

# Public Health Newsletter

Fall 2019-Spring 2020

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We'd like to congratulate the class of 2020! Graduation may look different this year but know that your achievements are just as important and celebratory, even if we can't all celebrate together. We are so proud of your hard work!

### Find us on

Facebook: [EKU Health Promotion & Administration](#)

Instagram and Twitter: [EKUPublicHealth](#)

Foundations of Health Education students hosted a health fair at Clark-Moores and Farristown Middle Schools.



# Faculty & Staff Spotlights



## JULIE LASSLO

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Dr. Julie Lasslo successfully completed her doctoral defense in December 2019 and has completed all of the requirements for her PhD! Dr. Lasslo exudes passion and dedication to the public health field! We are so proud of all her hard work!



## GEORGIA HEISE

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Dr. Georgia Heise has joined the Public Health faculty as an adjunct professor teaching MPH 816: Public Health Organization and Administration. She is also the Public Health Director for the Three Rivers District Health Department. She comes with a wealth of knowledge from her experience working in the health field. We are glad to have Dr. Heise join our team!





## DEREK HOLCOMB

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Dr. Derek Holcomb has been with Eastern Kentucky University since 2000 and has been working in Public Health at other universities since 1993. He began his Public Health journey in 1993 working on grants at the University of South Florida's College of Public Health upon his graduation from Southern Illinois University with his PhD. After his year of work at the University of South Florida, he then became an Assistant Professor at Purdue University in the Department of Health, Kinesiology and Leisure Studies from 1994 to 2000. His final professional move was finally to Eastern Kentucky University, where he has been an Associate Professor and taught a long list of classes that include Human Behavior Change, Program Planning Evaluation, Personal and Community Health, Global Health, Drugs: The Individual and Society and many, many more.

Dr. Holcomb retired in December 2019. We wish him the best in his next endeavors!



# Student Spotlights

## Going global with public health!



Out of the 530 students entered to win, pre-health services administration student Anna Hammer was one of 15 students to receive a full study abroad scholarship, including airfare, to British Isles, Morocco, Ghana, Thailand, Latin America, Spain, Czech Republic, or Slavic Europe. She won the trip to Spain and has her pick of taking PSY 220 or FLK 270.



Meaghan Starr and Sadie Harris attended the Lonnie Davis Student Leadership Conference in November 2019 with other health education students from around Central Kentucky.

**Public Health student Phaneece Macklin was crowned Homecoming Queen!**




**Our very own Public Health junior Breanna Bowling, an Honors student, first generation student and also a Pre-Medicine major, was selected as a finalist for the highly competitive Harry S. Truman Scholarship. This scholarship was created by Congress in 1975 and recognizes collegiate juniors who excel in leadership and public service and grants up to \$30,000 for graduate study. No more than 60 are awards each year.**

**Breanna served as the Vice President of Service for Alpha Phi Omega for two years, participated in the Courier program that is a public health service-learning opportunity focusing on Appalachian health disparities, and been a hospice volunteer. After graduating from ECU, she plans to obtain a dual MD/MPH degree to serve at risk communities, transform public policy, and increase access to care for Appalachia and other underserved communities.**



**Rachael Corrone is a Graduate Student in the Master of Public Health program as well as a graduate assistant at the University. She is currently part of a large-scale study at the Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), which aims to create, implement and maintain public health programs and to improve the health and safety of people in Kentucky. She is an intern in the viral Hepatitis C department. Kentucky is in the top 10 states with the highest infection rate.**



 **ETA SIGMA GAMMA (ESG)**

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**Danie Rowe received the Undergrad Chapter Member of the year award through ESG. She is also the President elect for the 2020-2021 year! Dani also received the 2020 recipient of the Outstanding Service in Public Health Award. We are proud of Dani's hard work and accomplishments!**





ESG members tabled at the Coffee & Consent event hosted by the Green Dot Program. Students were educated on healthy relationship and consent!



ESG members tabled at CityFest representing the Health Promotion & Administration Department. They educated attendees on the risks of smoking and binge drinking.



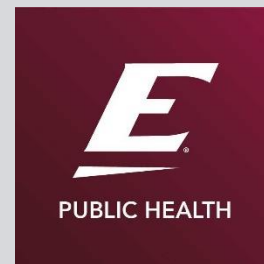
# Madison County Community Health Assessment

The ECU Public Health faculty and several Public Health students partnered with the Madison County Health Department (MCHD) to conduct a county wide community health assessment. This consisted of a Health and Safety Survey that was administered to the public from October 31<sup>st</sup> through December 6th. Two versions of the survey were created, an English version, and a Spanish version. Data based off of the survey was then collected to identify what community members feel are the top health issues within Madison County. This information will be used by the MCHD and ECU to facilitate community wide meetings and then aid in identifying creative interventions for the top health issues in the county. ECU Public Health is honored to be a part of community wide change!

Your voice counts!  
Improve the health of Madison County!

## Take the Madison County Health and Safety Survey!

The poster features a colorful illustration of a community scene with a bus, cars, buildings, and people engaged in various activities like walking a dog, playing basketball, and using a wheelchair. A QR code is located in the bottom left, and the ECU Public Health logo is in the bottom right. The URL <http://bit.ly/CHA2020> is at the bottom.



## Alumni Corner

### YOUNG-ROCK HONG

Young-Rock Hong successfully defended his dissertation September 2019 at the University of Florida. We celebrate this significant career milestone with an outstanding alumnus.

Dr. Young-Rock Hong has also accepted a full-time tenure-track assistant professor position in the Department of Health Services Research, Management and Policy at the University of Florida.

