Letter from the Chair

Dear Department of Mental Health Alumni and Friends,

I hope you have enjoyed a restful summer with friends and family! We here at the Department of Mental Health are getting excited for a new academic year. Our faculty, staff, students, and affiliates continue to help improve the lives of people, families, and communities affected by mental and behavioral health challenges. As you will see in this newsletter, our folks have shown the excellence and passion for teaching and advising while also pushing forward the science and practice of public mental health. Our recent graduates defended impressive dissertations and masters theses and our alumni continue to make us proud. We are so fortunate to have such dedicated and talented people working together.

This year, we were thrilled to learn that the Bloomberg School was again ranked the #1 School of Public Health. Given the expanding programs in public health across the nation, and the high quality education and research activities at many schools of public health, this is a great honor, and a testament to the quality and dedication of our people and our partners. As mentioned last year, we also embarked on a new strategic plan for the school last year. The details can be found at: www.jhsph.edu/about/strategic-plan/updates.html.

We are already making progress in each of the 5 focus areas of the plan and our department is playing a key role!

We have 5 new faculty members this year. Please read about their impressive and important work on page 7. We are now also in the process of recruiting at least two more Assistant Professors as well as a faculty member to lead our Workplace Mental Health initiatives including a Center for Workplace Mental Health in partnership with the Luv u Project. See more about these efforts at jhsph.edu/mental-health-workplace.

Hopefully, you have also been receiving our weekly roundup emails so you know what we up to! If not, please email Michelle Maffett at mmaffet1@jhu.edu to get on this list. We are also on twitter @JohnsHopkinsDMH, so follow us there too!

I am grateful every day for the opportunity to contribute to the success of this Department and School, and even more grateful for the continued engagement of all of you—our alumni, friends, students, faculty, and staff. Here’s to a productive new year!
LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS!

We would love to hear how and what you’re doing and your recent career highlights. We’d also like to highlight your accomplishments on our departmental alumni website.

Please keep in touch! Just drop an email to Michelle at mmaffetl@jhu.edu
‘I always call myself a Hopkins kid,’ says Adam J. Milam, MD ‘16, PhD ‘12, MHS ’09. ‘I have literally been affiliated with Johns Hopkins all of my adult life. I spent eight years completing coursework and training at Johns Hopkins University and I have been on the faculty for seven years. I do not regret one day. The opportunities that I had being a part of the Hopkins family has contributed greatly to my career path and trajectory.’

After completing his doctoral degree in mental health at JHSPH in 2012, Milam attended medical school at Wayne State University in Detroit. He is currently a fourth-year resident in the Department of Anesthesiology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. Milam continues to be a faculty associate at JHSPH, with an independent research portfolio related to youth violence exposure and prevention; school climate and academic performance; and environmental strategies for preventing teen substance abuse.

As a fourth-year resident, Milam provides anesthesia care for patients undergoing surgery and trains junior residents and medical students. He praised his JHSPH training as good preparation for becoming a resident physician – from critical thinking, designing and implementing research studies as well as leading and being part of a team.

As a resident, Milam has served in leadership roles including co-chair of the House Staff Executive Committee (liaison committee between residents and administration), delegate for the California Society of Anesthesiologists, and junior chief resident. “I recently found out that I was selected to serve as one of the Chief Residents for the next academic year – the first African American to be selected for this role,” Milam said.

Milam began taking classes at JHSPH as an undergraduate senior, then completed master and doctoral degrees. “I started as part-time faculty in the department following my degree and I have continued to collaborate with doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty at JHSPH,” he said, noting Drs. Philip Leaf, Nicholas Ialongo, Sabriya Linton and Brion Maher specifically.

Milam said he has also remained in contact with several alumni from the department who are now at other institutions including Drs. Elizabeth Nesoff (Columbia University), David Fakunle (Morgan State University), and Qiana Brown (Rutgers University). “I also work closely with my former advisor and my mentor, Dr. Debra Furr-Holden (JHSPH, 1999; Adjunct Professor) on state and national policies to reduce violence related to youth violence exposure and prevention; school climate and academic performance; and environmental strategies for preventing teen substance abuse.

