Promoting healthier tomorrows through education and research today
Dean's Message

Dear Alumni and Friends:

At the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health, we know the vitally important role that public health plays in promoting the lives and the overall well-being of all people. In 2017, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the college. There is much to celebrate as we look back on the successes achieved and look forward to continued growth and achievement in our role as a leader in public health education, service, research and awareness.

As you know, health is not simply a consequence of genetics. It also is determined by the personal choices we make, by the environment around us, and by the organized efforts that communities undertake to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy.

Public health is about protecting health by safeguarding the places where we live, work and play, and about making healthy lifestyle choices easy for all people. It is about investigating the effect of environmental factors, social influences and economic considerations on our health. It also is about working to minimize health risks and to promote better health through prevention of disease, injury and disability.

I hope you will share my pride as you read through this issue, which showcases the work, dedication and accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Finally, I would like to express my personal gratitude to our alumni and friends for their gifts in support of scholarships and fellowships for our students. We also offer our sincerest appreciation to Dr. Leslie and Clifford Hudson for their recent $1 million gift to our college to provide doctoral student fellowships as well as the annual Hudson Fellows in Public Health Symposium.

As we mark another important anniversary for this college, may it serve as an important reminder to all of us that an investment in public health is an investment in the future well-being of our citizens, our children and future generations.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Raskob, Ph.D.
Dean, OU College of Public Health
Regents’ Professor, Epidemiology and Medicine

President’s Message

The University of Oklahoma has recently celebrated its 125th anniversary and the OU College of Public Health is celebrating 50 years of success. The faculty, staff and students of the college have been leaders in the area of public health and have helped positively impact the health of Oklahomans. The record they have established across the country and the respect they have earned from peers worldwide is unmatched.

The OU College of Public Health is one of only 59 fully accredited colleges of public health in the United States, having maintained continuous accreditation ever since it was first accredited in 1969, which is well before more than half of the current schools of public health even existed. From biostatistics and epidemiology to health promotional sciences, and from environmental and occupational health to health policy and administration, this college is truly remarkable in terms of its areas of study and its research.

As we look to the future, the OU College of Public Health is the pacesetter and example of what we can do to improve the health status and quality of life of the people of Oklahoma, our nation and the world.

Sincerely,

David L. Boren
President, The University of Oklahoma

Promoting Healthier Tomorrows Through Education and Research Today
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4 The Next 50 Years
College celebrates 50 years of excellence

6 Million-Dollar Gift
New endowment advances research and education

7 Pandemic: Will It Happen Again?
Inaugural Hudson Fellows in Public Health Symposium

8 Community Service Allstar
Alumna takes public health training to community service

10 A Passion for Public Health
First Hudson Fellows in Public Health plan to make a difference

12 Leading Public Health
Oklahomans in national leadership roles

13 Public Health and Law in Action
J.D.-M.P.H. and J.D.-M.H.A. Programs

17 From Law to Public Health
Faculty member’s journey unites two professions

18 Surgeon General at OUHSC
Edward N. Brandt, Jr. Memorial Lecture addresses opioid addiction

19 Tackling Health Disparities
Targeting improved health for the uninsured and underserved

20 Excellence in Public Health Education
Faculty earn top honors

22 Honoring Public Health Students
2016-2017 Scholarship Recipients

24 A New View
College auditorium undergoes major renovation

26 Build a Legacy
Discover ways to share in the college’s mission

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A golden anniversary brings a time to reflect with pride on the history, growth and accomplishments of the OU College of Public Health and its faculty, students and staff. It also offers a time to look ahead eagerly as the college moves toward new horizons on a journey of excellence in public health education, research and service.

As Oklahoma’s only accredited college of public health and one of only 59 in the nation, the college is truly a leader in the state and the nation.

“We serve the citizens of the state through three key objectives. First, the education and training of public health practice professionals and public health research scientists,” said Gary Raskob, Ph.D., dean of the college. “Second, the discovery of new knowledge through research and then the transfer of that knowledge into practical education for protecting and improving the public’s health; and third, in service to both governmental and private-sector partners at the local, state and national levels.”

In all three areas, the college has shown tremendous success. Annual extramural grant support has increased more than three-fold. So, too, has support for students.

“We have markedly increased student support through graduate research assistantships, now supporting more than 36 graduate assistants,” Raskob said. “In addition, we have just added two new doctoral fellowships funded through a new $1 million endowment and increased endowed scholarships from two in 2001 to 23 in 2016 through the generosity of our alumni and friends.”

Research at the college has seen tremendous growth as well, extending well beyond the borders of Oklahoma and the United States. The college has increased annual extramural grant support more than three-fold, with more than $40 million in awards supporting research and training efforts over the next three to five years.

“During the last academic year, our faculty submitted more than 61 proposals for funding. Two-thirds of those were from faculty in a lead role, for a total request of more than $38 million,” Raskob added.

In addition, the college maintains an important collaborative role in campus-wide research, underscoring its commitment to collaboration.

“Our faculty play key roles in major campus-wide efforts, such as the Oklahoma Clinical Translational Science Resource Center. We have strengthened our collaboration with the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the City-County Health Departments in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa. We also have increased the college's national visibility and service contributions with a number of faculty serving in leadership or key roles within organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Science Foundation, and the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, to name just a few,” Raskob said.

“The future will certainly bring new challenges, but we are positioned well to meet those.”
Faculty members also continue to be recognized for their excellence in public health education. In the past 13 years, members of the faculty have been honored with three Regents’ Professorships, two David Boyd Ross Professorships, 11 Presidential Professorships, five Regents’ Awards for Superior Teaching or Creative/Scholarly Activity and four Provost Research Awards.

In addition, six staff members were named employee of the month for the entire OU Health Sciences Center and two were named employee of the year.

The college prides itself in being one of the most diverse colleges at OU in terms of student, faculty and state demographics, meeting or exceeding state demographic rates for African American, Asian and American Indian students.

During a site visit for re-accreditation, students expressed that the college was best characterized as having rigor, integrity and professionalism. This high level of excellence is a tribute to the entire college and one built on a solid foundation dating back to the mid-1960s and a few key visionaries who recognized the need for a College of Public Health.

Until then, portions of public health had been passed from one OU college to another in Norman and Oklahoma City as a preventive arm of medicine or engineering. Led by William Schottstaedt, M.D., and Gordon Deckert, M.D., a plan for the new college and its departments was formulated. The vision became reality in 1967 when the School of Health was activated. Two years later, the school earned full accreditation.

After a brief stint as a joint college with the College of Allied Health Professions, public health separated and became the College of Public Health in the early 1980s.

Among the college's first faculty members was Edward N. Brandt Jr., M.D., Ph.D., who served as the nation's assistant secretary of health and a leader during the beginning of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Brandt continued to teach at the college until his death in 2007, and his legacy of excellence and commitment to improved public health continue at the college today. The newly enhanced and upgraded auditorium has been named in his honor.

