

Public Health Memos

HAPPY SPRING!

Happy Spring y'all! Hope you all had an enjoyable spring break and took some time to rest and recharge! For those of you preparing to take the comprehensive exam in a few weeks, best of luck! We have officially made it to the halfway point of the semester! Check out this edition of memos for campus events, a new faculty highlight, information about Public Health Week, and more! As always, if you have any future ideas or feedback for the memos, please feel free to email me at pprother@vols.utk.edu

CAMPUS EVENTS

- **2022 Baker Distinguished Lecture with Jonathon Haidt.** Hosted by the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy. Thursday, March 31st 5:30-6:30 PM. [Event Information.](#)
- **Mindful Art Making.** Hosted by the McClung Museum. Wednesday, April 6th 5-7 PM. [Register here.](#)
- **Humanistic GIS: Towards a Research Agenda.** Hosted by the Geography and History Department. Thursday, April 7th 4:30-6 PM. [Event Information.](#)
- **Wellness Workshop: Building Confidence.** Hosted by the Student Counseling Center. Wednesday, April 13th 1-2 PM. [Event Information.](#)
- **Navigating Gender & Sexuality and the Job Search.** Hosted by the Center for Career Development and Academic Exploration. Wednesday, April 13th. 6-7:30 PM. [Event Information.](#)
- **De-Stress Day.** Hosted by the Campus Events Board. Wednesday, April 20th 11 AM—2 PM. [Event Information.](#)

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IMPORTANT DATES

- MPH Comprehensive Exam on **April 8th**
- Last day of spring classes is **May 10th**
- Graduate Hooding Ceremony is **May 20th**



PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENT ASSOCIATION



Monday 4/4: Get Earthy on Ped Walkway from 11 AM–1 PM

Wednesday 4/6: Get Zen on the green next to HSS from 3:30-4:30 PM and Get Connected from 5-6:30 PM

Saturday 4/9: Get in the Zone at World’s Fair Park at 12 PM!

**Stay tuned for more details!
These events are open to
students, faculty, staff, and
friends/family!**

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK: APRIL 4-10, 2022

It’s that time of year again—Public Health Week! In addition to the great events being put on by the PHSA, continue to join online for other ways to be involved!

- [Check out the themes for 2022](#)—each day you can find resources to learn more about different areas of public health:
 - **Monday:** Racism
 - **Tuesday:** Public Health Workforce
 - **Wednesday:** Community
 - **Thursday:** World Health Day
 - **Friday:** Accessibility
 - **Saturday:** Climate Change
 - **Sunday:** Mental Wellness



NEW FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. DALENIECE HIGGINGS JONES

Please introduce yourself!

Hi! I am Daleniece Higgins Jones and I am an Assistant Professor of Public Health. I have a BS in Biology, a MPH with an Environmental Health focus, and a Ph.D. in Epidemiology. I was born and raised in Memphis, TN, and my husband and I and our baby girl have only been in Knoxville for a short period of time. I consider myself a Molecular Epidemiologist, a field of epidemiology that indicates the incorporation of molecular, cellular, and other biological measurements into epidemiologic studies. I have several years of research experience in bacterial genomics and molecular diagnostics of pathogens. I also have expert experience in sampling and laboratory analysis of a variety of environmental and clinical samples. My laboratory here at UTK is equipped with instruments capable of analysis from culturing methodology to molecular analysis such as QPCR. I have substantial interests in environmental epidemiology and disparity issues. In addition, I have completed various research projects that characterize the socioeconomic disparities in environmental samples.

What is your role in the department and what are your research interests?

I will be teaching three courses in the Public Health Program: Epidemiology 1 (540), Epidemiology 2 (542), and Data Management (340). My research focus is molecular microbial food safety epidemiology, which focuses on molecular diagnostics of pathogens from environmental and clinical samples with a special interest in health disparity. The overall goal of my research program is to understand disease in terms of the interaction of the environment. I will use laboratory methods to address my goal, which will create a better understanding of the mechanisms that lead to disease. Furthermore, by integrating molecular methods into epidemiologic study design I can enhance the capacity to control disease risk and create interventions and prevention measures for smaller and mixed exposures. This research focus can improve risk mitigation strategies and provide a foundation for future innovative investigations that seek to explore the interactive effects that multicausal exposures have on human health.



