



A Message from the Chair, Dr. Jean Breny

Change Is in the Air!

Happy Spring and graduation season to everyone in our Public Health community! I hope that this newsletter finds you well and in anticipation of a restful and wonderful summer.

This is my last issue of Public Health Connections as Department Chair and, as I reflect over the past nine years spent in this role, I have so much to be grateful for. The world has changed since I stepped into the role of Chair in the Fall of 2013, but we have changed with it and responded to it. I am appreciative for the hard work of both faculty and students, who had to pivot to online teaching and learning when COVID-19 hit and continued to persevere. I applaud our colleagues in local and state level public health for the hard work they continue to do protecting us on the front lines. So many of you have come through our programs and/or teach for us, and we are incredibly privileged to call you, our colleagues.

Over these past nine years: we hired new full-time faculty who are energetic and dedicated to teaching; launched two online MPH programs; expanded our global reach to Liverpool, England; enhanced our social media presence; extended our community; brought our adjuncts together once a semester; enjoyed community gatherings at professional meetings; received CEPH re-accreditation in 2016; and created the Health Equity and Anti-Racism committee. Finally, it brings me great joy to welcome our new Department Secretary, Mytzi Campbell to our Department. She is truly a wonderful addition.

On the horizon, there is the excitement of new beginnings! Dr. Stanley Bernard will step in to the role as Department Chair in Fall as we move in to our new building for the College of Health and Human Services. The possibility for collaborations will be endless!

We also bid a bittersweet but fond farewell to Drs. William Faraclas and Deb Flynn, as they set their sails for retirement! Their presence will be greatly missed, but their legacies will remain.

To all of you – thank you for your support these past nine years. Let us all continue to work together to create stronger, healthier, and more equitable communities. And, to the class of 2022 – all of my best to your futures! May your great lights continue to shine!

With gratitude,

Jean M. Breny

"The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we are brave enough to see it – if only we are brave enough to be it."

Amanda Gorman, 2021 Presidential Inauguration



In This Edition

Student
News

New
Building!

Coming
Soon:
Podcast

Faculty
Publications

Faculty
News

Alumni
News

Our New Podcast

Our department is proud to announce the start of our new podcast, Public Health Connections. Each episode will focus on a different aspect of public health. Be sure to watch for announcements as episodes drop. You will be able to subscribe wherever you listen to podcasts. Episodes will be driven by students interviewing leaders in public health.

publichealthconnections.podbean.com



Special thanks to: Michael Bay, Communications; Ken Sweeten, Athletics; Allison O'Leary, Integrated Communications and Marketing; Frank Strona, MPH, PhD(c); Arden Castle, CHES
Your guidance and support has been monumental in helping us get this far!

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Dean's List

Congratulations to each of you, who worked incredibly hard. Your dedication is not to prove yourself worthy of acclamations, rather it is in gaining knowledge to serve others.

Fall 2021 semester Undergraduate Students with at least a 3.5 semester GPA with full time credits

Sanay Ayele
Wendy Batterton
Justin Bennett
Paige Bullock
Iqra Butt
Victoria Caldwell
Jacob Camputaro
Hailee Corona
Angela Corsino
Melanie Golino
John Guaraca
Antoinette Higgins

Brandon Jacques
Aisha Jawaid
Loveth Johnson
Razan Kaiser
Uruj Khan
Awina Kyne
Vanessa Lopez
Christa Malan
Jahkeeva Morgan
Emma Piatek
Nina Robertson
Gabby Rousseau
Amitan Rubin



In Memorium

Chardé Spates

Many were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Chardé Spates, a 21-year-old senior and public health major from New Haven.

Chardé was a part of the university's first cohort of the Residential New Haven Promise Emerging Leaders Program in 2018. Dawn Stanton, director of University Access Programs, who was her mentor in this program, said that Chardé was "so warm and kind and full of ambition. She was a hard worker who learned to balance multiple responsibilities and took great pride in everything she committed to achieving."

Chardé was "beautiful inside and out with a smile that lit up the office every time she walked in," Dawn added. "I will miss her smile, her occasional texts, and knowing all the ways she would have changed the world. The loss of Chardé is heartbreaking."

Stanley Bernard, associate professor and internship coordinator in the Department of Public Health, was Chardé's advisor. He and Deb Risisky, public health professor and undergraduate coordinator noted that Chardé was bright and had a great future ahead of her. She worked hard for what she wanted. She enjoyed engaging in her class discussions and always had thoughtful contributions."

