

# 2021-2022

PROVOST

# *Annual Report*



**UTTyler**<sup>™</sup>

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

# A LETTER *from* THE PROVOST

## DEAR FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

Here at UT Tyler, we are blessed with great, hard-working faculty, staff and students, whose many accomplishments are captured in the attached report for the 2021-22 academic year. This past year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the university, as we also implemented our successful merger with UT Health Science Center at Tyler, receiving final approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

As part of our successful merger with the Health Science Center, we unified our health-related academic programs into the following four schools and colleges; led by Dr. Julie Philley, Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and Vice Provost; (1) School of Nursing; (2) Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy; (3) School of Health Professions; and (4) School of Medicine. Our School of Medicine was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), while also receiving

major philanthropic funding to completely underwrite the tuition of its first cohort starting in summer 2023. Our now standalone School of Nursing continued to receive high rankings for many of its programs, including a national ranking in the 2022 U.S. News & World Report for the MSN program and a No. 2 ranking in Texas by the Registered Nurse Organization for the RN-BSN program. We also have a newly formed School of Health Professions with four departments of Public Health; Kinesiology; Healthcare Policy, Economics & Management; and Rehabilitation Sciences.

This past year, UT Tyler moved up in the Carnegie Classification to R2, Doctoral University with High Research Activity - our second move in just three years, an incredible accomplishment by any standard. This year, we began the process for the decennial reaffirmation of our institutional accreditation through SACSCOC. We also received Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) STAR award for our effective management of the

pandemic during the prior two years. This year also marked the 25th anniversary of our College of Engineering, graduating our first chemical engineering majors, while receiving its highest US News & World Report ranking of 75 among all engineering schools in the nation without doctoral programs. Last fall, we celebrated the second year of record-breaking freshman class. Our Office of Research and Scholarship held the third East Texas Research Conference in spring 2022, focusing on a theme of research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

This coming year, we will be focusing on the completion of our decennial reaffirmation, our strategic planning process and our expanded online and micro-credentialing plans, as we aspire to serve our true role as the anchor institution in East Texas.



*Amir Mirmiran*

Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

Sam Lindsey Chair Professor



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# COLLEGE of ARTS & SCIENCES



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN DR. NEIL GRAY

As we near the end of another great academic year, I would like to congratulate our exceptional faculty, staff, and students for another productive year. They are the college, and I am honored to serve them. The faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences are extraordinary scholars, teachers and mentors. Their student focus is evident in everything they do, including scholarly and creative work. The diversity of the contributions our faculty make to understanding and improving the world around us is inspiring. Our faculty and students work on projects ranging from new ways to save endangered species, to building virus-like particles for the treatment of cancer, to analyzing important works of literature, to understanding culture and the societies that develop them, to creating beautiful and meaningful works of art and musical performance and more. The faculty also continue to earn recognition for their effective and innovative teaching achievements. Many UT Tyler's Regents' Outstanding Teaching Awards, the most prestigious teaching recognition given by the University of Texas System, have been received by faculty in the Arts and Sciences. Faculty have also received many other teaching awards.

We also have amazing students like Claire McGuire, a senior chemistry major, who recently received a National Institute of Standards and Technology Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in inelastic neutron scattering, and she also received an even more impressive a national Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship for her upcoming graduate work at SMU.

The Patriot Talon student newspaper, Debate Club and Model United Nations program are all housed in the Arts and Sciences and are the recipients of numerous awards and recognitions at regional

and national competitions. All these activities are open to students, regardless of their major and home college, and are coordinated by well-credentialed members of the faculty.

The College of Arts and Sciences is the pre-professional school of choice. Every year our graduates are continuing to top programs in dentistry, medicine, law and pharmacy. Others are staying with us and entering graduate programs in their area of interest in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The college has as its main mission to be instrumental in building and sustaining the middle class in its service area. Of the top 10 skills that employers seek in ideal employees, almost all have their home in Arts and Sciences. Skills like communication, critical thinking, creativity, reasoning, ethics and problem solving are all foundational skills for the Arts and Sciences. Because of the value of all our disciplines, our advisors are strong advocates for the double major, an initiative that can, with planning, be completed in a four-year time period.

The Arts and Sciences are the heart and soul of any university. We are the crossroads for all higher education. As bearers of this important responsibility, we are dedicated to the education of every student. Our goal is to ensure that every UT Tyler student has a strong and diverse skill set that will prepare them for the unprecedented challenges and opportunities in the 21st century.

*Dr. Neil Gray*

Professor of Chemistry & Dean  
of the College of Arts & Sciences

## ENGAGING STUDENTS IN RESEARCH: NSF REU IN MATHEMATICS

Drs. David Milan, Christy Graves and Madeline Dawsey completed the last year of their three-year grant for a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program funded by the National Science Foundation. Due to their excellent work, this grant has been approved for an additional three years, 2022-2024.

This grant funds the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) site in mathematics at The University of Texas at Tyler. The eight-week program will take place in the summers of 2022, 2023 and 2024. Each summer, 10 students will work in groups of three with one faculty mentor leading each group. The program focuses on building confidence of student participants and preparing them to go on to pursue careers in mathematics. The REU will have a greater effect by recruiting students from underrepresented groups. In particular, Hispanic students, women and first-generation college students will be recruited.

The goal of the REU is to give students an introduction to mathematical research that will help prepare them for and

encourage them to pursue PhDs in mathematics. The investigators believe that this program will have a greater effect by recruiting students from underrepresented groups.

In addition to daily research, REU participants will attend talks by former research students who are currently enrolled in graduate school and by other local faculty. They will have the opportunity to ask questions about graduate school and academic careers. Students will keep a daily research journal, and they will learn mathematical typesetting. The REU projects have been carefully chosen to be accessible to undergraduates with basic training in proof writing, but with the potential to produce novel results. The results will be presented at national conferences. It is expected that some projects will result in publications in peer-reviewed journals.

Students will have the opportunity to participate on research in a variety of important mathematical problems including number theory, reliability polynomials and inverse semigroups.



Dr. David Milan



Dr. Christy Graves



Dr. Madeline Dawsey

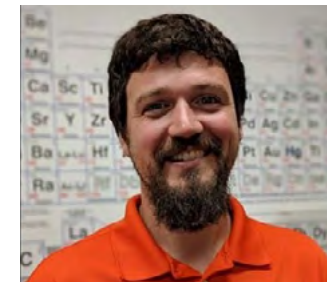
## AWARD-WINNING DESIGN: PROFESSOR VANESSA JOYNER



The College of Arts and Sciences is proud of the exceptional creative activity of Professor Vanessa Joyner, Associate Professor of Instruction in Communication. Her work earned her international attention that resulted in three Indigo Awards in 2022. She received a Silver Award in Graphic Design, a Silver Award in Package Design and a Bronze Award for Logo Design. Professor Joyner is responsible for teaching design courses that include publications design, visual design, web design, brand identity design and computer software applications. These

are representative of the rich scholarship and creative activity she uses to enrich her students learning.

## TEACHING EXCELLENCE: DR. DUSTIN PATTERSON

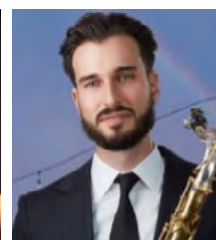


Dr. Dustin Patterson, Associate Professor of Biochemistry, is a finalist for the 2022 Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. His enthusiasm about teaching is obvious to all and extremely contagious. His teaching excellence has been recognized throughout his time at UT Tyler by his peers and

students when they awarded him the Jack and Dorothy Fay White Fellowship for Teaching Excellence, the Alpha Chi Outstanding Faculty Award and multiple departmental research awards for his excellent work with undergraduates in the lab.



Aubrey Logan



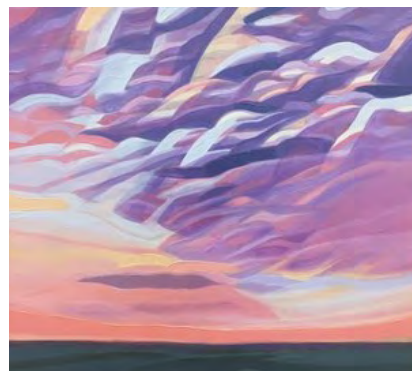
Chad LB

Dr. Sarah Roberts, Associate Professor of Music, had another very productive year with the UT Tyler Jazz Program. She developed and implemented one of the most successful youth camps at the university. The 2021 camp featured Aubrey Logan, accomplished jazz singer and trombone soloist. Logan won the Audience's Choice Award and the Jury's First Place Award at the 2009 Shure-Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. She was also

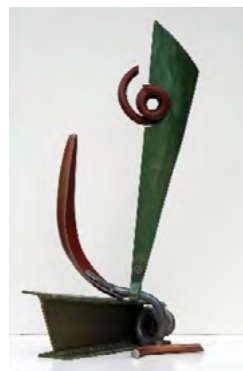
an American Idol in 2009. The 2022 camp featured Chad LB, hailed as a "Sax Phenom" by the New York Daily News, Chad LB has toured globally as a bandleader and with superstars ranging from Chris Botti to Taylor Swift. He has been a featured soloist with premiere ensembles like the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra, and he was formerly a prominent member of the multiple GRAMMY Award-winning Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra.

# FACULTY RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

The faculty had a productive year in scholarship with 41 solo or ensemble creative performances; nine creative productions; 55 journal articles; 88 national, international and state presentations; 27 book chapters and two books. Some examples of their extraordinary contributions to their disciplines are below.



**Rise**  
Professor  
Alexis Serio



**Articulated Orchid**  
Professor  
Duane Hughes

## KIN: THE SERIO-HUGHES FAMILY

Professors Alexis Serio and Dewane Hughes, Professors of Studio Art in the Department of Art & Art History, exhibited their work by invitation at The Kemp Center For The Arts Northlight Gallery in Wichita Falls, Texas. Their exhibition, “Kin: the Serio-Hughes Family,” involved multiple pieces from Serio and Hughes across sculpture and painting.



**Dr. Katrin Kellner**



**Dr. John Seal**

## MALE-BIASED DISPERSAL IN A FUNGUS-GARDENING ANT SYMBIOSIS

Drs. Katrein Kellner and Jon Seal in the Department of Biology published their progress in the investigation of the dispersal of the fungus-gardening ant *Trachymyrmex septentrionalis* using a combination of maternally inherited (mitochondrial DNA) and biparentally inherited (microsatellites) markers in the *Journal of Ecology and Evolution*. They found three distinct, spatially isolated mitochondrial DNA haplotypes; two were found in the Florida panhandle and the other in the Florida peninsula. In contrast, biparental markers illustrated significant gene flow across this region and minimal spatial structure. The

differential patterns uncovered from mitochondrial DNA and microsatellite markers suggest that most long-distance ant dispersal is male-biased and that females (and concomitantly the fungus) have more limited dispersal capabilities. Consequently, the limited female dispersal is likely an important bottleneck for the fungal symbiont. This bottleneck could slow fungal genetic diversification, which has significant implications for both ant hosts and fungal symbionts regarding population genetics, species distributions, adaptive responses to environmental change and coevolutionary patterns.



**Dr. Jordan Beaver**

## THE EFFECTS OF TEMPERATURE AND ETHANOL ON PROANTHOCYANIDIN ADSORPTION TO GRAPE CELL WALL MATERIAL IN THE PRESENCE OF ANTHOCYANINS

Published in *Molecules*, Dr. Jordan Beaver presented his progress on the quantitative and qualitative impacts of anthocyanins on proanthocyanidin adsorption to grape-derived cell wall material were investigated in 15 unique

systems of varying temperatures, ethanol concentrations and proanthocyanidin concentrations. Proanthocyanidin solutions were exposed to cell wall material and monitored for changes in concentration over 24 hours. Increases in both temperature and ethanol resulted in a larger retention of proanthocyanidins in solution and typically faster adsorption kinetics. Analysis of the solution after exposure to cell wall revealed a significant reduction in the molecular weight of

proanthocyanidins present in solution, suggesting that anthocyanins do not alter a previously described mechanism of preferentially binding large molecular weight molecules. Additionally, a reduction in polymeric pigment abundance was noted in most conditions, suggesting rapid formation of polymeric pigment in the model solution and preferential adsorption of the polymeric pigment to cell wall material. Compared to a previous study of proanthocyanidin adsorption in the absence of anthocyanins, a significantly larger percentage of proanthocyanidin material was lost via adsorption—up to 70% of available material. In a winemaking context, this may suggest a preferential loss of polymeric pigment via adsorption to cap cell wall material compared to non-pigmented proanthocyanidins and free anthocyanins.



**Dr. Mark Owens**

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE, PUBLIC BEHAVIOR AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEXAS COUNTIES IN A PANDEMIC

Dr. Mark Owens in the Department of Political Science and History published his work on emergency response in Texas counties in the journal, *Now: The Essence of Knowledge*. County governments are essential to the coordination of a state’s public health

response in an emergency, but counties have the autonomy to utilize different strategies. During the coronavirus pandemic, the virus rapidly spread through some communities in Texas before it arrived in others. This led to a situation where specific counties needed to take action to reduce the rapid spread of the virus before state officials

adopted a statewide mandate. The counties in need of a coordinated public health response issued local stay-at-home orders in this critical window. Using an event history analysis, Dr. Owens found a significant association between rising infection rates and partisanship as predictors that accelerated the timing of a local stay-at-home order. To evaluate the effectiveness of an early stay-at-home order, he analyzed responses from a statewide survey of random adult residents. He found that an individual’s experience with a local stay-at-home order is strongly associated with an individual’s compliance with the social distance recommendations of public health officials compared to residents of counties that did not implement a local stay-at-home order.



**Dr. Marco Castaneda**



**Dr. Meryen Saygili**

## THE EFFECT OF SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDERS ON SOCIAL DISTANCING AND THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A STUDY OF TEXAS

This timely work, published in *Frontiers of Public Health*, found that the growth rate of cases and deaths as significantly lower during the policy period when the percentage of the population that stays at home is highest. The crucial question is whether the policy has a causal impact on the sheltering percentages. The fact that some counties in Texas adopted local restrictive policies well before the statewide policy helped them address this question. They concluded that there was no evidence that this top-down restrictive policy increased the percentage of the population that exercised social distancing.

SPRING 2022 **EDEN** FILM SERIES



Dr. Kenneth Bryant

**EDUCATING AND CELEBRATING DIVERSE EXPERIENCES**

The Eden Film Series is the idea of Dr. Kenneth Bryant, Associate Professor of Political Science and Special Advisor to the Dean on Diversity and Inclusion. For four academic years, the Department of Political Science and History has hosted the EDEN (Exploring Diverse Experiences and Narratives) Film Series to compel students, staff and faculty to engage with difficult topics beyond the formal classroom. The series acknowledges, celebrates, investigates and normalizes racial and ethnic, social, cultural as well as political differences, by engaging difficult topics (introduced by thought-provoking films) and having tough conversations with an array of expert guests. In short, it is all about building an inclusive UT Tyler community.

In 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, amidst the pandemic, EDEN screenings enjoyed an average attendance of 150 students, staff, faculty and community members on Zoom. The beauty of the event is that it provides students with an opportunity to discuss timely matters from an interdisciplinary approach. Participating faculty guests have ranged from Political Science and History department colleagues (such as Drs. Mandy Link, Colin Snider, as well as Professors

Eric Lopez and Rhys Dotson) to psychology (Dr. Sarah Sass) to criminal justice (Dr. Danielle Bailey) and communication (Dr. Ashleigh Day). Students learn from invited staff too, such as the directors of the Office of International Programs and the Military and Veterans Success Center. Additionally, invited film directors and producers discussed their films with student attendees.

Series topics have included interracial relations, criminal justice reform, women's suffrage, marriage equality, PTSD in war veterans, queer and Jewish identity in the Weimar Republic, the journey of undocumented immigrants, transgender peoples' representation in the media, victims of historical genocides in Turkey and Chile, Latina representation, mental health institutionalization, racism in "Small Town" America and the sometimes-conflict between religion and government.

In addition to screening the films, EDEN guests are invited to participate in a Q&A with student attendees. In its short tenure, this project has expanded from a departmental event to a university and community outreach opportunity. It is also now a podcast with international reach.



**KVUT UPDATE**

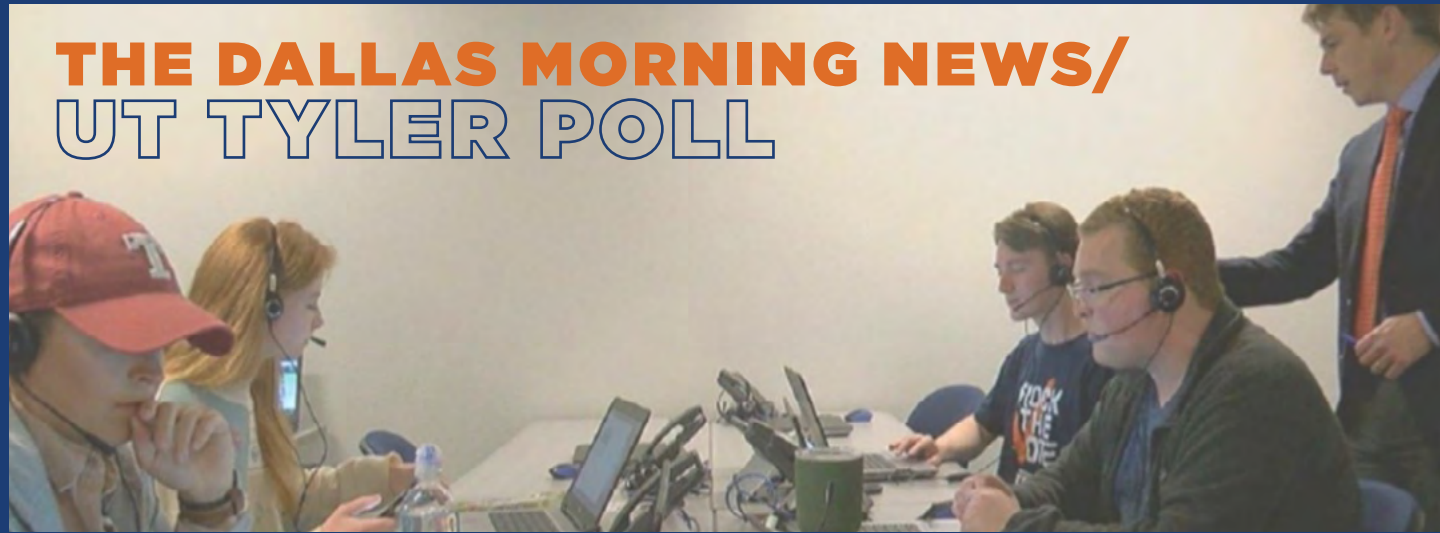
**UT TYLER PUBLIC RADIO: AFTER THE LAUNCH**

After two years of hard work, the College of Arts and Sciences launched the first public radio station in East Texas. UT Tyler Public Radio officially launched in 2021. The station is now expanding into podcasting, expanding the number of radio stations and investigating the possibility of public television. The station broadcasts content from National Public Radio, American Public Media, Associated Press and others. The station also plays jazz music throughout the day and at night. The station is producing its own local news and plans to add original content produced by UT Tyler faculty and staff during the upcoming year.

