

June 2, 2016

Dear Team,

The highlight this month was, without a doubt, the college's inaugural convocation ceremony. We honored the achievements and tenacity of our graduates as well as the support of their family and friends. [Student awards](#) were presented as a great testament to their outstanding work. I was delighted to introduce Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, who is the Medical Director and State Epidemiologist at the Iowa Department of Public Health as our inaugural convocation speaker. I invited her to speak because she is one of our nation's great public health practitioners and a good friend.

Although commencement is always special, this was the first time in our history that we have had the critical mass of students to hold a separate convocation ceremony to celebrate just OUR graduates and their families. I have no doubt that many of these students celebrated at convocation will go on to be leaders of changing the health of our communities in the US and worldwide. A special thanks to Dean Alice Schumaker and Ms. Kristi Gifford for arranging this special event, and to Dr. Chandran Achutan, who was our first grand marshal; it was spectacular!

Our faculty and staff continue their fantastic work. Congratulations to Ms. Laura Vinson, the college's May 2016 Silver U Award winner. Laura is a valuable asset to our college and students as the Service Learning Program Manager. Thank you to Drs. Armando De Alba Rosales and Libby Crockett for their service to the Omaha Refugee Health Collaborative and providing a free class on women's health. Congratulations to Dr. Nizar Wehbi who was appointed to the American College of Healthcare Executives Council of Regents as interim regent for Nebraska and Western Iowa and to Ira Combs who was honored at the Institute of Healthcare Advancement Literacy Conference with an award for his work on the "North Omaha Area Health: Health Literacy for Young People and Families".

Welcome to Ms. Peibei Sun, Health Data Analyst in HSRA and another welcome to Dr. Abbie Raikes who's now officially onsite as Associate Professor in the Department of Health Promotion, Social and Behavioral Health.

Some of you may know that I wrote a book about my experiences as a disease detective and I'm happy to report, *The Next Pandemic* was released this month. Part of this process is going on a press tour and I have to say, I've enjoyed promoting the college and university more than my book! I did have a really cool opportunity to discuss infectious diseases at the generous invitation of the [Carnegie Council](#) to talk about what diseases pose the greatest risk and what we need to do to prevent them.



I sincerely hope all of you marked your calendars and will attend the all college retreat to be held on June 7, 2016 from 8:00 – 4:30 here at the college. The day promises to be engaging as we plan our next year and you won't want to miss it!

Always listening,  
Ask

**Ali S. Khan, MD, MPH**

Retired Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS

Dean and Professor

College of Public Health | Office of the Dean