



UNC CHARLOTTE

College of Health and Human Services

**Master of Health
Administration**



**Memory Book
2019-2020**

Contributors

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UNC CHARLOTTE

College of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health Sciences

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Congratulations to the 2020 MHA Graduates!

May is always a bittersweet time in academia. We reflect with pride (tinged with relief) at the graduation of another cohort of nascent health administration professionals as they join our cadre of distinguished alumni while simultaneously regretting that your time with us has all too quickly come to an end.

The 2020 graduating cohort will be forever remembered for its resilience and perseverance in the face of an unprecedented string of unprecedented disruptions. These past two years have tested this cohort, first by weather disruptions to final exams, then by an active shooter situation that caught many in an hours-long lock down, then a reprise of weather disruptions including a tornado warning, and, as if that weren't enough, a global pandemic. For this cohort, abnormal became the norm.

While it is easy to focus on the negatives...the many events cancelled, the many plans altered, the many opportunities lost... **I challenge you to remember this time with pride and confidence.** Not only did you pull together and rise to the challenge of completing your academic training, you've learned invaluable life lessons about leadership in times of uncertainty; about the perils of relying too much on assuming the status quo, about the value of nimbleness and flexibility in an otherwise slow evolving healthcare culture; about how to respond and communicate during times of upheaval when leaders, not administrators, are most needed; and, most of all, the strength and support that teams and networks provide. **You have come to thrive in the face of these unknowns.**

You enter the next phase of your professional lives more battle-tested and prepared for the uncertainties that await than most. Use these hardships to your advantage and not as your excuse. Go inspire others that way you have inspired us. Know that we and our cadre of alumni you are joining are here to support you. Remember from time to time to reach back and help those who have come here to follow in your footsteps. Your destiny awaits.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Thompson, MS, DrPH

Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Public Health Sciences
Director, MHA program; Director, Health Informatics and Analytics Program

A Message from CHESO...

On behalf of all of the elected leaders of the Charlotte Healthcare Executives Student Organization (CHESO), we want to extend our warmest congratulations to the MHA graduates of May 2020!

It has been our honor to serve as your CHESO leaders from 2019-2020.

Beyond that, it has been an even greater pleasure to work beside each and every one of you for the last two years. Together, as MHA students, we have helped each other endure academic stressors, conquer professional hurdles, and survive tragic circumstances.

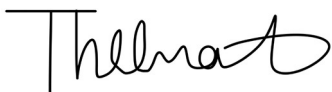
If these last two years have taught us anything, it should be that we all have something besides our graduate degree in common - we are all *resilient*. No matter what life throws at us, we have the right kind of toughness to survive it. Time has gifted us all with a solid respect for one another and each of our abilities to strive forward.

That is why it is such a bittersweet moment to have to say farewell to you all. With the ending of our time together, there is an ushering of another adventure in the distance, one that will lead each of you on a path of success, leadership, and, most importantly, benevolence.

I know that wherever life takes you, your resilience will shine through. And I look forward to our professional paths crossing again at some point. However, until then know that your entire cohort (especially me!) is cheering you on from afar.

Oh, and also, make sure to throw your hats up in the air at some point, because –
you just mastered it!

Congratulations & best wishes, always.



2020 Thelma Achidi
President CHESO 2019-2020



Tina Louise Velgus
Vice President CHESO 2019-2020

2020 Graduates

Thelma Achidi- *Most Likely to Run For President*



Degree: MHA/HIAN **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: Thankful, grateful, and truly blessed.

Taylor Bailey- *Most Likely to Be Famous*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: "What? Like, it's hard?" - Elle Woods

Renna Berry- *Best Presenter*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: The ability to read, write, and analyze; the confidence to stand up and demand justice and equality; the qualifications and connections to get your foot in that door and take your seat at that table - all of that starts with education. – Michelle Obama

Rahul Bhandari- *Most Generous*



Degree: MHA/MBA **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: Dr. Alan Grant: It looks like we are out of a job.

Dr. Ian Malcolm: Don't you mean extinct?

Christopher Dinh- *Most Likely to Be a Hospital CFO*



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2020

Quote: You don't need a motivational quote, you just need a cup of coffee.

Patrick Gitter- *Most Likely to Be a Politician*



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2020

Quote: "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts." – Winston S. Churchill

Morganne Guinther- *Most Prepared*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.—Christopher Reeve

Serah Haley- *Most Likely to Be a Hospital CEO*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Certificate: Health Informatics and Analytics

Quote: I am so grateful I got the chance to know all of you and I'm so proud of everyone in this program. Congratulations to those who are graduating.