UT Tyler Radio 99.7 KVUT leadership includes professional journalists with decades of experience, providing audiences with the news and information they need to make informed decisions.



## THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/ UT TYLER POLL



### CENTER FOR OPINION RESEARCH (COR)

The Center for Opinion Research (COR) at The University of Texas at Tyler has had a great third year, thanks to the hard work of the faculty champions, Dr. Mark Owens, Dr. Ken Wink and Dr. Kenneth Bryant. These professors bring a tremendous mix of talents to this effort and are developing what will be a force in the polling world and help continue the development of UT Tyler's reputation as a leader in community engagement.

The COR also conducted seven major polls in 2021-22, many in partnership with the Dallas Morning News. The

Dallas Morning News/UT Tyler Poll is a statewide random sample of 1,232 registered voters conducted May 2-10. The mixed-mode sample includes 412 registered voters surveyed over the phone by The University of Texas at Tyler, with support from ReconMR, and 820 registered voters randomly selected from Dynata's panel of online respondents. The margin of error for a sample of registered voters in Texas is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points, and the more conservative margin of sampling error that

includes design effects from this poll is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points for a 95% confidence interval. The online and phone surveys were conducted in English and Spanish. Using information from the 2020 Current Population Survey and Office of the Texas Secretary of State. The sample's gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, metropolitan density and vote choice were matched to the population of registered voters in Texas.



Dr. Mark Owens



Dr. Kenneth Bryant



Dr. Ken Wink

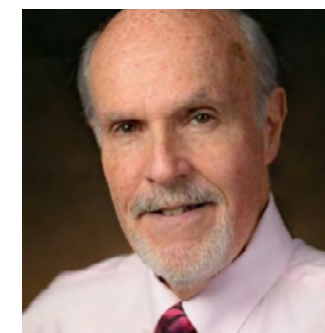


## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT SOCIAL WORK

### BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

The Bachelor of Social Work Program (BSW) has been tremendously successful under the leadership of Rich Kenney, Program Director and Professor of Practice in Social Work. He and Professor Erika Robinson-Freeman serve as the founding faculty members for the BSW. Both have been heavily involved with accreditation of the program by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The program has already received provisional accreditation with high marks from CSWE. They are well on their way to full accreditation.

The program is designed to grow and retain local social work practitioners. The program started strong with over 50 majors and is poised to grow rapidly. The social work students are already involved with important community efforts including child abuse prevention.



Rich Kenney

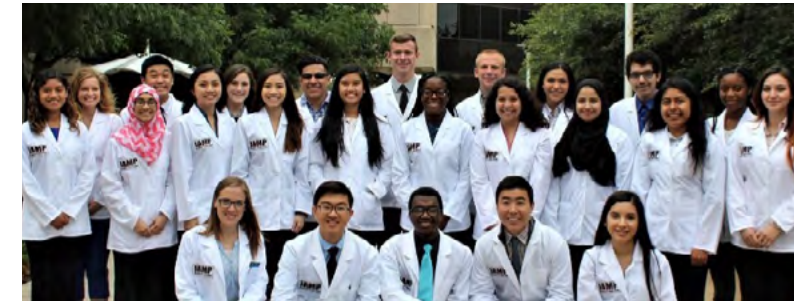


Erika Robinson-Freeman





# STUDENT SUCCESS & ENGAGEMENT



## STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: JAMP

Three students in the Pre-Med Academy have been selected to participate in a state medical school preparatory program. The students are scholars in the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP). The program was created by the Texas

Legislature to encourage and support highly qualified, economically disadvantaged Texas resident students pursuing a career in medicine.

This is the second consecutive year for the program to select three students from UT Tyler. Traditionally, UT Tyler has been allowed a maximum of two JAMP scholars. The fact that once again three students have been selected directly reflects the quality of our students.

The 2022 cohort includes biochemistry majors Sidney McElroy, Ismael Llovera and Sovan Ven. Opportunities available to them through JAMP include scholarships and stipends, summer internships, clinical enrichment experiences, multi-phase MCAT preparation, guaranteed admission to a participating Texas medical school, if all criteria are met, and medical school scholarships.

JAMP is funded through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and represents a statewide collaboration between 11 Texas medical schools and 70 public and private undergraduate institutions.

The UT Tyler Pre-Med Academy serves pre-health students preparing to attend a professional school for medicine, dentistry, physician assistant, pharmacy, optometry, chiropractic, physical therapy, occupational therapy, podiatry or veterinary medicine. The academy also provides advising and support to help students become the most competitive for professional school admission.

## STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: MODEL UN



Nine Model United Nations students from the Political Science program, representing The

University of Texas at Tyler, were recognized at the 2022 National Model United Nations Conference in New York, New York. The students were awarded the Honorable Mention Delegation Award for their representation of the Slovak Republic. This distinction is presented to the top delegations at the conference. It is awarded on continually remaining 'in character,' teamwork, leadership, speaking and negotiating abilities, as well as knowledge of the issues and proper usage of the rules of procedure. In addition to the Honorable Mention Delegation Award, UT Tyler student Arianna Polius was also awarded an Outstanding Delegate in Committee Award. This award is voted on by their peers in their individual committees. At this year's conference the Outstanding Delegates for each committee had the opportunity to speak at the closing ceremony of the conference.

The 6th East Texas High School Model United Nations Conference on Friday March 25th, 2022, 97 students from across the East Texas region attended the Sixth Annual

High School Model United Nations Conference. Hosted by the Department of Political Science Model United Nations Program the conference had attendance from six different schools including University Academy Tyler, University Academy Longview, University Academy Palestine, Edgewood High, Bishop T.K. Gorman, and Texas High (Texarkana).

Throughout the day students worked on resolutions while also practicing the rules of procedure, making speeches, and voting on resolutions they created in committee. The students tackled issues such as saving our oceans, the situation in Afghanistan, Human Rights, and fighting against human trafficking.

The UT Tyler High School MUN conference has been attended over the last six years by the University Academy Tyler, T.K. Gorman, University Academy Longview, and Texas High. This year two new schools joined us, University Academy Palestine, and Edgewood High. Each year the conference has grown a little and we hope to see more participation and growth of the conference because it is a powerful recruitment tool and teaches future UT Tyler students' vital skills such as public speaking, researching, writing, and conflict resolution.

## STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: DEBATE



This season welcomed three new members to our team: Freshmen Joshua Smith, Elle Stendebach, and Emma Press. They joined returning sophomore Hunter Parrish and graduating seniors Ayush Kumar and Mason Remaley for an impressive year of competition.

Ayush and Mason were chosen to represent UT Tyler at the exclusive National Round Robin National Tournament this spring; a unique tournament where schools may only bring two partnerships, so the field is very small. In this hyper competitive field comprised of only the best debate partnerships in the country, Mason and Ayush placed third.

Ayush and Mason also competed at the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence; an exclusive tournament only available to the highest-ranked 32 partnerships in the country. Coming in ranked at No. 16 in the nation, Mason and Ayush went undefeated in preliminary rounds, and they entered the elimination bracket as the No. 1 seed in the tournament. They advanced all the way to the championship round against

the University of Oregon, the team ranked No. 1 for the entire regular season. After an incredibly close debate, Mason and Ayush placed second to Oregon.

Later, Ayush and Mason competed at the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship. This is the largest tournament of the year and has the highest attendance of any debate tournament all season. Mason and Ayush again made it all the way to the final round and lost a very close debate to an excellent senior-senior partnership from Rice University, to finish in second place again at the National Championship. This makes three times that Mason and Ayush were in national championship rounds in their three years of competition for UT Tyler, and three times that they finished in second place.

Elle and Emma were partners for the season, managing to win multiple novice and junior division tournaments during the regular season, and eventually qualifying for the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship in the Open Division. They finished nationals with a 4-4 record.

Joshua Smith partnered with Hunter Parrish, and despite a slow start to the season, consistently pushed themselves to improve the entire way. Given a strong second half of consistently advancing to elimination rounds in every regular season tournament of the spring semester, they ended up ranked in the top 10 teams in the country, qualifying for both the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence as well as the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship. As a freshman and sophomore, they finished in twelfth place at the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence, and they went on to make the quarter final round (The Elite 8) of the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship.

## STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT: ARCHER FELLOWSHIP

The Archer Fellowship Program was established by The University of Texas System in conjunction with former US Representative Bill Archer to bring highly motivated and accomplished students to Washington, D.C., for a comprehensive academic and professional experience. Selection is based on a competitive application process, and each cohort of Archer Fellows is comprised of the best and brightest students from across the UT System.



Ethan Collins is assigned to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and is a junior at The University of Texas at Tyler, double majoring in finance and economics with a minor in mathematics. On campus, he has served as a senator representing juniors in the Student Government Association and has worked for the Honors Program as an office assistant. After graduation, Collins plans to attend law school at UT Austin and practice business law. He grew up in a small town and was very involved in community activities. He plans on giving back to his community after beginning his career in law.

# SOULES

## COLLEGE *of* BUSINESS



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN DR. KRIST SWIMBERGHE

The academic year 2021-2022 was a year of “getting back to normal” or in many ways “learning how to deal with the new normal” for the Soules College of Business faculty, staff and students.

The combined effort of faculty, staff, students and community stakeholders resulted in the Soules College of Business’ online MBA program to be recognized as a top 100 program in the 2021-2022 US News and World Report ranking as well as 53rd in the U.S. according to Fortune magazine’s most recent ranking. Furthermore, the UT System Board of Regents and the Texas Board of Higher Education provided final approval for the Soules College of Business to offer a new Master of Science in Cyber Security and Data Analytics degree starting in academic year 2022-2023.

This academic year was also the year where Soules College of Business alumni collaborated with the College of Engineering alumni and successfully organized the inaugural alumni homecoming bash. I would like to thank the 2022 UT Tyler Inaugural Business-Engineering Alumni Bash Taskforce.

I continue to be honored to be able to serve and lead the Soules College of Business as Dean. I am grateful to all of those who play a role in making the Soules College of Business what it is today and look forward to partnering with all of you to continue to move the Soules College of Business and The University of Texas at Tyler forward.

*Dr. Krist Swimberghe*

Dean of the Soules College of Business

# NEW FACULTY



**Dr. Hoyoung Kim**

Dr. Hoyoung Kim joined the Accounting Department in Fall 2021 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Kim currently teaches managerial accounting for undergraduate and graduate students. His research focuses on managerial accounting. More specifically, his current research interests are cost management, supply chain contracts, political issues and

connections, and CEO turnovers. He received a Bachelor of Science (B.S) in Accounting and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from Eastern Illinois University and a Ph.D. in Accounting at Kent State University.



**Dr. Hui (Eva) Liang**

Dr. Hui (Eva) Liang joined the Accounting Department in Fall 2021 as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Liang currently teaches financial accounting for undergraduate students and data analytics for graduate students. Her research focuses on financial accounting and information economics. She

received a Ph.D. in Business Administration with a major in Accounting at University of Minnesota - Twin Cities.



**Dr. Lei Hua**

Dr. Lei Hua joined the Management and Marketing Department in Fall 2021 as an Assistant Professor. His teaching interests include Operations Management, Supply Chain Management, Business Analytics, and Business Statistics. His primary research interests lie in behavioral operations, game theory, applied

artificial intelligence, and social media crowdsourcing. Dr. Hua received his Ph.D. in Management Science from The University of Texas at Arlington.

# NEW STAFF



**Jaime Romero**  
Administrative Assistant II



**Caitlyn Cook**  
Administrative Assistant II



**Brooklyn Cortez**  
Graduate Academic Advisor III

## EAST TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER (ETEC)



The East Texas Entrepreneurship Center (ETEC) has had an amazing year. ETEC held our first two UT Tyler business competitions: The Big Idea Pitch and the Business Model Challenge. Students' campus-wide competed for \$20k in cash and prizes with winners coming from the Colleges of Arts and Science, Engineering, Nursing and Business. Additionally, ETEC successfully hosted our 4th Annual East Texas High School Idea Challenge, which awarded over

\$22k in UT Tyler scholarships. We are especially proud of our relationship with the College of Engineering. With support of students, the ETEC has been able to help bring exposure and investor attention for research investigated by Dr. Shawana Tabassum resulting into provisional patents filed earlier this year. Externally we have been busy with our entrepreneurship speaker series which has provided businesses in the region with COVID-19 economic impact and recovery analysis as well as other business development tools to foster economic growth. The success of this regional program is bolstered by collaborations with Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Workforce Solutions, UT Tyler Hibbs Institute and many UT Tyler professors who have selflessly shared their expertise at these engagements. We have also held special events within the Hispanic community and with the Black African American Metro-Chamber of Commerce. We are grateful to the US Economic Development Administration, the Blackstone Foundation, Cadence Bank and Southside Bank for their continued support of ETEC.

## HIBBS INSTITUTE FOR BUSINESS & ECONOMIC RESEARCH

The Hibbs Institute has had a successful relaunching in the academic year 2021-2022. The institute keeps producing periodic bulletins (Hibbs Brief and Hibbs Newsletter) and has expanded its audience to nearly 7,500 individuals in East Texas. The Economic Overview reports, which provide relevant economic and sociodemographic indicators of 24 counties and four regions, are updated quarterly and are available free of cost at the institute's website. The institute keeps providing technical assistance to local and regional organizations regarding the current state of the economy and data requests, but, now it has a more active presence in the community via in-person presentations and frequent interviews with local newspapers and TV channels.

The institute has adopted a more entrepreneurial focus on developing research-paid projects and contracts with companies and organizations that request specific types

of economic analyses (e.g. the Caldwell Zoo, John Soules Foods, East Texas Workforce Solutions, etc.) Additionally, the institute has obtained research grants to conduct collaborative research projects (currently in progress) with the Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, in Mexico and the Health Science Center. The institute is also working on a comprehensive data repository that will be available to economic development organizations, local governments and the public. This data repository will tremendously help individuals and organizations encounter the most common local economic and sociodemographic indicators of more than 50 locations in Texas and contiguous states.

Finally, the institute is currently hiring another economist to increase existing capacity and to better help, advise, collaborate and work with more organizations in East Texas.

## LONGVIEW SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

May 1, 2022, marked the third year of operation for the UT Tyler-Longview Small Business Development Center (SBDC) led by Director Day Shelmire. As an SBA grant and resource partner, the center’s business advisors help entrepreneurs start businesses and small businesses owners grow existing businesses. In its first three years, the SBDC counseled more than 775 entrepreneurs and small business clients while providing over 6,500 hours of one-on-one counseling. These efforts helped start over 70 new businesses, created almost 400 new jobs, while

helping secure almost \$45 million in small business loans and owner equity. Also, the year 2021, saw the end of additional CARES Act funding and activities for the center. Center business advisors helped clients with Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness as special COVID-related activities wrapped up at the end of the year. The UT Tyler-Longview SBDC is in Longview and covers Gregg, Upshur, Rusk, Harrison, Marion and Panola Counties. The center has satellite offices in Marshall, Henderson and Jefferson.

## OUTSTANDING FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

Each year, the Soules College of Business recognized excellence in research, teaching and service for faculty. An award for outstanding staff member is also presented. Winners for 2021-2022, are: Dr. Kyung-Ah Byun - research award; Dr. Mary Helen Fagan - teaching award; Dr. Barbara Ross Wooldridge - service award; and Ms. Brandy Smith - staff award.

## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The Soules College of Business Advisory Board generously implemented the Soules College of Business Advisory Council Endowed Scholarship this year. This endowment of \$25,000 is intended to assist dedicated sophomore-, junior- and senior-level students seeking to better themselves through their education and involvement with a professional mentor through the Soules College of Business Advisory Council.

A total of \$28,250 was awarded to 12 students through the Soules Scholars. Students who received the awards were: Josiah Alexander, William Andrews, Riordan Brown, Thomas Coffey, Aaron Collier, Ty Killingsworth, Cullen Malone, Ethan Mccarthy, Haru Sakai, Courtlyn Shubert, Laikyn Wilkerson and Luke Youngblood.

Returning student scholarships were awarded for a total of \$111,742. This included 75 awards for a total of \$78,610 at the undergraduate level and 31 awards for a total of \$33,132 at the graduate level.

### 2021-2022 OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

#### ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND BUSINESS LAW

- Outstanding Undergrad Accounting Student: Arpana Nepal
- Outstanding Master of Accountancy Student: Virginia Grandos
- TXCPA Excellence Award: Robert Taylor of Tyler
- Outstanding Undergrad Finance Student: Kaitlyn Sullivan
- Outstanding Service to Finance Students: Ashlyn Ross

#### COMPUTER SCIENCE, COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Outstanding Undergrad Computer Science Student: Winslow Conneen
- Outstanding Undergrad Computer Information Systems Student: Andrew Barfield
- Outstanding Undergrad Information Technology Student: Merisha Subedi
- Outstanding Graduate MS Computer Science Student: Seth Norman

#### HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Outstanding PhD HRD Student: Leah Aiken
- Outstanding Undergrad HRD Student: Alexandra “Alex” Wentz
- Outstanding MS HRD Student: Karen Carson

#### TECHNOLOGY

- Outstanding Undergrad Industrial Technology Student: Jacob Cebell
- Outstanding Graduate Industrial Management Student: Paul Kavul

#### MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

- Outstanding Undergrad Marketing Student: Josh Menhennett
- Outstanding Undergrad Management Student: Angel Perez
- Traditional MBA Outstanding Student: Selina Keilani
- AP MBA Outstanding Student: Foster Boadi



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & STUDENT SUCCESS

## SOCIETY OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM)

The Society of Human Resource Management student organization has been busy this year. From attending an After-Hours Mixer hosted by Rose City SHRM, participating in Swoopstation and holding 16 meetings this year, our students have been meeting face-to-face with the option of participating through Zoom. Speakers during meetings included Julie Burch, Heidi Torres, Jeanette Hamilton and Holly Bishop. Topics covering stress, networking in a virtual world, internal HR, to HR consulting and much more. Our students are looking forward to next year already and can't wait to continue to grow.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (FMA)

The Financial Management Association (FMA) had a busy year conducting bi-weekly meetings each Tuesday during the fall and spring semesters that included guest speakers. Two teams competed in the Junior Achievement Stock Market Challenge. FMA also participated in the Reality Fair and conducted a raffle for fundraising.