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Milam shared three pieces of ad-vice he gives to current and prospective JHSPH students:

- **Find a great mentor.** This will be helpful during your training at JHSPH and in your career as a researcher.
- **Enroll in a broad and diverse set of courses to create a good foundation and understanding of public health.**
- **Be teachable.** Faculty will take interest and pour knowledge and resources into you.

While Milam has excelled in his career, he also finds time to hike and bike around LA, and also to travel.

“I did a medical mission trip in Mbarara, Uganda and have recently traveled to Kampala, Uganda; Lagos, Nigeria; Dublin for St. Patrick’s Day, and Scotland,” he said.

**RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**

In fiscal year 2018, the faculty applied for 90 grants (including competing and non-competing applications).

Our success rate was 38%, with 34 grants awarded at a total amount of $17,256,595. This is better than the current average NIH success rate in FY18, which is only funding approximately 22.7% of applications.

This speaks to the quality and tenacity of our faculty! It should also be noted that with delays at the NIH, there are currently 23 still pending.

These submissions include only grants in which our faculty were Principal Investigators—the faculty supported other investigators throughout the school and university and other institutions as well.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADS!

Doctoral Degree Recipients

Doctor of Philosophy

Ryan M. Andrews
Advisor: Michelle Carlson, PhD
Examining Causal Pathways in Neurocognitive Research

Kenneth Aaron Feder
Advisor: Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD
Children in the United States Opioid Epidemic

Erin Michelle Anderson Goodell
Advisor: Renee Johnson, PhD
Interpersonal Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol Misuse Among Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers

Martha Claire Greene
Advisor: Wietse Tol, PhD
Alcohol Misuse and Global Mental Health: Achieving Parity in Research and Practice

Kimberly Beth Roth
Advisor: William W. Eaton, PhD
Latinos’ Experiences in the US Acculturation, Discrimination, Stress, Social Cohesion and Psychiatric Disorder

Lydia Alexandra Stewart
Advisor: M. Daniele Fallin, PhD
Association of Sociodemographic Characteristics with Autism spectrum Disorder Measurement and Identification Timing in the U.S.

Master’s Degree Recipients

Master of Health Science

Daniel Olusoga Akinbolue
Cerra Celeste Antonacci
Amber J. Bailey
Daniela Barrio
Lindsey R. Cohen
Angie L. Cruz
Deepta Reddy Dokuru
Bridget Aviv Gottlieb
Stephanie Kathryn Griep
Nusrat Islam
Kalie Jean
Michelle M. Kim
Dana Lee
Zehan Li
Chichun Lin
QianHui Ma
Christie Nneamaka Okoye
Elise Nicole Planchet
Sonal Sharda
Elizabeth Angela Shaya
Eunice J. Song
Travis Richard Thompson
Andrew Thienchuong Trandai
Naria Zui

ALUMNI NEWS

Mieka Smart, DrPH ’15, is an assistant professor in the College of Human Medicine at Michigan State University, with appointments in the Division of Public Health and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She is also the director of the College of Human Medicine Leadership for the Medically Underserved (LMU) certificate program.

April Joy Damian, PhD ’18, has been named the next Chair of AcademyHealth’s Public Health Systems Research (PHSR) Interest Group Advisory Board. Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Kresge Foundation, the Advisory Board provides strategic guidance and leadership to the more than 3,000 individuals within AcademyHealth’s PHSR Interest Group who share an interest in exploring and enhancing the U.S. public health system by formulating, translating, and applying the PHSR evidence base.

Laura Stonestreet McDonald, PhD ’11, is currently an Operations Officer at World Bank.

Benjamin Zablotsky, PhD ’13, is Health Statistician at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
**ALUMNI NEWS**

Hannah Allen, MHS ’14, is currently a postdoctoral scholar in a T-32 training program at Penn State.

