

Board of Governors Citizen Scholar Program

2021-2022 Nomination Form

<u>Emily Fessler</u>	<u>M02938974</u>
Student's name	Student ID
<u>4006 S Lone Pine Ave Unit 214, Springfield, MO 65804</u>	
Student's Local Address	
<u>(920) 912-4579</u>	<u>Sheboygan, Wisconsin</u>
Student's Telephone Number	Student's Hometown
<u>Master of Public Health Program</u>	<u>4.0</u> <u>Spring 2022</u>
Student's Major	GPA Graduation Date
<u>Dalen Duitsman</u>	<u>836-5550</u>
Nominator's Name	Nominator's Campus Phone
<u>Director OPHI, Full Professor MPH Program</u>	<u>002 PCOB</u>
Nominator's Title	Nominator's Office Address

Respond to the questions below, attaching additional pages as needed. Please type submissions. A copy of the student's résumé should also be attached. Two additional letters of support are required. Complete packets are due by September 9, 2021.

1. Please indicate, based on the selection criteria provided in this nomination packet, a list of the student's accomplishments that makes him or her eligible for consideration for this award.
2. In what way is your nominee different from other strong student members of the university community? List specific examples where the nominee demonstrates strength of character or other defining qualities. If possible, elaborate on your candidate and include personal stories and experiences that support your nomination.
3. In your opinion, what is your nominee's most significant achievement?
4. Provide any additional information you wish to share.

Please note that once nominations are closed all candidates will receive written interview questions from the Board of Governors' Citizen Scholar Selection Committee.

Please return completed nomination packets **by September 9, 2021** to:
Office of Student Affairs – Carrington Hall 200 (417) 836-5526 or studentaffairs@missouristate.edu



Missouri State
UNIVERSITY

September 13, 2021

Office of Student Affairs
Missouri State University
Carrington Hall 200
901 S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO 65897

Dear Citizen Scholar Selection Committee, Board of Governors:

I am writing this letter to nominate Emily Fessler for the 2021-2022 Board of Governors' Citizen Scholar Award. Emily is one of the most capable and committed students that I have had the pleasure of working with. I serve as her supervisor for her Graduate Assistantship in the Missouri State University Ozarks Public Health Institute (OPHI) and as one of her professors in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program. I have known Emily since her acceptance into the MPH program. She currently serves as the President of the Future Public Health Professionals (FPHP) student organization. As such, she organizes and leads the meetings, coordinates activities and seeks additional experiences to enhance the academic training of its members. Emily has been an outstanding President of this organization and as the faculty sponsor I can say with confidence that she is one of the very best who have served in this position. Emily also serves as the student representative on the Board of the Missouri Public Health Association (MPHA). MPHA is the oldest and most prestigious Public Health professional organization in Missouri. Only one Public Health student is chosen from all of the Universities in Missouri to serve in this position. The MPHA student representative communicates with all of the other University Public Health student organizations to keep them abreast of the MPHA developments and to solicit their input on timely board issues and conference sessions. Emily also worked with the MPHA Legislative Chair in monitoring bills that impacted Public Health.

Besides her significant involvement with FPHP and MPHA, Emily is the Student Director and Education Chair of Paws to the Polls and a member of SW Missouri League of Women's Voters. She does legislative watch for the League on healthcare related bills, and she is also a Deputy Registrar for them. Emily is one of the founding members for Paws to Polls which is a nonpartisan student led campus initiative designed to increase voter literacy and voter participation among college students. For this organization, she wrote, presented, and obtained a grant for \$6,000 from the Student Government Association. Emily does tabling, classroom presentations, voter simulation activities, and other voting events for Paws to Polls as well.

Due to the high vaccine hesitancy rate in Springfield, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) deployed several staff members to Springfield. CDC contacted the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to determine who their staff should work with in Springfield. They were advised to contract the Springfield/Greene County Health Department and myself at OPHI. The CDC staff working with OPHI were given space in our offices in Park Central Office Building (PCOB) to serve as their base of operation. As one of OPHI's Graduate Assistants, Emily was asked to work with the CDC staff. She became the point person in arranging focus groups conducted in two census tracts in NW Springfield, she co-presented with CDC staff on the focus group training, assisted in the development of the focus group questions, organized focus group teams, deployed teams to different locations, transcribed responses and organizes our ongoing meetings with CDC.