Over the past decade and a half, health leaders nationally began to understand that the only way to save a collapsing health care system was to shift the focus from treatment to prevention. Again, public health and the mission of the college took on added importance, and continues to bring expertise and guidance to bear on critical issues across Oklahoma and the nation.

“As we celebrate 50 years of excellence, I am proud that this college remains a leader in public health education and research, attracting more of the nation's public health leaders as faculty and enrolling among the best and brightest students,” Raskob said. “The future will certainly bring new challenges, but we are positioned well to meet those as we strive toward a goal of improved health for all citizens across Oklahoma, the nation and the world.”
Million-Dollar Gift

New endowment advances research and education

Advancing excellence in public health education remains a primary goal of the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health. It is a goal shared by alumna Dr. Leslie Hudson and her husband, Clifford Hudson, a fellow OU graduate with an honorary doctorate in humane letters.

The Oklahoma City couple donated $1 million to the OU College of Public Health. The gift establishes two annual fellowships for doctoral students in the college.

“Universities, health sciences centers and colleges of public health are fragile institutions. They can exist only because they are cared for by people who really understand the need, people who are true stewards of our institutions. It’s especially gratifying when that stewardship comes from our own graduates,” said OU President David L. Boren. “When they reach a point where they have the opportunity to give back, they seize that opportunity and give back in very meaningful ways.”

The Hudsons both earned undergraduate degrees from the University of Oklahoma. In addition, Dr. Leslie Hudson earned a master’s of public health degree and a doctorate in epidemiology from OU. She also served as a faculty member in the OU College of Public Health, specializing in epidemiology.

“Educating and supporting the future generation of public health scientists who will do cutting-edge research on the current public health challenges such as tobacco use prevention, cancer prevention, and promotion of healthy youth behavior is critical to improving the health of Oklahoma and the nation,” observed the Hudsons.

“We are pleased that our gift will help support the career development of these young scholars and researchers.”

Through the Hudsons’ financial support, two deserving doctoral candidates each year will pursue new discoveries that ultimately will help protect and improve the public’s health. Jennifer Green and Dana Mowls were named the inaugural Hudson Fellows in Public Health.

“We are pleased that our gift will help support the career development of these young scholars and researchers.”

“Receiving the fellowship means that someone believes in me and values my research. That is a great feeling! I am beyond thankful for the Hudsons, as they have provided the opportunity to focus 100 percent of my efforts on my research,” said Mowls of the honor.

“It means a lot. So many other people don’t get a real opportunity to pursue higher education, let alone be a Hudson Fellow. I’m incredibly grateful to have been chosen,” said Green.

“The Hudsons are deeply committed to improving the health of all Oklahomans,” Boren said. “Their commitment to the training of the best possible public health professionals will have an impact on the quality of life for many people for years to come.”

The gift also creates the Hudson Fellows Symposium, an event designed to address contemporary issues related to protecting and improving the public’s health in Oklahoma and beyond.
Ebola infected tens of thousands and caused more than 11,000 deaths. It was a wake-up call for the world and for the United States when it arrived here by way of an infected traveler, then spread to a health care worker caring for him.

With advances in public health surveillance and modern medical care, many might be tempted to think a pandemic that would kill millions could never happen again and certainly not in the United States. Yet, author Sonia Shah said history points to important lessons when it comes to preventing the spread of infectious disease and preventing pandemics. Shah was the featured speaker for the Inaugural Hudson Fellows in Public Health Symposium sponsored by the OU College of Public Health.

"Over the last 50 years, we've had about 300 novel infectious diseases, either newly emerged out of nowhere or re-emerge into new places where they have never been seen before. Zika is just the latest one," she explained. "In a recent survey of experts on pandemic threats, over two-thirds said a pandemic that would sicken a billion people, kill 165 million and cost the global economy $3 trillion could occur sometime in the next two generations."

Among all of the pandemic-causing pathogens, cholera has been one of the most devastating, Shah said. It has caused seven global pandemics — the most recent currently occurring several hundred miles off the coast of Florida in Haiti. Cholera kills half of those who get it.

"Pandemics are very disruptive. How does a tiny microbe cause all of this disruption? It's a multi-stage process and involves a lot of human activity," Shah said.

About 60 percent of all pathogens originate in animals. So when humans encroach upon wildlife habitats, the opportunity arises for pathogens to cross over from their animal hosts to humans. Rapid urbanization historically also helped fuel the spread of cholera. Cities were overcrowded. Sanitation was poor. Shah pointed out those same conditions exist today in many of the developing regions of the world.

"By 2030, the majority of citizens will live in cities," she said. "Pathogens have already started to take advantage of that."

Shah said new and improved modes of transportation are another enabler of widespread disease historically and today. As people travel, so too do outbreaks.

"You can actually predict where an epidemic will strike next just by measuring the number of direct flights between infected and uninfected cities," Shah remarked.

Historically, Shah explained the best solutions to halting a pandemic were not always popular with the leaders of industry and therefore not pursued. Similar influences exist today, she said. So what will it take to generate the political will to effect meaningful change and better protect individual and population health today? Shah believes it will require a grassroots effort with public pressure helping fuel change.

"Biomedicine has brought great strides against disease, but Shah said it alone will not halt infectious diseases. It will require a multi-disciplinary approach.

"Public health is about protecting the places where we live, work and play, and about minimizing our health risks. Understanding the tremendous impact of infectious diseases and pandemics on health is a critical component of this. Ms. Shah's presentation and her book point to important matters within the public health community as we look to safeguard both individual and population health," said Gary Raskob, Ph.D., dean of the OU College of Public Health.
Her days are as busy as ever — mostly filled with work for which she earns no pay. But much like those working in public health, Dr. Leslie Hudson would tell you that “it serves a purpose beyond the income.”

Hudson, alumna and faculty member at the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health, serves as a board member and active volunteer with a variety of community, civic and educational organizations. Such work would seem to have little to do with her training as an epidemiologist at OU. Yet every day, Hudson relies on that training to help those organizations succeed.

“I always felt like my training in public health made me a better board member. I gained skills that are easily translatable into the rest of my life, and I’m still tremendously committed to public health and the community overall,” she said.

Hudson’s interest in public health was first sparked as a physical therapy student at the OU Health Sciences Center. It was a general lecture given by Nabih Assal, Ph.D., who taught epidemiology.

“Those early epidemiology courses are pretty compelling when you talk about the monumental effects of the work of those like Dr. John Snow, who got the town pump handle removed, ending a cholera epidemic,” Hudson said. “It’s really the tour de force in epidemiology.”

Snow was a British physician who in 1854 used a geographical grid to chart deaths from cholera in the London suburb of Soho. He faced many skeptics, but shared his research with town leaders, eventually convincing them to remove the handle from the local water pump, bringing the epidemic to an almost immediate halt.

