

T E A C H I N G · R E S E A R C H · O U T R E A C H

SYNERGIES

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Winter 2020/2021

**THIS IS
PUBLIC
HEALTH**



**Oregon State
University**



What's OUT THERE



Public health student Joe Harrity checks out supplies with Dean Nieto in Hermiston, Ore., as part of the TRACE project.

MEETING THE MOMENT. The year 2020 has challenged our thinking, disrupted our lives and plans, and brought public health and human sciences to the forefront like never before. We had to dig deep into our reserves of patience, trust and faith and create new ways of doing the things we at one time took for granted.

Across the college, faculty, staff and students demonstrated resilience and grit. We made alternative plans for internships and graduation. We adapted to teaching and learning online. And we put our expertise into action by helping lead TRACE-COVID-19 in service of the public's health.

From Co-PI Jeff Bethel to alumna Aslan Noakes (both pictured on the cover) to numerous students enrolled in multiple college disciplines, our college is on the front lines of this once-in-a-lifetime project that provides key information on the community prevalence of the virus that causes COVID-19 so that community

and university leaders can make informed decisions. I couldn't be more proud to join them, colleagues across OSU and our peers in public health in fulfilling our land grant mission and putting public health into action.

In addition to TRACE, public health and human sciences faculty across the college are researching the pandemic's effects in a variety of areas, and we've stepped up outreach efforts to help ensure Oregonians' health and well-being throughout the pandemic.

Sign up for monthly emails at synergies.oregonstate.edu to get health tips, college research and news, and to learn about the many ways we're supporting students in this new normal.

In health,

F. Javier Nieto, MD, PhD, MPH
Dean, College of Public Health and Human Sciences
Oregon State University

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Megan Robinson

Congratulations on achieving your bachelor's degree and taking the next step towards earning your master's in occupational therapy! Your dedication and sense of purpose have paid off in such a big way. I am so proud to be your sister, and I am excited to see where this career path takes you. I'll miss having you close by, but you will definitely be my favorite vacation destination for the next few years in Arizona :) Welcome to Oregon State alum status - go beavs!! xoxo Jillian



Pomp, despite the circumstances

CELEBRATING THE CLASS OF 2020

We see you, Class of 2020! This wasn't the year any of us expected, but we are so proud of you and what you've achieved — and we hope to welcome you back in 2021. If you haven't yet seen your online celebration and resources, check them out at health.oregonstate.edu/alumni/2020. On this page, you can find information about next year's ceremony and see 2020 CPHHS alumni such as Megan Robinson, pictured here being congratulated by her sister, Jillian.

Stay connected with the college by signing up to receive monthly news updates at synergies.oregonstate.edu.

Join the CPHHS community

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DEAN F. Javier Nieto, MD, PhD, MPH

MANAGING EDITOR Kathryn Stroppel, Director of Marketing and Communications

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Hanna Knowles, Alexis Croisdale

DESIGN Mary Susan Weldon

CONTACT Send letters to the editor, alumni news and address changes to Editor, Synergies, College of Public Health and Human Sciences.

Email: synergies@oregonstate.edu

Tel: 541-737-6612

insights

CPHHS researchers are at the forefront of complex health challenges.

They add to our knowledge, push boundaries and help us understand and confront health disparity so we can improve health and well-being for all, at every stage of life.

In the last fiscal year, CPHHS faculty submitted 169 research proposals and received nearly \$22 million in sponsored grants and contracts. This figure is \$3 million more than last year and exceeds the college's previous record (FY '18) by more than \$1.5 million.

RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Natural disasters alone are not enough to motivate local communities to engage in climate change mitigation or adaptation. Rather, policy change in response to extreme weather events appears to depend on a combination of factors, including fatalities, sustained media coverage, the unusualness of the event and the political makeup of the community.

Leanne Giordono, a CPHHS post-doctoral researcher, discovered these findings as lead author on a study funded by the National Science Foundation. The study, published in *Policy Sciences*, examined 15 extreme weather events that occurred in the United States between March 2012 and June 2017 and any subsequent local climate change policy.

