

May 20, 2019

Dear Team,

I have finally thawed out! Between the end of a long winter all the way to convocation and commencement, there have been so many noteworthy things to catch up on.

Thank you to all of you who helped in the response to the flooding that devastated our state. Your ability to mobilize and work with others on campus and throughout our communities was truly amazing. I'd especially like to thank Ms. Ellen Duysen who led the efforts here at the college. Your compassion for your fellow Nebraskans, the generosity of your time, and your spirit of lifting others up is inspiring. As I returned yesterday from giving a talk in Philadelphia, I had an aerial view that reminded me that the flood is very much still an issue and one that still requires resources.

On a much more pleasant note, let's talk about Dr. Jennie Hill and her new CDC grant! The five year, \$2.5 million grant aimed at reducing childhood obesity in rural communities was awarded to Dr. Hill from the Department of Epidemiology and Dr. Kate Heelan from University of Nebraska at Kearney. The universities will partner with four to eight rural Nebraska communities selected through an application process as pilot test locations. Dr. Grimm and I have invited the new NE DHHS CEO, Ms. Dannette Smith, to the campus next month to learn more about our research and educational activities and our efforts to make Nebraska the healthiest state in the union.

Congratulations to Dr. Lynette Smith who was awarded the Silver U in March. Her nominators wrote, in part, "Lynette has consistently demonstrated the most admirable qualities that we would expect from our best employees." That statement sums up Lynette's commitment to teaching, mentoring, high quality data analysis, and collaborative spirit of over the last 10 years perfectly.

Congratulations to our students whom were celebrated at convocation and commencement. This was our largest graduating class. We also celebrated Dr. Carol Swarts for her contributions to the health of Nebraskans and beyond with the Chancellor Robert D. Sparks, MD, Award in Public Health and Preventive Medicine. Hopefully in the future we'll be graduating students with certificates in planetary health, thanks to the assessment of our global health aspirations by Dr. Mac Otten-thanks to all of you for sharing your ideas.



Please join me in thanking our outgoing Student Association officers Alisha Aggarwal, Balkissa Ouattara, Jessica Wiens, and Bedant Chakroborty for their hard work during the 2018-2019 academic year. Welcome to our new officers: Anlan Cheney (President), Tatiana Tchouankam (Vice President), Suswara Mandala Rayabandla (Secretary), and Sabrina Chengane (Treasurer).

We are in a time of change and growth. Over the last few months we've welcomed Ms. Kerrie Fraterelli (Financial Administrator) and Ms. Aislinn Rookwood (YES Program Outreach Specialist) to the Department of Health Promotion, Ms. Colleen Svoboda (Partnerships and Assessment Manager) to the Office of Public Health Practice, Mr. Michael Harrington (Financial Administrator) to the Department of Epidemiology, and Ms. Bailey White (Research Technologist I) and Dr. Eric Carnes (Associate Professor) to the Department of Environmental, Agricultural, and Occupational Health. We have also selected a new Assistant Dean of Operations, Mr. Bradley Pfeifer, who will join us June 1; a new Chair of Biostatistics, Dr. Ying Zhang, who will join us July 1, and we will embark on a national search for a new Chair of the Department of Health Services Research and Administration as Dr. Li-Wu Chen announced his plans to return to a faculty position effective July 1.

As I look ahead to the summer months, I'd like to share a poem that Dr. Regina Robbins kindly shared with me as something that has inspired her. The poem is by Dr. Michele Desmarais from UNO, and founder of the Spirituality Public Health Religious Studies.

Always listening,

ask

Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH

Retired Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS

Dean and Professor

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