Chair, Michelle Williams, will lead the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health starting July 1, 2016 as the new Dean.
Welcoming a new Dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School

Michelle A. Williams, S.M. ’88, Sc.D. ’91, a distinguished epidemiologist and award-winning educator known for her influential studies of maternal and child health around the world, will become the next dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, starting in July 2016.

Since 2011, Williams has been the Stephen B. Kay Family Professor of Public Health and chair of the Epidemiology Department at the Harvard Chan School.

The principal investigator on several international research projects and training grants funded by the National Institutes of Health, and co-author of more than 400 published research papers, Williams is also the faculty director of the Harvard Catalyst’s Population Health Research Program and the Health Disparities Research Program. Her scholarship is especially known for its creative integration of epidemiological, biological, and molecular approaches to a range of public health challenges, and her teaching and mentoring have been recognized with awards from Harvard, the University of Washington, the American Public Health Association, and the White House.

“Michelle Williams is an eminent epidemiologist, an outstanding teacher and mentor, and an energizing leader and institutional citizen, impassioned about the power of public health to change people’s lives for the better,” said Harvard President Drew Faust in announcing the appointment.

A 1984 graduate of Princeton University, where she majored in biology, Williams went on to receive an M.S. in civil engineering from Tufts University in 1986. Continuing her studies at the Harvard School of Public Health, she earned her S.M. in population science in 1988 and her Sc.D. in epidemiology in 1991. After a postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, she joined the UW faculty as an assistant professor of epidemiology in 1992.

Emerging as an internationally recognized epidemiologist and educator, she rose through the UW faculty ranks, becoming an associate professor in 1996 and a full professor of epidemiology in 2000. While at the UW, she was highly active in the Center for Perinatal Studies at the Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, rising to become co-director from 2000 to 2011, with broad responsibility for a multidisciplinary research program involving clinical investigators, basic scientists, and epidemiologists. From 1992 to 2010, she held an appointment as an affiliate investigator at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, and from 2008 to 2011 she held a joint appointment in global health at the UW.

In 2011, Williams was recruited back to Harvard as the Stephen B. Kay Family Professor of Public Health in epidemiology and to become chair of the Epidemiology Department. Her research focuses on integrating genomic sciences and epidemiological research methods to identify risk factors, diagnostic markers, treatments, and prevention targets for disorders that contribute to maternal and infant mortality. Her work is particularly noted for its sophisticated linkages between epidemiology and allied disciplines and for its broad international scope, encompassing studies in Africa, Asia, and South America as well as the United States.

As an educator, Williams has led grants, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), that are designed to enhance the education of members of groups underrepresented in the biomedical and quantitative sciences and to train aspiring epidemiologists and other public health investigators in several dozen countries. Last year, she received the Harvard Chan School’s Outstanding Mentor Award, having previously been recognized with the UW’s Brotman Award for excellence in teaching (2007), the American Public Health Association’s Abraham Lilienfeld Award for education in epidemiology (2007), and the White House’s Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring (2012).

As department chair, Williams has guided the Epidemiology Department through a period of notable transition, while contributing to the conception and implementation of a range of School-wide initiatives, including recent major reforms in the doctoral and master’s programs. She remains active with various professional organizations and academic journals, while playing advisory or planning roles for such institutions as the NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Diabetes Association, the March of Dimes, and Meharry Medical College.
New Faces in Epi

Albert Hofman
Professor of Clinical Epidemiology

The Department of Epidemiology would like to send a warm welcome to Dr. Albert Hofman who has been appointed Professor of Clinical Epidemiology here at the Chan School. Dr. Hofman comes to us from the Erasmus Medical Center, Rotterdam, Netherlands, where he was professor and Chair, Department of Epidemiology.

Dr. Hofman is an internationally recognized scientific leader in the epidemiology of common neurologic and vascular diseases, in particular dementia and stroke. He was a leader in initiating genetic studies of complex diseases in large populations. Dr. Hofman founded the genetic epidemiologic laboratory in the Erasmus Epidemiology Department in the late 1980s. In addition, he has a wealth of expertise and a background in extensive leadership and administrative experience, having been chair of the very large Epidemiology Department for over twenty years.

