



*May 2020*

# CDU News



**Faculty Award Winners**  
**Ten Years of MMDSON**  
**...and more!**



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David M. Carlisle, MD, PhD | President & CEO



## **Greetings,**

We are truly in the midst of unprecedented times. With so much going on in the world today, it is imperative that we do everything we can to ensure that we're caring for ourselves properly. Remember to breathe, take breaks when you need to and practice self-compassion regularly. Now more than ever, we need to remember how to cultivate and rely on our inner strength.

I would be remiss if I did not mention recent events in the news, but I would first like to start by addressing our graduates with a sincere "Congratulations," especially given all that you've endured and worked around. I understand and empathize with the inevitable frustration that our students feel at the prospect of not being able to have a proper commencement ceremony. This is a day that most, if not all students, look forward to the most throughout their academic careers, and to have it stripped away from them due to reasons that were completely out of their control is maddening in ways that I can only imagine. The Class of 2020 at CDU and across the nation have my greatest admiration for displaying such resilience.

Although things may appear uncertain now, I implore you not to allow these events to diminish the significance of what you've accomplished: **you are a graduate!** There is no pandemic or quarantine period on this Earth that will ever be able to negate the sleepless nights, hard work, perseverance, phone calls home to Mom and so much more that have led you to this very moment.

Please know that here at CDU, we are doing everything in our power to make sure that we honor the Class of 2020 in the way it deserves to be in spite of this pandemic. We have a Commencement Committee that is working around the clock for solutions, including issuing a formal invitation to all graduates to participate at future commencement ceremonies during which they would be recognized as a group and as alums. We will also be launching a virtual Commencement website soon, to be distributed online via email and Broadcast.

Once again, I offer my sincere congratulations to the Class of 2020. No matter what, from here on out, you are a college graduate. That is not an assertion that everyone gets to make, and we hope that you are as proud of yourselves as we are.

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As we reflect on the seminal events of the past few weeks, beginning with the Minneapolis murder of George Floyd, it is important to note that these events are part of a larger context that is what it all-too-often means to be Black and Brown in the United States. What happened to Mr. Floyd is part of a context that includes the names of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Atatiana Jefferson. The list goes on to include Oscar Grant, Tamir Rice, and many, many others – in fact, this list includes thousands upon thousands of names, names of innocent usually, but certainly not always, Black men and women outrageously killed by law enforcement officers or armed vigilantes taking the law into their own hands.

Los Angeles is no stranger to the frustrations that Black and Brown people have felt due to the overt racism and systemic policy-level inequities that have existed in this country since its inception. Our very own institution, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, is a product of that history: we were founded in 1966 in direct response to the Watts Rebellion of 1965, which was started by the abusive arrest of a Black man and ultimately resulted in 34 fatalities. Two decades earlier, the so-called “Zoot Suit Riots” of 1943 saw the outrage stem from Latino men being attacked in Downtown Los Angeles and East LA by white American military personnel. In 1992, just a little over two decades after the Watts Rebellion, Los Angeles again once again witness to an urban uprising following the senseless murder of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins and inhumane assault of Rodney King. Forty four people died in 1992, including ten directly killed by law enforcement officers. It seems that roughly every two to three decades, Los Angeles becomes an epicenter in what seems to be a never-ending battle against blatant hatred. Once again, here we are.

It is with this context in mind that I am especially proud of CDU's institutional legacy and institutional mission. The words "social justice," "health equity," and "diversity" are truly unique, as they are rarely found among the mission statements of other higher educational institutions. More so than any other university that I am aware of, CDU has spent decades fighting the very social injustice that leads to events like those of this past month with Mr. Floyd and we will continue to do so. Although our niche is health care, our greater purpose is societal equity.

The hundreds, if not thousands, of demonstrations taking place across this nation send a very important and concise message: **"Enough."** Americans, especially younger Americans, are simply fed up to the point of action with the increasing inequity and overt hatred that have come to characterize American society. They're seeking change and taking to the streets to oppose the lurching and bombastic negativism that has replaced an eight year era of increasing hope for our country. We have tasted optimism, idealism, and love for all our fellow human beings, and we want these values back. We are seeking a country where simply being a human being counts for more than being rich, where democracy is more important than autocracy, where hope replaces hate and where compassion replaces contempt.