“That history and methodology and the way you can go about looking at associations and causations — I found it really interesting,” Hudson added.

So after spending a few years in the Washington, D.C., area while her husband earned his degree in law, the family returned to Oklahoma and Hudson, a young mother, decided she was up for a new challenge. She set her sights on an advanced degree in epidemiology at the OU College of Public Health.

“Dr. Linda Cowan had just come over from the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation and became my adviser,” Hudson said. “She was very interested in methodology. She was an amazing methodologist and she was very excited about research, and she transmitted that excitement. She also was an amazingly diligent worker. She was the ideal epidemiologist, in my mind.”

With two young sons at home, it was a juggling act, but one Hudson managed well.

“I was sort of a utility epidemiologist,” Hudson remarked. “I had been in the department for a long time as a student and had worked on studies. I knew the system, knew the studies. So I would take over her studies and I would fall in and become the epidemiologist.”

Hudson went on to serve on the faculty at the college and believes the training students receive at the College of Public Health is truly invaluable.

“What you expect students to be able to do is identify issues and ask the pertinent question; to design studies and programs to answer those questions; to manage those processes, whatever they are; to analyze the data; and to communicate back to the public and advocate to the public sector,” she explained. “Everything you learn is highly translatable wherever you end up, whether that be in the trenches, as an administrator or in a parallel field like running a public charity.”

Hudson’s love for students and for higher education remains strong, as does her passion for public health and for growing healthy communities overall.

“When I am on college campuses, I always feel better about the world. It’s always exciting to be around young people. They are just so bright and energetic. We are in good hands,” Hudson said. “I think the future for this college is quite bright.”
A Passion for Public Health

First Hudson Fellows in Public Health plan to make a difference

They grew up in different parts of the country. They attended different colleges with very different majors. Yet somehow, two young women, seemingly worlds apart, happened upon the same passion – a passion for public health. In 2016, Dana Mowls and Jennifer Green became the first Hudson Fellows in Public Health at the college.

Jennifer Green

Green grew up in a military family in San Antonio and married into a military family. Her grandfather, father, husband, in-laws and brothers-in-law served or are serving in the military now.

Health and education have played a strong role in Green’s life, too.

“Many of my family members are teachers, school administrators, social workers, physicians or involved in medical research,” Green said. “My husband earned his master’s in public health from the OU College of Public Health, too.”

It was during her senior year in college when Green first discovered public health.

“I was interested in being an athletic trainer or physical therapist, but neither was a great fit. I was interested in health, specifically sexual health and teen pregnancy prevention, but also working in underserved communities and narrowing the gap in health disparities,” she said.

In college, Green volunteered with a local non-profit organization working with youth in under-resourced neighborhoods. Every Saturday morning, she and other volunteers would knock on doors, pick up children who lived in the neighborhood and walk them to the park, where they would play games and get exercise.

“In that neighborhood, I noticed high levels of obesity, smoking, unplanned pregnancy, malnourishment, accidental injuries and more, as well as all of the challenges that occur as a result of those,” Green said. “I realized it would take more than backyard clubs to diminish health disparities.”
She realized that more would be needed to address the social determinants of health: poverty, unemployment, lack of quality educational opportunities, and policies impacting housing, incarceration and access to health care. Public health aims to do that, and that’s what I love about it.”

Green earned her master’s degree in public health at Baylor University, before deciding to pursue her doctorate at the OU College of Public Health, where she continued her work on adolescent health and health disparities, specifically teen and unplanned pregnancy prevention. As a graduate research assistant working on the Power Through Choices Project, she helped evaluate the effectiveness of pregnancy prevention programs available to at-risk youth. That work formed the basis of her dissertation, which explored the data for further insights on the impact of the program and the psychosocial constructs that mediate the effects of intervention on behavior change.

Upon completion of her doctorate, Green accepted a position as administrative director of the Riley County Health Department in Manhattan, Kansas. She credits the college and the Hudson fellowship with helping her to land a position that aligns so well with her ultimate goal of improving public health in underserved and at-risk populations.

“This is an exciting opportunity to bring the public health knowledge I’ve acquired at the College of Public Health into practice,” she said. “As health department administrator, my goal is to improve the overall health of Riley County citizens and to reduce any health disparities that exist.”

Dana Mowls

Dana Mowls grew up in Munroe Falls, Ohio. Her mother is a high school teacher and her father works as a data analyst at Goodyear. She said they taught her the Christian values that have become the foundation of her life, giving her the proverbial “roots and wings” needed to pursue her goals.

It was while studying as an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University that she “fell into” public health.

“I was a molecular genetics major. At the time, I didn’t know what public health meant, but I had developed an interest in how genetic factors contribute to health and disease,” Mowls explained. “A good friend of mine knew of my passion for research and recommended a graduate degree in epidemiology. It so happened that Kent State, which is located right next to my parents’ home in Ohio, was enrolling students into their M.P.H. program. The rest is history.”

With a master’s degree under her belt, Mowls leaped into research work. For two years, she worked as a graduate assistant with the Biostatistics and Epidemiology Research Design and Analysis Center at the OU College of Public Health under the supervision of Dr. Laura Beebe.

“My projects ranged from mapping electronic cigarette shops to estimating Oklahoma’s cost saving from investing in tobacco control,” Mowls said.

The Hudson fellowship and a National Institute of Drug Abuse grant, provided the financial fuel for Mowls to begin her own research work in earnest. She currently is recruiting participants for her dissertation research, titled Nicotine Metabolism in American Indian Smokers and Electronic Cigarette Users.

“My research will provide critical information needed to better tailor smoking-cessation interventions for American Indians,” Mowls explained. “And separately, for guiding U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations on combustible cigarettes and electronic cigarettes.”

She jokingly calls her dissertation “Everest.”

“It feels like a mountain. I have learned that if I take a little hike every day and don’t allow myself to get overwhelmed, I will be able to clear the summit,” Mowls said.

Her short-term goals are to complete and publish her dissertation research, which she believes will be significant in terms of delineating the high levels of nicotine dependence among American Indians.

“I am hopeful that my research will prepare me for a post-doctoral position at one of the Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science and to contribute to the evidence base utilized by federal officials to reduce the burden of tobacco-related morbidity and mortality,” she added.

Ultimately, Mowls hopes to collaborate with clinical and epidemiologic researchers to better understand how nicotine addiction contributes to differential vulnerability to poor health outcomes.

“I plan to pursue research focusing on genetic factors, such as nicotine metabolism, that influence tobacco use patterns,” she said.

It is information that she believes can lead to more effective tobacco prevention and cessation interventions.
Oklahoma Leads in Public Health

Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D., once said, “Health care is vital to all of us some of the time, but public health is vital to all of us all of the time.” With ongoing debate about affordable health coverage for all Americans, the re-alignment of reimbursement based upon quality outcomes in health care and the growing need to stem mortality and disease from preventable causes, public health education, research and service are clearly more important than ever. And public health leaders here in Oklahoma play an important leadership role at the national level, too.