In conclusion, Emily is truly an exemplary student. Without a doubt, she is in the top 1% of most capable and promising students that I have worked with in my 34+ years of University experience. In conclusion, I believe that Emily has a superlative record of community service and would make an ideal candidate for the Citizen Scholar Award. Please accept my official nomination of Ms. Emily Fessler, and do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dalen Duitsman
Missouri State University
OPHI Director
Professor MPH Program
DalenDuitsman@MissouriState.edu
417-836-5550



Missouri State
UNIVERSITY

September 15, 2021

Office of Student Affairs
Missouri State University
Carrington Hall 200
901 S. National Avenue
Springfield, MO 65897

Dear Members of the Citizen Scholar Award Selection Committee,

I write to recommend Ms. Emily Fessler for a Citizen Scholar Award at Missouri State University. I have known Emily since the fall of 2017, when she transferred to MSU and joined us as a student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I have known Emily in various capacities since her arrival, and can thus offer an abundance of information about her noteworthy accomplishments. She took Anthropology classes with me, worked with me as a Work Study assistant, and now works with me in a leadership capacity for a major campus public affairs endeavor. Due to her stellar academic achievements, significant contributions to the MSU community and to the community at large, I strongly believe she is a deserving recipient of this honor.

Emily's actions have resulted in a positive impact for many, with two primary endeavors as her most significant contributions: 1) Her contribution to the vision, development, and implementation of a campus voter education initiative, which has helped to create meaningful change at Missouri State University; and, 2) Her intensive and sustained work with the Ozarks Public Health Institute and visiting personnel from the Centers for Disease Control, which have contributed to efforts of making our community healthier and safer for all.

Emily's academic record is stellar. One glance at her transcript says it all, but I've also had the fortunate experience of having her as a student in three upper-level Anthropology classes. Emily performed exceptionally, scoring consistently at the top of the class. Her written work was excellent, and her class presentations impressive. She demonstrated motivation and initiative in choosing to present her original research work at our student anthropology conference, where she won an award for best paper of that year. Emily's class projects and papers were consistently thoughtful, well-organized, and innovative. In my Action Anthropology class, she focused her action on an international mapping project, Missing Maps. In this way, she contributed data to help map areas where humanitarian organizations try to assist people in locations where disaster has struck. Her trifold presentation, which was open to the public and held in the Plaster Student Union, demonstrated how others could also contribute to this important project simply with a bit of extra time, a cell phone, and a desire to help others in need.

I was happy and grateful when Emily offered her time to volunteer as my teaching assistant in a basic biological anthropology class so she could help me while obtaining some teaching and curatorial

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

901 South National Avenue, Springfield, MO 65897 • Phone: 417-836-5640 • Fax: 417-836-6416

soc-ant.missouristate.edu • SociologyAnthropology@MissouriState.edu

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Minority/Female/Veterans/Disability/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity Employer and Institution

experience. I felt even more fortunate when I realized what an indispensable helper she was. I subsequently requested that she work with me in that capacity through Work Study, and she spent the next few semesters, until her graduation, doing just that. She would appear before I could even summon her, paying more attention to the syllabus than I did, helping make sure all worked like a well-oiled machine. She kept office/lab hours and assisted students who requested it, and reached out to those who I suggested might need extra help. Emily was even mentioned in some of the evaluations as being a significantly helpful part of their learning experience.

Emily has always taken the initiative to seek out additional experience as well as ways to contribute to the community. This includes volunteer work, research experience, and academic preparedness beyond Anthropology. She has worked as a volunteer for Girls on the Run, Ozarks Blood Drive, Ozark Science and Engineering Fair, Discovery Center of Springfield, Springfield Dream Center, and Springfield Environmental Services. She has also interned with AIDS Project of the Ozarks. Her time management skills far exceed those of most people I know, because some of this she accomplished as a full-time student with a job as Admissions Ambassador at MSU, *and* working as an undergraduate classroom assistant with me. And, last but not least, while earning a transcript full of A grades. She also traveled to Nicaragua as part of a volunteer program and wrote up the results of her brief studies there.

