MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

Dear Members of the Epidemiology Department:

My 5-year term as Chair of the Department of Epidemiology comes to a close on June 30, 2021. The past 5 years have been a whirlwind of experiences for me, culminating, of course, in living through what is likely the biggest epidemic of our lifetime. Serving as chair of this superb department has been a tremendous honor and the highlight of my professional career. It has been wonderful to meet, teach, and work with so many dedicated and passionate students. I am deeply grateful to our central staff for their unwavering support during challenging times. I want to thank all of you for your support and your many contributions over the past 5 years. Together, we have been able to move the department forward and it is in a good place now. The department is enriched by talented and promising junior faculty, we passed a very successful 8-year review, we substantially enhanced our curriculum, and our application and admission numbers have grown exponentially.

Thank you for a wonderful 5 years!

Warmly,
Karin Michels, ScD, PhD
Professor and Chair

As the academic year draws to a close, every member of the FSPH Epidemiology community continues to remain active and fully committed to public health during this critical time. Thank you for your hard work and many contributions. Visit our department website to see the latest highlights.

For the latest news on COVID-19, visit FSPH's COVID_19 Information Page.
Congratulations!

Dr. Anne Rimoin has been selected to receive the Johns Hopkins Alumni Association Global Achievement Award for her work as a public health scientist, including during the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Susan Cochran has been elected Vice Chair of the UC Academic Senate beginning September 2021 and Chair-Elect beginning 2022. Dr. Cochran will represent faculty from across the 10 UC campuses from the President's office in Oakland.

Dr. Onyebuchi Arah has been elected by the Society for Epidemiologic Research (SER) to serve as President-Elect (2021-2022), President (2022-2023) and Past President (2023-2024).

FSPH News.

Dr. Nathan Wong received the Joseph Stokes III Award for Lifetime Achievement in Preventative Cardiology. Dr. Wong will be giving a lecture July 25th for it at the American Society for Preventative Cardiology Scientific Sessions.

Dr. Robert Kim-Farley was recently appointed for the period 2021-2024 as a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee of the UCLA Bedari Kindness Institute (BKI), the UCLA premier academic institute devoted to the multidisciplinary study of Kindness.

Dr. Elizabeth Rose Mayeda received a new NIH R56 grant entitled Optimizing generalizability of biomarker studies for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias with epidemiologic tools. The overall objective of the proposed research project is to identify optimal epidemiologic methods to improve generalizability of findings from highly selected Alzheimer’s disease biomarker studies to more diverse populations. Dr. Marissa Seamans is a co-I on this project.
Congratulations!

Dr. Eleanor Hayes-Larson's bundle of joy, Jesse, was born this Spring! Welcome Jesse!

Professor Liwei Chen has been selected as the Associate Editor for the journal "Trials." and the journal "Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice."

Doctoral candidate Claire Kim has been recognized for academic excellence and commitment to public health as a 2021 recipient of the Juneal Marie Smith Fellowship in International Nutrition.

Dr. Nina Harawa's article titled, "The Silent Epidemic of Premature Death in Black Men," was published in Undark.

Dr. Marissa Seamans was awarded a PhRMA Foundation Research Starter Grant in Health Outcomes Research.

EpiStaff Announcement
Co-Chairs: Rey Soto and Amy Ragsdale

India Richter, the Department of Epidemiology's Biobehavioral Assessment Research Center’s (BARC; PI: Pamina Gorbach) research manager, is leaving UCLA in July 2021 to start a Master in Business Administration at Stanford University. India came to BARC in the summer of 2018 to run the day-to-day operations of Dr. Gorbach’s mSTUDY cohort and the Global HIV Prevention Research Postdoctoral T32 Training program. During her time at BARC, India has led a major bioinformatics transition and designed innovative data query tools for mSTUDY investigators. India's long-term goal is to lead product innovation and development as a product manager at a global technology company focused on women's health. She aspires to build a legacy of impactful, equitable, and lasting health solutions that save lives and empower women. BARC has the utmost confidence that she will transform the world with her ideas. Best of luck, India!
The Los Angeles Times interviewed Dr. Robert Kim-Farley about the importance of extending the state’s vaccination campaign to teens and adolescents. “It will be important for children, as they become eligible for vaccination, to receive the vaccines if we’re going to achieve even more reductions in disease,” he said.