"In some ways, it's not surprising that you see communities that have these really devastating events responding to them," she says. "What about the vast majority of communities that don't experience a high-impact event — is there a way to also spark interest in climate change in those communities? We don't want people to have to experience these types of disasters to make changes." ▲



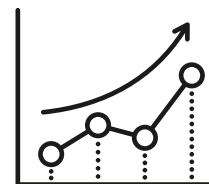
REDUCING AIR POLLUTION

Across the world and regardless of a country's income, long-term exposure to fine particulate outdoor air pollution is a major contributor to cardiovascular disease and death. But even small reductions in air pollution levels can result in a reduction of disease risk.

Perry Hystad, lead author and a CPHHS environmental epidemiologist, found that countries don't have to immediately eradicate all air pollution to make a difference for people's health.

"If you reduce the concentration of outdoor air pollution, you're going to see benefits for cardiovascular disease," he says. "Before this study, we were not sure if this was the case. Some studies suggested that at high concentration, as seen in many developing countries, levels would have to be reduced by very large amounts before health benefits would occur."

The international study, published in *The Lancet Planetary Health* journal, also included fellow CPHHS public health researcher **Andrew Larkin**. ▲



Protecting worker safety

CPHHS Associate Professor **Anthony Veltri** explores the balance between safety and profitability and makes the case for regulations that ensure safe workplaces in "Is worker safety worth the risk? The gamble businesses take if they want a better chance at survival." The article appeared in *CEOWORLD Magazine*, the world's leading business magazine for CEOs, CFOs and high-level business executives and leaders.

The article is based on his work as part of an international research collaboration that suggests organizations best equipped to provide safe workplaces are the least likely to do so, because they benefit financially from forgoing the cost of enacting workplace safety practices. ▲



EXAMINING POVERTY IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT



A new CPHHS study found that 77 percent of low- to moderate-income American households fall below the asset poverty threshold, meaning that if their income were cut off they would not have the financial assets to maintain at least poverty-level status for three months.

The study, published in the journal *Social Policy Administration*, compared asset poverty rates in the United States and Canada. Canada's asset poverty rate has improved over the past 20 years, while the U.S. rate has worsened.

The implications of these findings have become starkly apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic,

says CPHHS Associate Professor **David Rothwell**, lead author on the study.

"The fact that the U.S. safety net is so connected to work, and then you have this huge shock to employment, you have a system that's not prepared to handle such a big change to the employment system," he says. "It results concretely in family stress and strain, and then that strain and stress relates to negative outcomes for children and families."

Related: David and post-doctoral researcher **Leanne Giordono** recently released a new state-specific measure of poverty in Oregon.

Learn more at health.oregonstate.edu/orpm. ▲

Understanding the pandemic's effects

It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day chaos of the pandemic and its effects on disparate pieces of our lives, but Professor **Rick Settersten** brings it all together as lead author of "Understanding the effects of COVID-19 through a life course lens," published in *Advances in Life Course Research*.

He and fellow authors explore the pandemic's implications for the organization and experience of life transitions and trajectories across multiple domains.

They consider the implications of being infected or connected to someone who has, and the social, economic, cultural and psychological consequences. ▲

Discover more at synergies.oregonstate.edu/research.

When the novel coronavirus emerged,
the CPHHS dug in.

We used our expertise to help communities
understand the pandemic
and how public health works in society.

We shared information about
ensuring health and well-being
and engaged in research into the
impact and prevalence of COVID-19.

We kept programs running in new ways,
and we quickly transitioned to
teaching and advising online.

When the pandemic ends, our work goes on.

To understand and confront health disparity.

To fight for health as a human right.

To create the next generation of
globally-aware public health and human sciences
problem-solvers who will make a difference

OUT THERE.

THE TIMES CALL FOR HIS EXPERTISE, AND He's answering the challenge

GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCHER IS ON LEADING EDGE OF CORONAVIRUS

BY MOLLY ROSBACH

PROFESSOR CHUNHUEI CHI has been quietly going about his work of teaching students, conducting research, making connections with international partners, mentoring graduate students and more since he joined Oregon State in 1990.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chunhui has logged more than 130 interviews with journalists from around the world, sometimes fielding five requests per day. That's 128 more interviews than he gave in the previous 30 years combined.