Her role as Admissions Ambassador on campus provided her the vehicle to serve as an effective advocate of Missouri State University. She possesses institutional knowledge uncommon for a student, and her various roles on campus, together with her gregarious nature and interest in others, allowed her to know fellow students in leadership roles as well as many faculty and staff members. Some of these individuals have served as important connections and support for our campus voter education efforts.

As Emily moved closer to graduation, she realized that her holistic anthropological perspective would provide her with a strong foundation for a graduate education in public health, and she was excited about the opportunity to continue learning at and contributing to the MSU community. She was accepted into the Master of Public Health Program and offered a graduate assistantship working for the Ozarks Public Health Institute. This program and the associated experiences she has obtained have allowed her to combine her knowledge of human culture, health issues and health policy, together with her passion for all of the pillars of public affairs. Her work with the OPHI led to the opportunity to interact with CDC employees and implement techniques from both public health and anthropology in conducting focus groups and interviews. I was proud and impressed to read newspaper articles citing Emily's recent contribution to investigating the spike of COVID-19 cases in Springfield.

The public affairs action with which Emily has played a central role, and which stands out for me is the formation of a campus voter education initiative. From a young age, Emily was instilled with the importance of civic engagement, which later translated into her role as a proponent of civic engagement at Missouri State University. A number of students from my Action Anthropology class agreed with me about the vital importance of upholding the right to vote and for facilitating access to the democratic process among college students. We also shared the frustration about the average citizen having difficulty obtaining unbiased sources of political information. I invited this group, Emily among them, to meet in February of 2020. This meeting turned into weekly meetings, which birthed the campus voter education initiative, Paws to the Polls. Zoom meetings became necessary as COVID interrupted lives all over the world, but we kept on, and this group of dedicated students continued to impress.

Emily was foremost among them, and continues as one of the student leaders of the initiative. She immediately recognized the significance of peer-to-peer engagement for our efforts. Her words convey her rationale and her passions, and she continues to translate them into action.

“I knew that there was a large gap between our public affairs mission and students actually being involved in our community through civic engagement. I believe that this initiative has the opportunity to make long and lasting effects on Missouri State by educating students on the voting process, the impacts of voting, and how to think critically about ballot issues and candidates. While it takes some time to change the culture of a university, there are students that are passionate about this and truly want to see MSU as a voting campus. I believe we can get there.”

(Quote from her contribution to our e-Journal of Public Affairs piece in the fall of 2020, “Paws to the Polls: the making of a campus initiative”)

An abbreviated list of Emily’s contributions as a central figure and a student leader of Paws to the Polls includes: taking the initiative on writing a successful proposal for funding from the Student Government Association and serving as its proponent at SGA meetings, working on budgeting, voter education materials, helping to develop curriculum for GEP courses on voter education, helping organize classroom and campus group presentations, tabling for countless hours to register voters and provide voter information. Most recently, as the result of a presentation she was invited to give to area high school student leaders about voting and about Paws to the Polls, she has initiated a new partnership with a student volunteer coordinator at Greenwood School to expand voter education and voter registration opportunities for students there. It has been a privilege to work with her toward a common goal that can benefit many.

Several months ago, Emily sent me an email expressing concern about some health-related bills moving through the Missouri legislature and showed me letters she wrote in protest to recommend a healthier path for our state. I realized that she could fulfill an important role in the League of Women Voters. Emily immediately agreed, joined the League, and began to conduct the legislative reporting at the state level for health-related bills. She impressed the local League president and the state-wide representatives she reported to with her clear and thorough reporting. Through the League, Emily also took the initiative to train as a deputy registrar so she can officially register voters both on and off campus.

Her character shines as a citizen who demonstrates, through her behavior, involvement, and dedication, her ethical behavior and leadership abilities. The Citizen Scholar Award will allow recognition of Emily Fessler’s contributions and accomplishments, all the more incredible considering they were compressed into only a four-year span of time within a young person’s life.

