Department of Community Health Sciences

Fall 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

In Memoriam
Remembering those in our community
Page 3

Community Building
Learn what the Department is doing to further connect students, alumni, faculty, and staff
Page 4

View the interactive newsletter here:
>https://prezi.com/pfggwqcwhrzi/view<

Photos of CHS students, faculty, and staff during the Fielding Fall Fiesta, CHS Winter Gathering, and FSPH Holiday Open House
As I write my introduction to the Fall newsletter I am keenly aware of the activity around issues of racial diversity and inclusion across the country, including at UCLA and in our own department. UCLA has created a new office and appointed a Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The new VC, Jerry Kang, comes from the UCLA law faculty and is an expert on implicit bias and subtle forms of discrimination. The campus has appointed equity advisors for each School, and our own faculty member Marjorie Kagawa-Singer – who officially retired last spring – is back as the advisor for the FSPH. Also at the school-level, the Dean recently announced that the school will recruit three new faculty in health disparities and has obtained a “junior endowed chair” in health disparities from the UC Office of the President (which will probably be paired with one of the three new positions the Dean announced). We have incorporated a session on intergroup dialogue in CHS 210 and are working to make all classes more responsive to important events as they unfold. The CHS Grads for Racial Justice has been meeting with departmental faculty to develop more dialogue and coursework on racial issues in the department. This is the most activity I have seen on racial justice issues at UCLA in the 25 years I have been here, and we all hope that it makes noticeable and lasting institutional changes. If you have other resources and ideas about how to move the process forward, please let me know.

There have been several sad events this past fall. Professor Gail Harrison, who had retired from teaching but was still active in research, passed away in September. All donations to the Chair’s Student Support Fund this year will be devoted to supporting the types of students whom Dr. Harrison cared so deeply about – those who study nutrition and/or who are from abroad. Alumna Candace Coffee, age 36, who graduated in 2006 and was an active advocate for stem cell research died this fall of complications of Devic’s disorder. And November was the one-year anniversary of the death of Shonali Choudhury, an alumna who was a tireless researcher and advocate for women’s health and empowerment who passed away at age 34 from brain cancer.

To end on a positive note, 64 CHS students graduated last spring with their masters degrees and 11 earned their doctorates. CHS students made more than two-dozen presentations at the APHA annual meetings in Chicago in November. The department allocated funds to assist with student travel to national meetings because of the professional development opportunities they offer. CHS has also started a very successful set of community-building activities at the department level this past spring, including several informal opportunities for students and faculty to mix and chat, as well as seminars to build the skills that will help students succeed in our graduate programs. These activities will continue through the upcoming quarters as we work to strengthen the social capital in addition to the intellectual capital of our students.

Best wishes for the holidays,

Steven P. Wallace, PhD
Chair and Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences
IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Gail Harrison
Professor Emerita

Dr. Harrison joined the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, Department of Community Health Sciences in 1992, serving as Department Chair from 1994-2003 and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs from 2006-07. She retired in 2013. Dr. Harrison was a highly respected scholar and held leadership roles in various units on campus including the Center for Global and Immigrant Health, the Center for Health Policy Research, the Center for Human Nutrition, and the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. She was involved in many teaching and research endeavors, and was passionate about improving the nutrition and health of underserved and impoverished children, mothers, and families. She repeatedly was called upon to consult with the World Health Organization, the United States’ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and UNICEF. She was elected to membership in the prestigious Institute of Medicine in 2003.

Dr. Harrison’s colleagues and students knew her as a visionary whose legacy will continue through the many lives she touched throughout her distinguished career.

In honor of Dr. Harrison, to support students studying nutrition and/or who are from abroad, please consider donating to the Chair’s Support Fund.

Candace Coffee
MPH, 2006

Candace Coffee, MPH alumna class of 2006, passed away July 8, 2015 from complications of NMO (Devic’s disorder). She is remembered fondly for her bravery, tenacity, thoughtfulness, and desire to make a difference. She leaves behind her 2-year-old twin boys, Jack and Jude. A friend of Coffee’s set up a college fund for her twins. Those who are interested in donating may do so here: https://www.gofundme.com/yzt34w

Remembering Shonali Choudhury

Last year, PhD alumna Shonali Choudhury passed away at the age of 34. In honoring her life and contributions to health advocacy and public health’s mission of assuring health for all, CHS faculty have taken the initiative to create the Shonali M. Choudhury Memorial Scholarship Fund to help students cover the cost of travel, books or other academic needs. Preference will be given to students serving as special readers in Community Health Sciences 210 or 211AB, as Shonali once did. These are the courses in which students develop their understanding of community impact on health status and the value of community input into creation and sustainability of community health programs. These funds will help other students follow Shonali’s path of passionate advocacy for the elimination of health disparities for all. A tax-deductible donation may be made online.
COMMUNITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

Starting this academic year, CHS launched a new initiative to promote skill development and activities to connect CHS students, alumni, faculty and staff. This initiative includes workshops for students and quarterly social gatherings on- and off-campus.