Dr. Anne Rimoin presented a public service announcement at the 93rd Academy Awards about the importance of getting vaccinated against COVID-19. The segment aired on ABC’s pre-Oscars "Into the Spotlight" show and was broadcast by more than 100 television stations.

Eos interviewed Dr. Beate Ritz about air pollution, equity, and NASA’s Multi-Angle Imager for Aerosols (MAIA) mission. NASA scientists team up with epidemiologists to find out how air pollution affects health in cities around the world.

The Los Angeles Times interviewed Dr. Robert Kim-Farley about the importance of extending the state’s vaccination campaign to teens and adolescents. “It will be important for children, as they become eligible for vaccination, to receive the vaccines if we’re going to achieve even more reductions in disease,” he said.

AAMC and Diocese LA interviewed Dr. Nina Harawa about vaccine safety and hesitancy among racial and ethnic groups. “A lot of what I do is around health disparities, mistrust and concerns about experiences with medicine and the health care system,” she said in her interview with Diocese LA.
Dr. Peter Katona, an adjunct professor of epidemiology at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and a clinical professor of medicine in infectious diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has chaired the UCLA Covid Infection Control Working Group for over a year and served on the Covid Taskforce as well as half a dozen other UCLA and UCOP committees. In addition to his committee service, Dr. Katona has given dozens of interviews to media and over a hundred lectures on Covid to many universities such as NYU, Dartmouth, and Florida, as well as to the National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering, the Council on Foreign Relation, the Pacific Council on International Policy, and UCLA Forums. He has written a review of Covid fomite transmission for Clinical Infectious Diseases, authored the chapter on biological terrorism for the Oxford text on Public Health, and has authored articles on medical informatics, medical education, influenza, polio, nutrition, bioterrorism, disasters, and the future of health care.

Epidemiology Doctoral student, Claire Kim has been selected as one of the top 10 UCLA Grad Research Presenters at the 2021 Grad Slam for her presentation: Breast Cancer Prevention: Before the Lumps and Bumps. Research Topics: Breast cancer, environmental toxins, and life course epidemiology. Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karin Michels. Congratulations, Kim!

Barbara Cooke has been at UCLA for 37 years, starting in the Psychology department, followed by the Department of Theater, then finally Epidemiology in 1994 where she served for more than 20 years! After announcing her initial retirement in 2019, Barbara graciously agreed to return part-time to continue to support the department's post-award. Barbara's commitment to our department has been invaluable, and we cannot thank her enough for everything she has done over the years. Her impeccable sense of fashion, warm hello’s, and loving spirit will be greatly missed. Thank you, Barbara!

Dr. Peter Katona
Adjunct Professor
Jennie McKenney was doctoral student at UCLA in the Department of Epidemiology from 2011-2015. Tragically she was diagnosed June 2020 with Angiosarcoma, a rare and extremely aggressive form of cancer and passed away late March this year. With a bubbly personality and a quick laugh she was a popular teaching assistant for many students in Epidemiology and loved to teach during her time at UCLA. She was advised first by Annie Rimoin and then by Pamina Gorbach after she joined her research group during her first year. With Dr. Gorbach in the summer of 2013 she travelled to Durban, South Africa and began work on a protocol for the Microbicide Trials Network (MTN) entitled "An Observational Cohort Study of Women following HIV-1 Seroconversion in Microbicide Trials (MTN 015)" and developed that into a dissertation. Jennie’s dissertation project was using these data to study depression, disclosure, and sexually transmitted infections among women who sero-converted to HIV in microbicide trials. Jennie also worked on a Department of Defense (DOD) funded study with Dr. Gorbach assessing the acceptability of new in-home rapid tests for febrile diseases in Cambodia and Peru travelling to Cambodia with Dr. Gorbach. She was an invaluable member of the research team and excelled and clearly flourished in global field settings. Jennie was a delightful person to work with and was able to liaise with members of the Cambodian Ministry of Health; National Institute of Public Health, Cambodia; and the Naval Medical Research Unit. Jennie made two visits to Phnom Penh Cambodia, during which she helped start and manage the study and Dr. Gorbach has very fond memories of wonderful times she had with Jennie in this field trips having good laughs over mango lattes and bringing Dr. Gorbach to the best pedicure she ever had after a long day in the field. Jennie developed deep friendships in the UCLA doctoral program such as Reena Doshi who she later worked with at the Centers for Disease Control and was a devoted friend through good times and at the end of her life. Among her other special UCLA friends were Stephanie Reading, Nicole Hoff, Daniel Keebler, Vivian Alfonso, Heather Pines and many others. UCLA is proud and honored to have had Jennie McKenney as a graduate of our doctoral program in Epidemiology and while her life was cut way too short she serves as a model of an accomplished and committed global health epidemiologist for our students.

