



## Race & Equity @ SPH

On campuses across the country, students, staff and faculty have been engaged in impassioned debate over race, diversity and equity.

More than a year ago, University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce launched a Race and Equity Initiative in which she challenged the UW community to confront bias and racism at all levels. Among other actions, the administration has announced increased funds to enhance faculty diversity.

At the School of Public Health, we've taken several important steps to improve the climate around race. Chief among them is the addition of a new core curriculum competency calling for all students to be able to "recognize the means by which social inequities and racism, generated by power and privilege, undermine health."

A new seminar, Racism and Public Health, is now offered for students of all levels and degree programs.

In addition, we held an All-School Forum on Race and Equity in mid-April that drew about 250 people. After the forum, several

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Photo: USAID

## UW Developing 25-Year Vision for Population Health

This spring, University of Washington President Ana Mari Cauce invited the UW community and its partners in the Seattle area to develop a long-range vision for improving health and well-being across the planet.

"We have an opportunity to help people live longer, healthier, more productive lives—here and around the world," Cauce said in an address to representatives from the University, PATH, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other global health organizations.

The plan to create a long-term vision would start with the formation of a new Population Health Leadership Council that would develop an initial set of recommendations by January 2017, followed by a full 25-year vision and action plan.

The council would consist of deans in the health sciences and members of other colleges and schools at the UW. An external advisory board will be essential to the process, she said.

The UW could create new degrees in population health as well as new paths to encourage students to investigate population health-related questions, Cauce said.

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# UW Developing 25-Year Vision for Population Health

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“This phenomenal opportunity will allow SPH to ‘up its game’ in protecting population health, from the local to the global,” said Howard Frumkin, dean of the School of Public Health. “I’m especially excited that it will facilitate partnerships across campus, linking the health sciences with engineering, business, law, policy, social sciences, the built and natural environments, and more.”

Frumkin added, “A university as large and diverse as ours is perfectly positioned to advance health and well-being—from understanding upstream causes all the way to designing and testing effective, innovative solutions.”

Cauce said the population health effort would build upon the University’s ongoing interdisciplinary, data-driven approach. Key players in the initiative will be SPH and UW Medicine, including the Department of Global Health and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME).

Cauce identified opportunities in five key areas:

- Education and capacity building
- Diagnostics and critical assessment
- Developing and testing innovations
- Implementation sciences
- Strategy and planning

During her address, Cauce gave a shoutout to ongoing efforts to improve health. She touted research



Dean Howard Frumkin and UW President Ana Mari Cauce before her speech.

from the School and Fred Hutch—led by Lu Chen (PhD 2016, Epidemiology) and Christopher Li (PhD 2003 and MPH 2003, Epidemiology)—on disparities in breast cancer treatment and diagnosis. “What they found confirms the shameful existence of inequity in detection and treatment,” Cauce said. “Women of color were up to four times more likely to be diagnosed with cancer in its late stages, and they were at much higher risk of not receiving the recommended treatment at all.”

The UW president also highlighted IHME’s data collection and analyses that drive health policies around the globe. And she noted that the Department of Global Health has projects in 138 countries—one of those efforts uses modern text messaging to help new and expectant mothers care for their babies.

The ultimate goal of the population health initiative is to reduce health disparities, tackle the challenges of sustainability, and inspire the next generation of decision-makers. “Our aspiration is nothing less than to change the world,” Cauce said.

See her speech and a timeline of next steps: [www.washington.edu/president/populationhealth](http://www.washington.edu/president/populationhealth)

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work groups were formed to address needs such as increasing diversity among students, staff and faculty; developing a training program to build awareness of racism; and creating a center for the critical study of race.

These groups met under the auspices of the SPH Diversity Committee, which was formed in 2012. The Diversity Committee will incorporate these recommendations into a School-wide action plan. In the short term, the School plans to hire an external consultant to help assess ongoing needs around diversity.

“The key now,” said Dean Howard Frumkin, “is to move from talk to action—to refine the key ideas that emerged, and to implement them.”