Graduate Student and Research Conference

Graduate students presented their research at this year's Graduate Student Research and Creative Activity Conference. Each year students are invited to share their work and present to their peers.

Martin Agbalenyo (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Njoku Anuli) presented his hypothesis on the application of the health belief model to study the prevention of cholera in Ghana. Martin presented *Knowledge and Perception towards Cholera in Ghana: A Health Belief Model Approach*, and shared his proposed study to look at the Greater Accra region of Ghana and focus on day-to-day activities that often create conditions for cholera to spread.

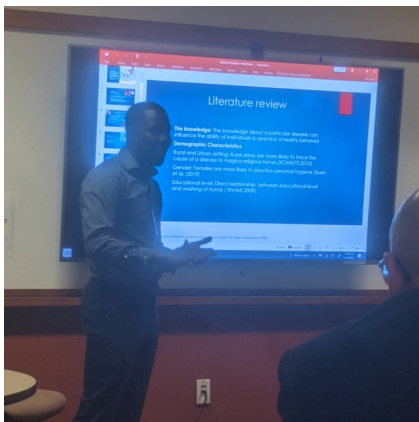
Elisabeth Matuska (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Aukje Lamonica) presented *Significant Others and Accessibility of Resources: A Secondary Data Analysis of The Suburban Opioid Study*. Elisabeth's study focuses on interpersonal relationships and the role of the romantic partner or co-parent as it influences behaviours and treatment for those with substance use disorders.

Marcelin Joseph (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Anuli Njoku) presented *Environmental Racism: Substandard Housing and Its Role in the Burden of Asthma in New Haven, Connecticut Residents*. Marcelin's work calls for further research into environmental racism as disparities are revealed among those who live in New Haven, which is now ranked 5th (metropolitan areas) amongst communities most challenging for those with asthma.

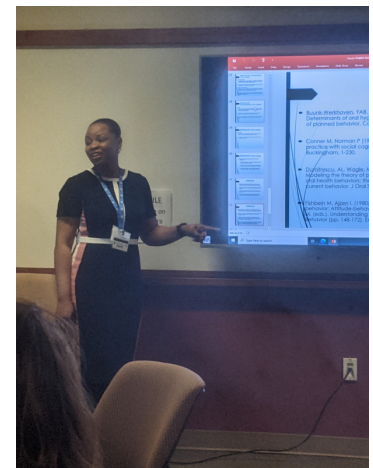
Funmilola Belie (Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christine Unson) proposed her study: *The Theory of Planned Behaviour Among the African-American Undergraduate Students in New Haven*. Funmilola's hypothesis centers around fear, knowledge, and practice of dental health and hygiene. The proposed study would gather information on health behaviors around oral care with the goal of improving dental health.

Besides presenters from Public Health, attendees were able to hear presentations from Social Work, Women and Gender Studies, Psychology, Environmental Studies, the humanities, physical sciences, and business.

Opportunities for collaboration were visible across studies. Students and attendees had a chance to hear about similar subjects being studied from other perspectives.



Martin Agbalenyo



Funmilola Belie

Rolling Out The Welcome Mat

A Short Move Equals Big Changes

Public Health is a team sport and our new home for the College of Health and Human Services will give us the space to interact with our team members. Alongside, Nursing; Recreation, Tourism and Sports Management; Communication Disorders; Health and Movement Sciences; Public Health will be moving into our new, shared location Summer 2022. The new facility offers students state-of-the-art lecture halls and space for students and faculty to interact across departments.



Simulation Lab

Collaboration Suite



Offices will no longer be scattered across campus. Faculty, staff, and students will be able to work and study together in a dynamic space. We look forward to discovering the new ideas fostered here and projects and research done in collaboration.

Dr. Anuli Njoku & Dr. Marian A. Evans

Articles

Njoku, A., & Evans, M. (2022). Black women faculty and administrators navigating COVID-19, social unrest, and academia: Challenges and strategies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(4): 2220. PMID: 35206408. <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/4/2220>

Dr. Jean Breny, MPH

Peer Reviewed Published Journal Articles

- Breny, J. & McMorrow, S. (2022). Research Engagement in a Virtual World: Strategies for Maintaining the Power and Impact of Photovoice Research Online. *Health Promotion Practice*.
- *Diaz, V.R., Albritton, A., Katague, M., Breny, JM, & Kershaw, T. (2022). We Are Family: Effects of a Relationship-Strengthening Intervention on Parenting Behaviors among Black and Latino Adolescent Couples. *Journal of Family Issues*, Vol. 0(0) 1–21.