From her Doctoral Advisor: Pamina Gorbach
"What I remember most about Jennie is how much she loved life. You could ask Jennie to do almost anything and she would say yes. She simply enjoyed being with her friends and trying new things. That's why it's hard to pick a 'favorite' memory of Jennie, because my favorite memories are all of the little things. It was our trips to Disneyland, hikes in Malibu, picnics in Manhattan Beach, bonfires at Dockweiler, road trips to San Diego and San Francisco, and way too much time spent wandering and hanging out at the Grove. Beyond exploring California, a lot of our time was spent with friends and classmates talking, eating, playing games and watching movies. There was never a time when we weren’t laughing. They say getting a PhD can be one of the hardest things you can do, yet Jennie had a way of making it fun and truly enjoyable. I’ll never forget her. She will forever be missed." - Stephanie Reading

"When I think about my time at UCLA, Jennie immediately comes to mind. I was a year ahead of her in the program, but we had similar research interests and became quick friends working under the mentorship of Pamina Gorbach. Jennie was always smiling, and I have so many wonderful memories laughing and exploring LA’s food and concert scene with her. Jennie was also an amazing travel partner, and I’ll always remember our epic adventures around California, Brazil, and Eastern Europe. Jennie was loved and her big heart and enthusiasm for life will be missed forever." - Heather Pines

"I was a cohort behind Jennie but we had the same doctoral advisor, Dr. Pamina Gorbach, so we got to know each other. We became friends when she was very generous with her time and sharing her study materials for the Quals. I continued to see her after UCLA when I was in Atlanta for work. Jennie was so vibrant, with a big smile and wonderful laugh, and had this unparalleled zest for enjoying life. She will be missed, but I know every time I raise a glass of champagne I will think of her." - Claire Jarashow.
"Back in 2010, I was standing in line at the first day of school orientation at UCLA. I had already met Stephanie one of our classmates and we chatting away our anxieties about starting a PhD. There was a girl behind us. She tapped us on our back, interrupting our conversation. She said she had overheard us talking and was enrolled in the same program. This was my introduction to Jennie. Little did we all know that within weeks we would all become the closest of friends. Minutes later we ran into Dan another member of cohort and it felt like fate that we all met that day. The four of us mostly stuck together through our very intense first year of school and found we all loved being in LA. We sat together in class and giggled like elementary schools kids, sometimes even getting scolded by our professors. We spend our free time shopping and eating around LA. Jennie and Steph spent endless days and nights wandering around the grove, which always drove me crazy, because of all the tourists! I would also beg them to do something different!

After our first year of school was finished, we started prepping for our qualification exam. Jennie and I joined an intense study group where we spent endless hours discussing boring epi topics. New years eve December 2011, Jennie and I spent the new year studying in my apartment. For those of you that know Jennie and me well, I'll tell you this? I don't think we even popped a single bottle of champagne! We made it through quals in Jan 2012 and were mentally exhausted. Jennie and I famously dropped every single one of our classes and got called into the department chair's office out of concern for us.