## STUDENT SOCIETY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SSHRD)

The Student Society of Human Resource Development (SSHRD) held several meetings and workshops for undergraduate and graduate students in the HRD program. Speakers who presented in some of the meetings include: "How to Succeed at Failing" by Alycia Angle, Talent Development Partner at Texas Instruments and TEDx emcee as well as "Can You Speak the Lingo? Communicating in the Corporate World" by Jamie Jackson, Senior Client Lead Recruitment at Amazon. SSHRD also engaged in virtual meetups during the semester to discuss ideas and brainstorm opportunities for the organization's growth.

## BETA GAMMA SIGMA (BGS)

BGS is the international business honor society for AACSB-accredited schools, which are the top 5% of business school programs around the world. In spring 2022, a new faculty advisor was named. Nine students accepted the invitation to be members of BGS. Of these nine, five are undergraduate students, and four are graduate students. Officers will be elected in the beginning of the fall 2022 semester. After elections are held, planning will begin to offer activities throughout the 2022-2023 academic year.

## AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION (AMA)

AMA student chapter has offered the Professional Development Speaker Series for 2021-2022. The goal of this program is to provide insights from business leaders and successful graduates to allow members to network, gain business knowledge and have a better understanding of life in the business and marketing world. We have invited CEOs, successful business leaders, and recent alumni in the different fields of marketing. We had a total of four guest speakers during this academic year; we invited the CEO of a Digital Marketing company in the Dallas/Tyler area, a Sales Manager of AT&T, and successful marketing alumni who work in data analytics for Brookshire, and branding.

The alumni were able to help guide soon-to-be graduates to better compete and be better prepared in the job market. All professional development series were successful.

## FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA (FBLA-PBL)

The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA-PBL) student organization hosted numerous online events during the academic year. Various executive level guest speakers engaged our student group through presentations, open forums, Q/A sessions, etc. Yaziri Orrostieta, Chief Executive Officer at WorkHub, is a UT Tyler alum who presented about Entrepreneurship and Networking. Roy Martinez, President of Swan Transportation Service, also a UT Tyler alum, engaged our students on the topic of Dealing with Extreme and Unexpected Change. Bryan Pannagl, Chief Financial Officer at CHRISTUS Highland Medical Center, delivered a dynamic presentation on *Finance in Business—a Healthcare Executives Perspective*.

## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PHD STUDENT ADVISOR TEAM



The PhD Advisory Team supports the unique needs of HRD PhD students. Among its many initiatives including mentoring and lunch and learns, the group raised nearly \$9,000 in crowd sourced funding to provide financial support to HRD PhD students attending the Academy of Human Resource Development Conference. This summer, the HRD department will also hold its second annual writing retreat to support HRD PhD students, candidates and alumni. The retreat covers a 48-hour time span of writing and kicked off with a keynote by Dr. Matthew Kelly, Assistant Professor of English and ORS Research Design and Data Analysis Consultant.

## BETA ALPHA PSI (BAP)

Beta Alpha Psi held 16 professional meetings this year that included speakers from Price Waterhouse Coopers, Saville, Dodgen and Company, alumni, and many more. Topics of these meetings included accounting skills, financial investments and other issues relative to the accounting profession. Meet the Firms was held successfully in a face-to-face environment with a great attendance of firm representatives from Dallas, Longview and local accounting firms presenting UT Tyler BAP an overview of the accounting profession. For the second consecutive year, a UT Tyler BAP member won the national Project Run With It award for a consulting analysis presentation at the 2021 National BAP meeting. Beta Alpha Psi was awarded as a superior organization recognition by the National BAP organization.

## SOULES AMBASSADORS

The Soules Ambassadors' mission is to identify and development the next generation of top leadership within the Soules College of Business, serve as liaisons to students, faculty, administration, the college, and university, and to be an agency with the capacity and intent to fulfill the needs and advance the goals of the Soules College of Business and the universities. These students lead student forums each semester to engage faculty, staff, and the dean of the college by encouraging questions and making suggestions to enhance the student experience. These students assisted in the First Annual Alumni Bash, worked the PGC Golf Tournament, SSB Million Dollar Hole in One event, helped with Patriot Premier, worked at the university food pantry, guided tours for VIPs visiting campus and attended a dinner event with Howe Wallace, President of the board of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity and President of PallettOne.

## ASSOCIATION OF TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND APPLIED ENGINEERING (ATMAE)

The mission of the UT Tyler ATMAE student chapter is to carry out the purposes and objectives of the association for the benefit of students in Technology, Management, and Applied engineering degree programs through engaging students in campus activities, community service, annual fundraising, and through both individual and team competitions at ATMAE conferences. This year, the student chapter has been active in several community and campus activities including participating in Earth Day (cleaned up the walking/biking trails around campus), participated in our Adopt-a-Street program (we adopted University Boulevard to clean quarterly), participated in UT Tyler's Arbor Day and donated items to towns that were affected by the damaging tornadoes that occurred on March 21 of this year.

## MINORITIES IN BUSINESS (MIB)

Minorities in Business (MIB) was established in fall 2020, to provide leadership opportunities to minority students majoring in business, to cultivate a supportive community for minorities and to promote the various business professions. For the 2021-2022 academic year, members of MIB volunteered with Moore Middle School to assist with the school's first Multicultural Fair, hosted their first on-campus Blood Drive in conjunction with the American Red Cross, provided a campus-wide community event where students had two opportunities to have professional headshots taken and conducted a game night at the end of the semester so that members could relax and destress before tackling their final exams. MIB also held meetings so that members could explore business opportunities and learn from other diverse business leaders. These meeting included: Shanese Williams, Building Blocks of Diverse Leadership, Bruce Bettinger, Tips on Handling Finances during College and Beyond and Crystal Pittendrigh, Where Can an East Texas Education Take You?.



# RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

## ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND BUSINESS LAW DEPARTMENT

The Department of Accounting, Finance and Business Law had more than 13 publications this year. These publications were in journals such as the *Rutgers Business Law Review*, *Journal of Accounting Education*, *Accounting and Finance*, *Journal of Business Finance & Accounting*, *Oil, Gas and Energy Quarterly* and the *Journal of Accounting and Finance*.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Department of Computer Science faculty published 10 journal articles, two conference proceedings, one accepted poster presentations, two book chapters and one presentation. Eight faculty members reported present or ongoing service as manuscript reviewers for journals and conferences. Four faculty members received, submitted or prepared proposals for six internal and external grants.

## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Human Resource Development faculty contributed 38 scholarly outputs this year including 12 journal articles and four book chapters. The HRD faculty also had six conference proceedings, one paper presentation and 15 other scholarly outputs. Dr. Yonjoo Cho received the 2021 Marquardt Research Award from the World Institute for Action Learning and \$10,000 to support her work as Human Resource Development Review (HRDR) editor from the Academy of Human Resource Development and SAGE. Dr. Kim Nimon received the President's Scholarly Achievement Award from UT Tyler and the Outstanding HRD Scholar Award from the Academy of Human Resource Development. Dr. Thomas Kramer received the Dissertation Award in the Advancing Talent Development category from the Association of Talent Development. Dr. Greg Wang received a \$1,000 Team-up Grant from the AHRD Korea SIG in partnership with the Korean Academy of HRD.

## MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Faculty in the Department of Management and Marketing produced almost 100 intellectual contributions ranging from publishing in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings to presenting at conferences and authoring textbook chapters and textbooks. Of note are also the leadership roles that several faculty took on in their respective academies: Dr. Venugopal Gopalakrishna-Remani was the conference chair and responsible for successfully organizing the Southwest Decision Sciences Institute conference in New Orleans, while Dr. Barbara Wooldridge concluded her final year as the editor for Marketing Education Review.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology faculty, Dr. Mohammed Ali, Dr. Dennis Jones and Ms. RaeJean Griffin became Association of College and University (ACUE) Teaching Fellows after completing a two-semester course in effective teaching practices. All three also earned a certificate in Effective College Instruction which is endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE). Dr. Mark Miller published a book for effectively preparing individuals for the various state welding licensing exams. Dr. Dominick Fazarro was honored by being awarded the ATMAE Senior Fellow status in Organizational Culture and Diversity. Interim Associate Dean, Dr. Heshium Lawrence, was the co-investigator for an internal funded grant entitled, "Gender and Race Wage Differentials in East Texas". He was also awarded the prestigious Epsilon Pi Tau's (EPT) William E. Warner Professional Practice Award for Region Four.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Nimon and HRD PhD student Ralph Ryan Riojas conducted the second annual employee engagement survey with employees at John Soules Foods. This year, in addition to presenting the results to the Soules leadership team and building an executive summary, an interactive

web-based application was built that allows leaders to interactively view the data behind the report. Dr. Cho and Mr. Riojas will be working this summer with Soules employees and conducting focus groups to further explore the results.

## EXECUTIVE MBA HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (EMBA-HCM)



Our Executive MBA Healthcare Management cohort has been engaging in professional experiences from a formal poster presentation on Patient Satisfaction to presenting as finalists in various competitions throughout the academic year.

During fall 2021, five of our EMBA-HCM students, Litton Schexnaildre, Samantha Smith, Vera Stroman Turney, Igal Tarash, and Supriya Veeramachaneni, were named finalists for the 2021 North Texas Chapter of American College of Healthcare Executives, ACHENTX Case Study Competition. Their submission, “Piece of Cake: A Business Model Strategy,” was presented to a panel of judges, in competition with graduate students from various academic institutions across the state.

During spring 2022, four of our EMBA-HCM students were selected to present their case at the 31st Annual Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (APPE) Conference. Litton Schexnaildre, Vera Stroman Turney, Supriya Veeramachaneni and Sonya Grigsby presented their paper, “Employer/Employee Legal and Ethical Perspectives on the Mandated COVID-19 Vaccine.”

Additionally, three of our EMBA-HCM students, Vera Stroman Turney, Rigoberto Villa and Christopher “Melissa” Malone, were selected for the ACHE of North Texas’ (ACHENTX) 2022 ACHENTX Mentorship Program, a highly selective program geared for students in healthcare administration programs to build their network and develop professional relationships.



## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



Dr. Cho completed her second year as editor of the Human Resource Development Review. Drs. Kim Nimon and Andrea Ellinger contributed to the second season of the HRD Master Class podcast series, produced by the Academy of Human Resource Development. Along with Drs. Jae Young Lee and Brad Shuck, Dr. Nimon spoke on employee engagement. The podcast featuring Dr. Jenni Jones and Dr. Andrea Ellinger covered coaching.

## FINANCE PROGRAM EARNS CFA UNIVERSITY AFFILIATION

The Soules College of Business finance program has obtained the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) University Affiliation, making it one of only nine universities in Texas to hold this distinction. Once students complete a bachelor’s degree, they can pursue a CFA chapter, which is a self-study program in which they must clear three levels of exams. UT Tyler is allowed to extend six scholarships annually to waive CFA enrollment fees and discount level-one exams.

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DATA ANALYTICS AND CYBER SECURITY

The newly approved Master of Science (MS) in Cyber Security and Data Analytics Program is an effort by the Department of Computer Science to provide graduate students with expertise that will make a difference in today’s digital world. The program will be entirely online to allow opportunities for full-time employed and traditional graduate students. Students will graduate with a course mix that can lead to career advancement or future jobs in either Cyber Security, Data Analytics or both. Within the degree program, students may also complete a set of stackable graduate certificates in specific areas.



# COLLEGE of EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY



## PHD HIGHLIGHTS

- The PhD program was approved for a site visit from APA following the submission of the self-study.
- The program was accepted and approved to place interns via the internship match from APPIC.
- The first cohort from 2019 have completed qualifying exams.

## EdD HIGHLIGHTS

- Several faculty and students attended the 2022 Carnegie Summit for School Improvement.
- 83% of students in the EdD program come from Title 1 districts, so the education from the program is focused on addressing achievement in high-needs areas.

## CHI SIGMA IOTA

17 counseling students were inducted into the Upsilon Tau Theta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota.

## APSI

The Advanced Placement Summer Institute had 136 teachers both within the U.S. and internationally get certified to teach Advanced Placement courses on their high school campuses. These teachers work to create high achieving students within their school districts.

## UT SYSTEM'S ELEVATE TXED

Staci Zolkoski presented to ElevateTXed Ambassador's Meeting (a UT System initiative) on Stress, Social Emotional Awareness and Resilience. It was well received, and she has been invited to present again.

## CMHC

Our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program placed clinical students on the Whitehouse ISD campuses to support the counseling needs for students. This unique partnership has been beneficial in engaging our clinicians in counseling skills, and it has provided the district with greater capacity for addressing student needs.

## PRINCIPAL PREPARATION GRANT

Gary Miller coordinated the Principal Preparation grant that provided full-time principal residency for students in Kennedale and Westwood. The UT Tyler Educational Leadership program is one of only thirteen schools in Texas that may accept students from districts that use this grant.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS

Henderson ISD, Quitman ISD, Faith Family Academy Charter Schools and Athens ISD have signed MOUs to improve pathways for educator education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

## HIGH ACHIEVEMENT ON CERTIFICATION EXAMS

- Seventeen of 18 of our Clinical Mental Health Counseling students passed the National Counselors Exam the first time they took it this fall; thus, qualifying them for Texas LPC licensure.
- All Clinical Mental Health Counseling students passed their Exit Exam (CPCE) this past summer. Our students' average scores were above the national mean (UT Tyler Mean = 90.6; National Mean = 81.1).
- 100% pass rate on School Counselor TExES Exam.
- 100% pass rate on Reading Specialist TExES Exam.
- 100% pass rate on Educational Diagnostician TExES Exam.
- 100% pass rate on the Science of Teaching Reading TExES Exam.
- 100% pass rate on Superintendent TExES Exam.
- 100% pass rate on the Performance Assessment of School Leaders.

## CENTER FOR CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN INITIATIVES

The CEP developed a new center, the Center for Caribbean and Central American Initiatives. The center will help support research and service in the Caribbean areas. A few highlights included:

- The center facilitated the signing of an MOU with Centro Escolar Mexico Junior College that can open opportunities for research and exchanges.
- Kristie Allen and Amy Hayes led a Center for Caribbean and Central American Studies session with University of Belize called Managing Stress and Anxiety in the Workplace. There were over 50 Belize faculty in attendance.
- Matt Vechione (Engineering) and Logan Proffer (graduate student) provided a traffic study for Corozal, Belize due to concerns with accidents at certain "hot spots."

# ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS

### TYLER ISD PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR



Geoff Sherman, alum of the Educational Leadership program, was Tyler ISD's Principal of the Year.

### TYLER ISD ROOKIE OF THE YEAR



Gracie Anderson, alum of our teacher preparation program, was Tyler ISD's Rookie of the Year.

### OWENS ELEMENTARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

McKenzie Huggins, alum of our teacher preparation program, was Owens Elementary's (Tyler ISD) Teacher of the Year.



# STUDENT SUCCESS

### MENTOR CENTER

The Mentor Center continues to provide assistance to students who are struggling. The academic measure is often the one that gets the student into the Center, but while there, the students get targeted referrals to other areas of support. The Mentor Center has a role in retention, too. Students who have not enrolled in classes receive a phone call to check on them.

### CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

Our CMHC program's Chi Sigma Iota Chapter volunteered and participated in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Out of the Darkness Walk.

### PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS



UA Tyler's Mitchell Campbell and UA Palestine's Rashad Mims were awarded \$10,000/year scholarships to attend UT Tyler.



# FACULTY SUCCESS

### CEP TEACHING AWARDS

Our instructors play a vital role in ensuring student success. We are proud of the CEP Teaching Award winners, Eric Stocks and Chris Thomas. Both of these instructors are great about connecting with students, and they provide opportunities to learn through research.

### ADVISORY BOARDS

Lana Kinney has joined the Career and Technical Education Advisory Boards of Chapel Hill and Whitehouse ISDs. Her expertise in teacher education has added valuable insights to these districts.

### PIPER PROFESSOR NOMINEE AND WHITE FELLOWSHIP FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Staci Zolkoski was the UT Tyler Piper Professor Nominee, and she won the White Fellowship for Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. Zolkoski is known for her passion for impacting the next generation of teachers through her work in the classroom. Her style, both respectful and interactive, makes her instruction impactful.

### OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD

Samantha Estrada won the Alpha Chi Student Honor Society Outstanding Faculty Award. Her ability to make the content meaningful makes her a student favorite.

### TEACHING OF WRITING AWARD

Jessi Rueter is the recipient of the 2021 Teaching of Writing Award, sponsored by the Professional Learning Community for Student Writing.

**SACSCOC**

UT Tyler had a successful SACSCOC visit, and the College of Education and Psychology had no recommendations. The committee report said that UT Tyler *consistently and persistently adheres to institutional effectiveness practices to improve student learning outcomes based on reliable data.*

# UNIVERSITY ACADEMY

**UNIVERSITY ACADEMY ANNIVERSARY**

The University Academy Lab Schools were founded 10 years ago with the collaborative efforts of Michael Odell, Eli Crow and Wes Hickey. The district has campuses in Longview, Palestine and Tyler, and they continue to be some of the highest achieving in the region.

**CHEVRON DESIGN CHALLENGE**



Kris Fischer led a group of University Academy-Palestine students to first and third place finishes in the Chevron Design Challenge. This contest is an intensive design experience in which students are presented with a need statement and required to come up with a solution, create a mock-up and “sell” their design to a panel of judges.

**NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLAR**

UA Tyler student John Kinsner qualified as a commended student in the National Merit Scholarship Program.

**UNIVERSITY ACADEMY EARNS PROJECT LEAD THE WAY RECOGNITION**

The UT Tyler University Academy has earned recognition as a 2021-22 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished District. This achievement recognizes our commitment to helping students own their education by increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in our PLTW programs. We are extremely proud to earn this award from an organization that empowers millions of students across the U.S. to unlock their potential and success in college, career, and beyond. These programs inspire and engage students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and prepare them with the in-demand, real-world knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in life beyond the classroom. UT Tyler University Academy is one of 13 districts in the country to earn this prestigious distinction. In addition to the district award, each campus has received recognition for the 2021-2022 school year:

- The Tyler Campus received recognition as a 2021-22 Distinguished School for high school PLTW programs, middle school GTT programs, and elementary Launch programs.
- The Longview campus received recognition as a 2021-22 Distinguished School for high school PLTW programs, middle school GTT programs, and elementary Launch programs.
- The Palestine Campus received recognition as a 2021-22 Distinguished School for high school PLTW programs and middle school GTT programs.

**UNIVERSITY ACADEMY HIGHLIGHTS**

- The UA held its first High School Leadership Conference to provide students with greater skills as they move into post-secondary lives.
- Teachers of the Year:
  - Jenny Calk (Palestine).
  - Meleaha Hazelbaker (Tyler).
  - Sara Evans (Longview).
- A Lego Robotics Club was created to give students greater experiences with this technology.
- The UA had service opportunities for students to help in nursing homes and provide care packages for the homeless.
- 54% of UA seniors plan to attend UT Tyler in the fall with 94% attending a four-year university somewhere.

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

The University Academy had several students perform well at UIL State:

- Number Sense Team-2nd Place (Thereon Stroud, J.P. Kinsner, Mathew Deptula, Melissa Hilbig)
  - 7th Place Number Sense-Thereon Stroud
  - 9th Place Number Sense-Melissa Hilbig
  - 16th Place Number Sense-J.P. Kinsner
  - 24th Place Number Sense-Mathew Deptula
- Current Events Team-1st Place (Alex Mejias, Mitchell Campbell, Bella Romero, Reagan Lee)
  - 1st Place Current Events-Alex Mejias
  - 2nd Place Current Events-Mitchell Campbell

**PALESTINE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

The Palestine Development Board, led by David Barnard, Ahnise Summers, Phil Jenkins and Jim Parsons, continued to provide support for the development of the University Academy-Palestine. In the past year, they provided \$52,744 to surface a sports court, improve landscaping and purchase an ice maker for faculty.

- Science Team-1st Place (J.P. Kinsner, Jagger Rossall, Alex Mejias, Thereon Stroud)
  - 5th Place Science-J.P. Kinsner
  - 1st Place Science-Thereon Stroud
  - 11th Place Science-Alex Mejias
  - 25th Place Science-Jagger Rossall
  - 2nd Place Biology-Thereon Stroud
  - 1st Place Chemistry-Thereon Stroud
  - 1st Place for Physics-Thereon Stroud
- 3rd Place Mathematics-Thereon Stroud
- 5th Place Congress-Miranda Baker



# RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

## RESEARCH RECOGNITION

Kouider Mokhtari was recognized for several publications:

- 1st most cited author in System (2001).
- 1st most cited paper in System (2001).
- 2nd most published author in The Reading Teacher (lifetime).
- 4th most cited author in The Journal of Educational Psychology (2002).
- 4th most cited paper in The Journal of Educational Psychology (2002).

## AERA

Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz was elected to serve as Program Chair-Elect (2-year term begins in 2022) of the Supervision and Instructional Leadership SIG (SIG No. 51) of the American Educational Research Association.

## PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Samantha Estrada, Assistant Professor of Psychology & Counseling and ORS Lab Consultant, presented *Introduction to JAMOVl* for the Office of Research and Scholarship. JAMOVl is a user-friendly point and click interface for R that is also free and open source. The workshop went through the basics of importing data, exploring data and performing basic analysis to get familiar with the software.

## NEW POST-DOCTORAL FELLOW

Nirmal Ghimire joined the K-16 Literacy Center as a Post Doc Research Fellow on May 9, 2022. Dr. Ghimire has a Ph.D. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from the University of Central Florida where he worked as a Research Associate providing research, teaching, and technology support for a large USDE funded grant project aimed at preparing preservice education teachers to effectively teach dual language learners.

## PRINCIPAL PREPARATION GRANTS

Three of our Principal Residency Grant partners, Westwood, Waxahachie, and Kennedale, were awarded Cycle 5 of the Principal Preparation Grant. Dr. Gary Miller organizes this grant for UT Tyler, which provides financial support for having students work as campus leaders while getting their degree.

## EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz was awarded Texas Council of Professors of Educational Administration's 2021 Educator of the Year. Her award was based on her general work to promote education. A couple of highlights included her role in bringing the EdD in School Improvement to UT Tyler, and her international work in Belize through the Central American Security Initiative Grant.

## CEP RESEARCH AWARDS

Woonhee Sung and Adam McGuire were recognized as the College of Education and Psychology's Researchers of the Year.

## PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Kristie Allen was announced as the President's Scholarly Achievement Award winner for UT Tyler. Her research included evaluating the impact of the Mentor Center, as well as getting a grant to provide a similar type Center at Galen University in Belize.

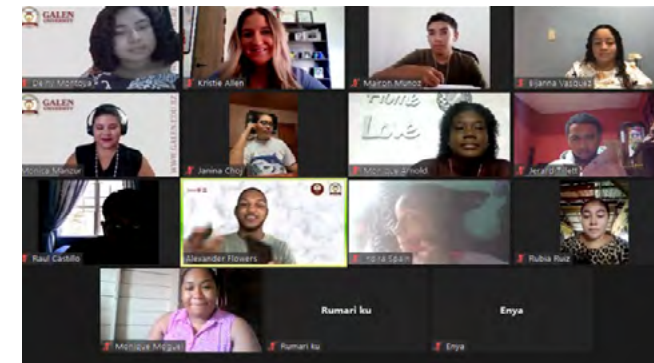
## LEADERSHIP AWARD

Adam McGuire was selected for the Anxiety and Depression Association of American's Career Development Leadership Award Program.

## COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Frank Dykes will assume the role of President for the Teacher Education Division of the national organization Council for Exceptional Children.

## COBEC GRANT



Kristie Allen was awarded a grant to develop a Mentor Center at Galen University. Her training helped provide support for students in times of need.

## JESS HAY ENDOWMENT FOR CHANCELLOR'S GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Jenna Moore, a graduate student working in Michael Barnett's lab, was the UT Tyler nominee for the Jess Hay Endowment for Chancellor's Graduate Research Fellowship.

## TRAVEL AWARD

Candice Hayden, one of Adam McGuire's PhD students, won the 2022 National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) R13-Funded Travel Award for her poster presentation, Perceived Social Support and Substance Use Recover During COVID-19.

## OUTSTANDING PAPER AWARD

Woonhee Sung received the AACE Award (outstanding paper award) for the paper she presented in SITE 2021 conference. The citation is: An, H. & Sung, W. (2021). Design of an Online Robotics Course Using the Learning by Design Approach. In E. Langran & L. Archambault (Eds.), Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference (pp. 568-576). Online, United States: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE). Retrieved August 23, 2021. <https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/219186/>

## VIDEO MODELING

Jessi Reuter and Frank Dykes will be working with Riverside Insights as consultants in developing video modeling of IQ testing.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

Adam McGuire is leading the way in addressing veterans' mental health needs. His work as the Clinical Psychologist and Research Investigator at the VA Center of Excellence for Research on Returning War Veterans is providing important support for veterans with PTSD and moral injury.

## CAMPUS VISITS AND PRESENTATIONS

The College of Education and Psychology welcomed students from Rusk, Chapel Hill and Hubbard to discuss UT Tyler, careers and success strategies. The CEP also met with students in Brownsboro, Grand Saline, Carthage and others to present, "What We Don't Teach You in High School About Success."

## BORN TO READ

During AY 2021-2023, the K-16 Literacy Center served 40 families (60 children) through the Born to Read Program (BTR), an initiative designed to promote and support the development of early language and literacy skills among young children (i.e., newborn to age 3) in East Texas. These children are followed through kindergarten to see how they do in reading when compared to peers who did not participate in the BTR program.

## COBEC - U.S CO-CHAIR

Wes Hickey was named U.S. Co-Chair for the Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation (COBEC). COBEC has higher education institutions from both the U.S. and Belize that work toward better partnerships.

## EAST TEXAS CENTER FOR SCHOOL BASED RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION

The East Texas Center for School Based Research and Instruction continues its connections with local school districts. A few highlights of the Center are below:

- Provided monthly EdTalks to local school districts on timely topics;
- Held the Education Law Conference and Rural School Symposium;
- Organized the Advanced Placement Summer Institute; and
- Met with superintendents to discuss ways in which the university could better partner.

## COOPERATIVE TEACHERS CREDIT UNION (CTCU)

CTCU donated \$14,000 to the East Texas Center for School Based Research and Instruction in order to help pay for professional development and outreach efforts for our local schools. The funds helped provide numerous sessions, including those to support instruction, incentive pay for teachers and socio-emotional learning.

## OVERTON SUMMER CAMP

The Literacy and Ingenuity Centers partnered with Overton ISD to develop summer camps in literacy and STEM. The purpose was to help close gaps caused by COVID.

## QUALITY MATTERS

Gary Miller will be working with Prairie View A&M in regard to the Quality Matters Texas Cohort Two Evidence Review. His invitation to participate in this review is based on the success UT Tyler has had in working with school districts on the Principal Residency Grant.

## FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT

Sarah Sass led the faculty senate as President during the 2022 academic year. Her leadership was instrumental in creating shared understandings among faculty as the merger between UT Tyler and UT Health Science Center at Tyler progressed.

## STAFF SENATE PAST-PRESIDENT

Sydni Blundell continued to provide leadership to UT Tyler as past-president of the staff senate. Her role during academic year 2022, included providing support to the new president.

## CEP SERVICE AWARDS

Engaging the community often requires a dedication to service. CEP is proud of its Service Award winners, Sarah Sass and Staci Zolkoski.

## PRESIDENT'S SERVICE AWARD

Sydni Blundell was announced as the President's Service Award winner. Her invaluable service in commencement, hooding, conferences, and as a staff support "go to," was part of the reason she was a clear choice for this honor.

## PRESIDENT'S EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE AWARD

Amy Hayes was announced as the President's Excellence in Service Award for 2022. She has worked to create a supportive environment for the Department of Psychology and Counseling, as well as work with numerous civic organizations, such as Mosaic Counseling and the Chapel Hill School Board. Yanira Oliveras-Ortiz was awarded the President's Service Award for 2021. This award was given due to her impact on education - locally, statewide and internationally.

## STAFF AWARDS

The staff are the backbone of our college, and they dedicate their time to ensuring our students are successful. The CEP Staff Award winner was Linda Speed. Her dedication to the faculty and staff of the Department of Psychology and Counseling is unparalleled, and she is a big reason the department is so productive.



# COLLEGE of ENGINEERING



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN DR. JAVIER KYPUROS

This has been a year of milestones for the College of Engineering (COE). The college celebrated its 25th anniversary, was ranked in the top 75 by U.S. News & World Report, graduated its first chemical engineering majors, secured millions in new externally funded grants and contracts, and established the Texas Rural Transportation Research Center and Center for Health Informatics and Analytics. Also, the college's alumni continue to be among the highest paid in the entire University of Texas System for their respective disciplines.

Our first graduates of the Departments of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering transferred to The University of Texas at Tyler in the fall of 1997. Since then, we have added civil engineering, integrated construction management, expanded to a second campus in Houston and started chemical engineering. In the coming years, we are poised to add degree programs in computer engineering, construction engineering, engineering leadership and biomedical engineering, as well as to expand teaching sites to other locations in the Houston area and elsewhere. With two campuses—the main Tyler campus and the Houston Engineering Center (HEC) — the college is rather unique. Between the two, the College of Engineering provides students an ecosystem that includes both a more research-focused campus and a more industry-connected campus.

For 2022, U.S. News & World Report ranked the College of Engineering 75th among the “Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs.” We rose 16 spots from our previous position to be the highest-ranked college of engineering in undergraduate-focused Texas public universities. This is our third year in the top 100.

The college has also worked diligently to increase philanthropy and grantsmanship. This is evidenced by the recent naming of the Jasper Department of Chemical Engineering, the establishment of endowed professorships and endowed chairs in the Departments of Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering and a major gift from an alum who graduated in the first class of engineers from UT Tyler. The faculty have secured millions in funding from the NIH and NSF, and we renewed our contract with Trane Technologies for another five years.

As we continue to expand our partnerships throughout East Texas, Houston and other neighboring areas, the college will provide critical pathways for promising students from diverse backgrounds and experiences to better address the challenges and opportunities most pertinent to our region, the state and the nation.

*Dr. Javier Kypuros*  
Dean of the College of Engineering

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Student engagement and belonging are an integral part of COE's overall approach toward ensuring that our graduates are prepared to succeed and thrive in careers across the engineering and construction management spectrum, and student organizations anchored in each of our disciplines form a big part of this effort. This past year, many of our foundational student organizations and student groups were recognized by national level societies and external organizations as being truly exceptional. In addition, we wish to recognize our first graduate in the Jasper Department of Chemical Engineering.

## IEEE CORONA CHAPTER

Alina Nietsche Pereira participated in the IEEE Region 5 Conference in April 2022. The event was held in Houston and her research poster presentation "A Wearable, Multiplexed Sensor for Real-time In-situ Monitoring of Wound Biomarkers" was awarded first place in the region. This is a major milestone for UT Tyler at the national level.

## CHEMICAL ENGINEERING AICHE CHAPTER

The newly established student chapter of AIChE in the Jasper Department of Civil Engineering participated in the AIChE Southwest Regional Student Conference for the first time in spring 2022. As one highlight, an interdisciplinary inaugural team of students (Michael 'Brent' Hughes, Carson Mayo and Bryson Power from Chemical Engineering, and Ashton Fitzgerald and Parker Wilmoth from Electrical Engineering) participated in the AIChE Chem-E-Car competition. In this competition, students design and construct a car powered with a chemical energy source that must travel a given distance and then execute a full stop. The activity gives students hands-on design and team building experiences, and also provides a way to engage with their profession at an early point in their academic careers.

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT SIGMA LAMBDA CHI CHAPTER

UT Tyler's new "Gamma III" student chapter of the Sigma Lambda Chi international construction management honor society was recognized by its international organization with another Gold Level award this year. In fact, based on total points awarded, this chapter placed second among all student organizations in the United States. In the three years of this chapter's active membership, UT Tyler has won two Golds and one Silver award.

The International Sigma Lambda Chi (SLC) Honor Society is the single, worldwide honor society that supports,

recognizes and rewards excellence in construction management and construction engineering. Every year, SLC reviews community service projects performed by chapters and selects a handful for recognition at the bronze, silver and gold level. "Gold" is the highest recognition a chapter can earn. UT Tyler instructor Joe Boylan is the chapter's faculty sponsor and has served the university for five years.

The chapter has three goals every year. They are: (1) to provide student support to all CM students through a multi-course tutoring program, (2) to provide real life leadership and programmatic skills through the Dean's Legacy Project Program which builds one to two new facilities for the college each year that range in scope from \$50K to \$600K, and (3) to produce support to our local community through the partnership with the local Habitat for Humanity organization that allows the SLC members to program, contract for and supervise the construction of a real home for a family sponsored by the Habitat organization each year.

The key members of the society this year, Jamie Babyak, Michael Mize and Jason Tolbert, have been instrumental leaders in shaping the future of the program at UT Tyler.

## ASCE TEXAS-MEXICO STUDENT CONFERENCE SUCCESSES

Over 25 students from both the Tyler campus and the Houston Engineering Center attended the 2022 American Society of Civil Engineers Texas Mexico Student Conference, held in spring 2022 in Houston. A team of civil and mechanical engineering students at the UT Tyler Houston Engineering Center earned top honors in aesthetics at the 2022 ASCE/AISC Steel Bridge Competition. The contest involves collegiate teams overseeing the design and fabrication of a 20-foot-long bridge to support up to 2,500 pounds. Paola Wagnon earned first place in the student paper competition for her paper, "ASCE Updated the Code of Ethics in October 2020. What Impact Will the Changes Have on the Civil Engineering Profession?"

Dr. Michael McGinnis serves as co-advisor for the Tyler chapter, and Dr. Michael Gangone serves as advisor for the both the Tyler and Houston Chapters.

## FIRST GRADUATE - JASPER DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Araiz Imran is our first graduate in the Jasper Department of Chemical Engineering. Imran, a four-year UT Tyler student, joined the program in fall 2019 and earned

Dean's List recognition multiple times throughout the course of his studies. Before attending UT Tyler, he had a strong volunteer presence at a grammar school in Lahore, Pakistan, and followed that by becoming one of the inaugural College of Engineering Volunteer Ambassadors, helping us showcase our programs during special events. He earned the first ever Jasper Department of Chemical Engineering Student of the Year Award in spring 2022.

# SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

In this year's report, we're taking the time to highlight four of our faculty scholars and the activities of one center whose achievements this year were extraordinary.

## DR. NAEL BARAKAT

Dr. Nael Barakat, Professor and Chair of Mechanical Engineering, has been selected by peers to be a member of the U.S. Fulbright Specialist Program Roster. Barakat will serve a four-year term.

A program of the US Department of State, the Fulbright Specialist Program is a unique opportunity for US academics and established professionals to engage in two- to six-week, project-based exchanges at host institutions across the globe.

As a Fulbright Specialist, Barakat is a candidate for a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the United States government. Programming is designed to forge lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries, while helping nations work together toward common goals.

## DRS. PREMANANDA INDIC AND PRAVITHA RAMANAND

Dr. Premananda Indic, PhD, UT Tyler Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, and Dr. Pravitha Ramanand, PhD, UT Tyler Assistant Research Professor of Electrical Engineering, received an \$861,744 subaward from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study signs of opioid exposure in infants to support a University of

Alabama at Birmingham project, "Vital Signs in Opioid Exposed Neonates."