Why did you choose public health and what advice would you give new public health students?

Before I chose a career in public health, I looked around and saw many issues in the lives of my friends and family members. Family members who were ravaged by chronic diseases, diabetes, cancer, obesity; the list goes on. I saw friends who struggled to find a safe environment for their children to play outside or a nearby store to buy safe, healthy food items. I was ignorant of the determinants that can cause such disparity. I chose Public Health so that I could learn the factors that led to these issues and what could be done to combat them. Through completing my education, I learned of numerous risk factors that can lead to several adverse health outcomes. Some of those risk factors were not immediately apparent, such as an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria due to abundant antibiotic use in agriculture, which I studied during my graduate work in Epidemiology. Though there may not always be an obvious answer to mitigate the many risks around us, I will continue to conduct research and learn to create awareness, so that health may improve for all. My advice to public health students is to use your education to create a change that you can be passionate about.

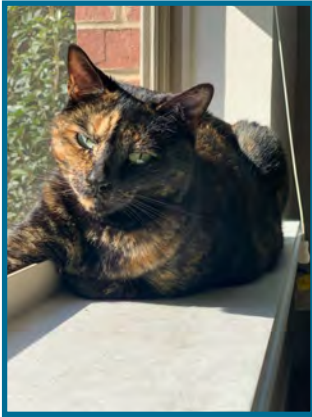
What is your favorite thing so far about Knoxville and UTK?

My absolute favorite thing about Knoxville is the scenery! It really is a beautiful place. I love all the friendly vibes at UTK. Everyone I meet has a smile.

APEX SPOTLIGHT: CALLIE KENNEDY

Please introduce yourself!

My name is Callie Kennedy. I am a second year MPH student with a Health Policy Management Concentration. I am from Maryville, TN, which is about 20 minutes outside of Knoxville. I also attended UTK for undergraduate, so it has been fun to have some of my same professors, but in a more in-



-depth sense. My hobbies include listening to all kinds of podcasts from My Favorite Murder (true crime comedy podcast) to You're Wrong About (a podcast breaking miscast persons or events we have heard about in the news), attending hot yoga classes, and cuddling with my cat—her name is Kitten; very original I know!

Tell us about your Applied Practice Experience!

My APEX is through HealthTrust, which is in Nashville, TN. HealthTrust is the Group Purchasing Organization for all HCS system wide hospitals, which are found across the country. They oversee all products going to all hospital locations, as well as bringing in new products and trials. One example is they are currently trialing a Bluetooth system to monitor products in the hospitals to allow for on time location and quantity for nursing staff to try to eliminate time searching for products to improve patient outcomes. For my APEX I was really interested in finding an opportunity that would allow my experience as a medical sales representative and my public health education to come together in a “business meets healthcare for all” combination. Being able to use the knowledge that I have learned throughout the past 2 years, has allowed me to come into this system and apply items such as strategic planning, quality improvement, and performance management concepts to organizational planning and management, to help better the systems that



they have in place. Currently, I am working with robots to see if they can streamline the 'nicking' process (physically getting the products needed for patients) for the hospital systems to decrease the amount of 'wrong picks' and expired items that are going out to hospital locations. This gives me experience with robots in a warehouse setting, as well as having me in hospitals working with staff and administrators to get feedback. It is so fascinating having me in hospitals working with staff and administrators to get feedback. It is so fascinating how technology and healthcare continue to grow, intertwine, and present future opportunities!

What are your career goals after graduation?

After graduation, I will be working for HealthTrust completing rotations through all portions of their hospital systems ranging from supply chain, environmental services, diversity, inclusion, and patient services. Upon completing these rotations, I will hopefully be working as a director of services in one of these areas and continuing to improve upon the healthcare experience. I would like to try to incorporate more of the public health aspect into all these roles as the world continues to grow and change!