Dr. Hofman received an MD in 1976 from the University of Groningen, and a PhD in 1983 from the Erasmus University Rotterdam. He was appointed in 1981 as an Assistant Professor at the Erasmus University Medical School and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1984. Since 1988 he has been full Professor and Chair in the Department of Epidemiology at the Erasmus Medical Center. In addition, Dr. Hofman has been a Science Director at the Netherlands Institute for Health Sciences since 1992, as well as an adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at our School since 1998. Dr. Hofman has an excellent record of teaching, including being the initiator and program director of the Erasmus Summer Program since 1991, and teaching the summer session course on Fundamentals of Epidemiology (currently EPI500, previously Principles of Epidemiology EPI1200) since 1998, at Harvard.

Jenifer Michaels
Project Manager, CCDD

Jenifer Michaels started working at Harvard University in January 2016 as a Project Manager in the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics. In 2012 she received her MPH from Mount Sinai School of Medicine with a concentration in biostatistics and epidemiology. She joins us from Massachusetts General Hospital, where her work focused on Quality Improvement and Patient Safety.

As a native New Yorker, she looks forward to exploring all that New England has to offer. While living in Boston, she has set an ambitious goal of personally consuming an entire Vermonster. Stop by Kresge 506A and say hello!

Radford Welch
Accounts Payable Coordinator

Originally from Wallingford, Connecticut, Rad Welch moved to Brighton after accepting the Department of Epidemiology’s Accounts Payable Coordinator position. He took on the new role after almost 4 years of being the Team Lead for the Student Accounts department at Post University. Rad graduated from Central Connecticut State University with a double major in History and Criminology and has since earned an A.S. in Accounting. He was also a member of the varsity baseball team and is still an active participant in men’s softball and baseball leagues for 3 seasons out of the year. With his background, Rad brings a strong sense of team work, dedication and energy.
Department Recognition

- **The Aging Workforce**: Challenges and Benefits for the Public’s Health, included panelists Francine Grodstein (from left), a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School; Christina Matz-Costa, a senior research associate at the Center on Aging & Work at Boston College; Lisa Berkman, the Thomas D. Cabot Professor of Public Policy, Epidemiology, and Global Health and Population at the Harvard Chan School; and moderator NPR correspondent Chris Arnold.

- **Dr. Brittany Charlton** is first author on a study that appeared online in BMJ.
  
  The study found that Oral contraceptives taken just before or during pregnancy do not increase the risk of birth defects, according to a new study by researchers from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the Statens Serum Institut in Denmark. They found that the prevalence of major birth defects was consistent (about 25 per 1,000 live births) across all pregnant women in the study population regardless of contraceptive use. Dr. Charlton is an Alum of the Epi Doctoral Program and was a Rose Traveling Fellow recipient.

- **Movember Updates**
  
  BellissiMo, the team that represents Harvard Hospitals, Harvard Chan School, MIT, Boston University, and friends and associates, raised over $52,000. They ranked 11th in the nation, and placed as the #1 academic Team in the world. Fantastic work! Dr. Mucci received the “Hey Mo Sista Whiska” award for 2015.

- **12th Annual Lee Robins Lecture**
  
  Karestan C. Koenen, PhD, Professor of Epidemiology presented the 12th Annual Lee Robins Endowed Lectureship in Psychiatry. Her presentation was titled “Traumatic Stress and Population Health”

- **Third International Molecular Pathological Epidemiology Meeting**
  
  The 3rd Annual MPE meeting will be held May 12-13, 2016 at the Jimmy Fund Auditorium of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. This international Meeting is to facilitate integration of molecular pathology and epidemiology. For more information visit: [http://goo.gl/UxRAAX](http://goo.gl/UxRAAX)

- **Dr. Tobias Kurth; New Role**
  
  Dr. Tobias Kurth, Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at the Harvard Chan School has accepted a new role as Professor of Public Health and Epidemiology at the Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin and the new Director of the Institute of Public Health.

- **Paula A. Johnson Named President of Wellesley College**

  Wellesley College announced that it will appointed Dr. Paula A. Johnson, a Professor at Harvard Medical School & the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and advocate for women’s health, as its president, making her the first African-American to lead the school. Johnson will become the 14th president of the women’s liberal arts college in July.