Jennie loved LA and she lived in West Hollywood. But after two years she had decided it was time to move closer to the beach. I was thrilled for her to come to my side of town! We moved her out of her apartment and into storage while she housesat in Manhattan beach. Of course, she had not found a new apartment by the end of summer and decided to move back into her old building and so we moved her right back in... Typical Jennie!

During this time, Jennie really began really developing her love of travel. Heather, another one of our friends was spending the summer working in Brazil and so we did the most obvious thing, Jennie, Vivian and I decided to drop her off! We all took separate flights, I have no idea why! But we somehow found each other in Brazil and had an amazing time, even when our entire boat (including Jennie) got seasick on a rough ride over to a small island.

Jennie and I both had plans to defend our dissertations by the end of 2014 so we booked tickets to Asia to celebrate the end of school forever. Jennie, of course, being the procrastinator that she was... delayed her defense for a few months. But despite her having that in the back of her mind, we still had an amazing time. Jennie got the full on big Indian experience, complete with a bus rental for us and my entire family to see the Taj Mahal. Despite a lot of family time, jennie was a great sport and my family loved her and have been patiently waiting for her return ever since. We both loved shopping in Thailand (I think we went to the market 3 times in Bangkok!), but we hated the live ping pong show, especially when we got sprayed in the face by some unknown substance. I convinced Jennie to try diving and at the beach, I am fairly certain Jennie faked a migraine to get out of a diving lesson I had enrolled us in.

Jennie's wanderlust grew with her! She spend weeks traveling around Europe with heather and Amir. She did some work in South Africa and Cambodia and ultimately decided that she wanted a career in global health. Right before quarantine started, we were both traveling for work were able to layover in Paris for Valentines day. She ate at her first Michelin star restaurant and we of course had to document every dish!

I can't help but be thankful for the fact that I was able to follow her to Atlanta. I was lucky enough to have her as a sister by my side for the last 11 years. From our celebrity stalking, to our travels, to our boozy brunches at home, it was never a dull moment and I am going to miss her every single day." - Reena Doshi
Congratulations to our 2021 Graduates!

The Department of Epidemiology congratulates 26 MPH graduates, 11 MS graduates, and 11 PhD graduates! Please join us in celebrating our graduates!

PHD THESSES

Wei Cao (Roger Detels, Chair)
The HIV Continuum of Care among People Living with HIV Aged 50 and Older in Guangdong, China

Jun Chen (Roger Detels, Chair)
Antiretroviral Therapy Experience among Domestic Migrants Living with HIV in Guangdong, China

Angie Ghanem-Uzqueda (Anne W. Rimoin, Chair)
Prevention and Control of Yellow Fever in the Democratic Republic Of Congo: Lessons Learned from a Recent Outbreak

Kosuke Inoue (Beate R. Ritz, Chair)
Estimating the Effects of Diabetes on Cardiovascular Events and Mortality: Causal Modeling and Machine Learning

Kexin Jin (Zuo-Feng Zhang, Chair)
Hormonal Factors in Association with Lung Cancer in Asian Women

Yusuke Okubo (Karin B. Michels, Chair)
The Effects of Changes in Health Policies on Antibiotic and non-Antibiotic Prescription Patterns and Healthcare Utilization in Japan

Quang Loc Pham (Li Li, Chair)
PrEP Care Continuum among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Vietnam

Kaewalee Soontornmon (Roger Detels, Chair)
Biopsychosocial factors associated with Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis in Thailand

Phirom Toeng (Pamina Gorbach, Chair)
HIV Testing Among Antenatal Care Attending Pregnant Women and Male Partners in Cambodia: Primary and Secondary Data Analyses Using Cambodia DHS Surveys (2005, 2010 And 2014), Case-Control Study and In-Depth Interview

Qi Yan (Beate R. Ritz, Chair)
Metabolomic and Epigenomics Assessment of Air Pollution and Pesticide Exposure in California

Yuhui Zhu (Zuo-Feng Zhang, Chair)
Dietary Intake of Nutrients, Adherence to Healthy Eating Guidelines, Genetic Predisposition with Stomach Cancer