On top of that, he has been a speaker on at least nine webinars, participated in four coronavirus-related committees, and provided 17 of what he calls "public service" communications — including to a fifth grade student from New York City who wrote to him in early June for a school project. Other far-flung calls came from a health worker in Paraguay, and a Rotary Club in England where he's scheduled to speak via videoconference.

"This is almost like my second full-time job, except it's a volunteer unpaid job," Chunhui says.

He has been featured in Al Jazeera, the Washington Post, the LA Times, the Independent, Deutsch Welle and too many stories to count in Oregon media. Articles quoting him have been translated into multiple languages and published internationally.

Reporters seek his insight on the U.S. government's response to the coronavirus, compared with other countries' responses, as well as his recommendations for proper mask use and how quickly people should return to public activity.

Chunhui's expertise with COVID-19 began in late December 2019, when he started hearing rumblings from China about a dangerous new virus.

Because he moved to the United States from Taiwan, where he has also conducted extensive public health research, he was plugged in to an international network of researchers in that field. He began reading their updates, as well as Chinese and Taiwanese medical news

reports and research papers, for four to five hours a day and discussing new findings with fellow researchers worldwide to learn everything he could about the emerging coronavirus.

"By the time the U.S. media started to pay attention in mid-February, I accumulated quite a lot of information and knowledge about this disease," Chunhui says.



Professor Chunhui Chi directs the Center for Global Health in the CPHHS.

He still spends several hours a day reading about the virus and talking with colleagues. He doesn't sleep more than six hours a night, he says, but "a nap really helps."

The interview jitters he felt in February have faded away. After about the 30th interview, he says, he started to feel at ease. Plus, his wife listens and gives feedback on how to improve.

Although he wishes we weren't in a pandemic, Chunhui feels this is a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to put his public health research to practical use.

"With these media interviews, I feel I have more direct impact on the public, particularly in this time of an unusual event and emergency," he says. "I feel the urge to spread the important information that can potentially help or even save people's lives. That's the motivation." ▲

Right time, right place

CPHHS EPIDEMIOLOGIST CO-LEADS STUDY OF A LIFETIME

BY KATHRYN STROPPEL



The TRACE project involves more than 300 people across campus, including researchers and professional faculty from five OSU colleges and nearly 100 CPHHS students. The team received the OSU Beaver Champion Award in September, given for “outstanding effort and achievement of excellence, extra effort beyond that requested, and performance of the highest quality.”

JEFF BETHEL HAS FOUND HIS MOMENT. For him, and others in public health, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on the work they do every day, work that happens behind the scenes and isn't visible until disease or disaster strikes.

An associate professor, Jeff is also an epidemiologist. Epidemiologists can be thought of as health detectives, combing through clues — data — in an effort to piece together the causes of disease and injury. Instead of investigating crime, they investigate how diseases occur in different groups of people, how to lower rates of disease, and how to prepare for and reduce the impact on human health from disasters.

Jeff, who previously worked as an epidemiologist at the Centers for Disease Control conducting infectious disease surveillance studies and pandemic influenza planning, studies how infectious diseases are impacted by a changing climate, as well as the health impacts of natural disasters and disease outbreaks.

Co-leading Oregon State's TRACE-COVID-19 public health surveillance project is the perfect alignment of interests and expertise. Still, it has been a unique experience.

“This is unlike any study I've ever done, and that most people have ever done, given the unique circumstances

in which we're working,” he says. “The principal investigators don't even meet in person; we're doing everything virtually, including planning in an environment of social distancing, training field staff in that environment, and collecting data. This work is also completely different in terms of sense of urgency, the sense of anxiety permeating throughout the entire world, and its importance.”

Until TRACE, Jeff says he didn't know many of his fellow researchers. “It's been great working with them, and we work really well together, even though we're not meeting in person,” he says. “Things are moving fast, understandably, and the team has responded well to that sense of urgency.”

As co-principal investigator and co-director of the study, along with Assistant Professor Ben Dalziel in OSU's College of Science, Jeff's main responsibility is to oversee data collection, train field teams, identify random samples of houses in neighborhoods, collect samples and more.

