In November 2018, SUNY Downstate President Wayne J. Riley announced the appointment of Dr. Kitaw Demissie, M.D., Ph.D as the new dean for the School of Public Health. Dr. Demissie is a nationally-recognized academic public health leader and researcher in the fields of health disparities and minority health, perinatal health, and cancer. Dr. Demissie will begin his tenure as SPH Dean in January 2018. A full feature will follow in the next issue. A very special thanks to Dr. Judith H. LaRosa, Ph.D., RN, Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Health Policy and Management for serving as Interim Dean during the transition period, and Dr. Michael A. Joseph, Ph.D, M.P.H for serving as Chair of the National Search Committee for the new SPH Dean.
Congratulations to the following doctoral students who have been awarded the Rao Scholarships 2018-2019: Damian Bird for HIV testing and PrEP Utilization among Afro-Caribbean Men and Women, Natalie Octave for Exploring Acculturation and Generational Differences in Diet in a Brooklyn Caribbean Population, Harrynauth Persaud for Healthcare Decisions among Indo-Guyanese Immigrant Men in the United States: Behaviors, Barriers and Cultural influences, and Mireille St. Pierre for Understanding Afro-Caribbean Christian Women Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence in New York City. Alicia Rao, M.D., and Madu Rao, M.D. have graciously established this scholarship for Doctor of Public Health students at the SPH. The scholarships will afford opportunities for doctoral students moving forward to their dissertation to be successful in their research and ultimately become contributors to public health science.

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The School of Public Health has recently expanded into our new, state-of-the-art Public Health Academic Building for the Fall 2018 term. The building, designed by Ennead Architects, contains office space for faculty, staff, and graduate students, common lounge areas, conference rooms, classrooms, and event space. It will also contain open-plan research laboratories, a state-of-the-art clinical simulation center, and multi-function spaces designed to accommodate team-based learning. Situated between the Basic Sciences Building (BSB) and Clarkson Avenue, the new building’s entrance plaza will open into an expansive lobby serving both buildings.

Dr. Monica Sweeney, Chair of the Department of Health Policy and Management, was honored by the Columbia Mailman Alumni Board with the 2018 Allan Rosenfield Alumni Award for Excellence, the school's highest alumni honor. In May 2018, Assistant Professor in the SPH Department of Health Policy and Management, Dr. Daniel Ehlke, received the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Distinguished Service Professor in the SPH Department of Community Health Sciences, Dr. Tracey Wilson, was honored at this year’s Sportsball 2018, the 24th Annual Black Tie and Sneakers Gala hosted by the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, in October 2018.

The School of Public Health wishes to express our appreciation to our Founding Dean, Pascal James Imperato, MD, MPH&TM, MACP, an internationally recognized leader in national and global health, for his remarkable wisdom and leadership in establishing the School of Public Health -- the first and only School of Public Health in Brooklyn, New York. His leadership moved a Master of Public Health Program, created in 2000, to a fully accredited School of Public Health in 2010. Dr. Imperato has recently been appointed the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs of the SUNY Downstate Medical Center. The School of Public Health celebrates and applauds this appointment and looks forward to Dr. Imperato’s continued service to our students and their academic experience at the SUNY Downstate Medical Center.

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A number of Downstate SPH faculty and students were selected to present at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Expo on November 10-14, 2018. MPH student, Mahlqa Butt, gave a talk, “Low-dose ketamine versus morphine to severe pain in the Emergency Department geriatric population: A prospective, randomized, double-blind study;” MPH student Antara Afrin, on behalf of classmates Yaseen Mohammad, Khady Ndiaye, and Brandon Yarde, presented a poster entitled, “Barriers and enablers of healthy food access among low-income Afro-Caribbeans in Crown Heights, Brooklyn;” DrPH student, Chanee Massiah, presented a poster called, “Factors associated with periodontal disease in a sample of Afro-Caribbean patients from a dental practice in Brooklyn, NY.” DrPH student, Bianca Rivera taught a class called “Epidemiology for Non-Epidemiologists” with Dr. Simone Reynolds. MPH students, Alyson Clarke, Tasnim Ahmad, and Maya Lloyd (on behalf of classmates Beverly Chang and Brittany Daughtry), presented a poster entitled, “Health disparities in gentrified communities: The ongoing fight for health equality and social justice of minority residents in Harlem.” SPH alumna, Viola Browne, DrPH presented a poster entitled, “Perceptions of facilitators and barriers for physical activity among obese adolescents,” developed with SPH faculty, Drs. D. Bruno, L. Dill, and A. Afable; Dr. Browne was also honored with the Award for Outstanding Research in the Area of Physical Activity by the Physical Activity Section of the American Public Health Association, for her work on the poster presentation!

In addition, several SPH faculty also participated in the conference: Dr. Simone Reynolds taught a 2-day course “Epidemiology for non-epidemiologists;” Dr. Sergios-Orestis Kolokotronis gave a talk entitled, “Evolution and epidemic spread of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.” Dr. Michael Joseph taught a course, “Biostatistics for non-statisticians,” and was also a co-author on a poster with collaborators from the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, entitled “Training the next generation of health disparities researchers: Addressing underrepresentation in clinical research through mentored internships with minority high school and undergraduate students.”