Pioneering work conducted by the team has identified that patterns of heart rate and breathing as early as the first day after birth can be used to identify infants who later develop signs of opioid withdrawal.

Indic and Ambalavanan have collaborated for the past six years on the NIH-funded "PreVENT" project that centered on sleep apnea and slow heart rate in extreme preterm infants, and have now extended their expertise to this different high-risk population.

In this five-year opioid study, the investigators will apply advanced data analytics to prospectively define and validate cardiorespiratory patterns. Machine and deep learning methodologies will be used to predict the onset and severity of NOWS, as well as abnormal sleep-disordered breathing a few months following birth. The results of this research may help with earlier identification of NOWS, facilitating quicker initiation of therapy in infants at high risk, while allowing infants at very low risk to be discharged sooner.

## DR. SHAWANA TABBASUM

Dr. Shawana Tabassum has been a productive faculty member in the electrical engineering department. In a short period of time, she has gone above and beyond to engage our undergraduate and graduate students,

including women and underrepresented minorities, in sensors research. She has, and is continuing, supervised five capstone projects, 16 undergraduate student researchers (one of them received his PhD admission at Rice University), and six MSEE thesis students. Her research focuses on developing a wireless plant sensor network to diagnose, track and manage adverse crop health conditions for precision farming and sustainable agriculture. She also develops novel fiber-optic sensors for in vivo monitoring and decision making in cancer progression in collaboration with the Fisch College of Pharmacy at UT Tyler. She has developed research collaborations with Texas A&M University, Iowa State University, University of Nevada-Reno and UC Davis.

Since joining UT Tyler, she has published four journal articles and 15 conference papers at leading IEEE venues. She was recently awarded the prestigious early-career NSF-ERI grant (funded, \$200k for two years) as the PI for developing wearable fitness trackers to remotely monitor crop health in real-time. She is also the Co-PI in an NSF-PFI grant (funded, \$250k for two years) to develop a fiber-optic sensing system for multiplexed gas detection in the agriculture field. She also led the effort in acquiring the C430MX Analog Mixed Signal Tester (\$300k) from SPEA America to improve our undergraduate curriculum and research profile. Dr. Tabassum also received the highly competitive UT System's Rising STARS award (\$300k for three years) for conducting research in biosensors and bioinformatics. She also received several other small grants as the PI, including, VentureWell Foundation's Faculty grant (\$30,000 for three years). Tabassum was selected as an mHealth Scholar in April 2022 by the mHealth Training Institute and NIH. She also was given the Best Student Paper Award-April 2022, at the IEEE Nano/Micro Engineered and Molecular Systems (NEMS) Conference. One of her students placed first at the IEEE Region 5 Poster Competition in April 2022. Her students also won First (\$7,500) and second (\$5,000) places at the Business Model Competition held by the East Texas Entrepreneurship Center in March 2022.

Legacy Project Program which builds one to two new facilities for the college each year that range in scope from \$50K to \$600K, and (3) to produce support to our local community thru the partnership with the local Habitat for Humanity organization that allows the SLC members to program, contract for and supervise the construction of a real home for a family sponsored by the Habitat organization each year.

The key members of the society this year, Jamie Babyak, Michael Mize and Jason Tolbert, have been instrumental leaders in shaping the future of the program at UT Tyler.

## TEXAS RURAL TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH CENTER

With the establishment of the Texas Rural Transportation Research Center (TRTRC) by Dr. Mena Souliman, there have been several transportation engineering milestones accomplished in the Department of Civil Engineering. Souliman secured two new research projects funded by TxDOT along with his collaborators at Texas Transportation Institute at TAMU. The two projects will look into quantifying the maximum accumulated seal coat layers required for roadway stability as well as measuring seal coat rate field adjustments. Another awarded project was SMARTP3M: Smart Pavement Monitoring, Management, and Maintenance. This is an interdisciplinary collaboration project led by Souliman as the PI, and Dr. Matthew Vechione (Civil Engineering), Dr. Mukul Shirvaikar (Electrical Engineering) and Dr. Yi Li (Computer Science) as CoPIs. The project began as a Presidential Internal Grant in 2020, and has since evolved into an externally funded project by the TranSET University Transportation Center (UTC). As Director of the TRTRC, Dr. Souliman is also the UT Tyler lead for several other projects studying diverse topics such as the use of ocean plastic waste in road construction, evaluation of flexible pavements at the network level and better classification schemes for aggregates used in reclaimed asphalt pavement. These and other projects meant that the center was funded with over \$75 million dollars last year.

Another transportation-related milestone includes the establishment of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Student Chapter at UT Tyler under faculty advisor Dr. Matthew Vechione. During the first official year of the chapter's establishment, it was the most recent recipient of the "Student Chapter Momentum Award" by the Texas District of ITE for "the most improved student chapter in Texas."

A third transportation-related milestone is that the top two graduate student posters at the 2022 Lyceum Research Showcase were related to transportation engineering. Benjamin Stewart received first place on a collaborative study with UTRGV under the direction of Dr. Matthew Vechione for his project, "Dynamic Queueing Analysis of the Gateway International Bridge Border Crossing in Brownsville, Texas for Potential Wait Time Reduction and Air Quality Improvement." Prashanta Acharjee received second place for his poster under the direction of Dr. Mena Souliman for his project, "Pavement Roughness Prediction Model for Texas with Artificial Neural Network." Acharjee also presented another research paper related to pavement roughness prediction models for the state of Louisiana at the regional ASEE conference and was awarded the second-best graduate research paper in the entire graduate student competition. This recognition led Acharjee to be awarded with the outstanding graduate student in the civil engineering department for the 2021-2022 school year.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year, we'd like to highlight some of the ways that the students at our Houston Engineering Center are interfacing with the greater Houston community.

## COLLABORATION WITH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Under the leadership of new HEC Director Dr. Andres Garcia, the student organizations based at HEC have organized and held the Alief ISD's district-wide Popsicle Bridge Competition for several years, pausing only in 2020, due to COVID-19. The HEC SHPE chapter collaborates with other HEC student organizations such as the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) student chapters to coordinate more than 100 engineering student volunteers. They host grade school students from more than 25 elementary, middle and high schools. More than 1,000 K-12 students compete every year. The Board of Trustees of the Alief ISD recognized the UT Tyler College of Engineering with a certificate for outstanding contributions to the school district. UT Tyler and Alief ISD created this event from the ground up with the intention of creating an activity that engages all students at the school level, and simultaneously get all HEC students to engage in outreach activities without limits.

The school students learn to build a bridge, follow competition rules, and most importantly, they experience a sense of belonging by participating in an event where students from all grades compete. HEC students learn to give back to the community, having a chance to accumulate service hours and be part of a team.

## COLLABORATION WITH NASA

UT Tyler's mechanical and electrical student design teams were particularly successful at the NASA Texas Space Grant Consortium Design Challenge this year. The TSGC Design Challenge is a unique academic experience offering undergraduate students an opportunity to propose, design and fabricate a solution to a toward solving research objectives of importance to NASA and its mission. Sponsored by NASA and administered by the Texas Space Grant Consortium since 2002, Design Challenge topics

are submitted by researchers working with NASA or its contractor community on current projects of interest within NASA's Vision for Space Exploration. The overall experience provides student team members with an opportunity to engage in scientific research, hands-on design, space-related career opportunities, communication skills and educational outreach.

UT Tyler had the largest participation footprint of any university this year, with five teams winning awards for their achievements. Mechanical Engineering teams Solis (Second Place Overall, spring 2022), Callisto (Sixth Place Overall, spring 2022) and Electrical Engineering team HEC5 (Sixth Place Overall, fall 2021) earned awards at the ceremony. Perhaps even more impressively, UT Tyler students and faculty mentors partnered with San Jacinto (Team Hyperion) and Houston Community College (Team Eagle) to help these teams earn further awards (Second and Third Place Overall, fall 2021).

## COLLABORATION WITH HOUSTON AREA HIGH SCHOOLS

This year, the HEC planned a different experience for the Senior Design Expo, and we hit a new high in terms of community impact. This might have been the largest Senior Design Showcase, not only for EE and ME, but in the entire College of Engineering. We expanded the Senior Design Showcase to include presentations to Early College and High School students in order to engage them and bring them into STEM fields, hosting almost 200 high school students visiting from Houston ISD and Alief ISD.

In great part due to the volunteers and Prof. Al-Shalash (Mechanical Engineering), the event was a significant success. The newly-elected SGA senators took the initiative of having an outdoor cookout and the professor assisted with planning the whole event with them. The visiting high school teachers were very impressed with the organization as well as the visiting judges and Houston Community College faculty and staff who stayed to the very end.



# SCHOOL of NURSING



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN DR. BARBARA HAAS

The 2021-2022 academic year for the School of Nursing may best be summed up in a single word: Change!

As part of the reorganization following the January 2021, merger of the academic and health affairs components of the university, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences was disbanded. A stand-alone School of Nursing was established on September 1, 2021. It is my deepest honor to have been named dean of the School of Nursing, where it is our mission to empower students to excel as nurse clinicians, leaders and scholars in a caring, learner-centered, strengths-based environment.

Throughout numerous organizational changes within the School of Nursing this past year, faculty and staff remained true to our mission. Their commitment to the students and our community is evident in all they do and accomplish. With an enrollment of 2,140 students, and thanks to the efforts of 83 dedicated faculty and 24 outstanding staff members, the School of Nursing continues to evolve to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

*Dr. Barbara Haas*

Drs. LeRoy and Lucy Mathis Chair in Nursing  
Professor and Dean

# REORGANIZATION

A completely new organizational chart, developed as a team of teams, has poised the SON to take on new challenges while building on past successes. As part of the organizational restructuring of the School of Nursing, Dr. Jenifer Chilton was named Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Dr. Chilton oversees all programs and student-facing activities within the school.



**Dr. Jenifer Chilton**

A new School of Nursing Director of Advising position was created as part of the reorganization. Angela Copeland serves the Director, overseeing a staff of eight excellent advisors to meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   |  |   |
| <b>ADVISING TEAM</b>  |  |   |
| <p><b>Ashley Davidson</b><br/>Longview Advisor<br/>adavidson@uttyler.edu<br/>903.663.8222</p>                   | <p><b>Susan Harris</b><br/>Palastine Advisor<br/>sharris@uttyler.edu<br/>903.727.2308</p>                        | <p><b>Angela Copeland</b><br/>Director of Advising<br/>acopeland@uttyler.edu<br/>903.566.7043</p>   |
| <p><b>Janet Rainey</b><br/>Graduate Programs Advisor<br/>jrainey@uttyler.edu<br/>903.566.7242</p>               | <p><b>Will Massey</b><br/>Tyler Advisor<br/>Last Names A-D<br/>wmassey@uttyler.edu<br/>903.565.5926</p>          | <p><b>Tammie Cooper</b><br/>RN-BSN   ADN-BSN Advisor<br/>tcooper@uttyler.edu<br/>903.565.5534</p>   |
| <p><b>Shera-Donne Lee</b><br/>Tyler Advisor<br/>Last Names K-Q<br/>sheradanlee@uttyler.edu<br/>903.566.7052</p> | <p><b>Charlotte Thompson</b><br/>Tyler Advisor<br/>Last Names R-Z<br/>cthompson@uttyler.edu<br/>903.565.5591</p> | <p><b>BSN Programs</b><br/>Traditional, Year-Round   120 credit hours<br/>ADN + BSN Concurrent   36 credit hours at UT Tyler + ADN Program<br/>RN - BSN Online   36 credit hours<br/>Graduate Online Programs<br/>MSN Administration<br/>MSN Education<br/>MSN Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)<br/>MSN Information, Quality &amp; Safety<br/>MSN MBA Dual Degree<br/>MSN Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)<br/>Doctoral Online Programs<br/>PhD in Nursing<br/>MSN to PhD   BSN to PhD</p> |

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

The faculty, staff and students achieve milestones daily as they go about their work of teaching, learning, patient advocacy, service and scholarship. Some of their achievements are recognized and highlighted here.

## PROGRAMS

- Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Christy Gipson, the UT Tyler School of Nursing is now an accredited provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Moving forward, the SON can offer continuing education to licensed nurses beyond those courses needed for a degree.
- Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) graduates had an overall 100% pass rate on the 2021 certification exam as reported by the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners Certification Board (AANPCB).
- The MSN programs once again ranked among the top programs in the country in the 2022 US News & World Report rankings.
- The RN-BSN program was ranked No. 2 in Texas by RegisteredNurse.org.
- The UT Tyler School of Nursing is a FEMA recognized CERT Program for Disaster Preparedness, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Glenn Barnes.
- Members of the SON Leadership Team (Dr. Amy Roberts, Dr. Jenifer Chilton, Dr. Barbara Haas, Michelle Nelson, Vicki Jowell) had the honor of representing the SON at the Greater East Texas Black Nurses Association 30th Annual Celebratory Recognition Event where the SON was recognized for "outstanding support and contributions to the National Black Nurses Association Greater East Texas Chapter."



## FACULTY AND STAFF

- Dr. Beth Mastel-Smith was recognized as a Distinguished Educator in Gerontological Nursing by the National Harford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence (NHCGNE).
- Dr. Glenn Barnes was named a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine.
- RN-BSN Coordinator and BSN faculty, Ms. Vicki Jowell received the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)'s Teaching and Learning Award.
- Through a competitive application process, Dr. Jenifer Chilton was accepted to the AACN-Wharton Executive Leadership Program at the University of Pennsylvania. The Wharton Executive Development program provides executive education that is evidence-based and results-focused to prepare individuals and organizations for greater success.
- Will Massey, Academic Advisor III, was elected President-Elect for TEXAAN (Texas Academic Advising Network) during the 2022 Annual Conference. As president, Massey will lead the state-wide organization of academic advisors from community colleges and universities across Texas.
- Dr. Barbara Haas was inducted into the UT System Kenneth I. Shine Academy of Health Science Education.
- SON student worker, Kaylee "KK" Scarborough, was awarded the university's Student Employee Spirit Award.



## STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

- PhD alum, Dr. Diane Barber, was inducted as a Fellow into the American Academy of Nursing, one of the most prestigious recognitions given in nursing. Her induction was in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the profession in cancer nursing.
- PhD student, Dr. Gini Cadenhead, was selected as the winner of the 21st Annual Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) Health Literacy Award.



- BSN and MSN-FNP alum and current doctoral student at Yale, Elizabeth Clark participated in a Texas Nurses Association pilot program titled Nurses, Politics and Policy. She testified before the Texas House of Representatives Public Health Committee. She was also featured in an article in the TNA newsletter.

## INNOVATIVE TEACHING

Education has changed dramatically since the days when a faculty member stood in front of a class to lecture. Today, faculty members engage students through innovative and hands-on experiences to prepare them for the demands of a nursing career. The simulation centers on all three campuses are integral to the educational experience of BSN and MSN students.

As an example, BSN faculty members Ann Campbell and Natalie Serrano worked with Simulation staff Hillary Oliver and Tiffany Russell to develop a creative and realistic evolving case study simulation of a COVID patient and family for Level III students. The case study provided a safe place for students to be challenged with grieving, frightened and demanding family members while caring for a critically ill patient.



Another change in health care related to COVID and the pandemic is the emergence of telehealth. The Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) faculty developed a creative means to meet both students need for clinical experience and the needs of educators and health care providers dealing with the stress of teaching and providing care during the restrictions imposed by COVID. Drs. Sandra Petersen and Barbara Chapman

worked with colleagues in the College of Education and Psychology to provide telehealth counseling for free to teachers and healthcare workers across the state of Texas.

Collaborating with other healthcare professionals is an essential part of educating today's nurses. One way this is accomplished is having Level IV BSN students participate in an Interprofessional

Education (IPE) symposium with Fisch College of Pharmacy students. Students work through case studies and learn about different approaches to care as seen through the lens of colleagues in different professions.

Other interprofessional opportunities are available as Dr. Glenn Barnes invites non-nursing students to participate in a Disaster Day. Undergraduate BSN students enrolled in the Population Health course learn how to establish disaster and personal shelters, triage injured persons, provide basic austere care, pack a first aid kit and prepare a 72-hour survival bag.



Teaching others is another strategy used to enhance learning. Level IV (senior) BSN students from the Longview campus supervised the Level II (junior) students during the Point in Time Homeless Resource Day for Gregg County.

Level III (senior) students enrolled in the Special Populations course provided an interactive birthing demonstration in the University Center.



## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

In addition to teaching, School of Nursing faculty actively engage in scholarship. During this academic year, faculty reported:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| # Journal Articles Published                       | 32        |
| # Book Chapters                                    | 1         |
| # Poster Presentations at Professional Conferences | 14        |
| # Podium Presentations at Professional Conferences | 31        |
| \$ Grant Funding                                   | \$711,966 |

Faculty also mentor undergraduate and graduate students in scholarly activities.

- Under the mentorship of Dr. Danita Alfred, 10 Honors in Nursing students won the best undergraduate poster at the annual Lyceum held on the main campus.
- The 2021 Honors in Nursing cohort, under the mentorship of Drs. Melinda Hermanns and Beth Mastel-Smith were accepted to present research from their poster presentations at the National Collegiate Honors Conference in Orlando, Florida.
- DNP student Nancy McClurg's case study was accepted by the Journal of Pediatric Health Care for publication in the May/June 2022, issue.

Scholarship extends beyond publishing, presenting, and securing grants. Dissemination to the lay public is critical. Dr. Barbara Chapman was featured on both NBC Channel 5 in Dallas and CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 discussing the PMHNP's community outreach. UT Tyler was one of the first universities to offer free virtual visits with trained mental health professionals. She was also interviewed by the Austin American-Statesman discussing the challenges faced by healthcare providers and the telehealth provided to educators and healthcare providers through the telehealth initiative she developed in partnership with Dr. Sandra Petersen.

In other community outreach, Dr. Danita Alfred received a HRSA grant in conjunction with UT Health Science Center faculty to promote and provide covid vaccines in underserved areas of East Texas. Dr. Glenn Barnes is a co-investigator. He and Jessica Bowen are organizing and overseeing the students' involvement in the project.

Faculty engage in activities to enhance scholarship, and several were provided opportunities this past year to develop research, advocacy and teaching.