Book Chapters

- *Breny, J., De Leon, B., & Schwartz, E. (2022). Partnerships and Community Building for Advocacy. In, Rees, K., Early, J. O., & Hampton, C. (Eds.) *Be the Change: Putting health advocacy, policy and community organization into practice in public health education*. Oxford University Press.
- Valdez-Barkwell, CM, Breny, J., Fagan, M., & Roe, K. (2022). Implementation Tools, Program Staff, and Budgets. In, Fertman, C. & Grim, M. (Eds.) *Health Promotion Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation: A Practitioner's Guide* (3rd ed.). Wiley Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-119-77088-6

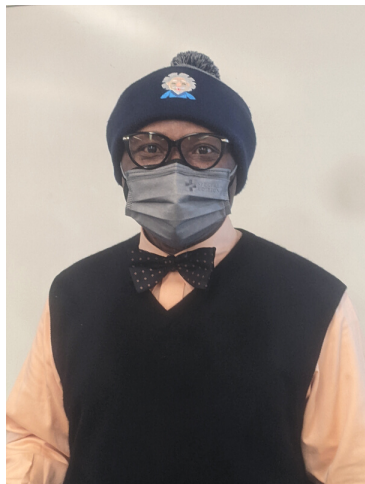
Invited Panel

- Halkitis, P., Bowman, D., Breny, J. & St. George, DM. Advancing the Journey to Achieve Health Equity and Eliminate Discrimination in Academic Public Health. Association of Schools and Programs in Public Health (ASPPH) Annual Meeting, March, 2022.

Presentations at Professional Meetings (Peer-Reviewed)

- Breny, J. & McMorrow, S. Let's Talk About Photovoice! Lunch roundtable at International Union of Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) Annual Conference, May 2022.

Affiliate Researcher at the Boston University Center for Anti-Racist Research.



Dr. John Nwangwu, MD PH presented at the Yale Faculty Roundtable "What Does COVID Mean for Us and the World?" this past November. Dr. Nwangwu's work with the World Health Organization, bringing him to Wuhan, China, and his research on the global impact of Covid-19 have given him insights that he shared at this roundtable. Attendees heard from speakers about how society has been impacted by the virus and how we can improve for the days ahead. [The Faculty Roundtable \(squarespace.com\)](https://squarespace.com).

From the desk of Dr. Anuli Njoku, Associate Professor, Department of Public Health *CSU Seminar Series Reflection 2022*

In Fall 2022, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) offered the CSU Seminar Series – an opportunity for Southern faculty to present discipline-based, 45–60-minute seminars at area campuses or remotely, as preferred by the host institution. I was immediately interested and saw an opportunity for dialogue, discovery, networking, and future collaboration. After completing the online form indicating my name, department, and proposed presentation topic(s), Provost Dr. Robert Prezant asked respondents to preview the list of possible invited faculty seminars before it would go “live” the following week. I was then thrilled to receive an email invitation from Dr. Rosemary Whelan in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics at Albertus Magnus College to present a seminar on my proposed topic of ‘Racial and Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19: A Call to Action’. I have a strong interest in health equity, have published research on COVID-19 health disparities, and was excited to share my research with the area community.

On April 19, 2022, I presented on racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 to an engaged audience of students, faculty, and administrators on the campus of Albertus Magnus College. I was warmly received by Dr. Whelan and her colleagues, including Department Chair Dr. Mark Barreuther and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Sean O’Connell. There was great dialogue following my presentation, including active student engagement!

It was a great pleasure to participate in the CSU Seminar Series and conduct a seminar at Albertus Magnus College. I look forward to the prospect of future collaborations!



Dr. Anuli Njoku presenting

These Graduates are Making a Difference

- Paulina Lopez, MPH '22 will be making an impact as the new Program Officer for the Connecticut Health Foundation. Good on ya!
- Congratulations to Shaiona Williams, MPH '21! Shaiona has been accepted to the Doctorate of Nursing Practice at Fairfield University, with a focus on midwifery.



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