### MARK HENSLEY

Laurel County Health Department (LCHD) just received the Commissioner Award for Meritorious Achievement for achieving National Public Health Accreditation State. Alumnus, Mark Hensley is the Public Health Director at the LCHD. We are proud of his leadership in public health and the accomplishments of the Laurel County Health Department!





One of our proud alumni Tyler Caldwell was selected by his peers at the Laurel County Health Department for the Laurel County Health Department's Trail Blazer award. This award was given to him for his dedication to various programs offered by the department to the Laurel County community. Tyler graduated from Eastern Kentucky University in 2016 and 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and Master of Public health, and is former winner of the Graduate Student of the Year award.

## Photo Gallery



Dr. Molly McKinney's undergraduate Social Marketing class visited the State Capitol in Frankfort, Kentucky to advocate for Public Health policy. The class was also lucky to get to have an opportunity to listen to former candidate for Governor of Kentucky Rocky Adkins speak.





Public Health students helped with the Madison County Health Assessment by handing our surveys around campus!



Several ECU MPH students received training to become members of the 2015 Kentucky Public Health Assistance Support Team (KPHAST). K-PHAST is a team of volunteers who will be on stand-by to respond during Public Health emergencies or assist on special projects at state and/or local levels. Initial training for these students was held on October 25, 2019 at the University of Kentucky's Boone Faculty Center in Lexington, Ky. Students received instruction on the Role of Local Health Departments and the Kentucky Department for Public Health in Disease, Outbreak Investigation and Disaster Response, use of the Incident Command System (ICS) in Public Health Emergencies, the Basics of Field Epidemiology and Outbreak Investigation, and Public Health Interviewing Techniques.

## 2020 Outstanding Student Awards

**Outstanding Public Health Research Award:** Curtis Flynn

**Outstanding Public Health Research Award:** Meaghan Starr

**Outstanding Graduate Student in Public Health Award:** Beth Vanover

**Outstanding Senior in Public Health Award:** Ashley Shofner

**Outstanding Junior in Public Health Award:** Sarah Morgan

**Outstanding Leadership in Public Health Award:** Breanna Bowling

**Outstanding Service in Public Health Award:** Dani Rowe

## Scholars Day & KPHA Presenters

**Although our students were unable to physically attend KPHA and Scholar's Day, we are very proud of all their hard work they devoted to their research!**

Anna Fugate: Evaluation of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in a Rural Appalachian Kentucky County

Meaghan Starr & Curtis Flynn: The Relationship between Homelessness and Violent Behavior in Adolescents in Kentucky

Becca Donoghue: Online Dating Apps and the Relationship to Risky Sexual Behavior in College Students

Beth Vanover & Skyler Worley: Adverse Childhood Experiences in Kentucky College Students

Lexus Cabiness: HIV/HCV Co-infection Rate Differences In Eastern and Central Kentucky Residents

Christopher Crawford: Kentucky College Students' Perceptions of Social Support in Relation to Exercise

# Letter from Department Chair

Greetings Public Health students, alumni, and friends. Normally each year I write a letter that is included in the newsletter that highlights many of the events, and activities of the year. However, this year my remarks are a little different. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic required each of us to adapt to numerous changes to flatten the curve. As I write these remarks, the US is nearing the total of 1 million people infected, and almost 100,000 fatalities. Our thoughts and prayers are with all individuals and families impacted.

The spring semester that many of you remember on the Campus Beautiful changed dramatically in March. ECU made the decision to change all courses to an online format in response to the pandemic. I want to express my sincere gratitude to all of the faculty that worked so diligently to quickly move courses to an online format in about 10 days to foster a successful conclusion to the spring semester. I know this presented many challenges for our students to complete the coursework remotely. However, I was so impressed by the efforts of the students and faculty to adapt to the new format.

The events of the past few months have reinforced the importance of Public Health at all levels. I would be remiss if I did not recognize all of our alumni and partners that were working on the front lines in response to the pandemic. In addition, I know many of our current students and recent graduates have assumed roles in response to the pandemic.

The department is working on plans for the 2020-2021 academic year. We do not know exactly what that will look like, but we look forward to another successful year. One thing that we know is already scheduled is our reaccreditation site-visit. In November, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) will be on campus to meet with faculty, students, and stakeholders. A special thank you to the Dr. Michelyn Bhandari, program coordinator for her efforts in leading the faculty in the completion of the self-study process. Her steady leadership and the commitment of the entire faculty has fostered numerous curricular changes to make sure that all of our students are prepared to meet the needs/expectations within the discipline.

As a program alumnus, I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to be taught and mentored by several of the now retired faculty in the department. I know each of you can easily think about the professors that have made a significant impact on you. For me, the three faculty that had the biggest impact were Dr. Don Calitri, Dr. Les Ramsdell and Dr. Merita Thompson. Each were dynamic teachers, and went above and beyond to help students be successful. In December 2019, we learned of the passing of Dr. Les Ramsdell. Our sincerest condolences go out to his wife Jan and the entire family. I was blessed to have Dr. Ramsdell as a faculty member in several courses, and sincerely appreciated all the times that I dropped into his office to talk about PH issues, career plans, or life in general. He was truly a consummate professional, and example that we also should emulate. I hope each of you are also able to make the same kind of impact on others as Dr. Ramsdell did for so many of our alumni. The department previously established the Baugh, Calitri, Ramsdell and Thompson Scholarship if you would like to make a donation in memory of Dr. Ramsdell.

In closing, remember to follow us on Twitter @EKUPublicHealth, Facebook (EKU Health Promotion and Administration) and Instagram ekupublichealth. We use the social media platforms to share information on activities, events, alumni spotlights and employment opportunities. If you have items you would like us to share, please send to me via email (michael.ballard@eku.edu).

Respectfully,

Dr. Ballard