

August 30, 2017

Dear Team,

The biggest news of the month is, of course, the start of the new semester! Welcome to our new and returning students. We are excited to have 75 new students! Thank you to Ms. Emma Schultz for taking on the role of the College's Student Association President. We know that she'll do an excellent job representing our student body.

Along with our new students, we're also welcoming a new Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Christine Arcari. Dr. Arcari started on August 1 and hit the ground running. We are excited to have her as part of our team, especially as we institute several changes. There will be two new academic degree programs, updated PhD curricula and a complete revision to our MPH program by fall of 2018.

For anyone who ran out of breath saying the Department of Health Promotion, Social & Behavioral Health, you will be happy to know the department is now officially the Department of Health Promotion. Same great department, new succinct name!

Congratulations to Dr. Shireen Rajaram, who was awarded the Visionary Educational Leader Award at the Premier Education Banquet. This award is given by the UNMC Office of Faculty Development and recognizes the essential role of visionary educational leaders at UNMC. It recognizes individuals who are actively championing our ITEACH values to lead UNMC's premier education mission, now and into the future.

Congratulations also goes to Dr. Pinaki Panigrahi being published in the journal Nature, a premier international weekly science journal. A randomized synbiotic trial to prevent sepsis among infants in rural India, was published online on August 16. Dr. Panigrahi led a team that performed a trial of an oral probiotic preparation on infants in rural India. This has garnered major international attention and even more important, could be critical in combatting the 1 million deaths of infants each year from bloodstream infection.

The College was recently ranked 19th in the 2017 Ranking of the 35 Best Master's in Public Health Degrees by College Choice, an independent online publication. The publication consulted a variety of sources including US News & World Report to produce the list.

I would like to remind all of our students to apply for the 2018 Suzanne and Ward Chambers Global Health Fellowship Award. This award is provided by the generous support of our faculty, Dr. Ward Chambers and his wife, Suzanne Chambers and is dedicated to the global pursuit of health. This is an excellent way for our students without prior international experience to



become actively involved in our global health activities. Please stay tuned for the announcement, requirements and deadlines.

As Hurricane Harvey continues to devastate Texas and other parts of the gulf coast, many have questions as to how they can help. There are many ways to do so, with the American Red Cross website providing a number of ways citizens can help. The College is actively involved in the response on two fronts at this time. Several members of the COPH Student Response Team, with Dr. Sharon Medcalf as their faculty advisor, belong to the Global Standby Task Force (STF) and have been trained to “mine” social media in a disaster. The STF was activated for Hurricane Harvey on Sunday and many on the team have spent the last several days geo-mapping distress calls through social media. This information gets transferred to the Urban Search and Rescue Teams and the U.S. Coast Guard. They then respond to trapped victims, or hazardous spills. Dr. Medcalf is happy to report that more students signed up to help this week. In addition, the Center for Preparedness Education’s Assistant Director, Ms. Elayne Saejung, was asked to deploy with a Field Innovation Team. The team deploys to help brainstorm non-traditional strategies for responding/recovering in a disaster. Shelter operations in the affected area are already overwhelmed. Ms. Saejung will be part of a team travelling to the area, to address this issue using a process that generates innovative solutions. Her team is partnered with a local public health department and FEMA.

Our thoughts are with those who are affected by Hurricane Harvey. As public health champions, let’s do our part to assist the affected communities.

Always listening,
Ask

Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH

Retired Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS

Dean and Professor

College of Public Health | Office of the Dean