It is important to note that, in my opinion, these events are occurring despite the COVID-19 pandemic, not because of it. The fact that so many demonstrators were wearing face coverings indicated that they were fully aware of the potential to acquire COVID-19 by being in a large group but they were moved to take to the streets in spite of this risk.

I am especially heartened by all the faces I see on the news -- not just those of African Americans, but those of Latinos, Asians, and white Americans all taking to the streets to protest the increasing brutality of American society. It's those faces that give me hope for the future because they not only remind me of the faces of my children, but they reflect all the faces of, the mission of, and the contributions of our institution, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

Continue to stay safe and take care of yourselves.

# Third Annual “Report Back Cuba” Virtual Conference

For the third year in a row, students and alumni in the College of Science and Health’s Master of Public Health (MPH) program were able to share their experiences and key takeaways from their recent trip to Cuba, as a part of the virtual Cuba Health Exchange Conference on May 6. The cohort, led by Dr. Bitu Amani and adjunct assistant professor Kathryn Hill-Trujillo, MPH, travelled to the country in March 2020 and studied under the professors at ENSAP (Escuela Nacional de Salud Pública), as part of the course MPH 584: Global Health Studies: The Cuban Health Model.



“We go to Cuba to learn about a system that has much to teach us,” Dr. Amani explained. “As health practitioners committed to equity and social justice, we are concerned by the fact that as a high-income country, the U.S. spends more per person on health than other comparable countries, but have poorer health outcomes.” She went on to explain that while Cuba does not have the same resources to spend on healthcare, they have comparable, if not better, health outcomes than the United States.



Students and alumni on the trip included Josephine Akingbulu, MPH(c); Jennifer Alvarez, MPH(c); Shanelle Bailey, MPH(c); Maria Barajas, MPH(c); Kyla Baron, MPH(c); Joshua Blackmon, MPH(c); Rakeidra Davis-Hudson, MPH(c); Kimberly Dorrah, MPH(c); Krandalyn Goodman, MPH(c); Lily Jimoh, MBS, MPH(c); Karlon Johnson, MPH(c); Briana Lopez, MBS, MPH(c); Carolina Rodriguez, MPH(c); and Pallavi Sharma, MPH(c).



MPH graduates shared what they learned at the Escuela Nacional de Salud Publica (ENSAP) during their stay, which was abbreviated due to the current global pandemic. However, though the trip was abbreviated students were still able to take an intensive course at ENSAP on the Cuban Health System and participate in site visits to clinics, hospitals and other community organizations.

## COM Student Awarded \$10,000 Scholarship from ElevateMeD



Kalonji Cole, a fourth-year student in the Charles R. Drew/ UCLA Medical Education Program, was one of ten recipients to be named an inaugural 2020-2021 ElevateMeD Scholar. Mr. Cole will receive a \$10,000 scholarship and

receive mentorship and other leadership development opportunities from ElevateMeD, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to diversify the health care workforce. Mr. Cole joins a class of scholars from lead institutions such as Howard University, Temple University, Mayo Clinic and more.

“I have had difficulty finding scholarships specifically for people of color in medicine [and] was thrilled to just find out that [this] scholarship existed for students like myself,” Mr. Cole explained. “What excites me the most about the scholarship is [ElevateMeD’s] mission and the expectation that it has of its scholars,” he said, going on to note that he and the other nine ElevateMed scholars have already helped to raise \$20,000 for the next cohort of ElevateMeD scholars. “I’m excited to be a part of a mission that is so important and so necessary, especially during these trying times,” he concluded.

Upon his graduation from CDU in 2021, Mr. Cole hopes to train in Internal Medicine.

# Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing Celebrates Ten Years

After graduating over 1,300 nursing professionals since it opened in Fall 2010, the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science kicked off this year's Nurses Week, which took place from May 6 – May 12, 2020, by celebrating its ten-year anniversary.

