Dean’s Welcome to SPH Students

(2018 Spring Semester)

As the Interim Dean for the JSU School of Public Health, I would like to take this opportunity to say welcome back to our returning students and to welcome all of the new students who are joining us this semester. I also want to share with you our progress on transitioning from a Public Health Program to an accredited School of Public Health.

All of the necessary infrastructures (both physical and personnel) have been put in place to meet the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) requirements. In brief, the school team (faculty, staff, administration, and student representatives supported by a community advisory board) has been working collectively to advance the transition from a program to a school. On behalf of this team, I am pleased to share with you that, to-date, we have upgraded the library, computer labs, and renovated several other areas. We have added some 10,000 square feet that includes new offices for department chairs and program directors, and a 200 seat lecture hall on the 2nd floor. Additionally, the School has hired all the required number of faculty and administrators to meet the CEPH accreditation requirements. We also have hired several new staff members, including a grant writer, a new director for Marketing and Field Placement, and a student support specialist (one task of the student support specialist is to prepare students, alumni and community members to take tests for certificates such as CHES, MCHES, CPH, and we are working on GIS). Please visit the School’s webpage at http://www.jsums.edu/health/ for additional information and the School’s ongoing activities.

I am also pleased to share with you that CEPH has scheduled a site visit and its team will be on campus May 2-4, 2018. The CEPH team will meet with the School’s faculty, students, staff, administrators, alumni and other stockholders in conjunction with the accreditation endeavor. Please note that the School’s current graduate programs (MPH, DrPH, and CMD) are all accredited by their respective accrediting bodies. Seeking the School accreditation is indeed a hallmark undertaking to establish the first School of Public Health in the State of Mississippi, which will, upon CEPH’s approval, add national and international recognition with added academic values and prestige as well as access to some resources that are limited to accredited Schools of Public Health in the USA.

This semester (as we did before), we are counting on you to assist us in our effort to becoming an accredited School of Public Health; the first in Mississippi and most likely the first at an HBCU! That is building a legacy and we all will remain a part of it. Our dream to have a School of Public Health at JSU has thrived despite a bumpy path since the inception of the Public Health Program in 1999.

Please know that the School’s team members are committed to making sure that all of you receive the best education, a memorable learning experience and, above all, that you graduate with the skills and competencies needed to compete successfully in your areas of expertise. As you can see from the School’s Mission Statement on the webpage, we do have a local focus with a global vision.
Again, as it was announced last semester, a “Meeting with the Dean” will be held each Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. in Conference Room 120 (across from the computer lab). All stakeholders (students, faculty, staff and alumni in particular) can meet with me individually or in groups to express concerns and discuss possible collaborations with faculty, staff, fellow students, and other units within the University. No appointment will be needed as it will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Finally, each Friday faculty, staff, students and community members are encouraged to participate in the School’s “Walking Campaign.” The initial walk began in October 2016, and it was well attended. The walk is an ongoing event, within the Jackson Medical Mall, to promote healthy well-being and fellowship. Please plan to participate and encourage your family members and friends to participate too. The walk starts at 4:00 p.m. SHARP from where the JMM Security Station is located and ends at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Again, welcome to an exciting academic year, a year in which we anticipate to be recognized as the first accredited School of Public Health in the State of Mississippi. Remember, all the current graduate programs within the School are fully accredited, so don’t let anybody tell you otherwise.

Thank you.

Mohammad Shahbazi, Interim Dean