- Angela Preston, a BSN faculty member and current PhD student at UT Austin, was selected as a 2021-2023 Jonas Nursing and Veterans Health Care scholar.
- Janice Hawes, a BSN faculty member and current DNP student, attended the American Association of Colleges in Nursing (AACN) Student Policy Summit in Washington, D.C. to build advocacy acumen.
- Angela Preston and Dr. Christy Gipson were accepted to the 2022 cohort of the Environmental Health Research Institute for Nurse and Clinician Scientists (EHRI-NCS).
- Five faculty members (Gina Dudley, Dr. Danice Greer, Dr. Kara Jones, Dr. Cheryl Parker, and Elaine Wallace) were selected to participate in the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) course on Effective College Instruction. All successfully completed and earned their ACUE certificate, further enhancing their scholarship of teaching.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE

An important aspect of a university education is providing service to society. The SON students and faculty are frequently out in the community, sharing their expertise, time and hearts to improve the health of East Texas.



Faculty and BSN students continue to train lay persons and healthcare professionals interested in being prepared to help in an emergency. The Stop the Bleed courses were offered to school districts and universities across the region.

Longview Level I (junior) BSN nursing students and faculty members Lori Greer, Hilary Greene and Sheri Battles participated in the National Night Out in South Longview. The students prepared trifold presentations concerning health related topics and engaged with participants to educate the public.



Faculty members Dr. Belinda Deal and Vicki Jowell, along with nursing students, volunteered to assist at Bethesda Clinic's Día de las Madres women's health event.



BSN faculty member Carla Biondillo, participated in NET Health Outreach with Dr. Richard Hackney from the Northeast Texas Healthcare Task Force, at Mount Zion Church in Hawkins.

Level III and IV (Senior) students registered potential donors as part of the Be the Match and the National Marrow Donor Program.



Students on the Palestine Campus hosted the Carter Blood Care Drive. They had 28 donors attempt and 19 units collected.



The Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF) student organization met the week before Thanksgiving to pack shoeboxes of presents for children across the globe. The group surpassed their goal of 20 boxes, filling 26 boxes for children.



Faculty member Dr. Belinda Deal, organized the annual NCF Retreat at Camp Gilmont with participants from across Texas.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

None of what we do in the SON is possible without our extraordinary community partners. The support from our partners enables us to admit more students and ensure they have excellent clinical experiences.

A pilot project with UT Health Tyler explored paying students for clinical hours while employed as a nurse extern and has been a huge success. The students have had outstanding experiences and most of them have chosen to remain in East Texas working in the area they served as an extern.

Another pilot project was launched with Christus Trinity Mother Frances Hospital. The Christus Foundation sponsored a clinician-nurse faculty to teach in the SON

for an entire year. This project helped address the severe nursing faculty shortage and provided an expert nurse clinician who knew the clinical facility.

School of Nursing supporters Janis and David King donated a year's worth of white coats to our Level 1 (first semester) BSN students for their White Coat ceremony. The King's generosity helped ease the student cost of attending nursing school and served as a foundation to create a future legacy of our BSN alumni giving back and donating at least one coat to future Level 1 students.



# BEN & MAYTEE FISCH

## COLLEGE of PHARMACY



## A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

DR. KATHLEEN SNELLA

The Fisch College of Pharmacy (FCOP) was excited to confer 67 new Doctor of Pharmacy graduates during UT Tyler's spring 2022 commencement ceremony. The Class of 2022 celebrated their graduation with family and friends at the Conferral of the Doctoral Hood Ceremony, which recognized the graduates for their hard work and outstanding academic achievements. The FCOP is very proud of the accomplishments, success and dedicated service of all our alumni. Two hundred thirty-nine pharmacists have graduated from the FCOP, from its pioneer class that graduated in 2019, through the graduating class of 2021. Approximately 90% of our alumni are licensed to practice pharmacy in the state of Texas with 24% employed in East Texas.

The FCOP admitted our seventh class of students into their first professional year during fall 2021. At the apex of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resiliency and dedication to success of FCOP students was admirable. Student pharmacists returned to the classroom, returning to individual and team-based learning in classrooms that allowed for social distancing, masking and other precautions aimed to provide student, faculty and staff safety. Student pharmacists actively engaged in introductory and advanced pharmacy patient care experiences in community pharmacies, hospitals, health-systems and clinics. Most learning experiences occurred in East Texas for both introductory (84%) and

advanced experiential learning courses (57%), allowing student pharmacists to provide care to their local community. Student pharmacist traveled to throughout Texas including Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.

The FCOP faculty, staff and students were recognized by the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health) "Doc" Ballard Award for Excellence in Public Health in 2021. The Doc Ballard Award was given to Smith County Judge Nathaniel Moran, Tyler Mayor Don Warren, former Tyler Mayor Martin Heines and the Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy at The University of Texas at Tyler.

The FCOP's COVID-19 efforts were recognized when The University of Texas at Tyler received the 2021 The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Star Award. The 2021 STAR Award recognized institutions with outstanding health, safety and success initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FCOP is proud to be among the many colleges, schools and departments contributing to UT Tyler outstanding efforts during the pandemic. The last two years have been unprecedented and challenging, but we are very proud of the commitment shown by our faculty, staff, students and alumni to the pharmacy profession and to the health and welfare of East Texas and beyond.

*Dr. Kathleen Snella*

Interim Dean of the Ben & Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy

# NEW FACULTY

The Fisch College of Pharmacy is home to two academic departments, the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes and the Department of Clinical Sciences. The Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences includes 10 faculty members with research interests ranging from the discovery of new drugs to treat cancer to the neurological basis of drug dependency. The Department of Clinical Sciences includes 16 pharmacist faculty with a variety of specialty practice areas, including ambulatory care, infectious disease, critical care, oncology and internal medicine. Faculty in both departments actively teach within the program,

sharing their knowledge and expertise directly with the student pharmacists. Additionally, over 700 practicing pharmacists work with the Fisch College of Pharmacy to train our student pharmacists during their direct patient care experiences. These pharmacists represent nearly 600 practice sites in Texas.

The college welcomed Young Ran Lee, Pharm.D. into the faculty as a Clinical Professor, and Dr. Stacy Reid, Pharm.D. joined the college as the Director of Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences and Clinical Assistant Professor in 2021.

# AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

## DR. SANTOSH ARYAL, PH.D.

Dr. Santosh Aryal was honored as a Vebleo Fellow in June 2021. The Vebleo Fellow recognizes researchers and scientists demonstrating leadership in science, engineering, and technology. Dr. Aryal joined the FCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes in spring 2020 as an Associate Professor. Dr. Aryal received his Ph.D. in Bionanosystem Engineering from Chonbuk National University in the Republic of Korea.

## DR. FARAH DEBA, PH.D.

Dr. Farah Deba was recognized as the Mentor of the Year at the UT Tyler Lyceum Research Conference. The Lyceum is an annual conference co-sponsored by the Honors Program and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The Lyceum provides undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to present their original research to the UT Tyler community and to network with fellow student and faculty researchers.

# RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The Fisch College of Pharmacy faculty are involved in a wide variety of research and scholarship activities. In the 2021-2022 academic year, faculty received research funding from the National Institutes of Health (R01, R16), the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (R21), the Texas Vaccine Outreach and Education Grant program, private research donations and the UT Tyler Internal Grant program.

## DR. SANTOSH ARYAL, PH.D.

Dr. Santosh Aryal of the FCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes (Co-Investigator) and Dr. Zhoumeng Lin (Primary Investigator, University of Florida) were awarded an R01 National Institutes of Health Research grant for their study, "Development of a web-based predictive model of nanoparticle delivery to tumors by integrating physiologically-based pharmacokinetic modeling

with artificial intelligence." The study will develop a pharmacokinetic model aimed at predicting tissue distribution and tumor delivery of nanoparticles which is critical step in developing nanoparticle-based anticancer drug formulations.

## DR. AYMAN HAMOUDA, PH.D. AND DR. BRENT BILL, PH.D., MS

UT Tyler faculty researcher received a Support for Research Excellence (SuRE) Program research grant in 2021. This National Institute of Health (R16) grant was awarded to Dr. Ayman Hamouda, Ph.D. of the FCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes (Primary Investigator) and Dr. Brent Bill, Ph.D., MS of the College of Arts and Sciences Department of Biology (Co-Investigator). The SuRE program supports investigator research designed at increasing research capacity at institutions that meet specific eligibility criteria ([www.nigms.nih.gov](http://www.nigms.nih.gov)). The investigators were awarded \$588,000 to support for research project, "In vitro pharmacology and in vivo neuroprotective effects of CMP1 analogues in an optimized Zebrafish model of Parkinson's disease" over the next four years.

## DR. AYMAN HAMOUDA, PH.D. AND DR. BRITTANY PARMENTIER, PHARM.D., BCPS, BCPP

Collaborative research between the FCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes and the Department of Clinical Sciences allows researchers the opportunity to conduct translational research. Dr. Ayman Hamouda, Ph.D. and Dr. Brittany Parmentier, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCPP combine their expertise in neurobiology and substance abuse in their research project "Evaluation of Cannabidiol (CBD) Products and their Use in the East Texas Community". The researchers, using an animal model, will evaluate specific CBD products to determine possible associated long-term benefits and toxicities. The knowledge from the research will help educate and promote additional research on the effects of CBC products.

## DR. TAKOVA WALLACE-GAY, PHARM.D., BCACP AND DR. JONATHAN NEWSOME, PHARM.D., BCGP

Dr. Takova Wallace-Gay, Pharm.D., BCACP of the FCOP Department of Clinical Sciences and the UT Tyler School of Medicine, and Dr. Jonathan Newsome, Pharm.D., BCGP of the FCOP Department of Clinical Sciences, received funding for their project, "East Texas Vaccine Awareness and Collaborative Community Services (ETx VACCS)" by

the Texas Vaccine Outreach and Education Grant program. The granting organization is a partnership between the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Unit and Texas A&M Health to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates within communities.

## DR. MAY ABDELAZIZ, PH.D., M.S., B.PHARM.

National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases R21 grant funding was renewed for a second year for the study, "Mechanistic Insights into VraS Mutations Linked to Bacterial Resistance" by Dr. May Abdelaziz, Ph.D., M.S., B.Pharm., of the FCOP Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes. The VraS is a histidine kinase found in bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus aureus*. This project will determine the effects of clinically relevant mutations of the VraS on key aspects that regulate its function. Mutations of VraS may increase resistance to antibiotics and therefore decrease effectiveness of antibiotic treatment.

## DR. SANTOSH ARYAL, PH.D., DR. RAMAN (KRISHNA) VANKAYLAPATI, DR. AYMAN HAMOUDA, PH.D AND DR. HUA TANG, PH.D.

Several faculty members were awarded internal grants from UT Tyler for collaborative grants between the main campus and the Health Sciences Center. Dr. Santosh Aryal, Ph.D. of the Fisch College of Pharmacy, and Dr. Raman (Krishna) Vankaylapati of the School of Medical Biological Sciences, received funding for their grant, "Natural killer cell-mimicking nanocarrier for tumor targeted drug delivery." Dr. Ayman Hamouda, Ph.D. and Dr. Hua Tang, Ph.D. of the School of Medical Biological Sciences received funding for their collaborative research "Anti-Inflammatory Potential of Nicotinic Receptor Potentiators in Acute Lung Injury."



## RESEARCH TEAM

The FCOP expanded our research staff this academic year including several postdoctoral research associates and visiting research scholars.

Dr. Liaqat Ali, PhD, M.Phil. is a postdoctoral research associate for Dr. May Abdelaziz and is studying bacterial signaling systems and genomic modifications that affect antibiotic resistance in bacteria. Dr. Ali received a M.Phil. in Animal Genomics and Biotechnology from the PARC Institute of Advanced Studies in Agriculture (Pakistan), and PhD in Zoology and Molecular Cell Biology from Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (China).

Dr. Medhat El-Halawany, PhD, M.S. graduated with his PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology from Nagoya University (Japan) and a MS in Molecular Biology from Cairo University (Egypt). Dr. El-Halwany joins Dr. Ayman Hamouda's research laboratory as a postdoctoral research associate and is studying the neuronal nicotinic Acetylcholine receptor.

Dr. Shoukath Sulthana, PhD also joins the research team for Dr. Santosh Aryal as a postdoctoral research associate. Dr. Sulthana received her PhD in Chemistry from Oklahoma State University. Her research includes developing a nanoparticulate drug delivery system with contrast agents and chemotherapeutics to study its therapeutic effect using cells and animal models.

Dr. Jiri Trousil, PhD joined the college as a visiting research scholar and is working under the supervision of Dr. Santosh Aryal. Dr. Trousil received his PhD in Analytical Chemistry from the Faculty of Sciences, Charles University (Czech Republic). Dr. Trousil's research includes developing, engineering, and analyzing functional nanobead-based interventions that will target specific cells and which will ultimately combat intracellular pathogens such as Mycobacterium tuberculosis.

## STUDENT RESEARCHERS

The FCOP continues to engage student pharmacists, undergraduate students, and graduate students in research and scholarship. During this academic year, 35 student pharmacists and two undergraduate students were represented on the 48 published research papers and thirty-four local, regional, and national poster and podium presentations. National poster presentations included Emerald Scott (Pharm.D. Class of 2023) who presented "Exploring the effect of mutations and the activity and stability of the bacterial histidine kinase VraS" at the American Chemical Society in spring 2022.

## STUDENT PHARMACISTS

Twenty-two new student pharmacists were welcomed into the profession at the Class of 2025 Fisch College of Pharmacy White Coat Ceremony. Dr. Chris Felton, Pharm.D., of the Brookshire Grocery Company and Ms. Audrey Hanson (Pharm.D. Class of 2024) provided the keynote and the student address respectively. Dr. Charlotte Weller, Pharm.D., led students in the Pledge of Professionalism. Dr. Weller is an adjunct faculty with the FCOP and Health Services Manager with Brookshire Grocery Company. Student pharmacists also received their first professional year pin marking the start of their four-year professional and academic journey.

The first-year students join the FCOP student pharmacist population in their commitment to academics, the profession, and community outreach. Student pharmacist achievements are proudly displayed in W.T. Brookshire Hall atrium with multiple banners celebrating their achievements. In 2021, the Texas Pharmacy Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (TPA-ASP) Cup was awarded to the UT Tyler TPA-ASP student chapter. The TPA-ASP Cup is a year-long challenge in which all Texas pharmacy schools participate in a series of outreach, advocacy, and student competitions. The Phi Delta Chi Most Resilient Chapter award was given to the UT Tyler Delta Iota Chapter in 2021. Phi Delta Chi is a national pharmacy organization in which students and alumni celebrate brotherhood, leadership, service, and scholarship.

Student pharmacists had multiple other achievements in addition to those displayed including the Rho Chi Honor Pharmacy Society which inducted 15 new members into the UT Tyler Epsilon Sigma chapter. Student pharmacists were participated in community outreach events both on campus and for the East Texas community. The UT Tyler chapter of the American Pharmacist Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists provided HPV vaccination education events on campus. Multiple student organizations collaborated for a Donation drive to benefit the Hospice of East Texas.

In May 2022, the graduating class of 2022 was recognized at the FCOP Conferral of the Doctoral Hood. The ceremony marked the completion of the students' academic journey. Providing guidance and advice to the newly conferred pharmacists was keynote speaker, Dr. Justin Hooper, Pharm.D., Director of Corporate Clinical Pharmacy at CHRISTUS Health. During the ceremony, doctoral hoods were presented by honored guests, individually selected by each graduate. The newly conferred pharmacists were led in the Oath of the Pharmacist by the FCOP Preceptor or the Year, Dr. Jennifer Konieczny, Pharm.D.

## INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Since its inception, a hallmark of the Fisch College of Pharmacy has been interprofessional education. The college's interprofessional educational curriculum highlights the importance of pharmacists as contributing members of the interprofessional healthcare team.

Our student pharmacists are educated in the Interprofessional Education Collaborative four core competencies of interprofessional education and interprofessional practice: 1) values and ethics for interprofessional practice, 2) roles and responsibilities, 3) interprofessional communication and 4) teamwork. Since all healthcare professionals, including pharmacists and student pharmacists, work as a part of an interprofessional team, these four core competencies serve to cultivate crucial foundational skills and abilities which allow students from different professions to learn about, learn from and learn with one another in multiple learning environments.

Interprofessional education is essential in the healthcare environment. The complexity of healthcare depends on integrated interprofessional teams collaborating to make shared decisions and deliver high-quality, patient-centered care. The seeds for these integrated, interprofessional healthcare teams become planted by bringing the students of health professions programs together early in their education. The College collaborated interprofessional education and interprofessional practice activities with health professions students and faculty from multiple institutions including UT Tyler, the University of Texas Medical Branch and Tyler Junior College.

The Fisch College of Pharmacy is a part of UT Tyler's Health Science Center, which includes the School of Medicine, School of Nursing and School of Health Professions. The strong partnerships between the UT Tyler healthcare programs provides an excellent foundation for continued interprofessional education and the ability for student pharmacists to learners learn and train alongside other health professionals and healthcare students.

## PATIENT CARE INITIATIVES

The FCOP established a pilot program focused on student success and patient care called the Leader Site Initiative. The program is led by the FCOP Office of Experiential Education with the goal of enhancing student experiential education while improving patient outcomes in East Texas. Specific pharmacy practice sites

were identified and selected to partner with the FCOP to build new patient care programs that support student learning. Piloted in January 2019, the Leader Site Initiative strategically established the infrastructure for layered learning. The programs engage student pharmacists in their second, third and fourth year of training in direct patient care activities based on their current knowledge and skillset. Incorporating students of different levels within the Pharm.D. program students within the leader sites provides students the opportunity to learn from and to teach fellow students.

The first Leader Site enlisted was UT Health in Athens. Katha Lawyer, Director of Pharmacy said the new Inpatient Medication Counseling program is working as envisioned and is having a positive impact on hospital scores.

