MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear HPEB,

Congratulations to each and every one of you! Congratulations to our graduates, to those finishing up your semester of classes or completing exams or presentations toward your degree – regardless of where you are in the program as students and regardless of your role in the department, I send you my very best wishes. We made it through the 2020-2021 academic year. I’ve written a few emails to you all over the past year – okay, I’ve flooded your inboxes. Please know that sharing messages and experiences gave me strength and hope and I thank you for your kind notes and calls.

This is a supersized newsletter. Please enjoy and join me in celebrating everyone’s accomplishments. After you read the newsletter and after the semester is officially over, what are you going to do? The semesters blend together so let’s be deliberate in taking somewhat of a full stop that works for you before you embark on your continued academic adventures. For me and my family, that full stop may be a weekend trip or an afternoon in in the Horseshoe for a bagel picnic and some frisbee. I’m going to need some more reading material so please send along suggestions.

In our household, we discuss time in semesters. I guess it’s because I’m still in school and even our son talks about his third-grade ‘spring semester’ ending in May. A family friend recently mailed me an old report she wrote for nursing school. She had to observe a young child in a family setting. I was totally surprised when I opened the report and it was about me as a 3-year, 8-month-old child. Yikes! Funniest part I will share was how I walked around repeating what others said, including mimicking my mother who happened to be saying that day, “I’m writing my final essay for the semester.” Well … look at that. Maybe that’s why we still talk in semesters in our house. (According to that report, I also used to say things like, “I hear a bear snoring, maybe the bear needs tea” but that’s neither here nor there.)

This time when I write “see you soon HPEB,” I know I will see many of you in person again soon. With gratitude and wishes of continued good health for you and your loved ones.

See you soon, HPEB- Daniela Friedman
Brianna Ashford-Carroll, HPEB masters student, was recipient of the Fall 2020 Ann Cassady Endowed Fellowship.

Megan Austin, HPEB masters student, was recipient of the Spring 2021 Ann Cassady Endowed Fellowship and was promoted to part-time Communications Coordinator at Smokefree South Carolina.

Maryam Alhabas, HPEB doctoral candidate, was recipient of the Spring 2021 Butterfoss Community-Based Research Endowed Fellowship.

Jenesha Nance, HPEB masters student, was recipient of the 2021 HPEB Outstanding Masters Student of the Year Award.

Chengbo Zeng, HPEB doctoral candidate, was recipient of the 2021 HPEB Christopher Peter Aluah Outstanding Doctoral Student of the Year Award.

Andrew Chen was recipient of the 2021 HPEB Undergraduate Student Research Award.

Dr. Casey Childers, HPEB alum, and her evaluation team's work was cited in a recent MMWR article highlighting best practices in translating data to practice in suicide prevention. Dr. Childers is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Dept of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at the UofSC School of Medicine.

Jennifer Mandelbaum, HPEB doctoral student, was a recipient of the 2021 Breakthrough Graduate Scholar Award.

Mayank Sakhija, HPEB doctoral candidate, was selected to be a Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network Scholar in the inaugural year of this scholars program.

Dr. Caroline Dunn, HPEB alum, started a new position as Lead Social Scientist with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Courtney Monroe was recipient of the 2021 Distinguished Undergraduate Research Mentor Award from the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Dr. Rachel Davis was recipient of the 2021 Distinguished Research Service Award from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

Dr. Xiaoming Li was a recipient of the 2021 Breakthrough Leadership in Research Award.

Dr. Jim Thrasher was elected Chairperson of the Smokefree South Carolina Board of Directors.

Dr. Ken Watkins was recognized for his 20 years of service at the University of South Carolina.

Maria Sophocleous, HPEB Business and HR Manager, was nominated for the 2021 University of South Carolina Outstanding Advocate for First-Year Students Award and was one of only 10 finalists for the 2021 University 101 Outstanding Teaching Award.

Dr. Shan Qiao and Dr. John Bernhart were named AJI Magellan Faculty Fellows. The Ann Johnson Institute for Science, Technology, & Society is a newly established center that is dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The AJI Magellan Faculty Fellows program rewards faculty who mentor students outside of their home discipline.

Nkechi Okpara, HPEB doctoral candidate, won an award for one of the most viewed spotlight presentations at the 2021 Society of Behavioral Medicine annual meeting, for her presentation of, "Food Doesn't Have Power Over Me Anymore!" The Role of Self-Efficacy in Determining Motivation and Dietary Adherences.

Miranda Cole, HPEB Center for Healthcare Quality Project Coordinator, successfully completed the UofSC GRANT Certificate Program.
Tina Leonard, HPEB online professional masters student, was featured in the Arnold School of Public Health I Am Public Health Series: Link

Dr. Faith Fletcher, HPEB alum, published this opinion piece on the vaccine rollout for NPR.com: Link

Dr. Faith Fletcher and Dr. Alicia Best, HPEB alums, are featured in this Rolling Stone article on the communication about vaccine hesitancy: Link

Dr. Oluwafemi (Femi) Adeagbo, post-doctoral fellow in the HPEB Center for Healthcare Quality, was featured by the Arnold School for being selected as an affiliate member of the African Academy of Science: Link

Mohammad Masudur Rahman, HPEB doctoral student, was a recipient of the inaugural Maternal and Child Health Graduate Scholarship along with two other students in the Arnold School of Public Health: Link

Dr. Lucy Ingram was featured for her work on a report with AARP SC and other statewide partners focused on health disparities among older Black adults: Link

Dr. Ruth Saunders, HPEB professor emerita, is the 2020 recipient of Clemson University Psychology Department’s Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award: Link
Practicum Presentations:


Brittney White: April 12, 2021 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Data Analysis for the SC Violet Death Reporting System

Wendy Besmann: April 19, 2021 Communication Strategies for Engaging School Wellness Champions: Applying diffusion of innovation theory to the adoption of Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program

Kristine Arnau: April 21, 2021 Healthy Aging and Alzheimer’s Disease in South Carolina


Dissertation Defense:


Dr. Giraudy and Willie B. -the HPEB CPR Dog
Congratulations to **Shirelle Hallum, Tianyue Mi, and Marilyn Wende**, HPEB doctoral candidates, for securing SPARC Graduate Research Grants.

Congratulations to **Dr. Shan Qiao, Dr. Andrew Kaczynski, and Dr. John Bernhart** and undergraduate students they are mentoring – **Shirley Callie, Julia Sultz, and Evan Robinette** – for securing Magellan Scholar grants from the UofSC Office of the Vice President for Research.

**Dr. Brie Turner McGrievy** and team members secured an RO1 grant from the NIH National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in the amount of $3,426,100, over 5 years, for the project entitled: “Ensuring the cultural relevance of Dietary Guidelines diet patterns among African Americans: Increasing dietary quality and reducing type 2 diabetes risk.”


Draper C, Younginer N (February 2021). Adapting the SNAP-Ed toolkit intervention, FoodShare, during COVID-19 and the results of a longitudinal evaluation on food security and produce consumption among customers. Poster presentation at the annual conference of the Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators, Virtual Format.


Please send submissions for News and Kudos to Pam Metz so that we can share and celebrate your work! HPEB Discovery I 915 Greene Street Suite 563 Columbia SC, 29208 Tel: 803.777.7096 pmetz@mailbox.sc.edu

Soon-to-be HPEB graduates and alumni, please continue to keep in touch with us! Please also ensure your contact information is current with the Arnold School by updating your information here: Link