The school was named after the legendary Los Angeles legislator Mervyn M. Dymally, who served in the California assembly and senate, as well as serving as the state's Lt. Governor. He capped his career with over 20 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. Dymally was a long-time supporter of CDU and highly instrumental in securing funding for the University as it grew over the years. "The school being named after Congressman Dymally is a fitting testament to his legacy and steadfast advocacy for improving access to both healthcare and education for under-resourced communities of color," said CDU President and CEO Dr. David M. Carlisle.



Dr. Dymally's (center) surprise naming ceremony for the nursing school took place during the 17th annual Jazz at Drew festival in 2007. "For the first time in my political career, my staff kept a secret from me," he remarked. "I am truly humbled by the Board of Trustees' decision to name this school in my honor."

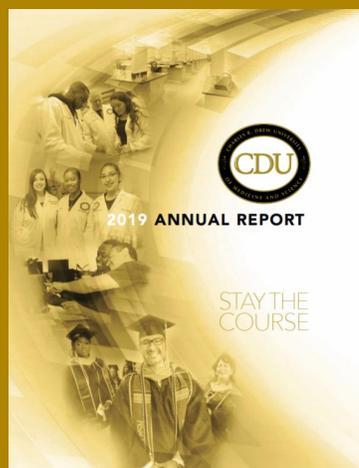
From 2010, when the first cohort of students matriculated into the newly-opened Life Sciences Research and Nursing Education building, to 2012, when the first class graduated 91 nursing students, to this year's commencement, when the school will confer 231 graduate and undergraduate nursing degrees, the Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing has grown steadily and continues to add new programs.

"MMDSON continues to expand and introduce new graduate and certificate programs, and we have plans to develop an undergraduate prelicensure nursing program predominately for high school students, licensed vocational nurses and veterans pursuing their goal to be Registered Nurses. In addition, plans are underway to open a Doctorate in Nursing Practice in Fall 2021. Most important, the focus will continue to be to serve the underserved, the mission of CDU that makes me very proud," said MMDSON Dean, Dr. Diane Breckenridge.



MMDSON, which is housed in the Life Sciences Research and Nursing Education Building, was California's first comprehensive nursing program to open in 25 years.

"In a recent survey of our nursing graduates, 41% of the respondents indicated that they are employed within a 10-mile radius of the University. This is a significant impact and contribution to the city of Los Angeles," said CDU Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Dr. Steve O. Michael. "As the University embarks on a second five-year strategic plan, we have a renewed commitment to growth and to cultivating diverse health professional leaders to serve in the under-resourced communities."



## 2019 Annual Report Now Available

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science is pleased to announce the publication of the 2019FY Annual Report.

This year's report celebrates student and faculty accomplishments and offers a glance into CDU's future as we continue to educate and empower impactful, compassionate and exemplary future healthcare professionals.

You can access an electronic copy of the 2019FY Annual Report [here](#).

## Professor Cynthia Davis and Colleagues Published in Spring Edition of 'Ethnicity & Disease'

The Sankofa Collective, a research collective co-chaired by COSH professor Cynthia Davis, MPH, had extensive research published in the Spring 2020 issue of *Ethnicity & Disease*, an international medical journal which covers the relationship between ethnicity and health. The issue highlights the Collaborative's work on health disparities and the numerous issues concerning the impact of HIV/AIDS in the African American community.



"A major goal of the Sankofa Collaborative, which AHF and CDU have supported since its inception in 2017, was to have a Special Edition published in a peer-reviewed journal highlighting the research, bio-behavioral, structural and policy needs of the Black community," Davis explained. "[We wanted to highlight the needs of] Black women and families, in particular."

The issue is available [here](#). Please note that *Ethnicity & Disease* is a subscription-based journal, and will become open access after six months. Please check with your institution to verify if they have a subscription to the journal.