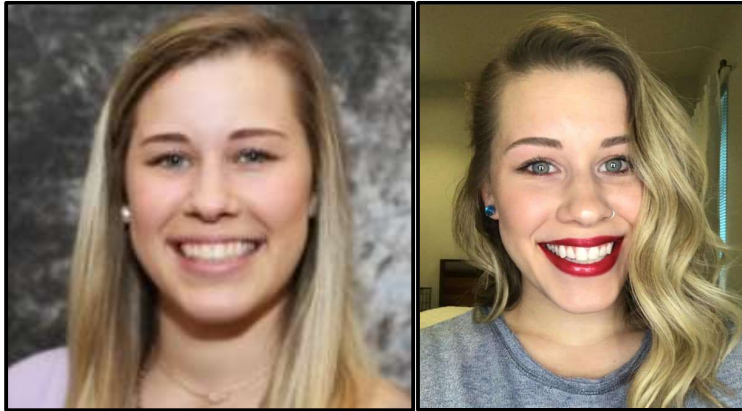
Taylor Holland- *Most Authentic*



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2020

Bethany Houde- *Best Smile*



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2020

Quote: In a world where you can be anything, be kind.

Lauren Kueider- *Most Upbeat Attitude*



Degree: MHA/HIAN **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Soumya Mannadiar- *Most Friendly*



Degree: MHA/HIAN **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem,
and smarter than you think. — Christopher Robin

Sydney Melton- *Most Creative*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: We will continue to face challenges and obstacles, but they will not define us. We are defined by how we respond.

Manal Naim- *Most Likely to Become a Motivational Speaker*



Degree: MHA/MBA **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: Indeed, with hardship will be ease (Quran 94:5)

Kathryn Olcott- *Most Likely to Encourage You to Do New Things*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: "Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion." ~ Simon Sinek

Sydney Orwig- *Most Ambitious*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** Summer 2020

Quote: Go into the world and do well. But more importantly, go into the world and do good.

Marianne Rojas-Abinader- *Best Personality*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you. – B.B. King

Amanda Rotteck- *Most Likely to Keep You Awake During Lectures*



Degree: MHA/HIAN **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: Stress is temporary, but a master's degree is forever.

Nialah Sharp- *Best Style*



Degree: MHA/ HIAN **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: "When you walk in your purpose, make sure you do it well and leave an impact."

Meena Surapaneni- *Most Likely to Brighten Someone's Day*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Ifeanyi Umeugo- *Most Likely to Be the Next Bill Gates*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020
Certificate: Health Informatics and Analytics

Quote: Go confidently in the direction of your dreams but remain humble, because it is better to humble yourself than for the Lord to humble you. There is no script, live the life you have imagined, soak it all in; Be bold, be courageous, be your best!

Tina Velgus- *Most Likely to Help Someone in Need*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2020

Quote: Always aim high, work hard, and care deeply about what you believe in. And, when you stumble, keep faith. And, when you're knocked down, get right back up and never listen to anyone who says you can't or shouldn't go on. -Hillary Clinton

Brett Welch- *Most Likely to Become an Entrepreneur*



Degree: MHA/MBA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Jalece Wherry- *Best Person to Share a Deserted Island With*



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

Quote: Respect your journey and you will end up where you are supposed to be.

Anne-Marie Wingate (not pictured)- *Most Likely to Be Found in the Library*

Degree: MHA/HIAN **Expected Graduation:** May 2020

2021 or Beyond Graduates

Morgan Anderson



Sierra Brantley



Klarissa Dargin



Ainsley Eure



Degree: MHA/MBA **Expected Graduation:** Dec. 2021

Quote: Life should be an incredible adventure. It's too short to be anything else.

Isaiah Furqueron



Alyson Hammill



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2021

Leslie Huezo



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** Dec.2021
Certificate: Health Informatics and Analytics

Jennifer Jang



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2022
Quote: Grind while they sleep, learn while they party, live like they dream.

Kaylah Jenkins



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2022
Quote: "We are going to leave the world better than we found it."
-- Daenerys Targaryen

Sunaina Kirpalani



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Quote: “We don’t make mistakes, just happy little accidents.”–
Bob Ross

Reagan LaBor



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2022

Quote: If a dream brings equal parts excitement and intimidation about how it will be accomplished, then you are on the right track.

Nikki Layden



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Brandon Lowery



Justine Lyon



Natassja McKoy



Degree: MHA

Expected Graduation: May 2021

Quote: Everything negative – pressure, challenges – is all an opportunity for me to rise.