The Pharmacist by the FCOP Preceptor or the Year, Dr. Jennifer Konieczny, Pharm.D.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

UT Tyler is helping to combat the opioid use disorder crisis in Henderson County. Dr. Cole Wilder, Pharm.D. of the FCOP Department of Clinical Sciences has recently joined efforts of the UT Tyler Health Science Center faculty, led by Dr. Harrison Ndetan, M.P.H., M.D., Ph.D. The Henderson County Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Project is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration and sponsored by the Henderson County Substance and Opioid Control Coalition (Henderson CoSOC). The community outreach project is a partnership between the Health Science Center, UT Health East Texas Athens, the East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the East Texas Community Clinic, and the non-profit Henderson County HELP Center. The goal of the program is to enhance access to substance and opioid use disorder prevention, treatment and recovery services in Henderson County. As a member of the HOPE Project treatment taskforce, Dr. Wilder will focus on the development and delivery of education and training programs to law enforcement and first responders. Training sessions will include information on opioids, opioid use disorder, and the recognition and treatment of opioid overdose with intranasal naloxone.

# SCHOOL *of* COMMUNITY & RURAL HEALTH



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**DR. GERALD (JERRY)  
R. LEDLOW, PH.D.,  
MHA, FACHE**

The culmination of six years of sustained effort for the School of Community and Rural Health (SCRH) is represented in this summary annual report. The faculty, staff, students and community stakeholders have worked diligently to achieve much in 'Improving the Health of East Texas!' This year included the Department of Health and Kinesiology as part of the school; and faculty and staff on both campuses have worked well together amid dynamic change. As the SCRH readies to assimilate into a new School of Health Professions as part of the two-university integration, the foundation is strong and poised for continued and increased levels of success. It has been an honor to serve as dean of the SCRH and an even greater honor to have served the professional team members of the school. The summary of the past year (2021-2022) is contained as provided by department chairs, center directors and staff.

*Dr. Jerry R. Ledlow*

Dean, School of Community and Rural Health  
Professor, Healthcare Policy, Economics and  
Management



## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Graduate and undergraduate programs in the SCRH had 821 students enrolled. As such, 14,692 semester credit hours (SCH) were produced across all programs.
- Over 230 students received undergraduate and graduate degrees through SCRH programs since June 1, 2021.
- SCRH programs and faculty earned over \$19.75 million in funding (completed, continuing and started) through over 50 new and ongoing federal, state, institutional and private grants and contracts. Additionally, the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment Programs (DSRIP, 1115 Waiver) received \$26.1 million in funding, as the Center for Population Health, Analytics, Quality Advancement Director (CPHAQA) serves the RHP-1 Anchor role for the region. DSRIP projects and funding ended December of 2021, with only reporting activities remaining. The above levels of funding are an exceptional feat for the relatively new school and its programs.
- Faculty within the SCRH contributed to scholarship through publication of over 47 journal articles including 70 faculty authorships. Another seven or more are in press or under review.
- The Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program received full Accreditation status by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) in 2021. The MOT program annual accreditation report was accepted by ACOTE without request for further information.
- The Master of Public Health Program underwent external review as part of the THECB requirements. The review was very positive, noting the quality of the curriculum and faculty credentials, diversity of faculty and students, faculty scholarly activities and research and the resultant opportunities provided to students, and the important role of the Occupational and Environmental Health Sciences Clinical and Departmental Programs as strengths of the program that set it apart from other MPH programs.

## CENTERS

The Health Status Report of Northeast Texas, 2021 (HSRNT21)<sup>1</sup> was released early in 2022, through the combined efforts of the School of Community and Rural Health, the Department of Preventive Medicine and Population Health in the new School of Medicine, and the UT System Population Health team. This report provides an in-depth analysis of the current health status of the 35 counties referred to as Health Service Region 4/5N by the Texas Department of State Health Services, illuminating current population health challenges in the region and highlighting areas in which progress has been made. The HSRNT21 is the second edition of the original report released in 2016, providing an additional five years of trend data, an expanded overview section that includes information on social and economic factors that impact health, and additional morbidity measures. HSRNT21 is accompanied by an interactive data visualization tool that allows comparison of county and regional data to the Texas and the nation. As did the 2016 HSRNT, the new HSRNT21 will serve as an important reference for stakeholders interested in promoting health and addressing geographic- and population-based health disparities in Texas.

<sup>1</sup> Nehme E, Schuessler K, Alvarado C, Elerian N, Miyakado H, Mandell D, Lakey D. (2021) The Health Status of Northeast Texas, 2021. Tyler, Texas: The University of Texas at Tyler/University of Texas System Population Health.

### THE CENTER FOR POPULATION HEALTH, ANALYTICS AND QUALITY ADVANCEMENTS (CPHAQA)

serves as an intersection between academic, clinical operations and community collaborations to improve population health starting in East Texas and beyond. As such, CPHAQA delivers a menu of Lifestyle Change programs to include Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), Hypertension Workshops, Hypertension Monitoring/Support, Active Living After Cancer, Your Diabetes, Your Heart and Tobacco Cessation.

- The DPP program received CDC certification in January 2021 and is nationally recognized. DPP programs are delivered in collaboration with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), MD Anderson and the TAMU Center for Population Health and Aging. Through these programs, CPHAQA continues to facilitate the UT Health North Campus' recognition as a participant in the American Heart Association's Target BP (blood pressure) Program. During the 2021-2022 period approximately 645 individuals participated in these programs.
- The tobacco cessation program received more than 2200 referrals and 629 healthcare workers received tobacco cessation medical education.
- CPHAQA is also the site of a DSHS certified Community Health Worker (CHW) Training and maintenance of

certification. Forty-four CHWs graduated during 2021-2022, and 28 credit hours of CEUs have been delivered.

- CPHAQA hosted and facilitated the 7th Annual Northeast Texas CHW Conference with 58 participants attending either in-person or virtual.
- As a host site of the Northeast Texas region's AHEC (Area Health Education Center), two grant writing workshops were offered in the fall and spring with a total of 62 participants.
- AHEC's collaboration with the UT Tyler Pre-Med Academy and SUPERNet offered a very successful inaugural Pre-Health Conference at the UT Tyler Campus, hosting 125 high school students from across Northeast Texas.
- The AHEC Scholars' program hosted 20 participants.

### SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

The Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education (Southwest Ag Center; SW Ag Center; or SWAG) was created in late 1995 at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler to serve Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas as part of a program initiative of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The initiative established a network of centers, funded on a competitive basis, to conduct programs of research, prevention, intervention, education, and outreach designed to reduce occupational injuries and diseases among agricultural workers and their families.

During 2021-2022, the SWAG outreach programs

- Updated and expanded the social media kit, Seasons Change | You Remain. The campaign has reached over 12,000 users and the link to webpage has received 1,470 clicks.
- Engaged producers and workers by posting content to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.
  - The Facebook page has 647 followers and has reached over 70,000 users.
  - The Instagram profile has 954 followers and has reached over 28,000 users.
  - The Twitter profile has 375 followers.
  - The YouTube channel has 565 subscribers. On average, about 800 views and three new subscribers are acquired every month.
- Produced a testimonial video series, Home Safe Home. Three videos are complete, and one is in production. Each of the videos feature a real farmer/rancher who recalls a work-related incident where an injury occurred. The goal of this video series is to use an emotional appeal to help other agricultural producers identify the unnecessary risks they are taking and make changes before tragedy strikes. The videos have been viewed over 500 times since January 2021. They will be posted

to the joint US AG Centers YouTube channel by summer 2022.

- Secured \$150K from the Texas Department of Agriculture to promote mental health, suicide prevention and stress associated with extreme weather. Partnered with the Texas Ag Commissioner to record two public service announcements.
- Created online courses for Livestock Safety, Heat Safety, and Shop Safety. 456 People have completed one or more of the courses.
- Supported the production of a Livestock Handling virtual reality training tool.
- Produced monthly safety articles.
- Secured a dedicated space in the Texas Department of Agriculture publication, Texas Agriculture Matters, for SWAG-produced monthly safety articles.
- Collaborated with Texas Farm Bureau to outline a safety article plan for 2022. Farm Bureau will use SWAG resources to build the safety and health focused articles and interview SWAG faculty and staff when necessary.

- Delivered three Pesticide Safety presentations to 194 people in Collin, Overton and Smith Counties.
- An article was published describing the collaborative process by which the Ag Centers set up and maintain a joint YouTube channel: Wickman, A. Duysen, E. Cheyney, M., Pennington, W., Mazur, J., Yoder, A. (2021). Development of an educational YouTube channel: A collaboration between U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers.
- Produced Research Reports for pesticide and heat safety projects.

## SWAG RESEARCH

- Five feasibility studies were funded which are briefly described below:
    - Shilpa Kusampudi, PhD, studied the inflammatory effects of compounds found in organic dust from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) on lung cells.
    - H. Robert Terry, Jr., PhD, evaluated Oklahoma agriculture teachers in their hybrid role as ag producers and teachers to assess their wellness and stress.
    - Tammy Thomas, PhD, developed a health and safety module to be implemented as part of the Grow the Grower Program. This is a farm training and business acceleration program in New Mexico.
    - Shannon Guillot-Wright, PhD, expanded her previous project to implement and evaluate a text messaging campaign to improve occupational health outcomes among commercial fishers.
    - Nishita Sinha, PhD, investigated the impact of the Professional Aerial Applicators' Support System (PAASS) program on the risk perceptions of agricultural pilots.
  - Coordinated annual joint pilot study symposium with the Southwest Center of Occupational Environmental Health (NIOSH Education Research Center) in Houston. New researchers present their pilot studies related to occupational health and safety and explore opportunities for collaboration.
  - Dr. Vijay Boggaram's publication on bacterial extracellular vesicles from organic dust was selected for the APS select award from the American Physiological Society. This publication was also featured in NIOSH eNews in November 2021.
- Meganathan, V., Moyana, R., Natarajan, K., Kujur, W., Kusampudi, S., Mulik, S., & Boggaram, V. (2020).

- Awarded the following Outreach Mini Grants:
  - Oklahoma State University: Youth ATV Safety Trainings.
  - Arkansas Cooperative Extension: Needs Assessment for USDA-CES Farm Stress Management Program.
  - Louisiana Cooperative Extension: ATV Safety.
  - Texas AgriLife Extension: Mental Health Video Testimonial.
  - Ag Health and Safety Alliance: Livestock virtual reality training; 360 videos for shop safety.

Bacterial extracellular vesicles isolated from organic dust induce neutrophilic inflammation in the lung. *American Journal of Physiology-Lung Cellular and Molecular Physiology*. 319(6): L893-L907.

- Received \$325K from NIOSH to study commercial fishing crew overboard recovery. One hundred and twenty-three fishermen were trained in a land-based crew overboard simulation and 119 life slings were distributed to fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico.
  - Developed a novel mobile application for recording daily musculoskeletal symptoms among logging machine operators.
  - Leveraged motor vehicle crash data from five states to be used for injury surveillance and research in agriculture, forestry, and fishing.
- Jisung, K., Trueblood, A., Kum, H.C., & Shipp, E.M. (2020). Crash narrative classification: Identifying agricultural crashes using machine learning with curated keywords. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 1-5.
- Evaluated the impact of COVID-19 among USDA certified organic producers.
  - In July 2021, SWAG PI, Shannon Guillot-Wright, PhD, partnered with an academic hospital and social service agencies to provide a free mobile health clinic at a dock in Southeast Texas. Through the community-based participatory research (CBPR) with shrimpers (n=59), it was found that Gulf of Mexico fishermen experienced a lack of health care coverage, little time to make appointments between shrimping trips, financial and language barriers, and lost, or incorrect citizenship documentation. Participants requested basic medical supplies onboard vessels and an on-site clinic at the dock during the interviews. Following CBRP best practices, they responded to their request by recruiting a team of volunteers, obtained medical supplies, continued outreach to shrimpers, and offered COVID-19 vaccines.

The free Docside Clinic led to fishermen accessing care for the first time in decades. Outcomes included COVID vaccinations, diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes, an emergency hospital admission, and diagnosis of high blood pressure. After the success of the July clinic, they initiated a free monthly Docside Clinic to offer patient care, flu shots, COVID shots/booster, and distribution of hygienic items, socks, blankets, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Over 150 fishermen have been seen in the free Docside Clinic.

Guillot-Wright, S., Farr, N.M., \*Cherryhomes, E. (2022). "A community-led mobile health clinic to improve structural and social determinants of health among (im)migrant workers," *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 21 (58).

- PI, Dave Douphrate, PhD, had the opportunity to facilitate access to COVID vaccinations among logging workers. His experience during the pandemic of facilitating vaccine delivery to workers in other AFF sectors (dairy and poultry) enabled research personnel to expeditiously arrange for logging workers to receive the vaccine at nearby DHS health clinics. These workers were unaware of vaccine availability and eligibility at the time. They worked with the logging contractor and arranged for entire logging crews to receive the COVID vaccine.
- PI, Michael Merten, PhD, is developing short pesticide education stories with accompanying videos to disseminate important research findings related to pesticide safety.

## COVID-RELATED COMMUNITY AND RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Numerous SCRH faculty and staff are involved in various programs sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic and aimed at improving outcomes in underserved communities. Several examples of these community programs include:

- The COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Confidence (COVHAC) Survey: A Rapid Community Assessment. SCRH program wherein faculty and collaborating investigators developed community and provider surveys to assess reasons and barriers preventing COVID-19 vaccination among individuals in Northeast Texas. SCRH faculty work diligently on this project to accomplish the program goals in a short time-frame.
- A Community-Based Consortium for Increasing Vaccine Uptake in East Texas to address vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccination rates in East Texas.
- Community-Engaged Research on COVID-19 Testing Among Underserved and/or Vulnerable Populations. Understanding and Addressing COVID-19 Testing Disparities in Vulnerable Populations: A Multilevel and Multimethod Approach. This program was undertaken to identify COVID-19 disease hotspots and testing deserts and work with priority communities regionally to develop and evaluate the multilevel just-in-time adaptive intervention strategies that increase access to testing. Project Lead Dr. Michele Crum
- The Community-Based Workforce Development and Mobilization to Increase COVID-19 Vaccination Equity in Texas aims to reduce COVID-19 hesitancy and expand current vaccination access through public outreach and education that reaches rural and underserved populations within the service region's 22 counties.
- The Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics for Underserved Populations (RADx-UP) Program was created by the

National Institutes of Health to help speed innovation in the development and implementation of COVID-19 testing and ensure that all Americans have access to COVID-19 testing. In partnership with the CTSA and a focus on communities most affected by the pandemic, this project utilizes community health workers who are conducting door-to-door surveys regarding COVID testing and vaccination in a multicounty East Texas area.

- Community-Based Workforce for COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach - As part of the American Rescue Plan, HRSA have awarded this funding to develop and support a community-based workforce that will engage in locally tailored efforts to build vaccine confidence and bolster COVID-19 vaccinations in underserved communities. SCRH faculty are in partnership with the School of Nursing and the Northeast Texas Public Health District regarding outreach activities in 22 East Texas counties. We are also collaborating with CTSA partners in Houston and Brownsville.

SCRH faculty, administrators and staff have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic with our hospitals, front line workforce, public health agencies, colleagues, government agencies and communities to provide the best opportunities for prevention, diagnosis, surveillance and treatment of COVID in our region. The above-mentioned programs are only a sampling of the hard work and contributions our dedicated faculty, students and staff have put forth toward the often-overwhelming needs of our communities brought to the forefront by the pandemic.

# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

## MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to the SWAG Center program to address mental health in agricultural workers mentioned previously, Dr. Karan Singh is leading a program to examine the health and economic costs of undertreated mental health conditions and develop a cost-effective, accessible behavioral health intervention to improve the health and lower health care costs of Northeast Texas residents. In addition, findings will assess work absenteeism, alcohol use, barriers to health care access, quality of life, as well as health care utilization for untreated or undertreated depression. Additionally, their data may be used to facilitate program development efforts aimed at reducing disparate mental health care in underserved populations across the Northeast Texas region. The Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC) funded \$1 million toward this project, “Examining the Social and Economic Costs of Undertreated Mental Health Conditions among Underserved Individuals Living in an Underserved and Primarily Rural Region of Texas.”

## OPIOID AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

- CAPSA East Texas Program - Substance abuse in Northeast Texas is pervasive across the 23 rural counties of Public Health Region (PHR) 4. The region suffers from higher rates of alcohol use and overall prescription drug use than other regions of the state. The Community-Academic Partnership for Substance Abuse in East Texas (CAPSA-ET) was a three-year project under primary investigator Dr. Yordi Tiruneh, which strived to build a sustainable research infrastructure (consortium) to address substance use disorder (SUD) in East Texas through community engagement and capacity building of various stakeholder groups. With the lead community partner, the East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ETCADA), CAPSA-ET engaged several community stakeholders in a series of planned activities to network and get involved in governing activities such as the CAPSA steering committee; participating in conferences, research trainings, focus group discussions, stakeholders’ socials, community forums, and other CAPSA online platforms. CAPSA-ET also identified research needs and developed a stakeholder-engaged research agenda for SUD in East Texas to capture relevant data and spawn

SUD research that can be meaningfully translated into community initiatives and interventions to improve SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services. Though the formal funded project ended December 2021, Dr. Tiruneh continues working with the CAPSA-ET stakeholders and collaborators around the state, such as the Justice Collaborative Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN) Texas Christian University (TCU) Research Hub, and MD Anderson Tobacco Cessation Programs, among others, to continue much needed SUD community-focused programs in the region.

- The ongoing project, “Strengthening and Expanding Access to Opioid Use Disorder and other Substance Use Disorder Services in Henderson County, Texas,” led by Dr. Harrison Ndetan, supports the implementation of sustainable and culturally appropriate programs that focus on expanding and enhancing the ability of residents in Henderson County to access opioid use disorder (OUD) and substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, treatment and recovery services. The project is conducted through the Henderson County Substance and Opioid Control Coalition (Henderson CoSOC), which is comprised of four consortium organizations: the UT Health Science Center at Tyler; The UT Health East Texas Athens Hospital; The East Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ETCADA); the Henderson HELP Center. The coalition has three task forces, an advisory board and a data monitoring and evaluation committee to help support its effort. The Henderson CoSOC funding also supports the HOPE Project, which seeks to expand, enhance and sustain access to evidence-based, culturally and linguistically tailored opioid and substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery services in the community.

## TEXAS HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

Several programs have developed under the umbrella of the grant-funded Texas Home Visiting program. All programs are focused on healthy early childhood development, improving family life and preventing child maltreatment.