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY

Elizabeth Agredano
Nayelie Yuliana Benitez Santos
Lauren Claire Byrne
Yufan Gong
Yancen Pan
Catherine Psaras
Alexander Recalt
Pranav Prathap Shetty
Shiraya Airiel Thompson
Yingyan Wu
Defne Selin Yilmaz

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Zachary Achen
Sarah Askins
Elizabeth Lee Chen
Yixin Chen
Jeanne Rochelle Delgado
Yiwei Ding
Kori Keith
Lamia Halim Khan
Israa Qadir Khanquadri
Hae In Kim
Haesoo Kim
Julia Jan Koerber
Natalie Land
Shiwen Li
Stephen Xinqi Li
Zhanghan Lin
Stephen Ma
Jacqueline Cayley Markt-Maloney
Victoria Barlow Murray
Boris Pavic
Valeree Rae Camota Pons
Weilu Song
Haley Anahid Surmeian
Shuyan Teng
Katia Valdez
Yueh-Ning Yang
Message to Students:
This quarter, the Epidemiology Student Association hosted online social events, an incredible roundtable discussion with Dr. Stephen Cole and Dr. Sander Greenland, and more, including the “Advancing Anti-Racism Through The Lens of Social Epidemiology” workshop led by Dr. Shawnita Sealy-Jefferson. ESA would like to sincerely thank Dr. Arah, Janae Hubbard and the FSPH Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and UCLA Graduate Student Association for supporting Dr. Sealy-Jefferson’s incredible workshop.

ESA has also been able to work with staff and faculty to finalize the recommendations from the Epidemiology Department’s Task Force on Anti-Racism and Racial Justice, to be presented to the Chair before the June 2nd Town Hall meeting, and to the whole Department afterwards.

As we near graduation, ESA would like to commend the student body for their tenacity and spirit over the past year. We would also like to thank the ESA Board members who will be graduating this term for the incredible work they did this year to promote community and academic excellence over the past year. Finally, we thank Ryan Assaf for his superlative leadership and service as ESA co-president and Melissa Soohoo for her invaluable contributions to ESA and the Epidemiology student community over the past three years.

Sincerely,
Ryan Assaf (rassaf@ucla.edu)
& Julia Koerber (juliajkoerber@g.ucla.edu).

Cheers, Class of 2021!

Elizabeth Agredano, MS
Nayelie Benitez Santos, MS
Elizabeth Chen, MPH

Lamia Khan, MPH
Haesoo Kim, MPH
Julia Koerber, MPH

Stephen Ma, MPH
Jackie Markt Maloney, MPH
Victoria Murray, MPH
Weilu Song, MPH

Featured Events This Quarter:
Kaiser Permanente Department of Research & Evaluation Alumni Panel
Friday, June 4th, 12-1 PM PST
RSVP: https://ucla.zoom.us/j/93370488878

Kaiser Permanente is currently hiring epidemiology graduates! Come learn from UCLA alumnus, Harp Takhar, Manager of Research Support, about Kaiser Permanente’s Department of Research & Evaluation as well as current opportunities and how to apply. Also hear from four FSPH alumni working in the R&E department about their experiences, and ask questions!

ESA Grad Kickback
Friday, June 4th, 5PM PST
RSVP: https://bit.ly/3vzaKJ8

Celebrate the end of the year with Zoom toasts, games, a BYOB happy hour, and prize raffles! Students from all degree paths are welcome to attend.

ESA 2020-2021 Board:
- Co-Presidents: Ryan Assaf and Julia Koerber
- VP of Financial Affairs: Victoria Murray
- VP of Doctoral Affairs: Melissa Soohoo and Angie Barrall
- Outreach/Communications: Stephen Ma, Elizabeth Agredano, Lamia Khan, and Weilu Song
- PHSA Liaisons: Jackie Markt Maloney and Nayelie Benitez Santos
- Mentorship Chairs: Elizabeth Chen and Haesoo Kim
- Seminar Series: Pat Arena, Angie Barrall, Nehaa Khadka, and Xinyue Liu