“In this country, we spend so many of our resources dealing with disease after it's occurred, and too little on prevention and health promotion. It's important to change this narrative,” said Dean Gary Raskob, Ph.D., who serves as board chairman for the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health. The association is the voice of academic public health representing more than 100 universities with schools and programs accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health. It aims to transform public health by strengthening and promoting the education, research, service and practice activities of its members, and advocates for investments needed to advance population health and to improve public health policies.

“Dr. Raskob is widely respected as a leader in public health in this country. Not only does he chair the board of the association, but his colleagues and counterparts here and across the country recognize and value his strong leadership. He has been heavily involved in advocacy and policy on a national level,” said Terry Cline, Ph.D., Oklahoma Secretary of Health and Human Services and Commissioner of Health for the Oklahoma Health Department.

Cline, too, is well-regarded for his work in public health at the national level. He is a past president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, an organization representing public health agencies in the United States, U.S. Territories and the District of Columbia, as well as the more than 100,000 public health professionals these agencies employ.

Cline also served as health attaché to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, advising the U.S. ambassador, the Israeli Minister of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on health-related challenges in Iraq. Prior to that, he was administrator for the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

“Dr. Cline brings a wealth of public health experience both on the national and state level to bear on critical issues that impact the health and well-being of all of us, but especially those in underserved communities who are at greater risk for poor health outcomes. We are privileged to have him leading the fight for improved health in our communities, state and nation,” Raskob said. “Oklahoma leads at the national level, too, through the heads of both the Tulsa and Oklahoma City-County health departments.” Raskob said.

Tulsa Health Department Executive Director Bruce Dart, Ph.D., and Gary Cox, J.D., executive director of the Oklahoma City-County Health Department, both served as president of the board of directors of the National Association of County and City Health Officials. Cox also was president of the Oklahoma Public Health Association. Both are highly respected as leaders in public health.

Like Raskob and Cline, they recognize the need to change perspective and to begin thinking about health in a more holistic way.

“So many factors impact health beyond disease. We know that education, poverty, health disparities, the environment, even the physical design of communities – all of these factors impact health, too. It is an honor to be joined by such impressive public health leaders from our state as we strive to help everyone understand that public health matters to each of us each and every day,” Cline said.
PUBLIC HEALTH & LAW
IN ACTION

J.D.-M.P.H. & J.D.-M.H.A. Programs

University of Oklahoma College of Public Health
University of Oklahoma College of Law
Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.”

At the University of Oklahoma, the colleges of Public Health and Law have found this to be true in the creation of two dual degrees — the Juris Doctor-Master of Public Health and the Juris Doctor-Master of Health Administration programs.

The goal is to support students with an interest in developing the interdisciplinary knowledge and skills needed to build successful careers in health law, public health policy and related fields.

“It is clear that those planning careers in health or public health administration and policy benefit greatly from attaining either a J.D.-M.P.H. or J.D.-M.H.A. dual degree. In fact, the dual degree already has shown it can open doors and advance career opportunities for our students,” said Gary Raskob, Ph.D., dean of the OU College of Public Health.

Health care currently is the second-largest sector of the economy. It also is the fastest-growing and is projected to become the largest sector of the American economy in the next decade.

“It was, in fact, a couple of students whose desire to obtain degrees in both law and public health who helped make the dual degree program a reality at OU.

“I used to teach at the law school and then moved up to the OU Health Sciences Center, and we had a couple of law students who wanted to pursue careers as lawyers in the health sector,” said Christina Bennett, J.D., assistant professor and director of the Master of Health Administration program at the College of Public Health. “One of them was Allison Peterson, a law student, who wanted to become an in-house council in a hospital setting. So with Allison, we created a curriculum chart, and a number of students started on the concurrent degree track.”

In January, the OU Board of Regents approved an official dual degree programs.

“Students attracted to the dual degree programs have a passion for health issues, but are oriented more toward regulation and compliance than patient care,” Bennett explained.

Pierron Tackes, who focused on environmental studies and public health as an undergraduate student at The George Washington University, said what appealed to her about the
JD-MPH program at OU was that it was new, growing and still flexible enough to allow her to pursue the aspects of public health law that interested her most.

“I was particularly drawn to public health policy because I loved the idea of how policy changes can improve health on a community scale. Law and policy can be used to alter people's behaviors so they may have healthier outcomes,” she said.

Tackes aspires to be a public health lawyer in the government sector, working on policy development to safeguard the health of both the public and the environment. She believes the dual degree has been pivotal in her pursuit of that goal.

“I interned for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Law Program. The program hires only eight interns during the summer, and I am confident that my background and my dual degree training played a key role in getting hired,” Tackes said. While interning at the CDC, Tackes assisted in the Global Health Security Agenda Public Health Project, a project analyzing the role of law in building health security.

“My understanding of both public health and law has allowed me to translate the impact of law on public health so that national leaders may use the information to make informed policy decisions,” Tackes added.

Matt Selander, who is working toward earning his J.D.-M.H.A., found the program a natural fit.

“Most first-year law students are not exactly sure what they want to do with their degree when they graduate. The J.D.-M.H.A. program allows students, like me, to create a market for themselves. It becomes much easier to compete for jobs. In simplest terms, it helps a law student stand out from the other 160 students in the class,” he explained.

Not surprisingly, Selander also earned a prestigious internship. His was with The Joint Commission, an organization that accredits and certifies nearly 21,000 hospitals, doctor offices, nursing homes, surgery centers, behavioral treatment facilities and home health care service providers in the United States.

“Having the M.H.A. as a specialty was extremely appealing to The Joint Commission. I was able to go right in and get to work. The organization didn't have to spend time teaching me the 'language' of health care,” he said. “The dual degree program allows students to become immediately important within an organization.”

Selander hopes to someday become general counsel at a major hospital or hospital network. He already is receiving job offers in his field of choice. Harroz and Bennett are not surprised.

“The health care sector is 20 percent of the gross national product. It's a sector that is financially important and it has a lot of regulations. So it is a fairly secure place for lawyers to look for work,” Bennett said. “The legal job market can ebb and flow, but this is an area where there are jobs and there is an increasing need for those with both legal and public health training.”

While the rigor or the program can be challenging, the payoff at graduation is clear.

“These dual degrees are powerful,” Harroz said. “Employers take note of the credentials and knowledge that underlie them. Immediately upon graduation, our students are distinguished by their broader depth of knowledge of the law and the health care industry, making them far more marketable than others competing for top positions.”
The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution. www.ou.edu/eoo

DUAL DEGREES WITH
THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Watching the work of a television character sparked a dream years ago for a little girl growing up in Lebanon, Ohio.

“I wanted to be Matlock,” said Christina Juris Bennett, J.D.