Emily came to us as a student who wanted to make a difference. Mission accomplished. I look forward to enjoying a front-row seat as I watch the rest of her future unfold, and am confident that the contributions she has made to the public affairs mission in our community are the beginning of a lifetime of thoughtful and dedicated contributions to humankind.

Thank you for your consideration,



Suzanne E. Walker-Pacheco, Ph.D.
Professor of Anthropology



Southwest Missouri Area Health Education Center

September 13, 2021

Office of Student Affairs
Missouri State University
Carrington Hall 200
901 S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO 65897

Dear Citizen Scholar Selection Committee, Board of Governors:

I would like to nominate Emily Fessler for the 2021-2022 Board of Governors' Citizen Scholar Award. I am the Project Coordinator for the Southwest Area Health Education Center (SWAHEC) here at Missouri State University. The SWAHEC is housed under the Ozarks Public Health Institute (OPHI). I supervise Emily on work she does for the SWAHEC and I have collaborated with her on projects for OPHI. Emily is a very driven student and has excelled in all areas of academics, community engagement and leadership especially during her time here at Missouri State University. She is a full-time student in the Master of Public Health (MPH) program, and she is completing a graduate certificate in Health Programming at MSU. Her future plans include completion of a doctoral program in medical anthropology to further her studies in how public health, illness, and social interrelationships are affected. She would like to develop a joint program in her professorship combining both public health and medical anthropology disciplines.

Emily is highly engaged with multiple student organizations here at MSU. She is President of the Future Public Health Professionals and is the Student Director of Paws to the Polls. She just participated in the Student Organization Festival this August with Paws to the Polls to get students interested in contributing to the public affairs mission through increased civic engagement and improved voter literacy. Being well informed about the policies that affect our community is so important especially with recent health policies that have been introduced into the State legislature. She also tracked recent legislation for the Missouri Public Health Association, particularly bills which would impact public health across the state.

As President of the Future Public Health Professionals (FPHP) group, she has taken the lead role in increasing engagement with students, securing speakers to present at regular meetings and initiated a joint event with other health profession groups so that we can network across different health-based disciplines.

This summer, Emily worked directly with the CDC to train a group of graduate public health students on motivational interviewing techniques that were used in community canvassing in Springfield, MO, to obtain rapid qualitative results on perceptions of COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. Focus areas included census tracts that had the lowest vaccine rates to date.



Southwest Missouri Area Health Education Center

Having worked professionally alongside Emily, I just can't say enough about her abilities. She is excellent to work with and very passionate about the work that she does. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions about my wholehearted recommendation. She would be an excellent candidate for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassandra Henne', written over a faint dotted line.

Cassandra Henne

Project Coordinator

Southwest Missouri Area Health Education Center

Ozarks Public Health Institute

O: 417-836-3229/417-836-3260

chenne@missouristate.edu

Emily A. Fessler
Springfield, MO
ereichgeld@gmail.com
(920) 912-4579

Education:

Missouri State University – Springfield, MO

Master's of Public Health Expected Graduation: Jul 2022
Concentration: Health Equity, SDoH, and Environmental Health GPA: 4.00/4.00

Health Programming Graduate Certificate Expected Graduation: Jul 2022
GPA: 4.00/4.00

Bachelor of Science in Anthropology, minor in Sustainability May 2020
Concentration: Biocultural with an emphasis in Environmental Health GPA 3.98/4.00

Ripon College - Ripon, WI

Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science Years Attended: 2015-2016
Major: Environmental Science GPA: 3.60/4.00

Notable Projects:

Rapid Qualitative Research with the CDC Jul 2021-Present

- Presented with the CDC on Motivational Interviewing techniques for vaccine hesitancy
- Coordinated 10 MPH students for the CDC and Springfield-Greene Co. Health Department to do Rapid Qualitative Research in Census Tracts 19 & 33 of the greater Springfield, MO area
- Worked XXX hours with the CDC on community conversations, social messaging, and COVID-19 vaccine uptake

State of Missouri Tobacco Prevention Program Evaluation Jan 2021-Present

- Assist with statistical analysis of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services tobacco prevention program to determine its effectiveness.
- Evaluate all school district tobacco policies in Missouri to create an action plan of institutional improvements

Healthier MO: Transforming the Future of Public Health in Missouri Jun 2020-Present

- Created toolbox for local health agencies which contains resources to assist agencies in alignment with the National Public Health Performance Standards.
- Research organizations and grants to determine potential revenue to fund transformation of the state's public health infrastructure.