Evan Peatross



Alison Peoples



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2021
Certificate: Gerontology

Vandana Sundaresan



Savannah Valentine



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2021
Certificate: Gerontology

Brittany Weatherall



C. Michelle Woody



Degree: MHA **Expected Graduation:** May 2021

Quote: "I don't know where I'm going from here, but I promise it won't be boring." - David Bowie

Grad School Life







Messages from the Professors:

Congratulations to the UNC Charlotte Class of 2020 Master of Health Administration program graduates. As you read this letter I want you to think of your time as a student at UNC Charlotte and how every experience developed you to be a better manager and leader. Thank you for the opportunity to write this letter. Your graduate degree is a prestigious honor and you have worked so hard to earn it. The year of 2020 as you prepare to graduate our world is faced with a pandemic that has prohibited you from celebrating your graduation achievements as expected. This time of year is typically spent with family and friends celebrating your achievements, but as we deal with Covid-19 we are encouraged to practice social distancing. Even though you may not be able to celebrate your accomplishments as you initially planned, I encourage you to take time to reflect on your time spent at UNC Charlotte, the relationships you developed, the knowledge you received, and the networks you established and be proud that you have a solid foundation with a strong educational background and experience.

Whatever steps you take in your next journey please always demonstrate your strong leadership capabilities and make it a priority to assist others in their journey. I hope you continue your passion for learning. I would like to share with you three important success tips.

1. Stay connected Join ACHE, participate with your local chapter, and make it a priority to receive the prestigious FACHE credential.
2. Stay connected with UNC Charlotte and learn of ways you can be active with the MHA program by serving as a guest speaker, assisting with CHESO, etc.
3. Always have a mentor and identify a person(s) that need your leadership and expertise to serve as their mentor.

Good luck to each of you and I wish you the best!!!

Dr. Piper



April 18, 2020

Dear MHA Graduates:

As I write this letter, news of the COVID-19 pandemic dominates the country. Most parts of our nation are under stay-at-home orders and normal life has been turned upside down. Concerns about allocation of scarce medical resources, unchecked contagion and flattening of "the curve" are common dinner table conversations.

I don't know for certain how this pandemic will end, but I do know this:

- The role of public health is more vital than ever before.
- It is important to be part of a community. To connect with each other. To be at our best, humans need to be connected socially to groups that share common interests.
- We will need leaders who are passionate about public health. Leaders who can develop new ways of thinking and new ways of doing to allow for a better response to the next public health crisis.
- You will encounter ethical challenges the likes of which I can only dream about. I know you will make decisions based not just on what you can do, but on what you should do.
- If we take care of each other, then most other things will fall into place.

It has been my privilege to spend time with you as we studied Health Law & Ethics together. Congratulations as you graduate and move forward with your career.

I look forward to the great things that you will do to improve the health of our community, our nation and our world. We are counting on you.

Best of luck -

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken M. Nanney". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Ken M. Nanney, JD

Adjunct Faculty



April 24, 2020

Dear MHA class of 2020,

It has been such an honor to work with you during your academic journey in our MHA program. We have shared many adventures through Decision Analysis, Health Care Finance, Health Economics, and Strategy. I have learned so much from you.

From Decision Analysis, I remember the fantastic job you did conducting a focus group discussing brain health. In Health Care Finance, I recall our lively discussions, the fabulous progress you made in Excel and gaining strong skills in financial analysis, and your excellent final team presentations. In Health Economics, you wowed me with your great presentations throughout the semester, with your thoughtful questions and discussion. In Strategy, some of your team presentations of our readings have been among the finest I have ever seen. And I have been truly inspired by the wonderful work of your teams in the capstone projects. Each team has developed an analysis and recommendations that will be of lasting value for your sponsor.

Outside of the classroom, it has been a pleasure getting to know you and hearing about your career goals and other plans. Please know that I care about you a lot. I am inspired by your individual and collective passion to serve others; to make a difference in people's lives; to dedicate your careers to improving our health care system and the physical and emotional well-being of people in the United States and elsewhere. I cannot think of a greater aspirational goal.

As I have mentioned, I read two newspapers every day – the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. One of the small “benefits” of our current challenging experience is that I have been able to take time every day to reflect on how I and other people are responding to the challenges we face with the coronavirus pandemic as I read articles by many people around our country and world. One of these was a recent piece by [Madeleine Albright](#), the first woman Secretary of State of the United States, 1997-2001. At nearly 83, she is a [Distinguished Professor](#) at Georgetown University. I thought of you as I read her essay, [Resilience in the Face of Disaster](#). I encourage you to read her essay. Here are the last four paragraphs:

“Whether we are driven by nostalgia or an itch for something new, whether we are revolutionaries or preservationists, it is in the abnormal times that we learn most about ourselves and others. The shock absorbers that ordinarily shield our emotions and lull our minds no longer work so well. Our schedules are disrupted and our priorities change. We shrink, we grow, we may even die; we do not remain the same. This is true of nations as well as people.

