From the Director

This past May, 173 PHS graduates joined the newest cohort of JHU alumni. This issue of the Newsletter includes highlights from the PHS Graduation Reception at which several members of this largest-ever PHS graduating class were recognized for outstanding achievements. I want to note here that all of our graduates have impressive accomplishments. All PHS students gain proficiency in both natural sciences and social sciences, do field work for an Applied Experience, and complete graduate-level coursework at JHSPH, while also meeting the other demands of a world-class university. Every one of our graduates should feel extremely proud.

This fall, we will welcome 130 newly-declared sophomores to the PHS major. When our students return to campus this fall, they will find some new PHS advising resources in place. We have been busy this summer working on ways to increase efficiency in the PHS office. Specifically, students will be able to access advising modules through the Blackboard learning management system. These modules provide information about navigating the PHS major. Students can access the modules before meeting with their advisor so that advising appointments can focus more on students’ individual needs.

We look forward to seeing all of our returning students in a couple of weeks and we invite our alumni—new and old—to keep in touch with us. Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Maria Bulzacchelli
PHS Director

Graduation Reception Recap

On May 23rd, the PHS Program held a reception for PHS graduates and their families. Several honors and awards were presented during this annual event. Of note, 18 students were inducted into the Alpha Chapter of the Delta Omega Public Health Honorary Society and 26 students successfully completed a senior thesis and graduated with Honors in Public Health Studies.

George Mwinnyaa ’17 and Rienna Russo ’17 received the Outstanding Senior Researcher Award for their exceptional Honors theses. We wish them the best as they both enter the MHS program in Epidemiology at JHSPH this fall!

Robert Besch ’17 and Gauri Bhatnagar ’17 received the Outstanding Senior Award for Academic Excellence, Leadership, and Service in Public Health Studies. Candidates for this award are nominated by their peers. Rob and Gauri were selected for their roles in elevating the PHS Program and creating awareness of public health through their involvement with the Public Health Student Forum, most notably, bringing the Surgeon General of the United States to speak on campus in 2016.

Nancy Chen ’17, Lani Chung ’17, and Isabelle Kim ’17 were recognized for their Longstanding Support of the PHS Program. We appreciate their assistance in the PHS office over the years.

Each year, the PHS Program also recognizes an instructor who exemplifies excellence in teaching public health. Candidates for this award are nominated by the PHS students. The recipient of the 2017 Golden Apple Award for Outstanding Teaching in Public Health was Dr. Peter Beilenson for his teaching of “Public Health, Policy and Politics: A Primer.” Students cited his passion for public health as making them excited to learn about the field.

A complete list of awards, including the full list of Honors students and Delta Omega inductees, is available on the PHS website. Congratulations to all of our graduates!
This summer, 11 undergraduates participated in the PHS study abroad program in Cape Town, South Africa. The program involves classroom instruction at the University of Cape Town and field placements in local nongovernmental organizations. Read more in the JHU Hub and visit the trip blog for student perspectives on the experience.

Students returning from Cape Town, along with other students who completed an Applied Experience this summer, will present their work this fall at our first-ever Summer Experience Poster Session, tentatively scheduled for October.

Congratulations to Ashley Ezema ’17 for being named a Fulbright Scholar! Ashley will be completing her research in Canada during the coming year.

Gordis Teaching Fellow Profile

Rachel Fabi will return this fall to teach her Gordis Teaching Fellowship course, “Beyond Borders: Ethics, Migration, and Public Health.” She writes: I applied to serve as a Gordis Teaching Fellow because I really wanted the experience of working with Hopkins undergraduates. I love teaching, and it’s truly a unique opportunity for a PhD student to be able to teach something I care deeply about to students who are genuinely interested in the topic. My course takes the central question of my dissertation—what do we owe to non-citizens?—and applies it more broadly to different types of migrants, both in the U.S. and internationally.

In the course, we delve into the political theory of access to health and health care for migrants at various stages of the migration process. I think students really enjoyed the relevance of the course to current events, as well as the emphasis on discussion and interaction. The relevance of the course material to their everyday conversations and experiences really appealed to the students.

One thing I learned through this teaching experience was how effective small-group work can be in the college setting. My students really thrived when they were able to get deeper into case analysis activities in small groups. Next semester, I plan to make these small-group activities more structured. The GTF was an incredible experience that I would recommend to anyone who thinks they might want to teach college students in the future.

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The PHS Program is currently accepting applications for the Gordis Teaching Fellowship and the new Africana Studies Teaching Fellowship. Up to 11 doctoral students from JHSPH will be supported to teach undergraduate public health courses in 2018. Further information and application forms for both fellowships are posted on the PHS Teaching Fellowships page. Applications are due September 15th.