Dear Friends:

Two years ago, we launched the Population Health Initiative with the goal of bringing our University together with external partners in a more interdisciplinary and collaborative way to speed progress toward improving health and well-being here and around the world. Our vision is grand in scale, but our work proceeds in the knowledge that ultimately, it is the health of communities — and the people in them — that matters.

This work is about the homeless teenager who can get foot care and a hot cup of coffee through the Doorway Project pop-up cafés. And it’s about the pregnant Somali immigrant who meets with a doula who understands her culture, thereby improving her prenatal health care. Each story matters — and together, they reflect the strength of our momentum and our growing capacity to create impact.

Significant early progress has been made toward realizing our vision of creating a world where all people can live healthier and more fulfilling lives. We have completed key foundational work, such as defining what we mean by “population health,” mapping the current landscape of population health work already underway across the UW, and developing vision and mission statements for the initiative.

Three grand challenges were identified to provide initial focus for the Population Health Initiative’s work. Accompanying resources were deployed to support the development of innovative solutions to these grand challenges, including two rounds of population health pilot research grants and funding for new population health faculty hires.

Several internally focused projects were launched to make it easier for University faculty, students and staff to engage in the collaborative work that is needed to make long-term improvements to population health. Exciting new external partnerships in sectors ranging from government to industry are also beginning to emerge, with each potential collaboration offering new opportunities for our University to support on-the-ground implementation of innovations and proven best practices.

The initiative’s work has received extraordinary philanthropic support through a transformative $210 million gift from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the construction of a population health building. The building’s central location on the Seattle campus will facilitate its mission of being a convening space for the faculty, students, staff and partners from a range of disciplines who are improving population health. It opens in 2020.

Above all, our progress has been marked by the eager engagement and involvement of people across our institution and community who seek to add their voices, talents and inspiration to this shared vision. We welcome and encourage you to reach out with your ideas and enthusiasm, because only through collaboration and cross-pollination can this audacious vision for population health be fully realized.

Sincerely,

Ana Mari Cauce
President
Professor of Psychology
WHAT IS POPULATION HEALTH?

Population health seeks to understand and improve all the factors that influence our health and well-being. This broad approach encompasses not only the elimination of diseases and injuries, but also the intersecting and overlapping factors that influence health.

Together, the three pillars of population health — human health, environmental resilience, and social and economic equity — affect the lives of billions of people around the world.

These pillars encompass many interrelated issues — mobility, policy and governance, poverty, racism, infrastructure, access to technology, urban planning and more. Working holistically to improve each area can influence health and well-being both here and around the globe.

WHAT DOES THE INITIATIVE ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE?

Our vision: The Population Health Initiative seeks to create a world where all people can live healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our mission: The Population Health Initiative addresses the most persistent and emerging challenges in human health, environmental resilience, and social and economic equity. Through partnerships with local, national and global communities, we develop, implement and disseminate transformative knowledge through the UW’s research, service and teaching.
WHERE DO WE START?

Making significant improvements in population health requires tenacious, disciplined and creative work. We will maximize our impact as a university by working initially to address three grand challenges that populations face locally, nationally and around the world.

**Nurturing brain, behavior and capability development:**
Achieving emotional, psychological and social well-being by increasing social and economic opportunity and access; supporting people’s motivation and self-determination for behavior change; and improving prevention of, recovery from and cures for mental illness.

**Bolstering healthy starts for children, adolescents and families:**
Addressing the health and well-being of children, from a mother’s prenatal health through a child’s adolescence, and working to enhance cognitive, physical, emotional and social development.

**Strengthening community resilience and capacity:**
Fortifying the interdependent institutions of local, national and international communities in the context of their natural and built environments, increasing their ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from disruptions to the systems that support thriving human populations.
IMPACT THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

The Population Health Initiative will meet our three grand challenges by collaborating across disciplines to cultivate innovative ideas and harness our research to find powerful solutions. Initial funding for this work has come primarily from two sources: population health research grants and bridge funding for population health faculty hires.