# Gaining Leadership Skills to Transform Health Systems



Growing up in Ethiopia, Mahlet Takele saw first-hand the vulnerability of poor health systems to epidemic disease.

“I knew that HIV was a big deal because it was killing a lot of people,” says Takele, from Bahir-Dar, a city with one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the early 2000s. “People were dying because their needs were unmet by broken health systems limited by a lack of resources and overburdened staff.”

Ethiopia also struggled with high maternal and child mortality rates.

“My grandmother was pregnant 14 times, but lost five babies at birth,” Takele says. “Mothers, newborns and children in developing countries are the world’s most vulnerable people, and I want to change that.”

Takele is a 2016 graduate of the School’s Health Informatics and Health Information Management (HIHIM) program, a unique and experiential undergraduate degree. The program has given Takele a strong understanding of health care data and health information technology, as well as the management and leadership skills necessary to transform health systems, she says.

Takele plans to continue her education in hospital administration or international health. And she dreams of one day running an international NGO to set up a series of clinics in countries such as Ethiopia. The clinics would give mothers safe places to give birth and would provide families the quality of health care they need.

“I want everyone to understand that health care is a human right,” Takele says. “Your race, income and where you’re from should not impact the quality of care you receive.”

## Health Informatics and Health Information Management (HIHIM)

The HIHIM undergraduate program, administered by the Department of Health Services, has a diverse student population in ethnicity, gender and age. Eighty-five percent of students are non-white, while the number of international students has doubled in the last two years.

“I attribute the diverse student population to the job outlook for a career in the health care industry and the global need for professionals trained in health informatics and information management,” says Kathleen Peterson, senior lecturer and director of the HIHIM program.

The program provides students with worldwide perspectives and innovative learning experiences that keep pace with the changing health care industry and emerging technologies.

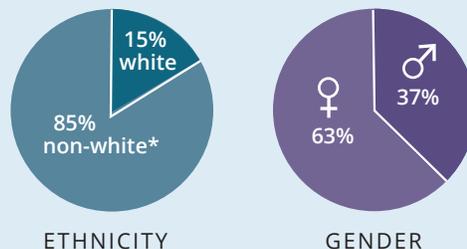
“The faculty present data encouraging students to think critically about health care systems across the world, as well as improving the health care system in the U.S.,” Peterson says.

Graduates of HIHIM are qualified to work in a variety of in-demand roles, including health information managers, data analysts, electronic health record implementation specialists, privacy specialists and compliance analysts.

“The need for health informatics and information management professionals is predicted to be strong through 2022, with job growth projections ranging from 15 to 22 percent,” Peterson says. “Much faster than the average growth of jobs.”

The School also offers a Master’s in Health Informatics and Health Information Management.

### HIHIM UNDERGRADUATE DIVERSITY



\* Hispanic, Native American, Asian, African-American, Pacific Islander, Hawaiian or biracial

(Based on demographic data from November 2015)

# Student Awards & Scholarships

## Walter Remak Scholar

*The Walter A. Remak Scholarship benefits undergraduate or graduate students in the School of Public Health who plan to pursue public health work in South Africa.*



**Katie Reynolds** (MPH, Health Services) is spending the summer in South Africa supporting a team of clinicians, engineers and scientists from the University of California,

San Francisco. “Funding from the Walter A. Remak Scholarship will enable me to tackle global health disparities in maternal and child health in the communities surrounding Durban,” she says. The team has developed the Smart Diaphragm, a device designed to determine whether a pregnant woman is at high risk for preterm labor.

Reynolds will help conduct interviews and focus groups to explore women’s attitudes and willingness to wear the device during pregnancy, the cultural beliefs surrounding preterm birth, and the area-specific barriers for implementing a device such as the Smart Diaphragm. “This could open up an earlier window for intervention and have far-reaching health impacts for mothers and babies,” she says.

Earlier this year, Ben and Nancy Remak decided to endow the Walter Remak Scholarship Fund, securing it in perpetuity and guaranteeing students like Reynolds can continue to do important work in South Africa. The Remak Scholarship Fund honors the late Walter Remak, who had a deep connection with South Africa and its people.

