O. Elijah Asagbra, PhD joined the ECU faculty in 2016 as an assistant professor in the Department of Health Services and Information Management. He received his PhD in Health Services Administration specializing in strategic management from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is a certified professional in healthcare quality and holds a lean six sigma greenbelt for healthcare. His research interests intersect organizational structure and strategy, health information technology, and performance. He is especially interested in issues relating to hospital performance (quality and financial), information technology capabilities that facilitate patient engagement, and population health. He is married and passionate about community involvement and service.

What do you like best about working at ECU?

My colleagues and students. I receive unyielding support and mentorship from my colleagues, and I am honored to partake in such camaraderie. I also enjoy imparting knowledge to my students, and being able to play a small part in molding future healthcare leaders.

What do you find most exciting about your research and its potential?

My current research focuses on the use of technology in promoting patient engagement. Health information technology (HIT) has been lauded as a viable strategy to facilitate patient engagement, which has the potential for and promises to improve health outcomes and reduce health costs. I am specifically interested in investigating the factors that determine consistent and actual use of these HIT in communities because without proper adoption and use, any advantage provided by HIT for patient engagement may not be achieved. I am most excited for this research to foster collaboration and cooperation between key stakeholders in eastern NC communities in order to reap the promise and benefits of patient engagement.

What excites you about teaching?

As a junior member of faculty at ECU, I have come to realize that the era of the all-knowing professor is over. Students are exposed now to and are learning from a myriad of sources, including the internet and social media. This makes my role as the professor more exciting because I have to facilitate my students’ use of the correct information, and lead the discussions that may arise. Because learning and teaching have changed, I also strive to empower students to take ownership and become equal partners in the learning process. While not every student is eager to do so in the beginning, I am encouraged when I see students accept the responsibility and take charge of their learning. It makes me proud when they take an active role in their own development and not rely solely on the confines of their in-class lectures.
What do you hope students take away from their experiences from working with you on your research?

I believe research forms the basis for good decision making. While ultimately participation in research should be born out of curiosity, it is imperative that students in the health sciences be involved in research. Students should take away from their research experiences a robust understanding of how to think like a researcher, from the development of a research idea and the literature search, to the interpretation of results, and then making decisions given their findings.

What is your favorite teaching or research moment?

While everyone likes to receive a compliment now and again, my favorite moment was completely unexpected and almost disregarded. The moment came when I received my first recognition from the retention programs and undergraduate studies for being the person that made the most significant positive contribution to a student’s education.