It’s been years since Bennett, now assistant professor and director of the Masters of Health Administration program at the OU College of Public Health, first set her sights on a future in law. The public’s health wasn’t on her radar screen when she headed off to college.

“My dad is an attorney and an adjunct professor, and I came from a family of professors. On my mom’s side, it was engineering and chemistry,” she said.

Bennett earned her undergraduate degree in math from Vanderbilt, minoring in geology and women’s studies. Then she headed off to law school at Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned a degree in law.

She dove into a career in law, first clerking for a criminal appellate judge, dealing with death penalty and child sexual assault cases. The work was difficult, but nothing compared to what lay ahead of her.

“It was during the last six months of my clerkship that my mom was diagnosed with stage 4 uterine cancer. So I began taking time to care for her in Ohio each month. She died just nine months later. I remember being astounded. I was an attorney. My dad was an attorney. We had really good insurance, and it was still so confusing,” Bennett said.

The experience definitely impacted Bennett, as did a subsequent dip in the job market for attorneys.

“I took a job at a small firm doing work I despised, but I got to meet people who had their lives totally disrupted by health care,” she said.

Bennett left that job and serendipity stepped in that very night when she attended her first meeting for a committee at her church.

“Then someone I didn’t know introduced himself as a professor and said, ‘I have this idea for a book. If you will write it, I will guide you.’ So he guided me and I wrote a book,” Bennett said.

Ten months later, *TennCare, One State’s Experiment with Medicaid Expansion* was completed.

The book, published by Vanderbilt Press, provides historical perspective on TennCare, one of the oldest, most hotly debated experiments in U.S. Health Care Policy. TennCare was a reform initiative in Tennessee designed to increase the number of residents with health insurance while at the same time curtailing costs. In the book, Bennett details the struggle among competing stakeholders (the state, managed care organizations, providers, enrollees and their advocates) and tracks the pressure brought to bear on state leaders when TennCare strategies negatively impacted stakeholders’ interests. The book moved Bennett from the world of law into the world of academics. It also taught her important lessons.

“I would have never thought that the people working for state government cared as much as they did for the enrollees,” she said. “There are thousands and thousands, actually 1.4 million, why would they care about each person? But they really do. The individual stories of enrollees really stuck with them. I never expected that.”

It was an experience that taught her much about the impact of public health policy on individuals, and it motivated her to want to be part of a system that educated the next generation of public health professionals. Today, she finds few things more rewarding than teaching, helping students at the OU College of Public Health and the OU College of Law grasp the complexities of health care.

“I’m a bit of a Pollyanna. I really believe we can make our health care system better and serve the people who need us better,” Bennett said. “And when we make progress toward that, it’s all worth it.”
Surgeon General at OUHSC


His focus was a public health crisis in Oklahoma and across the United States — prescription drug abuse. Though not unique to Oklahoma, the state is very near to ground zero of this drug problem.

“We’ve seen a rapid escalation in the number of opioid prescriptions that are written for and also misused. We’ve seen near quadrupling of the number of overdose-related deaths since 1999. And Oklahoma has shared a heavy burden of this,” said Murthy.

The facts tell a frightening story:

• Prescription drug abuse is Oklahoma’s fastest growing drug problem.
• Prescription painkillers are now the most commonly involved drugs in unintentional overdose deaths
• Oklahoma had the fourth-highest unintentional poisoning death rate in the nation (17.9 deaths per 100,000 population)
• Of the nearly 3,200 unintentional poisoning deaths in Oklahoma from 2007-2011, 81 percent involved at least one prescription drug

“We look at addiction differently than we look at other chronic diseases. And unless we change that, it’s going to be hard for us to move forward on the treatment and other changes that we need in our health care system,” said Murthy.

Opioid addiction is a monumental public health problem and one public health and community leaders in Oklahoma are working to address. Many attended the lecture. Several also participated in a post-lecture panel discussion, including Dr. Terry Cline, Oklahoma Secretary of Health and Human Services and Commissioner of the State Department of Health; Terri White, commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; Dr. Layne Subera, physician and chair of the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs; and Kelly Dyer Fry, a local news editor who has experienced the difficulty of prescription drug abuse involving a family member.

“In order to overcome and address this epidemic, there are some key things we have to do,” said Murthy. “We have to first change our prescribing practices, recognizing that we’ve had a dramatic increase in the number of opioid prescriptions over the last 10 to 15 years.”

Murthy pointed out that while Americans represent 5 percent of the world’s population, we use somewhere between 75 and 80 percent of the world’s opioids.

“More than enough to give a script to every adult in America,” Murthy remarked.

Ultimately, he said that it will take everyone — practitioners, health departments, faith organizations, employers, schools and hospitals — to change the way we think about addiction and the way medicine is practiced when it comes to treating pain.

“That’s why I’m here, because in order to solve this problem we will need your help and we will need your partnership. And if we have that and we work together to solve this problem, then I believe this is an epidemic that we can overcome.”
America is not getting a good value for its health dollar, and changing that falls largely to those studying today for careers in public health and health care. That was the message heard by hundreds of students gathered at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center for the annual Bridges in Access conference.

The conference, co-sponsored by the OU colleges of Public Health and Medicine, is designed for and organized by students across a variety of health professions.

“We need a better future, and it depends on you,” said Dr. Harrison Spencer, one of the keynote speakers at the event. Spencer was president and CEO of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health until his untimely death in August.

“Most of our money is going to health care and much less to the factors that impact overall health. If you are going to impact health, you have got to get into people’s lives,” Spencer told a standing-room-only audience.

Getting into people’s lives requires delving into the many varied factors that influence individual health, including social determinants, socioeconomic status, mental health, public health, education and early childhood education. Improved health, Spencer explained, requires more than just improved access to care. It requires a major paradigm shift in both philosophy and funding with less focus on treatment and more on prevention and better health outcomes.

“We, who are in health professions, are now required to work more with patients before they need health care. This is how we will improve health,” he said. “We need a better future, and it depends on you.”

The title of the 2016 conference was “Oklahomans on the Line.”

“We have people in this state who are in need every day,” said Oklahoma Health Commissioner Terry Cline, Ph.D., who also spoke at the event. “This conference helps everyone appreciate that all boats rise with the tide. When we are able to help those most disadvantaged, it improves the health of all.”

The Bridges to Access conference was the brainchild of a student who came to OU to complete her studies after being displaced by Hurricane Katrina. She dreamed of an event that would bring together members of the community and students from public health, medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, the allied health fields and more. Hundreds of students and community members attended this year’s event, which was organized by the OU Community Health Alliance, an organization of health professions students. It also was streamed to a gathering of about 100 students at Oklahoma City Community College.

Tackling Health Disparities

Student-led initiative targets improved health for the uninsured and underserved

To the world, Harrison Spencer was a leader, a physician and an advocate for health care as a fundamental right. To those who knew him best, he was humble, caring and a true friend.