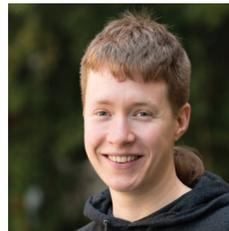
## Omenn Award Winners

*The Gilbert S. Omenn Student Award for Academic Excellence recognizes outstanding achievements by two graduate students annually in the School of Public Health.*



**Farah Mohamed** (MPH, Global Health) was an active leader and exceptional student in both his Master’s in Public Health and Master’s in Social Work degree programs at the UW. “I have learned how public health can be a powerful tool for social justice,” he says.

During his practicum, Mohamed strengthened the foundation for what is now a partnership between Health Alliance International and the Somali Health Board. This relationship has the potential to benefit thousands of refugees and immigrants in the Seattle area—a community Mohamed is personally and professionally committed to. “I know what it means to be a refugee,” he says. “Refugees have undergone traumatic experiences back home and it is another hard experience to try to build a new life here when they arrive.”



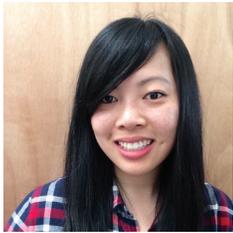
**Jean Morrison** (PhD, Biostatistics) loves answering scientific questions. While at the UW, she participated in a number of large-scale studies that used genomic sequencing data to identify factors that contribute to disparities in health outcomes.

“I like working with problems that have public health applications because I want to help identify solutions that could be useful to someone at some point,” Morrison says. She played an integral role on a landmark epidemiological study called the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos. The PhD program, she says, offered her plenty of opportunities for collaboration within and outside the department and gave her the space to “do good science.”

Outside of academic work, Morrison enjoys making meaningful contributions to the community through volunteer work. She currently volunteers for the King County 24-hour crisis line.

## Grayston-Day Fellows

*The Grayston-Day Fellowship supports tuition and other educational expenses of graduate students in the School. Faculty members nominate students to receive awards based on financial need, merit and diverse perspectives.*



**Amanda Chin** (MHA student, Health Services) is not only a student, she also supports her parents and three younger siblings. She plans to use her MHA degree to ease access to care for patients who have difficulty navigating the

complex health system. She is also focused on the larger built environment and how it affects health.

Receiving the Grayston-Day Fellowship means she'll be able to work fewer hours and focus more of her time on studies. "The greatest impact is feeling the support from faculty, staff and my peers, and knowing that they believe in me," Chin says. "I am motivated more than ever to work harder towards my goals and making the community a better place."



**Shadae Paul** (MPH student, Global Health) was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Fiji, where she worked on health education and wellness promotion activities, including at a local prison. Shadae intends

to pursue both an MPH and MPA while at the UW. She currently works at the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University on a quantitative study on the impact of the arts in palliative medicine. The study hopes to show the benefits of incorporating the arts into the traditional model of health care. After graduation, she plans to work on improving maternal and child health outcomes in Latin America and the Caribbean. "The Grayston-Day Fellowship is such a wonderful blessing," she says.

## SPH Endowed Fellows

*The SPH Endowed Fellowship provides support to one PhD student and one Master's student based on academic merit and leadership potential in the field of public health.*



**Marielle Goyette** (PhD student, Epidemiology) has a passion for sexual and reproductive health. For her PhD, she is looking at the impact of assisted partner services (APS) on HIV treatment and

prevention in Kenya and King County. APS is a public health strategy used to test and treat the sexual partners of infected individuals.

"The SPH Endowed Fellowship will help support my education expenses and allow me to improve how APS works in various high-risk populations locally and globally," Goyette says. She plans to dedicate her career to improving HIV partner services—an approach that has the potential to curb the HIV epidemic.



**Sara Marquis** (MPH student, Health Services) is the first in her family to attend college. She has also witnessed on a very personal level how health disparities affect lives. Marquis cares about the treatment of mentally

ill individuals and the factors that may lead to incarceration. She is developing pre-court diversion programs that will connect patients with valuable community resources.