Bernie Wong, MHS ’17, is Senior Associate at Mind Share Partners, a non-profit organization whose mission is to build awareness and acceptance in the workplace for people with mental health conditions. He recently gave a Firestarter talk at the Mental Health at Work 2019 conference. The link is http://bit.ly/BernieWong.

Nikita Driscoll Weaver, MHS ’17, began a new position as Health Services Social Worker at the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities.

Matthew Collison, MHS ’17, is senior research specialist at American University’s Justice Programs Office, which includes traveling around the country providing training and technical assistance to Juvenile Drug Courts. Their team recently completed Georgetown’s Center for Juvenile Justice Reform’s RED certification program, and he’s just gotten back from presenting a few sessions at NADCP’s national conference in National Harbor. And he’s getting married in September!

Gregory Hard, MHS ’18, is beginning the Nursing Program at Massachusetts General Hospital in fall.

Amber Bailey, MHS ’19, is currently a Research Project Coordinator at Sheppard Pratt (Towson campus) - Neuropsychiatry Department. She will be submitting her thesis to the Journal of Neuropsychology later this month.

Shalini Wickramatilake, MHS ’11, is currently enrolled in the DrPH program in the Department of Health Policy and Management. They had a mini MHS class of 2011 reunion getaway in May, because Lindsay Stanley and Amir Fayeek got married in the Bahamas (upper right picture). They first met at Hopkins and have been together ever since. What a great love story!

Victoria Green, MHS ’18, is an Analyst in Health Policy at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. She conducts research for Congress on FDA regulation of tobacco, medical devices, and cosmetics, as well as some behavioral health issues, including veterans behavioral health and maternal behavioral health.

Uche Azuzu (now Aneni), MHS ’12, is currently a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellow at the Yale Child Study Center. I completed my residency in Psychiatry at Duke last year.

Kayva Anchuri, MHS ’18, recently had her MHS thesis published by the Journal of American College Health. Her paper is about risk factors for suicide among NCAA college athletes in the U.S. and it was published in the Journal of American College Health. In addition, Kayva just began medical school at the University of Calgary!

**STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS**

**Department Awards**

Paul V. Lemkau Award
Kyle Moore, PhD student
This award is made annually for outstanding performance in doctoral students in the field of mental health.

Morton Kramer Fund
Kenneth Feder, PhD student
This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in the application of biostatistical and epidemiological methods to mental disorders.

Lucy Shum Memorial Scholarship Award
Yian (Angela) Lin, PhD student
This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in public health policy for mental health issues.

Dr. Ali and Rose Kawi Scholarship
Kate Perepeko, PhD student
This award is made annually to a doctoral student who has demonstrated excellence in mental health issues.

Alberta Szalita Award
Lindsey Webb, PhD student
This award is made annually to an outstanding doctoral student in the Department of Mental Health.

Centennial Scholarship Award
Yian (Angela) Lin, PhD student
In honor of the School’s 100th anniversary, the Centennial Scholars Program provides immediate impact funding for the best and the brightest public health students at the Bloomberg School.

**School-wide Awards, 2018-19**

Kayla Ma, MHS student won first place in the policy category of the Delta Omega poster competition for “Development of the mental health peer support questionnaire in colleges and vocational schools in Singapore.”

M. Claire Greene, PhD was inducted into Delta Omega.

MHS students Lindsey Cohen, Mythili Sanikommu, and Sonal Sharda were inducted into Delta Omega.

**Other Student Awards**

Kayla Ma, MHS student, received the Excellence in International Public Health Practice Award.

PhD student Calliope Holingue has been awarded a Gordis Teaching Fellowship to teach her course “Mental Health and the Gut” to undergraduate students at the Homewood campus.

Kayla Tormohlen, PhD student, has received both a NIDA Director’s Travel Award and a Johns Hopkins Addiction and Overdose Workgroup Travel Award to attend the annual meeting of The College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD).