SW AHEC Hospital Collaboration Dec 2020-Jan 2021

- Contacted all hospitals within 21 counties to identify entry-level job training opportunities for rural students.
- Created an internal database to document job training opportunities and contact information for human resources and education departments overseeing opportunities.
- Created a database of opportunities by counties for external stakeholders.

Work Experience:

Ozarks Public Health Institute and SWMO Area Health Education Center

Graduate Assistant

Jun 2020-Present

- Organizing and researching various data repositories for preceptor development and rank
- Entering data into the statewide data portal APEX
- Assisting with healthcare related workshops for health professionals and high school students
- Assisting with the AHEC Scholars program curriculum
- Contacting clinics to recruit physicians for mentoring medical students
- Manage website updates for both SWMO AHEC and OPHI

AIDS Project of the Ozarks

Intern

Jan 2019-May 2019

- Data collection, evaluation, analysis and reporting of HIV/AIDs and STIs of 29 counties in Missouri to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and Centers for Disease Control

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, MSU

Research and Teaching Assistant

Jan 2018-May 2020

- Created a documentation system of skeletons and bones.
- Responsible for the curation of artifacts
- Graded homework and exams for Exploring our Human Ancestry and Biological Anthropology courses.
- Provided study materials, resources and held office hours for students in aforementioned classes.

Presentations:

Public Affairs Academy, MSU

Paws to the Polls: The Making of a Grassroots Movement

Jul 2021

Department of Public Health and Sports Medicine, MSU

Social Determinants of Health

Apr 2021

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Dec 2020

Department of Sociology and Anthropology, MSU

Missing Maps: Humanitarian Aid for Natural Disasters & Epidemics

Dec 2019

Landscaping Coffee: Agroforestry in Latin America

Nov 2018

Department of Geography, Geology, and Planning, MSU

Health Impacts of War in Sudan

Dec 2019

Student Anthropology Conference, MSU

Collections Analysis: Contagious Magic and Negative Reciprocity

Apr 2019

Award: 2nd Place

Missouri Public Health Association

- 2021 - Past, Present & Future of Public Health

Citizen Scholar Nomination Interview Questions

- 1) Personally, the Public Affairs mission at MSU is a way of thinking and going about life. When our students graduate and move into the professional world, they should be well-rounded individuals because of our Public Affairs mission. Community engagement, cultural competency, and ethical leadership aren't just skills. They are a specific way that our students think about dilemmas, issues, and the world. To me, this means that when I am faced with a challenge, I can fall back on who MSU shaped me into. I will know how to lead my life and my team members through situations that require me to be ethical in my choices. I know how to engage with my community and connect with stakeholders in a way to create meaningful relationships in my personal and professional life. As an MSU student, I know to view situations and people through a culturally competent lens. I can see where more diversity, equity, and justice are needed. I see the importance of representation and the benefit of diversity on teams, organizations, and communities. If we all think the same or see things the same way, we can never push forward. Innovation and problem solving requires new perspectives. I intend to work in work academia. My goal is to one day build a joint public health and medical anthropology program for graduate students. I believe that the two disciplines do very similar things, but have so much to learn from each other. By using MSU's Public Affairs mission, those three pillars can make that happen. Public health lacks cultural competency in many ways, medicine in general has a lot of health inequities, but by bringing sociocultural principles and ethics from anthropology, that can improve. Public health is fantastic at community engagement, but medical anthropology can be lacking in that area. By using methods from public health on building community and developing stakeholders, applied anthropology can be more impactful. Finally, ethical leadership is required in both disciplines. We see that right now occurring with public health and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ethical leadership is one of the most important qualities public health can have, especially in situations where quick, on the spot decisions need to be made. This is a skill that not many public health professionals have, it takes years to develop, but MSU gives our students the right tools to be an ethical leader. MSU's Public Affairs mission is not just 3 pillars that you learn in GEP and never use again, they are practical skills that our students will use everyday in both their professional and personal lives. It's a way to navigate our world.

