

# **Dean's Welcome to SPH Students**

**(2018 Fall 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) were 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) worked collectively and advanced the transition from a program to a school. On behalf of this team, I am pleased to share with you that, we upgraded the library, computer labs, and renovated several other areas. We 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 hired all the required number of faculty and administrators to meet the CEPH accreditation requirements. We also hired several new staff members, including a grant writer, a new director for Marketing and Field Placement, and a public health work force development/student support specialist (one task of this staff 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 scheduled a site visit and its team was on campus May 2-4, 2018. The CEPH team met with the School's faculty, students, staff, administrators, alumni and other stockholders in conjunction with the accreditation endeavor. We received a favorable report and are currently working on few of the criteria that needed a bit tweaking. The CEPH will receive the completed report by September 19<sup>th</sup> and will present it to the CEPH's Board on November 1, 2018. We are confident that the JSU ("THE TIGER NATION") School of Public Health will receive full accreditation by November 2018, and become the first School of Public Health in the State of Mississippi. Such accomplishment will 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.

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.

As it was announced last semester, a "Meeting with the Dean" will be held each Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon 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 and beyond. No appointment will be needed as it will be on a first come, first serve basis.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mohammad Shahbazi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mohammad Shahbazi, Interim Dean