- **Career Incubator Fund Award**

  Dr. Lorelei Mucci was awarded the Career Incubator Fund Award for her project entitled “Obesity, histone modifications and lethal prostate cancer”, and her and her research team were awarded an R01 From the National Cancer Institute, entitled “Circadian Disruption and Risk of Prostate Cancer in a Multiethnic Cohort”

- **Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health**

  Dr. Donna Spiegelman spoke at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health’s monthly Columbia University Epidemiology Grand Rounds (CUEGR) on February 10th, on “Towards a unified methodology of study design and statistical analysis for causal inference in implementation science” and met with faculty and students in Columbia’s epidemiology and biostatistics departments.

- **Reel Epi is Back**

  Dr. Deborah Blacker, faculty in the Department of Epidemiology will be facilitating a talk following the viewing of “Inside Out” on April 6th in Vanderbilt Hall at 5:45pm. The film is about a young girl who is uprooted from her Midwest life and moved to San Francisco, and how she navigates a new city, home life and school.
When being asked about the best years in my life, I have no doubt in replying “my years at Harvard!”. I came to the HSPH in 1978 as a freshly graduated MD. I had the opportunity to benefit from having a Harvard host family and spent my first weeks in the USA on Martha’s Vineyard in the summer home of Eben Choate Clark, Harvard College’26, who made me feel immediately part of the Harvard family. This sense of belonging and being appreciated and recognized was comforted on the intellectual and professional levels at HSPH. I completed a Master of Public Health (’79), a Master of Science in Biostatistics and Epidemiology (’80), and, with the support of the Victor Emmanuel Chapman Memorial Fellowship, a Doctor of Public Health (’86). My thesis was on Parkinson’s disease in the Harvard and Pennsylvania Alumni cohort, developed by Dr Ralph S Paffenbarger, Jr. I had the chance of being taught by outstanding faculty members, Frederick Mosteller, Marvin Zelen, and the ones who allowed me to be Teaching Assistant and Harvard Teaching Fellow in Biostatistics (Margaret Drolette, Christine Waternaux, James Ware) and in Epidemiology (Alan Morrison, Kenneth Rothman). I give a special appreciation to Olli S Miettinen who was teaching the advanced course in Epidemiology. Being the TA of a giant conceptor and thinker of theoretical epidemiology was a challenging task but what I learned through teaching gave me the knowledge and reasoning which became the solid grounds of my whole career in epidemiology, as a researcher and a teacher and mentor.

Upon my return to Europe, I worked predominantly on cancer epidemiology, spending twenty two years at the International Agency for Research on Cancer-World Health Organization in Lyon, France. I created a Research Unit of Epidemiology for Cancer Prevention and also was Acting Chief of the WHO Program for Cancer Control. The name I chose for my Unit clearly defined the objectives I pursued: to conduct methodologically sound epidemiological research with valid statistical, clinical and biological background in order to provide results which could rapidly be used to initiate effective population health programs to prevent cancer and other chronic diseases, with attention being given to ethical considerations and an aim of social justice. This justifies, in addition to the production of scientific papers, the legitimacy of using means of non-scientific communication, and the interaction with political and charismatic media figures to allow the passing of laws and regulations on recognized toxic products and make populations aware of what they can do to protect themselves. Over the years, my interest shifted from behavioral risk factors, to environmental concerns. Pushing the idea that a substantial proportion of cancers may be linked to the presence of potentially interacting chemical, physical and biological carcinogens in the air, water, soil and daily objects, was some twenty years ago violently opposed by most well established research scientists and being a voice in favor of the precautionary principle did not help with one’s career, at least in France. With biological markers of exposure in molecular epidemiology and more recently with the early understanding of the role of epigenetics, societal and scientific attitudes are changing. Other challenges are facing the coming generations of epidemiologists, such as the impact on the health of populations of terrorism, mass migration and social violence.