Spencer traveled the world, working to eradicate malaria and other parasitic diseases. He served in several leadership positions with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and with the World Health Organization, as dean at academic health institutions in London and New Orleans and as president and CEO of the American Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, a position he had held for more than a decade and a half.

Nationally and internationally recognized for his work in public health practice, research and education, Spencer often spoke about the potential for each and every person to make a difference, to break through barriers and to improve the health of the public overall.

Spencer was a man of outstanding intellect; a man who was passionate about his work; and a man respected for his leadership, his ethics and his steadfast commitment to public health and to helping those less fortunate. His life was a glowing example of what one person can accomplish for the sake of many.
The college is honored to have an exceptional faculty devoted to providing the highest-quality educational experience for our students with rigor, integrity and professionalism. Five of our faculty members have been awarded top honors this year by the university and the State Board of Regents.

**Presidential Professorships**

**Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor**

Dale W. Bratzler, D.O., M.P.H.

Bratzler serves as associate dean and professor of health administration and policy in the College of Public Health, as well as professor of medicine in the College of Medicine and chief quality officer for OU Physicians. An outstanding and nationally-recognized scholar who has excelled in all of his professional activities, Bratzler excels at translating his scholarship into the classroom and mentoring students.

He has repeatedly rewritten and updated two courses in Quality Management in the Department of Health Administration and Policy. The courses now include experiential learning based on his consulting experience with the CDC, his personal background as a practitioner and his research.

“His students rave about his classes, teaching style and positive classroom environment. He is truly providing students with a meaningful learning experience,” said Steven Mattachione, J.D., C.P.A., chair of the Department of Health Administration and Policy.

Allison Petersen, J.D., M.H.A., a recent graduate of the college who is now employed at Integris, called Bratzler’s class “the single most engaging course” of her graduate career.

“His course challenged me most, not just in the conventional academic struggles of midterms and finals, but rather, in my reflection of what role I wanted to play in my career as a health care attorney,” she said. “He invests generously and genuinely in the success of his students.”

**Sam K. Viersen Family Foundation Presidential Professor**

Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan, Dr.P.H., M.P.H.

Jernigan joined the faculty of the college in 2011 and very quickly distinguished herself as an outstanding faculty member in the areas of research and scholarship, teaching, service and student mentoring.

“Dr. Jernigan’s passion for her work comes through in her teaching. She introduced us to the concept of community-based participatory research and how it is changing the way research is done. This class lit a fire in me that is still burning today,” said Rachel Erkenbeck-Hart, a medical laboratory scientist and M.P.H. candidate.

Jernigan’s study THRIVE (Tribal Health and Resilience in Vulnerable Environments) was awarded a $3.1 million grant from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the NIH.

“Recent research has documented that throughout the history of the NIH, fewer than 10 individuals indentified as Native American have been funded as principal investigators of R01 grants,” said Marilyn Winkleby, M.P.H., Ph.D., faculty director, Office of Community Health, Stanford School of Medicine. “Valerie ranks in the top 5 percent of faculty members I have worked with in terms of her intellect, academic abilities, motivation and creativity, as well as her ability to mentor, teach and involve students and the community in her work.”

**President’s Associates Presidential Professor**

David Thompson, Ph.D., P.T.

Thompson is an associate professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. For more than 20 years, he has been an outstanding educator at the OU Health Sciences Center, where his teaching and mentoring roles have benefited students in the colleges of Public Health, Allied Health, Dentistry and Medicine, as well as the Graduate College.

Thompson has been instrumental in integrating research methodology and biostatistics training into the clinical and public health degree programs campus-wide. He serves as director of the Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design Training Unit for the Oklahoma Shared Clinical and Translational Resources program, an invaluable resource for young researchers on campus.

“Dr. Thompson provides a bridge between the theory and practice of biostatistics. On a larger stage, he is providing a bridge between the biostatistician and the researcher, particularly the clinical researcher, and teaching others to do the same,” said Barbara R. Neas, Ph.D., David Ross Boyd Emeritus Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology.
He is a true mentor who cares deeply for his students, effectively translates original scholarship into his classroom teaching and consistently gives his complete dedication to the learning and career development of his students.

“I first met Dr. Thompson in 2010 when I returned to Oklahoma to pursue a General Academic Pediatrics Fellowship. At the recommendation of my fellowship director, I approached him for assistance on secondary database analysis as part of my first fellowship project to address childhood obesity in Oklahoma,” said Ashley Weedn, M.D., M.P.H. “Although not a formal student of his at the time, he graciously spent several hours providing statistical guidance for my project. Moreover, I was impressed by the time he spent teaching me the principles and theory behind the recommended statistical approaches.”

David Ross Boyd Professorship

Sara K. Vesely, Ph.D.

Vesely is assistant dean of academic affairs and professor of biostatistics in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology. She is an outstanding teacher and mentor who leads by example and excels in a remarkable range of courses, including computer applications for data management and statistical analysis, introductory biostatistics, analysis of frequency data, and clinical trials methods.

It is not only the volume, breadth and depth of her teaching and mentoring, but the positive impact on students’ lives that Vesely demonstrates consistently, year in and year out.

“Dr. Vesely has an exceptional ability to effectively communicate didactic material. She is a motivating instructor who cultivates a curious environment of scientific learning,” said student and research colleague Camille C. Gunderson, M.D., Fellow, Gynecologic Oncology, OU Health Sciences Center.

In addition to her extensive teaching, Vesely has developed an internationally-recognized research program in hematology, related to platelet disorders. She currently is funded on two federal grants and is director of the Stephenson Cancer Center Biostatistics Core.

“I am fortunate to work in a world-class research institution with world-renowned investigators. To succeed in this environment, it takes more than a graduate education. As I look back, it is the curiosity for medical research that brought me to this institution. Self-motivation and self-confidence are why I am successful in my role. Dr. Vesely sparked that fire within me,” said Clinton Hagen, M.S., biostatistician in the Department of Neurology, Mayo Clinic.

Regents’ Award for Superior Teaching

Deidra Renaé Terrell, Ph.D.

Terrell earned both her master of public health and doctoral degrees in epidemiology from the OU College of Public Health. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, and also is associate director of the Translating Practice into Research Program, which is designed to assist practicing health care professionals in translating problems they see in practice into feasible research projects.

“Dr. Terrell was always available to help discuss research ideas and study design. Through my meetings with her, she helped me design my own research projects, gave me confidence in my own study designs and always thought of useful learning pearls to better each project,” said Stephanie Pickett, M.D., Mercy Medical Center.

Terrell brings unique expertise in public health surveillance, clinical trials methodology and research ethics to her teaching. In addition, she incorporates experiences from her own research in benign hematology in her courses, providing a current and relevant education experience for students.

