Public Health in the Time of COVID-19

Thank you all for your patience as we all navigate the new world that COVID-19 has dealt us. Halfway through the spring, we moved all classes online and all APE projects out of the field. It has been a challenge for everyone, but you have shown great resilience and ability to adapt.

Summer classes are underway, and as always, they are 100% online. Please follow departmental announcements and emails for guidance on how we will continue into the fall semester. Most of all, please stay safe!

Fall classes start Monday, August 17th!

MPH Trip to Philippines

In January this year, MPH and Nursing students travelled to Dumaguete, Philippines on a TTUHSC International Education Trip, led by the Office of Global Health. The MPH students included Savannah Forsyth, Aksha Upadhyay, Jnev Biros, Cain Lara, and Obi Udensi. Students were introduced to the Philippines health care system, and toured several hospitals and the Dumaguete public health department. Community needs assessment of Canday-Ong was conducted with the assistance of students from Siliman University. Students were accompanied by Drs. Theresa Byrd and Rubini Pasupathy.

Pictured (L to R): MPH students Cain Lara, Jnev Biros, M.D., Savannah Forsyth, Aksha Upadhyay
Announcements

● Fall registration is now open. Current students should contact their faculty advisor for guidance on fall classes

● Incoming online students will complete MPH orientation entirely online

● Fall 2020 orientation for new students is scheduled for August 10th

New additions

● Dr. Emily Bailey joined the department as an Assistant Professor on the Abilene campus in October, 2019. Dr. Bailey is an environmental scientist who comes to TTUHSC from a postdoctoral fellowship at Duke University.

● Dr. Lisa Gittner transitioned from part-time to full-time faculty in the department in August 2019. She is an Associate Professor on the Lubbock campus.
# Recent Graduates

## Summer 2019
- Nathan Villalpando (MPA/MPH)
- Robyn Wood
- Jeanette Cala
- Vianne Nanez
- Ashley Roest
- Ashley Sciba

## Spring 2020
- Savannah Forsyth
- Amber Zickefoose
- Kelsey Rosenberger
- Shanice Latham (M.D./MPH)
  - Dena Helo
  - Danielle Goss
  - Kali Gentry

## Fall 2019
- Verneicia Allen
- Brittany Duhart
- Samantha Guerra
  - Sally Lutes
- Andres Martinez-Marin
- Tyler Maylone
- Abigail Sitton
- Bridget Haney
  - Joan Mathew
- Ricardo Casarez
- Sidonie Ngangmi
- Jaffer Samad
- Dixon Santana, M.D.

(Dual degree graduates in parentheses)

**Congratulations to all of our new MPH graduates!**
Faculty Activities & Honors

- **Dr. Courtney Queen** was named a Fulbright Scholar by the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, Department of State

- **Dr. Julie St. John** and *Liesl Wyett* were selected for the first cohort of the TTUHSC One Team Fellows Leadership program

- **Dr. Duke Appiah** received the Trudy Bush Fellowship for Cardiovascular Disease Research in Women’s Health, American Heart Association Council on Epidemiology and Prevention

- **Dr. Emily Bailey** received a research award from the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health.

- **Dr. Courtney Queen** became an affiliate of the Virtual Institute for Transdisciplinary Research and Scholarship for Africa at Texas Tech University

- **Dr. Duke Appiah** was named Outstanding Teacher of the Year. The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

- **Dr. Emily Bailey** will be partnering with ACU on COVID-19 testing for the fall semester.

- **Dr. Hafiz Khan** joined the *Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease* editorial board as an associate editor

- **Dr. Jeff Dennis** joined the editorial board of *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*

- **Dr. Courtney Queen** was elected to the TTUHSC Faculty Senate

- **Dr. Courtney Queen** joined the Association of Schools and Programs in Public Health committees on Academic Affairs and the Global Health Network for Academic Public Health

- **Dr. Jeff Dennis** was selected for the TTUHSC Quality Enhancement Plan Steering Committee on student wellness
Recent Publications


Ball S, Dennis JA, Bedanie G, Nugent K. (2020). Relation between mean platelet volume and C-reactive protein. Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings (pp. 1-6).


*denotes equal contributions. Listed alphabetically.


Dennis JA, Gittner LS, George AK, Queen CM. In press. Opioid use disorder terminologies and the role of public health in addressing stigma. Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly.