As President Obama stated it, “Yes, we can!”. For me, Harvard allowed me to think “Yes, I can”. If I had not been at Harvard, I would never have been able to conduct research and train students and health professionals in many countries of the world, in particular by carrying on epidemiological investigations and population health programs in China, South America and Northern and sub-Saharan Africa. The course I am most proud of has been my Erasmus Mundus-tropEd module on Cancer Control in the Tropics and the recognition I have been most sensitive to the nomination in 2005 as one of the “1000 women for the Peace Nobel Prize” as a reflection of my modest contribution through the health and education of women towards the world peace.
# Spring 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Andrea Roberts, PhD, MPH</td>
<td>Research Associate</td>
<td>Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Paula A. Johnson, M.D., MPH</td>
<td>Professor of Medicine</td>
<td>Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Center for Women’s Health and Gender</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jennifer Howse, PhD</td>
<td>President, March of Dimes Foundation</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nancy Krieger, PhD</td>
<td>Professor of Social Epidemiology</td>
<td>Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Co-sponsored with MGH Global Psychiatry</td>
<td>Atalay Alem, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>FXB G12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Jesse R. Fann, MD, MPH</td>
<td>Professor, Psychiatry &amp; Behavioral Sciences, Adjunct Professor, Epidemiology, Adjunct Professor, Rehabilitation Medicine</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Elizabeth Platz, ScD</td>
<td>Martin D. Abeloff. MD Scholar in Cancer Prevention, Department of Epidemiology, Director, Cancer Epidemiology, Prevention, &amp; Control Training Program, Leader, Cancer Prevention &amp; Control Program, SKCC Professor</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Works-in-progress</td>
<td>Ashley Buchanan, DrPH</td>
<td>Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, John Jackson, ScD</td>
<td>12:30-1:30</td>
<td>Kresge 502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cutter Lecture</td>
<td>Duncan C. Thomas, PhD</td>
<td>Professor and Director, Biostatistics Division, Verna R. Richter Chair in Cancer Research, Department of Prevention Medicine, University of Southern California</td>
<td>4:00-5:00</td>
<td>Kresge G1 (Snyder Auditorium)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student and Postdoc Updates

- **Harvey V. Fineberg Fellowship in Cancer Prevention**
  
  Claire Pernar and Weike Wang of the Epidemiology Department were the 2016-2017 recipients of this Fellowship, which aims to support students whose work is focused on cancer prevention.

- **Successful F31 Submissions**
  
  Lauren Tanz, received funding on her submission entitled “Preterm delivery and risk of maternal cardiovascular disease in the Nurses’ Health Study II”

- **dLOV Series**
  
  Blake Johnson, President of the Harvard Chan Queer Straight Alliance (QSA) gave an emotional and moving speech during the unfurling of the Gay, Lesbian, and bi-sexual flags during the schools dLOV series. The event was wrapped into dLOV, and saw the raising of three LGBTQ pride flags: the gay pride flag, the bisexuality pride flag, and the transgender pride flag. The placing of these flags was the result of nearly a year’s worth of effort by Student Government and Meredith Rosenthal. My speech focused on the current climate of LGBTQ life at the Chan School, and challenged the community to think critically about LGBTQ health, as conversations about LGBTQ individuals are currently most often discussed in relationship to HIV/AIDS.

- **CDC Millennial Health Leaders Summit**
  
  Lauren Barber (Epidemiology) and Emily Gao (Health Policy & Management) were selected as delegates to the 2016 Millennial Health Leaders Summit on March 31, 2016. The two day intensive training prepares the next generation of leaders with tools to take on the task of eliminating health disparities.

- **CROI Presentation**
  
  Catherine Oldenburg, a 5th year Doctoral Candidate presented at the 2016 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections. Her talk was entitled “Antiretroviral therapy and HIV acquisition in South African population based cohort”. Catherine received a young investigator award to attend the conference.

- **Rose Traveling Fellows – Fall 2015**
  
  Earlier this year 6 students/postdocs were awarded the Fall 2015 Rose Traveling Fellowship; three students from the Epidemiology Department and three from the Biostatistics Department. The goal of his fellowship is to give graduate students and postdoc in these departments a cross-cultural experience, which could be in a developed country or a developing country, by offering critical financial support.

- **Symposium Presentation**
  
  Dr. Archana Shrestha, post-doctoral fellow for Dr. Spiegelman, presented in a symposium “Promoting Research in Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology in Nepal,” on January 18th, 2016. Her talk was titled, “Nepal Pioneer Worksite Intervention Study.”

- **New Postdoc to join Dr. Buckee**
  
  Aimee Taylor has joined Dr. Caroline Buckee’s team. During her doctoral studies, Aimee focused on the development of statistical models to estimate Plasmodium falciparum multi-SNP haplotype frequencies, using prevalence data collected in highly endemic regions, where multiclonal infections are prevalent. At Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Aimee will be using mathematical models to investigate the relationship between patterns of transmission, human migration and the structure of the malaria parasite population in South East Asia.

- **John Graunt Society**
  
  The John Graunt Society held a Student Panel Q&A for the Epi written exam, to take place this upcoming May. Students shared their experience and advice for successfully passing their written exam.