As the study continues to expand and garner attention across the state, Jeff has taken on a new role — spokesperson — and a renewed appreciation for communicating to the public.

“I had never done a live interview before. It's been very new, but exciting. It's taken me out of my comfort zone, but I'm getting better at it.”

Being in the media's lens, he says, is helping him learn about communicating to the public and OSU community in an environment of uncertainty and anxiety.

“We're in very unique circumstances, so messaging internally and externally needs to be done in a responsible way. I knew that, but I'm learning to do that even better.”

EPIDEMIOLOGY: THE FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

In addition to TRACE, Jeff conducts research and teaches graduate public health students in the CPHHS, which he's done for nine years. His own journey to public health began while working at a biotech firm in San Diego after earning a bachelor's degree in biochemistry.

“I knew pretty quickly that a career on the bench wasn't for me,” he says. “I'd always had an interest in health and public health and was talking to a friend earning her MPH in epidemiology at UC Berkeley. I didn't know a lot about epidemiology at the time and thought, ‘This is for me.’ It combines this interest in health and improving people's lives. On top of that, it's a quantitative field, which aligns with my interests and skills.

“From there, I knew going to grad school would be important for me to further my career in public health, and that's what I did. Like many people going into public health, as opposed to medicine, I thought I could make a bigger difference in people's lives at the population level.”

When he looks back at his career and forward to the legacy he hopes to one day leave, he thinks of one thing: IMPACT.

“My biggest goal is to make an impact on the communities I serve, in Oregon and beyond.” ▲



Jeff and Dean F. Javier Nieto bring together expertise in survey epidemiology methods and emergency response. They helped the TRACE team leverage their connections with local and state public health organizations, as well as the community, through the OSU Extension Service.

FOR JEFF'S EPIDEMIOLOGY STUDENTS, who learn how data informs decisions and who will go on to apply their in-demand skills in a variety of industries, he hones in on problem solving.

“Epidemiology is the basic science of public health. I think there will always be a market for those with quantitative and basic epidemiological skills — those who can look at a health problem and see how that problem is distributed in a population in terms of time and space, and then use public health tools to identify risk factors and causes to ultimately improve the population's health,” he says.

“We think of epidemiology as a toolbox, and we try to give students a wide range of tools they can use no matter where they land in their career in public health. I also hope to challenge them, inspire them and push them to be consumers of public health info — to draw their own conclusions based on the original journal article and not how the media distills it.”

Public health explained

WHAT IT IS, HOW IT WORKS, AND WHO DOES IT

BY KATHRYN STROPPEL

THE YEAR 2020 WAS THE YEAR FOR PUBLIC HEALTH.

But have you ever asked yourself, “Just what IS public health?”

If so, CPHHS faculty are here to help.

In summer 2020, they joined the OSU Alumni Association, OSU Foundation and OSU Center for Health Innovation in a webinar series on public health.

Here is a summary of what they shared. Better yet, watch the recorded webinars on the college’s YouTube channel.

“Our impact goes well beyond what we can do individually.”



PUBLIC HEALTH 101

Hosted by professor and epidemiologist **Viktor Bovbjerg**, Public Health 101 explores the meaning of public health, defined by the CDC as “The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals.”

Although definitions abound, Viktor says they all share five key themes: Science, communities, prevention, equity and collective action.

When considering public health challenges, including the recent pandemic, he says that public health professionals ask themselves four main questions:

- 1 **Is this a public health problem?** If so, for whom? What’s the prevalence and impact?
- 2 If yes, **what are the causes** at the individual and/or collective levels?
- 3 If we know the cause, **what action can we take?** Should we focus on primary prevention or early diagnosis/treatment, reduce impact/complication — or some combination?
- 4 **Was the public health action effective and for whom?** Ensuring equity and access demands finding approaches that work for every group.

In the CPHHS, students and researchers are at an advantage, he says, because all key public health disciplines are represented and are complemented by the human sciences, which are powerfully connected to public health. “Our impact goes well beyond what we can do individually.”

“You just need a ‘get things done’ attitude, because there’s a lot to be done.”



PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS GET IT DONE

Healthy behaviors and living a healthy life are influenced by an expansive number of health professionals, ranging from medical care to prevention and education, says **Karen Elliott**, senior instructor II and public health internship coordinator.