“She created an environment of excitement that facilitated more than just learning. She instilled a passion for epidemiology that went far beyond memorizing answers for an upcoming exam,” said Lindsay Denson, master of science candidate. “In addition to experiencing Dr. Terrell’s teaching style in the classroom, I have the privilege of being her mentee. She is my adviser and chair of my thesis committee. She has provided unrivaled education and guidance while designing and executing my thesis project.”

Though early in her faculty career, Terrell has established herself as a superior teacher and successful researcher.

“She has already made major contributions to the excellence of the academic and scientific stature of the OU Health Sciences Center,” said James N. George, M.D., George Lynn Cross Professor, OU College of Medicine.
Edward N. Brandt Scholarship
Bowie Han
A fourth-year medical student from Oklahoma, Han’s research interests revolve around neuroscience and psychiatry, specifically the long-term cognitive and psychiatric manifestations in patients with thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura. Han plans a career as a clinician, teacher and researcher. He believes maintaining behavioral and mental wellness is a cornerstone of the shift towards optimal preventative care.

Edward N. Brandt Scholarship
Kaitlin Warta
Warta is a dual degree M.D./M.P.H. student from Tulsa, Okla. She is passionate about women’s health promotion and plans to apply for a residency in obstetrics and gynecology. At the OUHSC, Warta has served in a leadership role with Women’s Health Interest Group, Medical Students for Choice and the Bridges to Access Conference planning committee. She also has spent time at community clinics translating and providing care to the underserved.

Burns-Schaiff Scholarship in Public Health
Dana Smith Mowls
A doctoral candidate in epidemiology and Hudson Fellow in Public Health, Mowls plans a career that will allow her to conduct translational research aimed at eliminating tobacco-related morbidity and mortality. Her dissertation research, supported by a National Institute of Drug Abuse Grant, evaluates nicotine metabolism in American Indian Smokers and electronic cigarette users.

Calvey Family Scholarship
Doğa Karyaldiz
Karyaldiz is from Turkey and a second year graduate student, studying industrial hygiene and environmental health sciences. She is multilingual and holds several professional certifications, and this summer interned with Marshall Environmental Management, Inc. gaining essential career experience. Karyaldiz plans to become a certified industrial hygienist and to work to provide safety in her fields.

Ronald L. Coleman Scholarship
Marcio Bezerra
Bezerra is a second-year Ph.D. student studying occupational and environmental health. Born and raised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he graduated with distinction from the Brazilian Army Military Academy and holds two other bachelor’s degrees, as well as a master’s of public health degree. Bezerra is interested in metal poisoning and hopes to pursue a career in the health fields when he retires from the military.

Conoco Phillips OEH Scholarship
Kathleen “Kae” Althinne
Althinne is a second-year M.S. student in industrial hygiene and environmental health sciences. This summer, she interned at Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in the environmental health and safety office. Althinne looks forward to working hands-on in the industrial hygiene field in order to provide the safest possible environment for workers.

Conoco Phillips OEH Scholarship
Kevin O’Neill
O’Neill is a second-year M.S. student in industrial hygiene and environmental health sciences. He interned in Duluth, Minnesota, for the renewable energy company Minnesota Power. There, he assisted a certified industrial hygienist with aerosol monitoring and heat monitoring, noise dosimetry and developed methodologies to reduce hazardous exposures to workers. He plans to work as a certified industrial hygienist.

COPH Advisory Board Scholarship
Kuna Tiga Okong
Okong is a second-year M.P.H. student, studying epidemiology. Born and raised in Cameroon, West Africa, she earned her medical degree and chose to serve in several rural and community areas. Through those experiences, the role of public health first became evident to Okong. Her desire to make a difference has led her to the United States to continue her studies.
Roy B. Deal Scholarship
Allshine Chen
Chen is in his first year as a Ph.D. student in biostatistics. He has worked in the BSE Research Design and Analysis Center. Chen holds an M.S. in applied statistics and an M.S. in public health sciences. His father was a biostatistician and his mother was an epidemiologist, so he feels statistically inclined to follow in their footsteps and contribute to the field of public health.

David J. Falcone Memorial Scholarship
Matthew Selander
Selander is a third-year law and second-year M.H.A. student. This summer, he worked as a legal and compliance intern at The Joint Commission in Chicago. His responsibilities ranged from HIPAA compliance to contract and business associate agreement review, providing him an in-depth look at the accreditation process. The internship furthered his passion for and pursuit of a career in health care.

Rosetta Fisher Scholarship
(Through COPH Alumni Association)
James Butler
Butler is an M.H.A. candidate. He recently completed an internship at OU Medical Center, where he worked alongside the CEO to develop and implement strategic plans to improve patient satisfaction within the emergency department. Butler hopes to someday hold an executive leadership position within a hospital and to continue to use his community health background to advocate for all patient populations.

James N. George BSE Scholarship
Xi “Sophia” Chen
Chen is a Ph.D. student in biostatistics. She earned her medical degree in China before coming to the United States to continue her education with an interest in oncology. Previously involved with diverse clinical and public health projects, Chen currently serves as a graduate research assistant in the Biostatistics and Epidemiology department evaluating an exercise intervention program on people with peripheral arterial disease.

CMDR Edmund Gleason Scholarship
Quyen Duong
Duong is a fourth-year Ph.D. student studying biostatics. She currently is a G.R.A. working in the Stephenson Cancer Center Biostatistics Core and the Biomedical and Behavioral Methodological Core, where she is involved in several projects and grants. Duong is interested in adaptive randomization and plans to explore this area in her dissertation.

E. Scott, Susie, Regan & Shannon Henley Family Scholarship
Allison Shelton Jones
Jones earned her undergraduate degree in finance with a minor in health and exercise science. She has been involved in various internships, including Chesapeake Energy, The Bethany Children’s Center, Teal Creek Senior Living and St. Anthony Hospital. These internships have made her realize that she is passionate about pursuing a career in public health.

Hudson Family Scholarship
Munim Deen
Deen completed his M.P.H. in epidemiology and continued his studies this fall as an epidemiology Ph.D. student. While at the OUHSC, Deen has worked as a G.R.A. and has served as an officer in COPHSA and BSESA. He’s also worked as a policy reviewer at the State Department of Health. A former newspaper columnist and lab scientist, Deen hopes to use his public health training to aid underserved communities worldwide.

Brent Hurd Scholarship
Tyler Davis
Davis is a third-year J.D.-M.H.A. candidate. He completed an internship at St. Anthony Oklahoma City within the legal affairs department, doing work on legal compliance, patient quality, patient safety and risk-assessment issues. He also attended the American College of Health Executives Congress earlier this year and is excited to continue to work within the health care field.

Eliza T. Lee Scholarship
Kaitlin McGrew
McGrew is a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology with a background in nursing. Since transitioning to public health, she has devoted her time to research aiming to quantify and ultimately reduce health disparities in Oklahoma. She is interested in the use of public health strategies to decrease the burden of stigmatized illnesses such as Hepatitis C and substance use disorders.