"This scholarship will help offset my significant student loan debt and may allow me to work fewer hours at my part-time job so I can better focus on these projects," Marquis says. She hopes to work with public health and correctional agencies to divert mentally ill individuals from entering the justice system in King County.



L to R: Hanna Dinh, Terra Hoy, Marlena Norwood, Alice Popejoy, Alec Sullivan, Dominic Tran, Tiffany Woelfel

*The Husky 100 recognizes 100 UW undergraduate and graduate students in all areas of study who are making the most of their time at the UW. These students know that education happens inside and outside of the classroom, and they are making a difference on campus, in their communities and for the future. In the inaugural year of the award, seven students from the School of Public Health were honored.*

**Hanna Dinh, MHA 2016, Health Services**

"I strive to continually develop myself to be an effective health care leader for not only individual patients, but also for diverse communities."

**Terra Hoy, BS 2018, Public Health and Social Work**

"I want to continue to develop a holistic, realistic vision of social work and help fill the gaps in healthcare support for queer and transgender folks."

**Marlena Norwood, BS 2016, Public Health Major**

"I have spent my undergrad years developing a passion for public health ... (and developing) the conviction to work towards inclusive—and healthy!—communities for a better world."

**Alice Popejoy, PhD 2017, Public Health Genetics**

"I have served the student body, I am a parkour practitioner and coach, and I am embracing my new role as the proud mother of a baby girl."

**Alec Sullivan, BA 2016, Global Health Minor**

"I thrive through processes of culture-shifting and mind-stretching, critical-making and identity-forming."

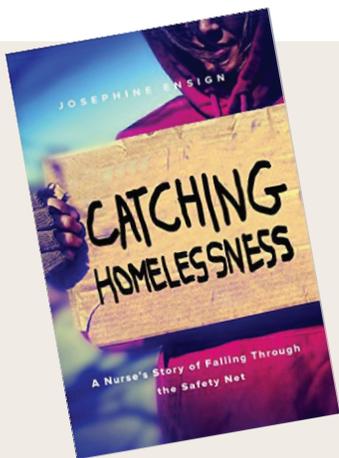
**Dominic Tran, BS 2016, Global Health Minor**

"I am a caring and supportive mentor, an active and engaged researcher, and an aspiring physician. I self-identify as a gay, Asian-American in STEM, and I'm proud to be so."

**Tiffany Woelfel, MPH 2016, MSW Social Work**

"I have worked to increase equity for students with disabilities and survivors of sexual violence."

*You can support amazing students like these by giving to the Public Health Undergraduate Student Assistance Fund or the School of Public Health Endowed Fellowship (provides graduate student support). Use the enclosed envelope or contact Libby Singer at [ersinger@uw.edu](mailto:ersinger@uw.edu) or 206-221-6343.*



## Catching Homelessness

The 2016–17 Common Book is *Catching Homelessness* by Josephine Ensign, an associate professor in the UW School of Nursing. The memoir takes a piercing look at homelessness, nursing and our country's health care safety net. Ensign reflects on how working as a nurse changed her and how her work was altered by a personal experience of being homeless. It's a timely topic. In January 2017, the UW community will host Tent City 3, housing 100 homeless residents for 90 days. The Common Book series provides a shared framework for interprofessional dialogue among students, staff and faculty across departments and programs in the UW Health Sciences.

## New Faculty

**Jesse Jones-Smith**, *associate professor, Health Services, Nutritional Sciences*, is a new strategic hire. She leads efforts addressing obesity, food, physical activity and health, which comprise one of the emerging challenges in the School's Strategic Plan. She primarily investigates the role of economic and community resources in risk for obesity in both children and adults.

**Anju Aggarwal**, *acting assistant professor, Epidemiology*, focuses on the role of food and the built environment on health-related behaviors and body weight dynamics, topics also related to the Strategic Plan.

**Sara Lindstroem**, *assistant professor, Epidemiology*, focuses on understanding the genetic variants associated with complex diseases such as cancer and obesity. Genomics and public health make up another emerging challenge.