Population health pilot research grants

In 2017 and 2018, the initiative awarded 13 pilot research grants of $50,000 each to faculty-led teams from 16 schools and colleges across the University’s campuses in Seattle, Bothell and Tacoma. This $650,000 in funding was matched by additional school, college and departmental funds, more than doubling the total value of these awards to roughly $1.33 million. The funded projects include:

- Investigating how West Coast fisheries could contribute to healthier diets for low-income populations
- Developing an evidence-based psychosocial intervention training for lay counselors to help expand access to mental health services in underserved communities
- Improving health in an informal urban “floating community” in Peru through interventions in the built and natural environment
- Addressing health disparities faced by rural underserved agricultural communities in Washington state by developing a community health-educator program

The initiative has funded additional faculty pilot awards through partnerships with CoMotion, the UW Office of Global Affairs and the UW Simpson Center for the Humanities.

Bridge funding for faculty hires

The initiative funded three new faculty positions to focus on innovative solutions to the three grand challenges. These awards, a four-year “bridge” against future retirements, required proposal of a joint hire between two or more academic departments.

- Developing population-level innovations for local early-childhood interventions (Nursing and Public Health)
- Improving global maternal, adolescent and child mental health (Global Health and Psychology)
- Addressing the coupled issues of health and environment in Arctic communities (Marine and Environmental Affairs and American Indian Studies)

Departments represented by pilot grant awards

- Allergy & Infectious Diseases
- Anthropology
- Aquatic and Fishery Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Bioengineering
- Biomedical Informatics and Medical Education
- Chemistry
- Civil & Environmental Engineering
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Dentistry
- Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences
- Epidemiology
- Evans School of Public Policy & Governance
- Family and Child Nursing
- Family Medicine
- Global Health
- Health Services
- History
- Human Centered Design & Engineering
- Immunology
- Information School
- Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences (Bothell)
- Landscape Architecture
- Law
- Marine and Environmental Affairs
- Medicine
- Microbiology
- Near Eastern Languages & Civilization
- Neurology
- Nursing & Health Studies (Bothell)
- Oral Health Sciences
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
- Psychology
- Psychosocial and Community Health
- Rehabilitation Medicine
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (Bothell)
- Speech & Hearing Sciences
- Neurology
- Nutrition
- Social Work
- Social Work and Criminal Justice (Tacoma)
ENRICHING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The initiative’s initial outreach to students, trainees, faculty and employers identified a need for greater access to, and support for, interdisciplinary and experiential learning. Following are some examples of early efforts to meet these needs.

Undergraduate research course at UW Bothell
In the Spring 2017 Research in Progress series at UW Bothell, University investigators from varying disciplines discussed how their research seeks to improve the health and well-being of populations. Topics ranged from the ethics of caring for aging populations in mass incarceration to how augmented and virtual reality applications can address health issues.
Undergraduate research course on the UW campus in Seattle
The Population Health Initiative partnered with the UW's Undergraduate Research Program to offer a series of faculty lectures during winter quarter 2018. Topics included the prevalence of health disparities around the country and the world, the health impact of increasing the minimum wage, and developing resilience to climate variability and change.

Undergraduate and graduate student awards
The Population Health Initiative granted an initial round of Graduate Student Conference Travel Awards to further the academic, research or professional goals of 13 graduate students as they strive to become the next generation of leaders in population health. These competitive awards were open to graduate students on all three UW campuses who had been accepted to present at a conference, symposium or other professional or academic meeting.

Similar travel awards were granted to four undergraduate students. In addition, 16 undergraduates received Population Health Recognition Awards for their innovative and well-presented population health research at the Undergraduate Research Symposium. Four students also received Population Health Recognition Awards for their submissions to the annual Library Research Award for Undergraduates.

“The UW Population Health Initiative Graduate Student Conference Travel Award made it possible for me to establish myself in a new research area that more directly relates to my long-term career goals.”
— Sarah Edmunds, Ph.D. candidate in psychology

Student engagement with leading population health experts
The Population Health Initiative partnered with the UW Graduate School to bring Dr. Donna Shalala, former U.S. Secretary for Health and Human Services, to the University as part of the Jessie and John Danz Lecture Series. Her public lecture, “Healthcare for All: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?” detailed how the U.S. health-care system has evolved and discussed the resulting challenges and opportunities for ensuring health-care coverage for every citizen.