I do not claim to understand much about human psychology. But I do think that we are a lot tougher and more capable of moral courage than cynics suggest, and that we benefit from the survivors among us. According to ancient myth, the one divine gift vouchsafed to humans – after all its evil companions escaped from Pandora's box – was Hope.

When asked about my outlook on life and world affairs, I reply that I am an optimist ... who worries a lot. These are not the best of times, but we have seen worse. It might do well for us to view these abnormal days as an opportunity to ask more of ourselves, to

reflect on our relations with one another, and think critically about improving the social, economic, and political structures that shape our lives.

We can draw inspiration from those who have surmounted high obstacles in the past, and vow to make the new normal that we aim to bring about better, more just, and more secure than the old.”

Now back to the most important people right now – you. Please know that although I miss our conversations in person and seeing your smiling faces, you are here with me and your smiles are in my minds’ eye. You are so bright, so full of charm and laughter, have so much energy and determination to serve, and yes, you have so much resilience.

It has been my honor and joy to work with you. I know your future will be bright. I send my heartfelt congratulations – and, for now, a virtual handshake and hug – on your graduation.

My best wishes,

Sarah B. Paditka



My Dear MHA Students:

I hope you learned a lot from the soft education we brought into the light for you in our management classes. I hope as you remember this time, it will bring a smile to your face and remembrance of the good times we had. I believe that this education is a springboard to your successful careers and full and joyful lives. Please stay in contact.

Dr. Platonova



Congratulations, MHA-Niners!

It was an absolute honor having the opportunity to teach you Decision Analysis course in your very first semester in the program. I cherished every moment of those Wednesday evenings we spent learning how quantitative methods improve managerial decisions in our healthcare systems. I have learned more from you than I was able to teach.

Our healthcare system will be strengthened by your passion, intellect, and leadership, and will be able to fight more efficiently against epidemics. Now I can age in peace as I know that you all are managing our healthcare systems.

I wish you every success in the future. Stay well and be happy!

Yours,
Dr. Paul



Dear MHA Graduates,

One of my favorite things to do each spring is to reread the statements of purpose each of you submits with your application to our program. These statements remind me of the experiences and motivations that brought you to UNC Charlotte to pursue an MHA and allow me to recognize your growth over these past couple of years. Each of you has a unique story, but many share a common thread. Your statements portray a fervent desire to help and serve others, and a keen awareness of the burdens borne by our most vulnerable populations. Many of you shared individual experiences that illustrated these burdens. Some of you mentioned loved ones lost far too soon; others described experiences of extreme poverty and the adverse health outcomes that accompany that condition. The thread you share is your resiliency and willingness to overcome difficulties to help people in need. You transform adversity into meaningful action that will improve the well-being of others.

During your time at UNC Charlotte, you felt the tragedy of a campus shooting, the trauma of a global pandemic, and disruptions resulting from weather. When faced with these unsettling events, you displayed courage and resilience as you continued your determined progress toward achieving your goal. You demonstrated leadership in the example you set for others. I am proud and gratified to have been a part of your experience.

As you move on from UNC Charlotte, I have no doubt you will continue to accomplish the goals you described in your personal statements. All of you will help people. Many of you will help shape your communities, improve the healthcare experience for patients, families, and healthcare workers, advocate for vulnerable populations, and increase the diversity of the healthcare workforce. As UNC Charlotte MHA alumni, I hope you will include continued engagement and service to your alma mater as one of your goals. Your passions and abilities will have far greater reach, when you share them with the students who follow you in this program.

I wish you a clear path and few difficulties on your way toward helping others, but I know that when you encounter challenges, you will not be deterred; instead, you will use those experiences to fuel your motivation and action. Congratulations and best wishes!

Sincerely,

Melissa

Melissa Smith, MSPH | MHA Program Administrator

MHA 2020 Graduates,

Congratulations on your well-deserved success. It has been such a pleasure knowing you and watching each of you work so hard to get to this point. I am happy to share in this excitement.

Be proud of what you have accomplished. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Always remember: There is no limit to what you can do if you keep believing in yourself.

All the best,

Julie Ann Howell

Julie Ann Howell | Administrative Support Specialist