**David Pigott**, *assistant professor, Global Health*, focuses on improving the spatial resolution at which disease burden and metrics are considered. He also leads work defining at risk areas for a number of pathogens with pandemic potential.

**Bradley Wagenaar**, *acting instructor, Global Health*, is interested in building effective systems for mental health care. His research, implementation and service work focus on supporting equitable public sector health systems and policies globally.

L to R: Jesse Jones-Smith, Anju Aggarwal, Sara Lindstroem, David Pigott & Bradley Wagenaar



Photo: Courtesy of Gil Omenn

## Gil Omenn & Martha Darling Establish New Endowed Faculty Funds

Former School of Public Health Dean Gilbert S. Omenn knows a lot about the value of innovative, interdisciplinary faculty. Recruited to SPH in 1981 by former Dean Robert Day, Dr. Omenn eventually succeeded him and led this dynamic, science-based School for the next 15 years.

Two early initiatives he helped launch included the Cancer Prevention Research Unit with Fred Hutch and the CDC-sponsored Health Promotion Research Center with the Seattle/King County Housing Authority. Later, Dr. Omenn helped develop the Institute for Public Health Genetics as a presidential initiative with participation from multiple UW units, including the School of Law and College of Arts & Sciences.

Now, almost 20 years later, Dr. Omenn and his wife, Martha Darling, have established two endowments to reflect their commitment to securing the finest faculty members for the School of Public Health. The Gilbert S. Omenn Endowed Chair in Biostatistics will support a senior faculty member in that department, and the Robert W. Day Endowed Professorship will support a junior faculty member from any SPH department.

"We intend that the outstanding faculty who will hold these positions will make a special effort to build programmatic strength with public health genetics, environmental and occupational health sciences, and data analytics," Dr. Omenn said. "Moreover, we hope the two faculty selected will be connected in a mentoring and collaborative relationship."

SPH is extremely grateful for the couple's generosity and vision for deepening its interdisciplinary strengths in these critical public health arenas.



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# Alumni Updates

*We want to hear what our alumni are doing!  
Please send your news and updates to [sphalum@uw.edu](mailto:sphalum@uw.edu).*

**Alexandria Marie Mann**, BA 2016, Public Health, is an EMT for American Medical Response.

**Paul Nevin**, MPH 2015, Global Health, was national winner for feature photography, large school division, in the Society of Professional Journalists' Mark of Excellence Awards for his photos documenting maternal health issues in Kenya.

**Leah Dodge**, MPH 2015, Global Health, was recently hired as an epidemiologist at the Urban Indian Health Institute, a division of the Seattle Indian Health Board.

**Melissa Arias**, BA 2014, Public Health, is working with the CDC through the Public Health Associate Program hosted at the Tulare County Public Health Department in Visalia, CA.

**Miriam Alvarado**, MPH 2013, Global Health, was selected for the prestigious Gates Cambridge Scholarship. She will be working toward a PhD in medical science at the MRC Epidemiology Unit at the University of Cambridge.

**Carrie Dennett**, MPH 2013, Nutritional Sciences, is a columnist with *The Seattle Times*. She writes a weekly article focused on nutrition and health.

**Gretchen Hammer**, MPH 1999, Health Services (Maternal and Child Health), received the 2016 Livesay Award for Social Change from Colorado College. She currently serves as Medicaid director and oversees the Health Program Office at the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.

**Sarah Patterson**, MHA 1984, Health Services, received the Silver Award for Outstanding Health Care Executive-Puget Sound Region from *Seattle Business* magazine. She has been a member of the leadership team at Virginia Mason Medical Center for nearly 30 years.

**Anita Geving**, MHA 1983, Health Services, was named Outstanding Medical Group Executive by *Seattle Business* magazine. Since joining The Polyclinic in 2011, she has helped transform the company into a leading independent, multispecialty medical practice.

**Don Garvey**, MSPH 1982, Industrial Hygiene, was the keynote speaker at the 2016 Korean Industrial Hygiene Association's annual conference in Seoul, South Korea. He works for 3M Company in St. Paul, MN.