Dan J. Macer Scholarship
Joseph “Joey” Geresi
Geresi is pursuing a law degree and M.H.A. degree. He serves as president of the OUHSC student affiliate of ACHE and treasurer of COPHSA. An internship at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital provided Geresi invaluable experience in work related to managed care contracting, medical tourism and compliance. His prior law office internships specialized in medical malpractice, insurance defense and general practice.

Dan J. Macer Scholarship
Babawale “Wale” Oluborode
Oluborode is a second-year M.P.H. student in epidemiology. He completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology in Nigeria before moving to the United States to further his career and hone his research skills. Oluborode currently is a G.R.A. in the BSE department, involved in multiple projects. Upon completing his degree, he intends to pursue his interests in women’s health.

Dan J. Macer Scholarship
Ashley Roswell
A second-year M.H.A. student, Roswell works at INTEGRIS Mental Health Hospital as a health unit coordinator and patient access representative. She recently interned at OU Medical Center Edmond, where she worked with the CEO on several projects, including organizing and developing a joint camp for complete joint replacement patients. She serves as vice president of COPHSA.

J.C. Watts Family Health and Wellness Scholarship
Andrea “Vanessa” Garcia Luzuriaga
Luzuriaga is a second-year M.P.H. student from Quito, Ecuador. Her passion for reducing health disparities and working with underserved communities began as a volunteer at Good Samaritan Health Services. Currently a G.R.A. in the HPS department, Luzuriaga helps in community-engaged research to better understand stressors in Latina working mothers and to create solutions to promote their health.
New Auditorium Honors Brandt

The auditorium at the College reopens soon following a major upgrading and enhancement project. It will boast a new look and a new name – The Edward N. Brandt, Jr. Auditorium.

The $500,000 project includes modern seating, a beautiful new entrance and state-of-the-art equipment.

The auditorium enhancement also includes significant technological advancements with upgraded monitors, projectors and speakers, as well as the integration of equipment that will allow content to be recorded and streamed to distant sites.

“This newly enhanced facility offers the opportunity for us to continue to grow our educational programs for students and the community,” said Dean Gary Raskob, Ph.D. “It also allows us a wonderful venue to host top public health experts from throughout the nation and the world, who will share their knowledge and experience with our students, further enhancing the quality of education provided by our college.”

The project was made possible through the generous support of The University Hospitals Authority and Trust, as well as friends and colleagues of Dr. Brandt.

“We are very grateful to the Authority and Trust, as well as to the Brandt family, for helping us to memorialize Dr. Brandt’s passion for public health and the tremendous impact of his work throughout the years,” Raskob added.

Alumni and friends of the college also have an opportunity to have their names permanently displayed on seating in the auditorium through a seat-naming opportunity called Seating Our Future.

Edward N. Brandt, Jr., M.D., Ph.D. Brandt was born in Oklahoma City on July 3, 1933. In 1960, he earned his medical degree at the University of Oklahoma and a doctoral degree in biostatistics and epidemiology. In 1981, President Reagan appointed Dr. Brandt to serve as Assistant Secretary of Health. After more than two years of distinguished service during the beginning of the AIDS epidemic and a new title as “Godfather of Women’s Health,” Brandt left his federal post. He returned to Oklahoma in 1989 to serve as executive dean of the OU College of Medicine and the first director of the Center for Health Policy at the OU College of Public Health. Dr. Brandt died on Aug. 25, 2007, at his home in Oklahoma City.
College of Public Health

Seating Our Future

Celebrating 50 Years of Public Health
with a Seat Naming Opportunity in the
Edward N. Brandt Jr. Auditorium

Hurry, seats are limited
and will sell fast!

You can help seat our future. Purchase a dedication plaque for the newly renovated 213-seat Edward N. Brandt, Jr. Auditorium, located prominently in the College of Public Health. With a one-time gift of $200, your name — or that of a respected colleague, mentor, admired professor, student, or loved one — will be engraved on a 3.5”x1” silver dedication plaque and will take a permanent place on the arm of a theater seat.

100% of your gift is tax-deductible and all proceeds will support the renovation and revitalization of the newly named auditorium. Renovations to the Auditorium are expected to be complete in spring 2017 and will be used for classes, lectures, guest speakers, conferences, and awards ceremonies.

To purchase your dedication plaque, please visit coph.ouhsc.edu
Unwavering commitment to students remains our top priority at the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health, and we are grateful to all of those who have chosen to join us in this commitment by investing in the power of education. With your help, we will continue to nurture the next generation of public health professionals and leaders.

There are a number of ways to share in this mission. These include gifts, scholarships and department giving.

### GIFTS

- Gifts of Cash
- Gifts of Securities
- Corporate Matching Gifts
- Memorial or Tribute Gifts
- Planned Gifts

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships remain a top priority for the College of Public Health. As education costs continue to climb, scholarships play an increasingly important role in attracting the best and brightest students at all levels of our programs. By contributing to an established scholarship, or starting a new one in your name, you’re making a lasting investment in the future of Public Health in Oklahoma, the nation and the world.

### DEPARTMENT GIVING

Each department relies on gifts that assure excellence within their programs. Your donation may be used to support student assistantships; to invite speakers with special significance to student and faculty members; to upgrade and purchase classroom/laboratory equipment; and to meet other needs as they arise. Gifts may be designated to departments as follows:

- Public Health Development 50230
- Health Administration Development 50356
- Biostatistics and Epidemiology Development 50456
- Occupational and Environmental Health 50495
- Health Promotion Sciences 50660

All gifts, large or small, work together to support OU College of Public Health. Your personal interest will determine which gift option you may support; be assured your gift in any area will make a powerful impact. If you would like more personalized information about giving, please contact Director of Alumni Affairs and Development Kyndall Wahkinney at kyndall-wahkinney@ouhsc.edu or (405)271-8001, ext. 43414.

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About Our Photographer

Dale Bratzler, D.O., M.P.H., not only is he a valued member of our faculty, but also is responsible for many of the photographs you see in this issue.

Whether it's through the lens of his Nikon camera or the broad scope of population health, Bratzler is skilled at keeping subjects in proper focus.

He currently serves as professor and associate dean at the college, as well as chief quality officer for OU Physicians and medical director of the Clinical Skills, Education and Testing Center. He recently was named the 2016 Edith Kinney Gaylord Presidential Professor at the OU Health Sciences Center.

Bratzler’s research interests include the development and maintenance of national performance measures used to profile and publicly report metrics on quality of inpatient and outpatient health care; evidence-based management of hospitalized patients; and use of information technology to improve the quality of health care.

He has served twice as president of the American Health Quality Association, is a past member of the National Advisory Council for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and is a recent member of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

When Bratzler’s focus is not on improving public health and public health education, it often is through the lens of his camera. He has been a photography aficionado since medical school, taking photos for his own pleasure and also for occasional weddings.

We would like to express our gratitude to him for his generous contribution to this issue.

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