During Fall 2015:

- Doctoral students led skill building workshops (study skills, test taking, conducting an article review)
- Dr. Chandra Ford hosted the first professional symposium, highlighting her current study on lesbian and bisexual survivors of domestic violence
- Dr. Carol Aneshensel, Department Vice Chair, held an open Q&A for students
- The CHS community completed a group hike at Griffith Park
- A “Coffee Hour” and Winter Gathering (photos below) were held to promote interaction among students, faculty, and staff

For those interested, audio from the workshops and professional symposium have been uploaded to YouTube

The next social event for the entire community, including family and friends, will be the Downtown LA Art Walk on February 11, 2016. More details will be sent in January. We look forward to seeing you there!

CHS Winter Gathering 2015

The Department held a potluck gathering to celebrate the end of Fall Quarter and the end of the calendar year. View the full album.
Faculty Updates

Dr. Hiram Beltrán-Sánchez  
**Assistant Professor**

Dr. Beltrán-Sánchez’s study on why men don’t live as long as women was published in the prestigious *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, which may be read here.

Dr. Marjorie Kagawa-Singer  
**Professor Emerita**

The Asian & Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health (APIC) honored Dr. Kagawa-Singer, with APIC’s Lifetime Achievement Award on November 2, during APHA 2015.

Dr. Ondine von Ehrenstein  
**Associate Professor**

Dr. von Ehrenstein was appointed Associate Director of the UCLA Blum Center on Poverty and Health in Latin America. She will support the development of research and publications, as well as fund development for the Center.

Alumni and Student Updates

Elizabeth Evans, PhD ‘15

Evans was an invited speaker for a HuffPost Live discussion addressing Hillary Clinton’s $10B plan to treat drug addiction and reduce incarceration for non-violent drug offenders. The discussion may be viewed here: [http://goo.gl/hEHzgu](http://goo.gl/hEHzgu)

Jennifer Jee-Lyn Garcia, PhD ‘14 and Mienah Zulfacar Sharif, PhD Candidate


Cassondra Marshall, MPH ‘10

Since her graduation in 2010, Marshall worked as a research fellow in the Division of Reproductive Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, and recently earned her DrPH from the University of California – Berkeley. She is currently a Delivery Science Fellow at the Kaiser Permanente Northern California Division of Research.

“Stairclimbing Bruins”

On September 25, the FSPH Team “Stairclimbing Bruins”, which included CHS staff, students, faculty, and undergraduate assistants, climbed the 75 floors of the US Bank Tower as part of a fundraiser for the Ketchum-Downtown YMCA of Los Angeles. The team surpassed their goal and raised $1,461 for the event. The event supports and strengthens the YMCA’s community programs in and around Downtown Los Angeles.

Left to right: Vanessa Gomez, Jennifer Ramirez, Emily Rozema, Tabashir Sadegh-Nobari, Queenie Leung, Amy Wang, Hannah Husby, Linghui Jiang
**RECONNECT WITH CHS**

*Continuing Your Lifelong Connection*

**Update** us on your career and achievements. Complete the [Contact Information Form](#) for alumni.

**Mentor** a student and help guide them as they develop into a public health professional. Email [chsalumni@ph.ucla.edu](mailto:chsalumni@ph.ucla.edu) to find out how to get involved.

**Engage** with students: Give a lunch lecture or offer an externship during spring break. Email [chsalumni@ph.ucla.edu](mailto:chsalumni@ph.ucla.edu) to express your interest.

**Join** the [Public Health Alumni Association](#) board, participate in "think tanks" and be involved in the school's future.
Help us educate tomorrow’s leaders and promote health equity by supporting our students’ training and our faculty’s innovative research by making a donation at https://giving.ucla.edu/FSPHCHS

Or give by mail - Make your check payable to The UC Regents, note "CHS Donation" in the memo line, and mail to:

Attn: Preethi Thomas, Department Manager
Department of Community Health Sciences
UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
650 Charles E. Young Drive South
P.O. Box 951772
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1772

Please be sure your name, address, telephone number, and email address are included.