Looking to the Future

Dear SBS family, after the ordeal of waiting for some 96 hours – hours of anxiety and uncertainty for some and fear and apprehension for others, Vice-president Joe Biden and Sen. Kamala Harris have been declared the winners of the 2020 Presidential Election.

This momentous event offers lessons for our future.

First, I am assuming that although many of us are thrilled with the election results, I recognize that there are likely to be some who would have preferred a different outcome. This moment calls for a recommitment to our values of respect and understanding as we relate to each other. Let us seek opportunities to listen and learn.

Second, this election implores us to pause, acknowledge and celebrate its historic significance. For the first time in the history of our democracy some 160 million Americans exercised their right to vote. Relatedly, the winning team received more votes than any prior presidential campaign in history. Also, for the first time in 28 years, an incumbent president was not re-elected. And, arguably, most strikingly, in this election, we witnessed the first woman, the first Black American woman, the first woman of Indian descent, the first Asian American woman, the first woman of immigrant parents to be elected as the vice-president of the United States.

Third, Sen. Kamala Harris’ accomplishment reminds us of our need to speed up the work of improving health and achieving equity in health. It took 100 years after women were granted the right to vote for Senator Harris to smash this glass ceiling. One hundred years is a long time to wait, and we do not have the luxury of waiting that long to dismantle systemic inequities and to solve some of the pressing social and public health challenges that we face. So, in this moment, let us remind ourselves not only that the arc of the universe bends towards justice, but that it does not bend on its own! Using the best available science, let us all recommit ourselves to the work of bending the arc of justice, but let us also, with determined persistency, pursue this work with the fierce urgency of now.

David R. Williams

Faculty Spotlight

Stephanie Child joined the SBS Department in November 2020 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Child received her PhD in Public Health from the University of South Carolina and recently completed her postdoctoral fellowship from the UC Berkeley Social Networks Study.

"SBS houses a lot of faculty whose work I deeply admire and respect, and whose work has helped to shape my own"
thinking about social determinants of health. My background is in Health Promotion and Behavior and my research primarily focuses on personal networks as a mediating variable between more upstream determinants and downstream outcomes such as health behaviors and outcomes. I am currently working on an extension of the UC Berkeley Social Networks study, which incorporates clinical data being collected by UCSF's Health eHeart study in a project that will examine personal network characteristics associated with cardiovascular disease and hypertension."

Learn more about Dr. Stephanie Child.

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**Alumni Corner**

*Elizabeth Perry, SM'17* recently gave a talk to the Fall American Savings Education Council Meeting on October 14 about "Creating Paths of Least Resistance for Higher Savings Levels: New Models in Behavioral Science."

"When I attended HSPH originally, my family stayed in Washington, D.C., and I commuted back and forth each week. I would drop my young son at daycare early Monday morning and catch a shuttle flight to Boston. It was exhausting (and a lot for my husband and I to manage), but I knew the SM program was one-of-a-kind, and the SBS department at Chan was where I needed to be. I soon met other students doing similar balancing acts, and we—along with the wonderful administration in the SBS department—supported each other through a lot.

Especially right now, there are multiple demands on everyone’s time, and when we’re up late at night completing a paper or waking up early to take a final, it can sometimes feel like we’re stretched to our limits. My advice is to find your tribe. Reach out to students in your classes, look for student organizations based on interest (many of them are quite active even in a virtual environment), join class a few minutes early to get to know your professors, make appointments with administrators if you need support. Find your support system of people who care about you and want you to succeed. And lean on them. None of us are in this alone. Chan is full of brilliant and busy people, but in my experience—especially in SBS—they will almost always stop and help you when needed. So hang in there. Everyone wants you to succeed, and we're all just doing the best we can, making our way through this together.

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**Career Updates**

Congratulations to the SBS staff, faculty, and academic appointees who have reached a key milestone at Harvard in calendar year 2020:

**5 Years**
- Teresa Bellone
- Jaime Mchunu
- Claudia Trudel-Fitzgerald

**10 Years**
- Whitney Waddell

**20 Years**
Jarvis Chen in November has been promoted to Lecturer on Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Stephanie Child joined the SBS Department in November 2020 as an Assistant Professor.

Scott Delaney received a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Dr. Delaney’s research interests include childhood health, well-being, and social epidemiology.

Congratulations to Elaine Lynch who will be retiring at the end of December after 17 years of dedicated service in SBS! While her official title is Financial Coordinator, those who have worked with her know, she fills a much bigger role within SBS. She is the department's friendly face, the holder of departmental knowledge and history, a reliably friendly and sympathetic listener, the source of a good word and a clever quip, and the person to go to when we need help solving a problem. She will be greatly missed.

The Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity is delighted to announce a new addition to their team: Kevin Rhee. Kevin joins the Center as a Research Assistant II.

Kevin is a registered dietitian and received his Master of Science in Public Health degree in International Health/Human Nutrition from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology and History from Albion College.

Awards and Honors

On October 1, the Harvard Chan Committee on the Advancement of Women Faculty presented Karen Emmons with the Committee on the Advancement of Women Faculty Service Award for her service to the community of women in science at the School.

The Board of the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association) has awarded David Williams the Presidential Citation for Distinguished Contributions to Mental Health and Social Justice. Dr. Williams presented his Presidential Citation Award Address on October 7 during the Coming Together for Action 2020 virtual conference.

Presentations

Boskey ER, Ganor O. “Self-Reported Sexual Orientation and Attraction in a Cohort of Binary- and Non-Binary Transmasculine Patients Seeking Gender Affirming


Publications


White Hughto J, Pletta DR, Gordon L, Cahill S, Mimiaga M, Reisner SL. Negative transgender-related media messages are associated with adverse mental health outcomes in an online sample of transgender adults. LGBT Health. In press.


Tynes BM, English D, Del Toro J, Smith NA, Lozada FT, Williams DR. Trajectories of Online Racial Discrimination and Psychological Functioning Among African
Events and Seminars

Qualitative Methods Club - Fall Qualathon
Day 1: Fri, Nov 13, 3:45-6:45 ET
Day 2: Fri, Nov 20, 3:45-6:45 ET
RSVP

WGH Working Group Meeting
Wed, Nov 18, 1:00-1:50pm ET, Via Zoom
Email wgh@hsph.harvard.edu to RSVP

Positive Health Interest Group – November Meeting
Speaker: Ashley Gripper
Thur, Nov 19, 1:00-1:50pm ET, Via Zoom
Event Page & RSVP

Center for Health and Happiness December Seminar
Speaker: Cheryl Giscombé
Wed, Dec 2, 1:00-1:50pm ET, Via Zoom
Event Page & RSVP

SBS December Seminar
Speaker: Gilbert Gee
Mon, Dec 7, 1:00-1:50pm ET, Via Zoom
RSVP

WGH Working Group Meeting
Wed, Dec 9, 1:00-1:50pm ET, Via Zoom
Email wgh@hsph.harvard.edu to RSVP

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