Fourth year doctoral student Dan Lakin was recently awarded an ISTSS Frank W. Putnam Trauma Research Scholars award for his work “Men’s Engagement with Psychotherapy: Towards Inclusive Interventions in Low-Income Settings.”
**FACULTY AWARDS AND PROMOTIONS**

Phil Leaf’s East Baltimore Trauma Response Coalition Committee received a Mayoral Certificate of Recognition for their work to expand assistance to survivors of violence. Dr. Leaf has also been selected as this year’s winner of the Crenson-Hertz Award for Community-Based Learning and Participatory Research by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Concern (CSC) and the Community-Based Learning (CBL) staff. The annual award is given to a faculty member who is dedicated to community engagement. This is displayed through teaching, academic program development, and/or research that has enriched student learning and established meaningful community partnerships.

Tamar Mendelson, faculty in the department, has been named the new director of the Center for Adolescent Health. In addition, she has been named the second Bloomberg Professor of American Health, and endowed position to help expand the work and impact of the Bloomberg American Health Initiative, particularly in the area of adolescent health.

Johannes Thrul, PhD received a Faculty Development Award for his application entitled Real Time Viral Load Assessment with Proactive Interventions to Optimize Adherence among Youth with HIV. The award is funded by the Johns Hopkins University Center for AIDS Research (JHU CFAR) Developmental Core.

Andy Feinberg, professor in the department, was named to Council of Councils of NIH, which oversees Common Fund and NIH-wide policies and programs.

Elizabeth Letourneau, PhD was recently invited & approved to serve on an NAS Forum on Global Violence Prevention. This Forum aims to prevention interpersonal, self-directed, and collective violence and includes a strong cross-disciplinary focus. She has been promoted to Professor. Her first advisee, Dr. Kenneth Feder, graduated this year!

**EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING**

Faculty who received excellent course evaluations include:

- Deborah Agus (adjunct)
- Jeannie-Marie Leoutsakos
- Adam Spira
- Judy Bass
- Ramin Mojtabai
- Elizabeth Stuart
- Dani Fallin
- Rashelle Musci
- Holly Wilcox
- Elizabeth Letourneau
- Jeannie Parisi

**WELCOME NEW ASSISTANT SCIENTISTS**

Atif Adam, PhD received his doctorate from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health from the Department of International Health in 2017 and postdoctoral training on Systems science and obesity in the Johns Hopkins Global Obesity Prevention Center (GOPC). Dr. Adam’s research has been focused on building predictive clinical management models within the complex framework of human behavior and disease cascades, with a long-term goal is to develop and utilize an individual-level computational pipeline that can use real-time feedback to improve remote health monitoring and clinical management of older patients.

Jura Augustinavicius, PhD received her doctorate from the Department of Mental Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health in 2017. She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in this department. Her expertise in the in the cross-cultural investigation of maternal mental health and child neurocognitive outcomes using qualitative and quantitative analytic methods. As she continues to build her research on these topics, she is expanding her area of expertise to include how the changing environment impacts population mental health.

Jill Rabinowitz, PhD received her master’s and doctorate degree in developmental psychology at Temple before joining our Department of Mental Health as a postdoctoral fellow in the Drug Dependence Epidemiology Training (DDET) T32 Program. She has a strong commitment to re-search within the field of substance use, and is dedicated to using research to inform interventions and policy initiatives aimed at reducing the burden of addiction.

Ryoko Susukida, PhD received her doctorate in Mental Health in our Department in 2017, after already completing a separate PhD in Public Economics from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies at the University of Tokyo. She is a social and behavioral epidemiologist who pro-motes reproducible, comparative and qualitative and quantitative analytic methods. As she continues to build her research on these topics, she is expanding her area of expertise to include how the changing environment impacts population mental health.

Luciana C. Assini-Meytin, PhD received her doctorate from the University of Maryland School of Public Health. Her work focuses on the prevention of child sexual abuse and the long-term consequences of adverse childhood maltreatment for both, men and women. She is particularly interested in prevention science, life course research, and gender differences in mental health outcomes.