In “Public health careers: The world needs you,” Karen shares that if you’re making a career change or beginning your education, public health offers a number of options for those wanting to improve health and well-being.

“Where do you see yourself?,” she asks students. “Get some experiences there. Take leadership positions while a student. Explore the programs and jobs graduates land after graduation. Talk to professors and advisors. Learn about research and career tracks. Participate in internships and experiential learning. Ask for informational interviews. Reach out to directors and researchers. Discover your passion and why and how you want to make a difference. There are a lot of options!”

The good news for students considering earning a degree in the CPHHS: Demand for professionals in public health and health fields is growing.

“You just need a ‘get things done’ attitude, because there’s a lot to be done.”

“Think before you speak, be an informed citizen, vote and help others vote.”



HEALTH FOR ALL DOESN’T HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT

What influences your health? Why do health disparities exist among people in the same community? What can we do to ensure health and well-being for all?

Assistant Professor **Kari-Lyn Sakuma** tackles these questions and more in “A public health crisis: Factors that impact your health outcomes.”

The answers aren’t random, she says. “Places and communities are built by purpose, not chance, and if we look at the causes behind the official causes of death, we’ll start unlocking answers to health — after first asking many questions. For public health practitioners, this is called going *upstream* to identify the factors that contribute to health. The factors themselves are called the *social determinants of health*.”

As an individual, what can we do to influence these determinants and improve the health of our community?

“Learn, listen and practice,” Kari-Lyn says. “Find free resources, examine your own impulses, think before you speak, be an informed citizen, vote and help others vote, consider joining local groups and initiatives promoting causes you care about, think about how actions affect most marginalized groups and those without power — and don’t give up.”

“There is no certificate or finish line. This is a long-term commitment to better health and justice for all.”



Emily Ho



Siew Sun Wong

Nothing tastes sweeter than shared success

LONGTIME COLLEAGUES TAKE HELM OF KEY OSU NUTRITION CENTERS

BY KATHRYN STROPPEL

COLLEAGUES FOR MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS, **Emily Ho** and **Siew Sun Wong** have long supported each other's success.

Emily, who has been with the CPHHS for 17 years, six of them as inaugural director of the Moore Family Center for Whole Grain Foods, Nutrition and Preventive Health (MFC), recently was named endowed director of the Linus Pauling Institute (LPI). Soon after, Siew Sun assumed her endowed role in the MFC.

"I am extremely excited to pass the baton to Siew Sun," Emily says. "Her expertise in technology and nutrition education are a perfect fit for the vision of Bob and Charlee Moore. I am excited to see the innovations and new directions she can bring to the center."

Siew Sun says she's grateful for the team Emily has built in the MFC, as well as her mentorship. Her goal for the center is to enable practical, innovative, collaborative work that supports healthy living and to apply digital technology to enhance the center's research, education and outreach programs.

Both leaders see collaboration, diversity and a holistic view of health across the lifespan as keys to their success.

"Our team camaraderie grows steadily through a nurturing work culture that values mutual respect,

reliability, accountability, trust and flexibility to be productive and creative," Siew Sun says. "I live by the values of diversity, determination, discipline and distinction. I believe my passion and curiosity to improve human health through nutrition education and behavior change has opened doors for me to work with people from different backgrounds."

Emily, who maintains her role as faculty in the college's nutrition program and in the MFC, says these experiences influence her approach as LPI's director.

"The MFC directorship has prepared me in a lot of different ways, but one of the biggest things I learned about is the power of collaboration and getting different walks of life together committed to making a difference in moving the dial toward health," she says.

"The college as a whole is a perfect example of spanning the entire spectrum of human health research and how they fit together to solve big problems. Being able to interact and see the different approaches to public health, and also experience the power of community-informed research and practice, has really helped reshape my approaches to engaged health research.

"The College of Public Health and Human Sciences will always have my heart and be my home." ▲



YOUR IMPACT — AMPLIFIED

GIFTS HELP STUDENTS, FACULTY AND RESEARCH THRIVE

BY LAURA PIZZO, OSU FOUNDATION

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC is highlighting the importance of family and community relationships — and the inequalities at the intersections of families, work, child care and policies.