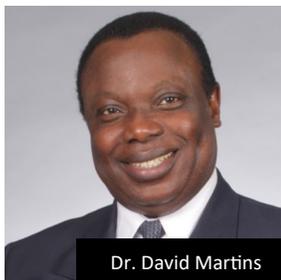
## Academic Senate Announces 2020 Outstanding Faculty Awards Winners and Honorees

The Academic Senate of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science is pleased to announce the winners of the 2020 Outstanding Faculty Awards:

Congratulations to Dr. David Martins, who was awarded the Outstanding Professor award for the 2020 Outstanding Faculty Awards. Drs. Sheila Young and Mariles Rosario were also honored for their service with the "Outstanding Service" and "Outstanding Teaching" awards, respectively.

The Outstanding Professor award is given to those who exemplify excellence in teaching, research, and/or community service. The Outstanding Service award was awarded to Dr. Young for her dedicated service to the University that furthers the CDU mission. Lastly, the Outstanding Teaching award was awarded to Dr. Rosario in honor of her outstanding teaching contributions to the University that further the institution's mission.

Additionally, the Academic Senate has commissioned two memorial plaques in loving memory of recently departed colleagues, Dr. Erik Fleming and Dr. Seyung (Steven) Chung. The plaques will be presented to [Dr. Fleming's and Dr. Chung's] families in honor of each of their many contributions to Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science," said Dr. Omolola Ogunyemi, president of the Academic Senate. "[They were both] respected and valued faculty members of CDU."





# Legacy of CDU

*“Legacy of CDU” offers readers an intimate look into the rich history of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.*

*Special Thanks to  
University Archivist Robin Schiff*

## Ten Year Anniversary of the Community Faculty Track

This year marks the ten-year anniversary of the Community Faculty Track at CDU. The program, established between CDU and the late Dr. Loretta Jones’ Healthy African American Families-II (HAAF-II) in 2010, was the first of its kind to allow community leaders apply to become faculty, with full rights and privileges, based on their experiences and expertise in addressing the social determinants of health in their communities.

Traditionally appointed CDU faculty members were facing challenges in optimizing their research strategies to improve community health outcomes due to their unfamiliarity with key community stakeholders. Those challenges included but were not limited to a lack of trust between the surrounding community and researchers, as well as a lack of inclusion of unique insights from the community they were seeking to serve. The Community Faculty track was designed to address those challenges by using community-based participatory research (CBPR), an approach to research in which community expertise is recognized as being on par with academic knowledge and involves community participation in each step of the research process.

Though it is not unheard of for universities to grant faculty appointments to highly experienced individuals without advanced degrees, granting a community member a faculty appointment solely based on their community experience was unprecedented at the time. The program initially faced opposition from detractors who believed that faculty appointments should only be granted to individuals with a terminal degree (the highest degree awarded in a given field), however Dr. Jones challenged CDU officials to recognize that the experience, knowledge and contributions of community leaders were just as valuable as those of traditional faculty.

In the years since the establishment of the Community Faculty Track, these members have proven to be invaluable assets to CDU. In their roles, community faculty members help facilitate the relationship and trust between University researchers and community members, and also impart real-world experiences and unique community perspectives to faculty and students in order to advance health research and medical education.

# On the Front Lines: Thank You For Your Support

*With your generous support, we have been able to reach those who are most in need of testing and education in light of this global pandemic. Your continued support will help us in continuing the fight against COVID-19 in South Los Angeles. Continue reading to learn how you can help us do more.*



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science would like to express our sincere gratitude to the California Wellness Foundation and The Ballmer Group for their generous grants of \$250,000 and \$100,000, respectively, to support COVID-19 testing site operations. On another positive front, we also thank our **longtime partner L.A. Health Foundation** for their grant of \$100,000 to support ten student scholarships worth \$10,000. It is because of gracious support such as yours and our valued funding partners that we are able to continue training diverse health professionals who enter the health workforce prepared to take on, and prevail, over challenging times such as these.

