Dear HSR Students, Alumni, and Partners,

Greetings! Hope you are well.

My name is Yoshi Iwasaki (http://www.sjsu.edu/hsr/about/faculty/deptchair/index.html). Few months ago on August 15th, I started my new role as the Chair of the Department of Health Science and Recreation in the College of Health and Human Sciences at SJSU. These first few months have re-assured me that the pursuit of this role is an extremely worthwhile “endeavor/journey,” surrounded by all the talented and enthusiastic people within, and partnered with, our department that has a lot of potentials for sustainable growth and meaningful transformation.

Looking back and reflecting on over 20 years of my academic career within public higher-education settings in the United States and Canada, I wholeheartedly embrace the central role of “engagement” in our collaborative work. To me, engagement is about being respectful and appreciative/grateful of differences, through communicating and co-learning with our students, our alumni, our faculty and staff, and our community and professional partners together. Meaningful engagement with all of our stakeholders in an inclusive, transparent, and empowering way through power-sharing, is both important and essential in order to advance the mission of our department together. For this purpose, I would like to sincerely invite all of you to work with me and be engaged in our “journey” to take our department to the next level and co-create/co-build our prosperous future together.

One immediate action that I have initiated to facilitate is our collaborative process for strategic “journey” planning and execution. With our commitment to high quality, student-centered education and service, guided by our community-minded, applied/career-focused, and interdisciplinary orientations, we have decided that we respectfully engage and work with our students and alumni from the beginning and throughout its entire process. For this reason, I have requested nominations within our HSR community for joining our committee in order to co-create/co-build our department together!
This is a very important committee that is comprised of: (a) three program coordinators, (b) three additional faculty members (representing each of our three programs), (c) several students, (d) several alumni, and (d) me as the department chair. This diverse/inclusive, cross-departmental committee discusses and makes recommendations about many key issues that influence the future direction of our department, ranging from teaching and curriculum (including internships/community-service learning), student advising and service, research and scholarship, and alumni relations, to the identity and purpose of our department, and partnerships with our professions and communities, to name a few, from both immediate and long-term perspectives.

Collectively, this representative team of committee members work together to co-create our plan for the sustainable growth of our department, as well as to facilitate the implementation of the plan. Therefore, both strategic planning and actions are integrated into this collaborative, iterative process. Importantly, this committee has a diverse, broad representation of our students and alumni, including those from public health and recreation programs at undergraduate and graduate levels. For some reason, if you have not received my invitation for joining the committee and would like to participate and contribute, it is not too late — please let me know immediately.

In closing, I would like to remind you that my door is always open. Please feel free to stop by my office (SPX 202), call me (408-924-1318), and/or email me (yoshitaka.iwasaki@sjsu.edu). Mutually respectful, open/transparent communications and dialogues are the key for the sustainable growth and meaningful transformation of our department, as well as through power-sharing, engagement, and empowerment. Clearly, our alumni and students play a most important role in co-creating/co-building the prosperous future of the Department of Health Science and Recreation in the College of Health and Human Sciences at SJSU. I sincerely look forward to working with you all!