- 2) I am the Student Liaison for the Missouri Public Health Association (MPHA). As a board member for MPHA, I have had wonderful opportunities to work with state health officials, local public health agencies, and other public health programs and students at campuses across Missouri. One of the things that I got involved with was legislative watch and advocacy during this year's past legislative session. COVID-19 has brought public health to the forefront of legislation and state concerns. During this past legislative session there were over 35 individual bills introduced that looked to bring down decades long public health capabilities and powers. This was not an isolated concern, attacks on public health systems were happening all across the U.S. However, Missouri receives the least amount of public health funding out of all U.S. states and territories, at \$7 per

person per year. With such a limited public health funding stream and an outdated public health system, this legislation was very disheartening. As my first time doing legislative advocacy, one of things I was tasked to do was to write to a Senate Committee advocating for Medicaid Expansion after it was removed from the Governor's Budget by the House of Representatives. The goal was to write to this Committee in the hopes that they would allocate the funds and reinsert Medicaid Expansion back into the budget. I wrote over 15 letters on behalf of MPHA to Senators, and unfortunately never heard back from any of them and Medicaid Expansion was not funded. To me, I viewed this as failure. Later, the Missouri Supreme Court would take up the Medicaid Expansion issue, and it was decided that it needed to be funded. However, when I look back on my participation in legislative advocacy this past session, I remembered how many dedicated public health professionals, organizations, and advocates I met. There's a lot of work that needs to be done for public health in our state, but that doesn't mean that people aren't doing it. There are a lot of people who are working so hard to improve our public health system and advocate for those whose voices aren't being heard, and that gives me hope that one day we can transform this system.

- 3) MSU has been one of the most impactful and meaningful experiences I've had. Who I am today and all I've accomplished is because of MSU. Three things that I am passionate about is justice, advocacy, and teaching, all of which have been fostered at MSU. Growing up, I came from a very low socioeconomic status and I am a first generation college student. I was raised in a community where I saw inequities everyday and knew that needed to change. The professors in my undergraduate and graduate programs at MSU have provided me with the tools and ability to channel my hunger for justice into constructive and meaningful projects and organizations. With the help of one of my undergraduate professors, I founded Paws to the Polls, a student-led campus initiative designed to increase voter literacy and voter participation at MSU. Starting this initiative and with my time working on the MPHA Board doing advocacy, I have found a passion in advocating for real system change. I worked as a Teaching Assistant for three years during my undergraduate program, and through that experience, I found that fostering and mentoring students was something that I was good at and really loved. This led me to my current career aspirations of working in higher education as a professor. The faculty at MSU really took the time to get to know me, saw where my skills and interests were, and helped me foster incredible passions for helping others. Without my experience at MSU over the last 5 years, I would not be who I am. As a first generation college student, who is in the process of applying to PhD programs, I would not be in this position if it wasn't for the University that molded and fostered my passions.

Award Recipient Information Form

Congratulations on being nominated and chosen as a Missouri State University Citizen Scholar!

The form below will be used for the presentation script to the Board of Governors, our Web page, and to prepare press releases within Springfield local media and recipient's hometown media outlets.

Please provide the requested information in sentence format and return the completed form via email to PeggyJones@MissouriState.edu by **5:00 p.m., October 29**. The fields are expandable.

1. Full Name and/or Nickname:

Emily Fessler

2. Preferred name for Certificate and publications:

Emily Fessler

3. The presenters of the award will want to make sure they pronounce your name correctly. Please include a phonetic pronunciation for our presenters.