Publications (continued)


*Public health faculty, students, and alumni in bold text*
**Departmental Grants and Funding**

**Dr. Duke Appiah**

Funder: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), R21  
Title: Beyond black and white: Understanding skin tone as a driver of prepregnancy cardiometabolic health and birth outcomes  
Role: Subcontract Principal Investigator  

Funder: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), Research supplement  
Title: Characterizing Trajectories of Quantitative Changes in the Plasma Proteome across the Menopausal Transition  
Role: Candidate (Project Principal Investigator)  

Funder: Garrison Institute on Aging, Collaborative Seed Grant Program in Aging  
Title: Mind your heart: the association of heart/vascular aging with mild cognitive impairment using data from project FRONTIER  
Role: Principal Investigator  

Funder: Garrison Institute on Aging, Collaborative Seed Grant Program in Aging  
Title: Biopsychosocial predictors of cognitive stability, decline, and resilience in a sample of older, rural-dwelling West Texans: a retrospective cohort study using data from project FRONTIER  
Role: Co-investigator  

Funder: Department of Defense, Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program  
Title: Immunotherapeutic targeting of glioblastoma with oncolytic virus and listeria-based anti-cancer vaccine  
Role: Biostatistician

**Dr. Courtney Queen**

Funder: TTUHSC Clinical Research Institute, CRI Seed Grant opportunity, pre-proposal award consideration  
Title: Skin and Neglected Tropical Disease Image Repository and mHealth Tool for Image Recognition of Early Stage Buruli Ulcer Disease.  
Role: Principal Investigator  

Funder: National Science Foundation  
Small Business Innovation Research Program/Small Business Technology Transfer, Phase I Pitch  
Role: Principal Investigator

**Drs. Lisa Gittner and Hafiz Khan**

Funder: National Science Foundation  
Title: Risk Modeling Using Big Data, NSF-2019-TTU-6-I/UCRC Cloud Autonomic Computing Center  
Roles: Principal Investigator (Gittner); Co-Investigator (Khan)

**Drs. Lisa Gittner and Jeff Dennis**

Funder: Bureau of Justice Assistance. Category 2 Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Grant.  
Title: Consistency and Coordination through Training: It all starts with training. PI: Lt. Misti Snodgrass  
Role: Consultants
Faculty and Student Presentations


Appiah D, Lewis CE, Carr J, Gross M, Jacobs DR, Sidney S, Shikany JM, Quesenberry CP, Gunderson EP. Lactation Duration Is Associated with Lower Visceral and Pericardial Fat Volumes in Parous Women: 25-Year Follow-up in the CARDIA Study (Presented at the American Heart Association’s Epidemiology and Prevention/ Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health Scientific Session, Phoenix, AZ), March 5, 2020.


Dissanayaka AM, Mengel S, Gittner LS, Khan HMR. Vulnerability Prioritization, Root Cause Analysis, and Mitigation of Secure Data Analytic Framework Implemented with MongoDB on Singularity Linux Containers. Accepted by International Conference on Compute and Data Analysis (ICCDA), 2020.


Presentations (continued)


**Pitalua Rodriguez MA, Mengel S, Gittner LS, Khan HMR.** Automated Hot-spot Identification for Spatial Investigation of Disease Indicators. 2019 IEEE Fifth International Conference on Big Data Computing Service and Applications (BigDataService), April 4-9, 2019, San Francisco East Bay, CA

Tu, Brittany **Pitalua Rodriguez M**, Mengel S, **Khan HMR, Gittner LS.** Building Effective Intervention Models Utilizing Big Data to Prevent Obesity Epidemic. April 03, 2019, Undergraduate Research Conference, Texas Tech University

**Shabaneh O, Rasmussen D, Rafiq A, Blakely S, Reddy PH, Gittner LS, Khan HMR.** Gender Differences in Prevalence of Myocardial Infarction in Rural West Texans. Student Research Week, March 20, 2019

**Queen CM.** Speaker: Pope Fellows in Public Policy. Abilene Christian University.

**Queen CM.** Homelessness, Housing, and Health. Community Foundation of Abilene.

**Queen CM.** SUD and infectious disease. Opioid Symposium: Collaborating to solve a crisis. Prevention Resource Center


*Public health faculty, students, and alumni in bold*