Last, but certainly not least, we give our heartfelt thanks to the following organizations and individuals for their donation of masks, food, cash and other essential supplies to the workers staffed at the COVID-19 testing site and other COVID-19 expenses for the month of May: Ms. Jessica Flores; Dr. Jimmy Hara; Dr. Lauren Swerdloff; Dr. Charles Swerdlow; Dr. Sheila Young; Yolanda Vera, CEO of MLK Outpatient Center; Apple Spice; Catering by Bryan; Chik-Fil-A; China Gate Restaurant; City Fare; McDonald's; NYMK Catering; Panera Bread; Porto's Bakery; Starbucks; and Sweetgreen, CDU Trustee Linda Griego, Betty Johnson, Rosemary Tilman-Icellum, Dr. Tom McGee, Melanie Rodriguez; Brenda Anderson; Lisa Brigdina; and Carlin Smith-Stine.

COVID-19 has challenged us all to share and show acts of kindness. Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science is truly thankful for the continued expressions of support that we have seen from our friends and partners in response to COVID-19. Because of your generosity we have been able to test over 7,000 community members since opening on Wednesday, April 8. We have also been able to provide more than 2,000 meals to our students, staff and faculty volunteers at the site which also include LA County Fire and LA County MLK Outpatient Center staff.

As stay at home orders are being lifted in phases, the need for COVID-19 testing has intensified. Our students, faculty and staff volunteers along with LA County Department of Health Services staff and students from other area colleges are choosing to be on the front lines until the needs for testing in the Watts-Willowbrook/South Los Angeles community are met. We hope you will join us as an advocate and supporter for our role in testing, data collection and analysis and in educating future health workers that will serve in disadvantaged or underresourced communities with excellence and compassion.

It's not too late to help us protect the community against this COVID-19 battle:

Monetary gifts can be given online at [CDU COVID-19](https://www.cdrewu.edu/updates-covid-19), or via text by sending "CDREWU" to **44321**. Additionally, in-kind donations of breakfast, lunch, healthy snacks, water, or juice can be made by emailing [advancement@cdrewu.edu](mailto:advancement@cdrewu.edu). (Note, responses to in-kind donations may take 24-48 hours for response.)

With your help, we are reaching those who are most in need of testing and education. We're ready to do more. Thank you for considering a gift to support CDU and giving us the tools to remain flexible and serve our Mission. Your gift today will make a difference. Please stay tuned to CDU's COVID-19 efforts at: <https://www.cdrewu.edu/updates-covid-19>.



# *In The News*

**WIRED**

[Covid-19 Is Killing Black People Unequally—Don't Be Surprised](#) (5/2/2020)

**Essence**

[14 Powerful Images Of Black Women On The Front Lines Of The Coronavirus Pandemic](#) (5/4/2020)

**Wave Newspapers**

[COMMUNITY REPORT: Trying To Stop The Scourge Of COVID-19 In South L.A.](#) (5/7/2020)

**Our Weekly**

[Dr. Kerry English, 40 year employee at King/Drew, dies](#) (5/7/2020)

**Florida Times-Union**

[Gene Frenette: From Nigeria to U.S., Theresa Jacobs nurtured her Jaguars son on right path](#) (5/8/2020)

**Los Angeles Times**

['We want to study you.' For black Angelenos, coronavirus triggers fear of another Tuskegee](#) (5/10/2020)

**CSUDH News**

[Class of 2020 Shares Fond Memories, Aspirations, and Collective Apprehension](#) (5/12/2010)

**U.S. News and World Report**

[What Are the Limits of Telehealth?](#) (5/13/2020)

**ABC 7**

[Race and Coronavirus: A SoCal Conversation](#) (5/18/2020)

**KCRW**

[Doctors reflect on coronavirus' outsized toll on communities of color](#) (5/21/2020)

**Los Angeles Business Journal**

[LA500 2020: Health Care](#) (5/25/2020)

**ABC 7**

[African American survivors of COVID-19 talk about bias, solutions](#) (5/26/2020)

**WPLN**

[Meharry President Tells Congress To Lean On HBCUs In COVID-19 Response](#) (5/27/2020)

**WSVN**

[Meharry Medical College proposes idea to Congress on how to fight COVID-19 in minority communities](#) (5/28/2020)

**NC Policy Watch**

['People of color want freedom ... from infection, freedom from death'](#) (5/29/2020)



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