Em-ily (Eh-mih-lee) Fess-ler (Fuh-eh-ss-luhr)

4. Hometown and High School:

Sheboygan, Wisconsin – Etude High School

5. Hometown media outlets:

Sheboygan Press, Sheboygan Sun, 101.5 WHBL (Radio)

6. Voting registration address (used for presentation at the Capitol in Jefferson City):

4006 S Lone Pine Ave Unit 214 Springfield, MO 65804

7. Expected Graduation Date:

July 2022

8. Immediate family members of Citizen Scholar recipients are encouraged to attend the dinner and award presentation. Please list the **names, full address and relationship** of those you wish to be accompany you on this auspicious occasion **(due to COVID members should be close family and will be sitting at the same table)**:

Cindi Reichgeld, 1524 N 37th St Apt D2 Sheboygan, WI, Mother

Adam Fessler, 4006 S Lone Pine Ave Unit 214 Springfield, MO, Husband

9. Family Members who are Missouri State Alum(s):

N/A

10. Family members currently enrolled as a student(s):

N/A

11. What is your favorite thing about being a Missouri State student?

My favorite thing about being a Missouri State student is all the amazing opportunities to work on research, connect with the community, and help solve real problems. Through my relationships with faculty and staff, I have had fantastic opportunities to be connected with things greater than myself and the University. I've gotten the chance to form real and lasting connections with professionals all over the state and country.

12. What is one of your best accomplishments or favorite memories as a student?

One of my favorite memories as a Missouri State student comes from my undergraduate experience as a University Ambassador. As a University Ambassador, I had the chance to connect with potential students from all over and help encourage them to find their place at MSU. On one of my summer tours, I got to meet two nontraditional students who were looking to move from Arkansas and transfer to another University. I made such a great connection with them, that they came back for two more tours and ironically ended up with me as their Ambassador again. They fell in love with MSU through my guidance and found their home here. As a Graduate Student that was tabling one day, they came up and remembered me. They told me about how much of an impact I had made on them that they were in their second year here at MSU. Not only did they remember who I was, but they explained that the connection I had formed with them was so meaningful and impactful on their decision, that they couldn't see them getting an education anywhere else.

13. What are your plans for the future?

After I finish my MPH and Graduate Certificate this summer, I plan to work in the area and then move for my Doctoral Program. I intend to get either a PhD in Medical Anthropology or a DrPH in Public Health. My goal is to be a professor, merging the disciplines of Medical Anthropology and Public Health. My long-term goal is to one day create a joint master's program at a university.

14. How have your experiences prepared you for your future?

All of my experiences at MSU have prepared me in some way, whether that was my time as a University Ambassador teaching me how to connect with new people or my time as an intern with AIDs Project of the Ozarks developing my passion for prevention and education. My experience working as an undergraduate Teaching Assistant, taught me how to work with college students, encourage and motivate them, and develop my abilities and skills in academia. As a Graduate Assistant with Ozarks Public Health Institute, I have learned how to develop research and network with professionals in the field. Creating the campus initiative, Paws to the Polls, I have learned the importance of grassroots activism. Currently, as the Student Liaison for the Missouri Public Health Association, I have been learning how to do policy analysis and development. All of these experiences, in addition to my coursework and being involved in other student organizations, I have developed the necessary skills and abilities to move forward with a doctoral program and continue to make lasting change in my community.

15. Who is someone who has had a big impact on your life, and how/why?

My mom has had the biggest impact on my life. She is the strongest and most hardworking person I have ever gotten to know. As a first-generation college student, coming from a low socioeconomic background, I have seen how much she has given me. Not materially, but emotionally. She has provided me more encouragement, love, kindness, and support than anyone else. She taught me how to be hardworking and driven. She showed me how to manage my time, be a critical thinker, and be organized. All of which were vital in my success at college. Another person who has made a major impact on my life is Dr. Suzanne Walker-Pacheco. As my professor and boss in undergrad, she has helped mold and form my passions, support my work and achievements, and encourage me to use my strengths and power to make meaningful and lasting change in the world.

16. What advice would you offer to incoming students?

My biggest piece of advice to incoming students is to do what you love. As cliché as that sounds, don't be involved just to be involved. Be involved in things that you are truly passionate about, things that you can fully commit to and will be able to be whole heartily present for. Don't do a major or a program because of the money you will make, do it because you love it and are passionate about it. Your job won't feel like work if you love what you do. Take time to enjoy where you are. Be present with your peers, engage with the faculty, and build relationships with the staff because your time at MSU isn't measured by the courses you take, but by the experiences you leave with.

17. Other Comments:

Go Bears!