CAMPUS HAPPENINGS

Transgender Week of Visibility—March 28th through April 1st . Use the hashtag #TWOV on social media!

- [Transgender Joy Art Project.](#)
- [Transgender Resource Fair.](#) Tuesday, March 29th 12:00-2:30 PM.
- [Disclosure Screening.](#) Wednesday, March 30th 3:00-5:00 PM.
- [Painting the Rock.](#) Thursday, March 31st 9:00-10:00 AM.

If you want to learn more about creating trans-inclusive school environments, [check out the resources from GLSEN.](#)

Sexual Assault Awareness Month—#SAAMUTK

- Join Dr. Ragan Schriver from the College of Social Work to learn how trauma affects individuals, how to support a friend, and resources. [Trauma-Informed Responses to Sexual Assault.](#) Tuesday, April 5th at 7:00 PM.
- Help to end the silence and change the way we respond to sexual assault by joining [Start Believing Day](#) on social media. Wednesday, April 6th.
- Get you Title IX-related questions answered and provide feedback about how the Office of Title IX is doing by attending [Office of Title IX Group Lunch Office Hours.](#) Monday, April 11th 12:00 –1:00 PM.
- Wear teal to support survivors of sexual assault on [Teal Day.](#) Wednesday, April 13th.

The pedestrian walkway across Henley Street will also be teal from April 1st—7th! If you want to learn more about SAAM, visit the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center.](#)

Arts and Culture Week—April 4th through April 8th!

Join the Campus Events Board for a week of fun events!

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

MON: PAINT THE ROCK
STUDENT UNION GALLERY
11-2PM

APRIL 1ST CULTURE WEEK KICK-OFF
STUDENT UNION GALLERY
7PM

TUES: ARTIST'S ALLEY
STUDENT UNION BALLROOM
7PM

APRIL 2ND

WED: PRINCESS SARAH CULBERSON
STUDENT UNION GALLERY
7PM

APRIL 3RD

THURS: FRIENDSHIP BRACELET
CENTER FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
11-2PM

APRIL 4TH

FRI: CEBCOT
STUDENT UNION PLAZA
7PM

APRIL 5TH

CEB

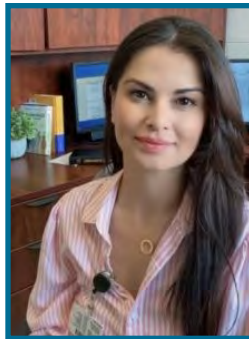
DEPARTMENT UPDATES & REMINDERS

Graduate Assistantships

If you are looking for funding, consider applying for a graduate assistantship for the 2022-2023 school year! The Department of Public Health offers some assistantship positions, subject to availability of funding. **Applications must be received by April 1st.** [Apply here.](#) You can also apply for other assistantship opportunities on campus which are posted on the [Graduate School webpage.](#)

Funded Grant Proposals

Three students who took PUBH 556: Grant Proposal Writing for Health and Social Programs in Fall 2021 had their grants funded! A big congratulations to Eglá-Irina Delvo-Lopez, Gulsah Onar, and Brittany Rosette-Jones! You can [read more about the grant awards here.](#)



APEX Presentations

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, May 12th** and **Friday, May 13th** for presentations by students who completed their APEX experience this Spring! These presentations are open to all Department of Public Health students, faculty, and staff. First-year students—this can be a great opportunity to learn about the breadth of opportunities available to you as you begin to think about your upcoming APEX! Times and specific schedule TBD.

New Elective—Summer 2022

If you are interested in Emergency Management, there's a new course being offered this summer! It will be online on Mondays from 7:15-8:15 PM. The course addresses the dynamics of emergency management and preparedness and explains the role of public health professionals in emergency situations. This course will address emergency response using a practical, public health focused approach. You can contact Dr. Russomanno (jrussoma@utk.edu) if you would like a copy of a draft syllabus. Registration is open now!