- **National Health and Medical Research Council Fellowship**
  
  Dr. Kerry Ivey, a postdoctoral fellow supervised by Dr. Eric Rimm since February 2014, has been awarded a 4 year National Health and Medical Research Council Fellowship to work on projects exploring the role of microbiome in modulating the vascular benefits of flavonoids.
Celebration with the stars!

This year the Harvard Chan School recognized the following staff, faculty, and academic appointees who reach a key milestone in calendar year 2015.

5 Years
Hugues Aschard
Andrea Baccarelli
Alan Berkeley
Caroline Buckee Eagle
William Hanage
Sean Mayne
Jill McDonald
Kathryn Penney
Molin Wang

10 Years
David Havelick
Sonia Hernandez-Diaz
Alethea Walton McCormick
Alkes Price

15 Years
Ruifeng Li
Pati Soule

20 Years
Nancy Krieger
Frank Sacks
Meir Stampfer

25 years
Donna Lynn Spiegelman

Fall 2015 & Spring 2016 Seminar Speakers

Nadia Abuelezam
David Cantonwine
Jerry Avorn
Sara Lodi

Maria Elena Medina Mora
Linda Valeri
Paul Ridker
Sarah Kerns

Publications


Spring Dissertations

Congratulations to the following students who successfully defended their dissertation!

Mohammad Alseaidan, February 17, 2016- “Maternal, behavioral and environmental risk factors for gestational diabetes and preterm birth among pregnant women; Results from the Kuwaiti TRACER pregnancy birth cohort”

Xin Li, February 26, 2016- “Genetics, caffeine consumption, height and skin cancer”

Leslie V. Farland, March 1, 2016- “A prospective study of endometriosis and breast health: finding from the Nurses’ Health Study II”

Upcoming Dissertation

Sheng-Hsuan Lin, March 23, 2016 1:30pm, FXB G10-“Causal mediation analysis with time-varying and multiple mediators”

Patrick Mitchell, March 29, 2016 9:30am, FXB G11- “Pneumococcal population dynamics in the conjugate vaccine era”

Catherine Oldenburg, March 29, 2016 12:30pm, TMEC (HMS) Rm 328- “HIV treatment and prevention in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa: Individual, couple, and household effects of antiretroviral therapy”

Ambika Satija, March 30, 2016 1:00pm, SPH 2 Rm317- “Plant-based diets and risk of type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease”

Eleanor Murray, March 31, 2016 10:30pm, Kresge 907- “Agent-based models for causal inference”

Ellen Caniglia, March 31, 2016 1:30pm, Kresge 907- “Dynamic monitoring strategies for HIV-positive individuals”

Kaitlin Hagan, April 5, 2016 12:00pm, TMEC (HMS) Rm 328- “Dietary and hormonal factors in relation to physical function”

Kirsten Dorans, April 5, 2016 1:00pm, TMEC (HMS) Rm 306- “Ambient air pollution and atherosclerosis: The Framingham Heart Study”

Wenyuan Li, April 13, 2016 12:00pm, Kresge 907- “Ambient air pollution, adiposity, and hepatic steatosis: The Framingham Heart Study”

2016 Youth and Public Health Conference

April 15, 2016

We are very excited to announce the fourth annual Youth and Public Health Conference at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. The Youth and Public Health Conference is designed to help young people from diverse backgrounds get excited about the field of public health. There are too few opportunities for high school students to learn about and engage with public health professionals. Many high school students have never heard of public health, or at least have very little understanding of the diversity within the field. Most students think of a job in health as being limited to physicians and nurses, and we are hoping to change their ideas of what health professions can be. Students will get the opportunity to spend the day at the Harvard Chan School, one of the top public health institutions in the world, interacting with current leaders in the field and discovering how they too could one day become leaders in public health.

The conference will be from 8am to 4pm on April 15th. Please email Paul Reeping at par517@mail.harvard.edu if you would like to volunteer.
Subscriptions to Epicenter, the newsletter of Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health Department of Epidemiology, are available at no charge, in print or PDF form.

To subscribe, send your email or mailing address to:

Eric DiGiovanni - edigiova@hsph.harvard.edu

(Ideas for submission or comments are always welcomed)

Tel: 617-432-1328

Editorial Board: Eric DiGiovanni & David Vaughn