As part of her visit, Dr. Shalala held five roundtable discussions with graduate students from the Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, the College of the Environment, the School of Medicine, the School of Public Health, the School of Social Work and the Department of Sociology. Topics ranged from how best to translate research discoveries into policy to the most effective means of communicating scientific findings.
BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

The initiative serves as a front porch for outside partners and collaborators who seek to engage the University in working to improve population health. We are a conduit for local, national and international academic institutions, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, corporations and others, helping these partners to easily and seamlessly explore and engage the full breadth of population health–related disciplines at the UW.

Case study: Local and state government

The initiative is exploring stronger collaborations with local and state government on population health projects. Initial efforts have raised awareness among government units about the breadth and depth of the UW’s population health expertise, with the goal of integrating better across existing work and exploring areas for new partnerships.

The UW has a successful track record of academic–government sector collaborations that can be leveraged in achieving this goal. For example, the UW Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation recently partnered with Public Health–Seattle & King County to analyze individual neighborhoods in the county to identify disparities in how long people live and the health issues they face. Graduate students from the Evans School of Public Policy & Governance intern regularly in departments across King County, while faculty from the College of Arts & Sciences have engaged with the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s office on several criminal justice research projects. These examples and others are building blocks on which the UW can establish future population health collaborations with King County and other government entities.
Case study: The Aga Khan University and Aga Khan Development Network

In June 2017, the Population Health Initiative hosted representatives from The Aga Khan University (AKU) — an international institution with locations in Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and the United Kingdom — to explore partnering opportunities across many disciplines. During that two-day visit, the initiative facilitated small-group discussions between AKU representatives and UW faculty and staff representing 27 different departments and units.

One immediate outcome of the visit was the launch of a new international internship program for UW undergraduate and graduate students, providing population health-focused training opportunities in East Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South Asia. Under this five-year agreement, AKU and other agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network will offer internships to UW students in a range of fields including architecture, communications, engineering, environment, finance, the health sciences and teacher education.

Also as a result of the visit, some individual UW faculty and Aga Khan Development Network staff have begun exploring more possibilities for partnerships, and several of the UW’s health sciences schools are working closely with AKU’s Medical College of East Africa. These collaborations include the launch of a distinguished lecture series, on-the-ground training to build local capacity for clinical research, and joint grant submissions.
BUILDING A CAMPUS HOME FOR POPULATION HEALTH

In October 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided significant support to the Population Health Initiative with a $210 million gift that will serve as a catalyst for the UW’s population health vision. This gift, which was also supported by $20 million in state funds, makes possible the construction of a new building to house several UW units working in population health.

The new building will serve as a gathering place where faculty, students and collaborators from many University departments and global partners can come together in their work. When completed in 2020, the building will house the UW Department of Global Health, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, and portions of the School of Public Health.

The building will also act as a convening space for Population Health Initiative activities, where students, faculty, trainees and visitors from a wide range of relevant disciplines can exchange ideas, develop projects and prepare for careers that will advance population health locally and globally.

The facility will be located on the east side of 15th Ave. NE, just south of the intersection with NE 40th St. and north of the Physics-Astronomy Building.
“This location demonstrates the centrality of this initiative to our University. This site will enable students and experts from a full range of disciplines across the UW to more easily collaborate on solutions to the grand challenges we face.”

— Ana Mari Cauce, UW President

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The Population Health Initiative made tremendous strides in its first two years, but much remains to be done. Our continued success in areas ranging from the development of new partnerships to the design of new programs requires the support of collaborators across our three campuses and of external partners. Join us in our quest to create a world where all people can live healthier and more fulfilling lives. Visit [uw.edu/populationhealth](http://uw.edu/populationhealth) to find out more about how you can get involved.
uw.edu/populationhealth