good news, I am getting to teach an online course this semester! It is a lot more difficult than teaching in person and it has given me a whole lot of new appreciation for our faculty who build online courses to really engage students and for our students who take the classes. I am getting lots of practice and am enjoying every minute interacting with students. I hope they are enjoying my company too 😊.

If you have not yet been to campus, we, as a college, have come together to take the necessary precautions to create a safe environment, for our COPH family and guests. Classroom capacity has been reduced significantly. You will notice that seats have been taped off to make sure that students are seated six feet apart. In addition, entry and exit signs have been posted for the larger classrooms, along with arrows on the floor to direct traffic. Cleaning stations have been placed in each of the classrooms and in every conference room, including cleaning instructions and how to reorder supplies. Surgical masks, hand sanitizer, and a face shield were placed in each mail slot. Please email, Bradley.pfeifer@unmc.edu to request additional surgical masks, face shields, hand sanitizer, or cloth masks. Given what we are seeing at campuses nationwide, including even here in Lincoln, please protect yourself and others at all time and do use your 1-Check UNMC app before coming on campus.

We continue to literally grow as well as grow our national and international standing. We ended the last fiscal year with a 23% increase in research funding and a doubling of our incoming MPH class.

We welcomed new faculty and staff: Marisa Rosen (post-doctoral fellow, Health Promotion), Siddhi Munde (Research Data Analyst, EAOH), Marcus Wadman (post-doctoral fellow, Health Promotion), Cheng Zheng (Associate Professor, Biostatistics), Beth Friedman (Administrator I, Health Promotion), Junghyae Lee (Statistician II, Biostatistics), Cheryl Beseler (Associate Professor, EAOH), and Ran Dai (Assistant Professor, Biostatistics).

We also bid farewell to our Chair of Health Services Research and Administration and the Associate Dean of Research; the Chair of Epidemiology transitioned back to faculty to help build our health security program. Please join me in thanking our faculty for taking on these new interim roles: Drs. Ying Zhang (Interim EPI Chair and current Biostatistics Chair), Daisy Dai, (Interim Associate Dean of Research and current Biostatistics Assistant Professor), David Palm, (Interim HSRA Chair, current Associate Professor and Director of The Center for Health Policy), and Jungyoon Kim (Interim HSRA Vice Chair and current HSRA Assistant Professor).

We also had the largest philanthropic program gift in the history of the College thanks to the generosity of Dr. Anne Hubbard. Congratulations to Dr. Jesse Bell and EAOH for receipt of a \$5 million gift to create a new program to address some of Nebraska's most pressing public health issues associated with water and climate. The Water, Climate and Health Program will bring together experts from the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska to conduct research and disseminate information on environmental issues related to water, climate and health.

It is impossible to read the news of this pandemic with its socio-politico-economic impact and gross inequities without being convinced every single day of the value of what you do to advance public health. Whether that be addressing the current pandemic, institutional racism and diversity, violence in all shapes and form including police brutality, climate change, childhood obesity, cancer and heart disease prevention, rural health, or healthcare reform. Our science is critical for new innovative solutions for this nation's greatest health challenges as well as the education of you, our guardians of health. I am humbled by each and every one of you for your hard work and for representing our College on a local, national, and global level. I look forward to seeing what you all will do next and wishing everyone a successful Fall semester and year. You can also follow me on twitter @UNMC_DrKhan for more of my daily, truly, random musings.

Always listening,

ask

Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH

Retired Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS

Dean and Professor

College of Public Health | Office of the Dean