There is an immediate need for evidence-based research to help policymakers make informed decisions about these issues and to educate families and communities about solutions. The college has been able to respond rapidly thanks in part to graduate student fellowships.

Brenda Barrett-Rivera, the Cheryl J. Lutz Family Policy Fellow at the Hallie E. Ford Center for Healthy Children and Families, worked with fellow graduate student **Asia Thogmartin** and Assistant Professor of Practice **Megan Pratt** to quickly develop a policy brief titled "Oregon COVID-19 child care policy changes and family well-being." It will be used as researchers and policy-makers wrestle with the effects of the pandemic on Oregon's children and families.

She also worked closely with Associate Professor **David Rothwell** on a grant application that received \$500,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for a five-year project about paid family leave and family self-sufficiency in Oregon.

"Return on investment has never been greater, and fellowships are investments that pay dividends for years to come, supporting all three parts of OSU's teaching, research and outreach mission and making a remarkable difference on society's most pressing issues," says CPHHS Dean F. Javier Nieto.



Brenda Barrett-Rivera, Lutz Family Policy Fellow at the Hallie E. Ford Center for Healthy Children and Families

In addition to fellowships, scholarships are needed to support student retention and success, including Ecampus and transfer students.

"This support helps ensure that students are able to work alongside researchers and that they are ready to join the workforce," Javier says. "It also helps the college recruit, retain and graduate purpose-driven students, especially those who are first-generation or who demonstrate financial need."

Endowed faculty positions support the researchers themselves. Endowments help faculty think big and pursue game-changing research into some of society's most critical issues affecting health and well-being, particularly in the areas of community health, mental health, integrated health and global health.

"It's important to understand that you can make a difference and be part of our vital work at this historic time," Javier says. "Everyone has a role to play in making the world a healthier place for all." ▲

"Fellowships are investments that pay dividends for years to come, supporting all three parts of OSU's teaching, research and outreach mission and making a remarkable difference on society's most pressing issues."

— Dean F. Javier Nieto

Visit health.oregonstate.edu/giving to learn more.



She didn't know where the road would lead, but **THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN A BLAST**

GRAD STUDENT IS ROLLING TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

BY KATHRYN STROPPEL

MAKING AN IMPACT is something **Kathleen McCarty** knows well. When she's not making a 't-stop' or 'passing the star' as Samwise Banshee on a roller derby track, she is working toward her PhD and leading discussions on race, gender and disability.

A Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Research Scholar and Fellow, Kathleen is connecting with a multidisciplinary cohort of students across the nation interested in inclusive health policy.

"As a scholar within that program, supported by OSU, I feel I'm getting such a rich, robust education and understanding for what I can and should be doing with my work," she says. "I'm the first to tell people that research isn't my strong suit; it's not the thing that gets me up in the morning. It's service and working with others that does. Being in this program makes me think about how research can help me engage in that service more. My experience is beyond what I ever thought possible."

Connections and conversation extend to her cohort in the CPHHS as well.

"Faculty within kinesiology allow us the autonomy to literally say to them, 'Hey, we don't think we're doing enough to understand race, gender and disability. Can we lead some discussions so we can all talk about this?'"

"The college has been open and supportive, and I've been able to have hard conversations with colleagues and professors," she says. "I think OSU does a really good job of offering programs that help me develop a more critical mindset, particularly the dialogue facilitation lab through the Office of Institutional Diversity and the Social Justice Education Initiative with Jane Waite, but the reality is that OSU is a very

white place. It's important that we have a social justice mindset and build curriculum that's more inclusive for people with disabilities and those from marginalized communities."

Expecting to graduate in 2021 with a PhD in kinesiology with a concentration in adapted physical activity, Kathleen is considering her professional options — and where she can make the greatest impact.

"I'm keeping my mind open to the possibility of something in respect to policy or where I can advocate for the needs of the disability community and help uplift their voices in some way," she says. "I've always loved teaching and coaching, and I've always sought out jobs and positions that allow me to center that. Academia might position me to continue centering teaching in a way that I love."

Staying in academia also allows her to champion change from within.

"Even my own field is problematic in the way it views disability. By calling it a 'special population,' it's already putting people in a norm-other binary. I have a critical perspective, but my optimistic side tells me I can work within academia to change these problematic structures."

LIFE IS THE BEST TEACHER

Kathleen grew up in small town in Michigan she calls "shockingly like Corvallis," and her parents both experience disability.

"Disability was always something I was aware of and saw a lot of nuance in," she says. "My language in college was ASL, and I interned with an agency for the deaf outside of Detroit. A theme of disability has been prevalent in my life, but it wasn't until much later that I discovered that in my career."

A first-generation college student, she earned her undergraduate degree at Oakland University. She then moved to Atlanta and spent four years weaving and

whipping around the roller derby track at the semi-elite level. That experience ignited a love for sport, physical activity and coaching, which led her to San Diego. There, she worked in a variety of fitness jobs while earning her master's degree in kinesiology/rehab science.

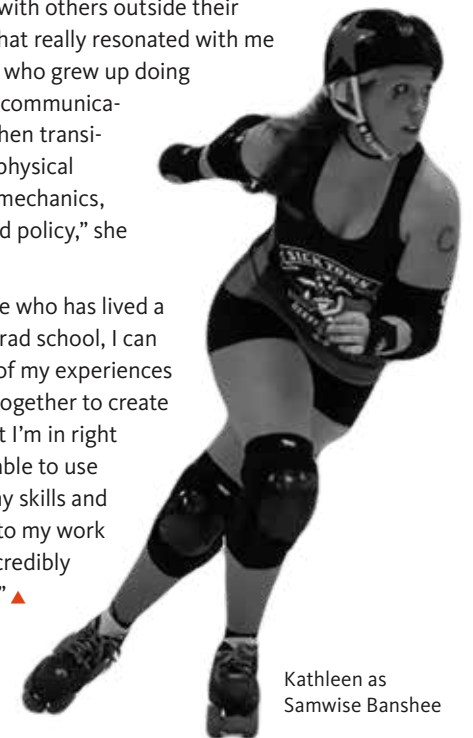
As part of her job working in an outreach clinic for adults with disabilities, she began researching similar programs offered by universities and discovered the college's IMPACT program. Already considering a PhD, she says her discovery felt serendipitous.

"I thought, 'Maybe I should apply to OSU and see what happens.' So, I did! And I got in!"

Now, with less than a year until commencement, Kathleen has a new appreciation for the journey that brought her to this moment. Her life experiences, it turns out, made all the difference.

"I remember someone saying how much they appreciated the kinesiology program because faculty have a philosophy of 'no walls' — meaning they collaborate with others outside their discipline. That really resonated with me as someone who grew up doing theatre and communications, who then transitioned into physical activity, biomechanics, disability and policy," she says.

"As someone who has lived a life before grad school, I can see how all of my experiences have come together to create this moment I'm in right now. To be able to use and blend my skills and put them into my work has been incredibly meaningful." ▲



Kathleen as Samwise Banshee

Kathleen McCarty, Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Research Scholar and Fellow

2021 To-Do List

- Make a difference.***
Be the reason a student continues their education by giving to student scholarships. Learn more at health.oregonstate.edu/giving.
- Get inspired.***
Sign up for monthly news updates, health tips, event information and more at synergies.oregonstate.edu.
- Be informed.***
Watch the 2020 Bray Health Leadership Lecture at health.oregonstate.edu/camara, presented by Camara Jones, MD, PHD, MPH and learn why racism is a public health crisis — and what we can all do about it.
- Listen up.***
Hear what 2020 CPHHS Alumni Fellow Rebecca Hernandez '05, associate provost of local and global engagement at George Fox University, has to say about diversity and inclusion in higher education at health.oregonstate.edu/rebecca-hernandez.
- Help others.***
Support CPHHS students, faculty and staff facing unexpected financial needs due to COVID-19 through Beavers Care. Learn more at health.oregonstate.edu/giving.
- Join a community.***
Learn how by contacting CPHHS Alumni Director Casey Farm at casey.farm@osualum.com.
- Talk with us!***
Find us on social media @cphhs.     
- Enjoy a happy and healthy 2021!***