- The Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is a home visiting program focused on working with first-time, low-income pregnant women throughout the pregnancy and until the child turns two years of age. Eight bachelor-educated

Nurse Home Visitors develop and sustain relationships with 25 clients each in varying stages of pregnancy and parenting in Smith and Henderson Counties. They focus on healthy pregnancy, full-term delivery, maternal and infant health, and empowering mothers to best meet infants’ needs. The NHVs connect new mothers and families to resources and encourage them to dream and plan to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Many clients return to school and work to provide the best future for their infants. The program has the capacity to serve 200 East Texas mothers.

- The Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting program that strives to strengthen area families. PAT Parent Educators work with pregnant women and families with children from birth through kindergarten. The program is based on the principle that child’s first and most important teacher is the parent. The goals of the program include increasing parent knowledge of early childhood development, enhancing positive parenting practices, developing children’s school readiness and success, and providing early detection of developmental delays and health issues. The three Parent Educators in Smith County have a capacity to serve 60 low-income families with young children navigate the challenges of family life by connecting them to available community resources. PAT is managed under a contractual agreement with Community Healthcore.
- Moving Beyond Depression (MBD) is a unique grant-funded program that meets the behavioral health needs of home visiting clients who are diagnosed with postpartum depression and anxiety. The grant was sought due to the dearth of therapeutic services in the community. The MBD trained therapist provides 15 free weekly sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy to PAT and NFP clients who are identified as high risk and agree to treatment. The therapist and referring home visitor work together closely to ensure that the client is supported, and the child’s needs are met. The therapist has capacity to support 50 women annually.

- Brain Scientist Dads (BSD) is a newer project that is a collaboration between UT Health Houston, Texas Home Visiting and Northeast Texas WIC, and funded by the Episcopal Health Foundation (EHF). The focus of the project is to educate fathers-to-be and fathers of children under age three about their role in child development in the critical first three years of life. Working with a Father Advisory Council of community leaders, a six-week curriculum was designed to address infant brain development, bonding, infant feeding and care, co-parenting and men’s health. Male Community Health Workers (CHW) were trained to facilitate the sessions along with the Father Advisory Council



members. The six-week program was piloted in January and February 2022, and eight men graduated. Plans are in the works to conduct future groups in both English and in Spanish during the next two years of EHF funding.

## HEALTHY MUJERES

As an offshoot and extension of the original very successful Healthy Families initiative, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) funded a new Program called Healthy Mujeres. This Program, led by our Austin-based team has been providing contraception, pregnancy-related services, and preventive services to traditionally underserved populations residing in the Rio Grande Valley through a mobile van and community clinics. The reach of the services has now expanded beyond the original program’s Hidalgo County service area. The graphic below summarizes the much-needed services provided to underserved communities to help improve maternal and infant health outcomes between September 2020-May 2022.

## TEXAS SAFE BABIES



\*unduplicated for the day of services, not per service

In its seventh year, the Texas Safe Babies initiative (funded by the Department of Family and Protective Services), is focused on developing and evaluating population maltreatment prevention strategies. Activities are divided into direct parent education and support, systems change work, and research and evaluation. Direct parent education and support is achieved with the Father's Playbook App, the Parenting Action Plan, and the Family CARE Portfolio (formally Plan of Safe Care). The Father's Playbook App was developed in collaboration with University of Texas at Austin to help new fathers support their family during pregnancy, encourage participation in the pregnancy, and plan for the baby's arrival. Version 3.7 of the Father's Playbook App was released in May of 2022. The app has had 1,954 unique downloads in the past year and has reached nearly 5,000 fathers since its inception. A Parenting Action Plan was developed in collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine to help new mothers and fathers

plan for difficult parenting moments with a newborn. The Parenting Action Plan has been incorporated into the Father's Playbook App since April 2021 and is being distributed with the Family CARE Portfolio. In July of 2022, we will be launching the second randomized control trial of the Parenting Action Plan to assess its effectiveness in reducing parentings stress and negative parental attributions. The Family CARE Portfolio (formally Plan of Safe Care) was also developed with Baylor College of Medicine and is an organizational tool co-designed with pregnant women with substance use disorder to help them navigate through multiple systems. The past four months has been focused on evolving the training and language in the portfolio to emphasized that use of this tool for all families, not just those with substance use disorders. Over the past year, 811 professionals have attended a training on the Family CARE Portfolio and 634 portfolios have been distributed to community organizations and medical clinics to provide to families.

## CANCER PREVENTION AND SCREENING PROGRAMS

Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) funds multiple prevention and outreach education programs in the SCRH, providing much needed free or low-cost screening, prevention, outreach and education to under-served populations across the region. Examples of these include:

**Colorectal Cancer Screening (CRC) Program** - The Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Prevention grant continues to serve many underinsured or uninsured East Texas in a 32-county area. Partnering with area Federally Qualified Health Centers, local health departments, and other health care entities, thousands of individuals have been screened for early detection of CRC. Invasive CRC

cancer incidence is higher in the East Texas area when compared to the remainder of the state. The UT Tyler Health Science Center and UT Health East Texas hosted a fun-filled "Spring Into Good Health" community health fair on Saturday March 26, 2022. For this event we brought together 35 vendors who provided free services to the community such as mammograms, COVID-19 testing, vaccines for all ages, STI testing and blood pressure screenings. We were able to educate over 145 individuals on cancer prevention and screening, healthy living and many services offered within the community. The East Texas Food bank served 115 families with free produce and thanks to our vendors and sponsors we were able to provide many giveaways during the event, such as

a bicycle from Omega Psi Phi. This event is held every year during the month of March in recognition of Colon Cancer Awareness Month, and we can't wait to see what Spring Into Good Health 2023 holds.

An additional CDC-funded program also aims to increase colorectal cancer screenings in clinical settings, through collaborative approaches to increase adoption, implementation and maintenance of US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) evidence-based interventions.

**Cervical Cancer Screening and Prevention Program** - In partnership with MD Anderson Cancer Center this program provides cervical cancer prevention services to medically underserved populations in the Rio Grande Valley, Laredo, Northeast Texas, Bastrop and Brazoria Counties through patient outreach, navigation and provider training/tele mentoring. The goals of this project are to increase cervical cancer screening rates among medically underserved women at participating sites through clinic in reach, community outreach educational programs, and patient navigation services, and to increase local capacity to deliver evidence-based cervical cancer prevention services through professional education, training and support of local providers. The program team contacts individuals past due for screening to navigate them to an appointment. Cervical Cancer Awareness Month Initiatives were carried out in January to increase awareness and education across the UTHSCT campus. The associated Cervical Cancer awareness month Facebook post reached 3,094 people and had 42 engagements. Additionally, four educational video resources have reached thousands, per the breakdown below.

- Video 1 - 896 reached, 40 engagements**
- Video 2 - 21,127 reached, 2,100 views**
- Video 3 - 18,800 reached, 1,100 views**
- Video 4 - 7578 reached, 494 views**

This CPRIT-funded program, "Increasing Access to Smoking Cessation and Smoke Free Home Services for Low- Income Pregnant Women in East Texas (Baby Steps for Health)," seeks to provide tobacco cessation resources to pregnant women and their families in East Texas. In partnership with the MD Anderson Cancer Center, the project reaches out to expectant mothers who use tobacco products. In addition, the project provides relapse prevention services, access to app-based motivational interventions and smoke-free-homes interventions during the prenatal and postpartum periods. Referrals are received from Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics in rural Northeast Texas. Services include confidential telephone counseling, mailed self-help materials, smoke -free home interventions and a pregnancy wellness app that provides tips, resources and new content every trimester covering topics like sleep, nausea, stress, smoking, etc. All collaborating FQHCs have been trained and are implementing the assessment for services to their women and all but one of our collaborating WIC clinics are trained.

The Tobacco Free Northeast Texas (TNET) Smoking Cessation Program developed procedures and policies allowing clinicians to provide referrals into TNET utilizing prompts in patient electronic health records. The program also provides free smoking cessation service to patients and citizens of Northeast Texas. Patient referrals have increased dramatically since February 2022, and the TNET program has increased participation through the addition of several clinics. This project is in partnership with the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Through this program 27 clinicians, received training on program procedures and improving patient referrals to TNET.



# SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

## SCHOLARSHIP

Faculty within the SCRH contributed to scholarship with over 45 journal articles including 60 faculty authorships, with another seven or more in press or under review. Additionally, one book and three book chapters were published, with three more under review. Over 75 oral presentations, poster presentations and other creative works were performed by SCRH faculty.

Conferences sponsored/hosted by SCRH programs to educate and engage colleagues, stakeholders and communities toward improving health include, but are not limited to:

- The ABCs of Health Disparities Conference.
- Focus on Education.
- Texas Collaborative for HIV Education and Prevention (TCHEP) Learning Series: Updates and Recommendations for Primary and Emergency Care Services” is an eight-series webinar for providers in Texas.
- Pre-Health Conference (CPHAQA).
- 2022 Texas Pediatric Brain Health Conference.
- Healthier Texas Summit.
- Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB) 2022 Virtual Summit: Addressing Patient-Centered Care in Quality Improvement Work.
- 7th Annual Northeast Texas CHW Conference.

## EXTERNAL FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

NIOSH funding of the The SW Ag Center was awarded for the next five years, with \$1.3 million received this past year. The SWAG received several additional awards in support of programs related to mental health and suicide prevention programs for Texas farmers, COVID-19 health disparities, to name a few.

Several awards were received by SCRH faculty and programs to support continued COVID outreach, education, testing, surveillance, prevention, vaccination and research. The Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) awarded over \$2.21 million for a Community-Based Workforce to Increase COVID Vaccinations in Underserved Communities. DSHS provided over \$2.6 million to examine COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy and Confidence (CHOVAC) Survey: A Rapid Community Assessment in Texas.



## STUDENT SUCCESS

Graduate and undergraduate programs in the SCRH had 821 students enrolled. Of these, 233 were in graduate programs and 588 undergraduates. As such, 4429 semester credit hours (SCH) were produced in graduate courses and 10,263 SCH in undergraduate courses.

Over 230 students received undergraduate and graduate degrees through SCRH programs since June 1, 2021. Of these, 76 were graduate and 125 were undergraduate degrees.

### Number of students within each SCRH program

| Graduate Programs                     | Students   |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Health Sciences MS                    | 32         |
| Kinesiology MS                        | 34         |
| Master of Public Health (MPH)         | 35         |
| Master of Health Administration (MHA) | 63         |
| Masters, Occupational Therapy (MOT)   | 69         |
| <b>Total graduate</b>                 | <b>233</b> |
| Undergraduate Programs                | Students   |
| BAAS-CNHS                             | 80         |
| CSD BS                                | 50         |
| Health Sciences BS                    | 84         |
| Kinesiology BS                        | 354        |
| Wellness BA                           | 20         |
| <b>Total Undergraduate</b>            | <b>588</b> |

### Number of degrees conferred

| Graduate Degrees Conferred            |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Health Sciences MS                    | 12         |
| Kinesiology MS                        | 13         |
| Master of Public Health (MPH)         | 11         |
| Master of Health Administration (MHA) | 18         |
| Masters, Occupational Therapy (MOT)   | 22         |
| <b>Total graduate</b>                 | <b>76</b>  |
| Undergraduate Degrees Conferred       |            |
| BAAS-CNHS                             | 27         |
| Communication Sci. Disorders BS       | 12         |
| Health Sciences BS                    | 15         |
| Kinesiology BS                        | 94         |
| Wellness BA                           | 6          |
| <b>Total Undergraduate</b>            | <b>154</b> |
| <b>Total Conferred</b>                | <b>230</b> |

Students in the MPH program participated in over 37 experiential courses, placing student in local, state, or national health professional and service institutions/agencies or into faculty-led research and community programs. These experiential courses to gain practical experience in core public/population health areas and key services in a real world setting or to participate in research projects focused on improving health or disease prevention. Twenty-one MHA students rotated through partnering healthcare and health service agencies to gain hands-on administrative, policy and management experience in residencies, or in capstone where they assess program needs and strengths and develop strategic plans with the institutions.

The H&K Patriot Wellness program was initiated in spring 2021. This program sponsors on-campus student activities during the regular semesters (five or six events per semester), which are designed to foster physical, mental and social wellness. Additionally, Patriot Wellness seeks to build community among H&K students to augment the college experience and aid student retention efforts. Recent events have included 3-on-3 volleyball, ultimate frisbee, canoe races and presentations on healthy cooking on a budget. Participation and feedback were excellent in 2021-2022, with 30-50 students attending each event.

## STUDENT HONORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Two MPH students were honored to have their work resulting from research undertaken during their capstone courses chosen for oral presentations at the Texas Public Health Association Annual Conference in May of 2022. Vivek Pakanati presented his work regarding Mapping East Texas for a COVID-19 Wastewater Study, and Madison Huntington presented the results from her study on the Evaluation of E-Mentoring for Public Health Capstone Courses.
- In February 2022, a team of three senior Kinesiology students, Timothy Averill, Corb Cannefax and Levi Bell, won the Texas American College of Sports Medicine Student Bowl competition in Waco. These students competed against 20 other teams from Texas Universities to bring the first-place trophy to Tyler for the first time in program history. In June 2022, the team finished fifth in the national student bowl competition in San Diego.
- MPH student Kenya Alexis-Mongare completed a one-year AmeriCorp Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) Food Security Initiative Program position with the Smith County Food Security Council, under the mentorship of prior MPH student Dr. Valerie Smith, 2021-2022.
- MPH student Emem David was awarded an Internship with the Health Education Resource Network and the American Planning Association, 2021.
- MPH student Ifeanyichukwu Ukamunna was accepted into the one-year Texas DSHS Public Health Fellowship Program which started June 2022.

## FACULTY HONORS AND AWARDS

- The “NIOSH COVID-19 Interprofessional Agreement Program: Expanding Occupational Health and Safety Expertise Through External Partnerships” team was awarded the 2022 Bullard-Sherwood Award for Research to Practice - Honorable Mention, Intervention Category, by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for its invaluable contribution to the health and safety of workers.
- Dr. Jeffrey Levin was awarded the Excellence in Education or Research in Occupational and Environmental Medicine Award, American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.
- Dr. Dalia Nessim was inducted into the Marquis Who’s Who in America.
- Dr. Cynthia Ball was awarded American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Fellow status.
- Dr. Shaadi Khademi was awarded American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Fellow status.
- Dr. Gerald Ledlow was granted membership in the Kenneth I. Shine, M.D., Academy of Health Science Education.
- Dr. Karan Singh received the Spark Award-Canvas Climb for Infusing Curriculum and Humor, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, March 9, 2021. He was also the Keynote Speaker- for the West Tennessee American Statistical Association Chapter Symposium, the University of Memphis.
- Dr. Harrison Ndetan was elected Fellow of the UT Tyler’s Academy of Distinguished Teachers, 2022 and received the Teaching and Learning Award for Innovation-Teaching during COVID-19, UT Tyler Center of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, 2022.
- Dr. Kimberly Elliott was elected to the Board of the Association for Prevention, Teaching and Research.
- Dr. Jessica Escareno-Alvarado was accepted onto the Tyler Hispanic Business Association Board of Directors for a two-year term.
- Ms. Ashley Dalby, Lecturer, has been nominated by President Calhoun for the prestigious UT System Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award.



# SCHOOL *of* MEDICAL BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN TORRY A. TUCKER, PHD

The School of Medical Biological Sciences (SMBS) at The University of Texas at Tyler strives to help students achieve excellence in science utilizing creative traditional and non-traditional instructional methods, state-of-the-art technology and innovative research.

The SMBS consists of two departments and 32 faculty members, 28 Postdoctoral Fellows and 13 Research Associates. Our highly skilled teams of scientists focus on acute, chronic and infectious lung diseases, dysregulation of coagulation pathways, immunologic problems and thoracic malignancies, while continuing to develop new knowledge and therapies to improve human health. We are also involved in training the next generation of scientists through our highly successful Master of Science in Biotechnology graduate program.

The biotechnology program consists of research and teaching faculty with MD and/or PhD degrees performing nationally recognized and extramurally funded biomedical research in competitive and relevant fields. All faculty use a variety of biotechnology techniques in their labs to eagerly teach, guide, challenge and support our students.

As part of the biotechnology program, students are encouraged to present their research alongside their faculty mentors at professional conferences, both nationally and internationally. Students are also included on publications in peer-reviewed journals. In the last year, the faculty published more than 50 peer reviewed articles, many of which included student contributions.

In summary, SMBS faculty and staff work to provide a comprehensive research graduate program while pursuing excellence in their contributions to medical research.

*Torry A. Tucker*

Associate Dean for Research,  
School of Medicine

# RESEARCH

## DR. DEEPAK TRIPATHI

The goal of the project is to establish memory like NK cells as biomarkers for risk of activation of latent TB in HIV+ individuals. 218852 CRDF Global (Indo-U.S. Joint Program on HIV/AIDS and STI Prevention Research Collaboration Awards, 2018) Tripathi (PI).

Alcohol induced dysbiosis in Mycobacterium tuberculosis infected mice. UTHSCT Research Seed Grant Tripathi (PI).

## DR. SHIVA KESHAVA GADDAM BALA KRISHNA

Biogenesis of Extracellular vesicles by APC-EPCR signaling- Role in pleural fibrosis. UTHSCT Research Seed grant (# 420059) 2021-2022.

## DR. BUKA SAMTEN

DAA3-19- 65679-1: CRDF Global Vankayalapati (PI), Samten B (Co-I with 10% effort).

The goal of the proposal is to determine IFN- $\gamma$  independent inhibition of MTB growth in human macrophages. R01AI123310-01A1: NIH Vankayalapati (PI), Samten B (Co-I with 10% effort).

## DR. XIA GUO

Dedicator of cytokinesis 2 in atherosclerosis R00 HL141583(NHLBI/NIH), Role: PI.

UTHSCT, Seed Grant, Title of Project: DOCK2 in pleural mesothelial cell migration and invasion. Role: Co-I.

## DR. HUA TANG

The Role of Runx3 in Host Response to Influenza Virus Infection. R21 AI128442-01Tang (PI, 25% effort) NIH-NIAID (Total \$389,792).

## DR. HONG-LONG JI

Novel paracrine mechanism for cell-based therapy of injured lungs. NIH 1R01HL134828-01A1. Principal Investigator (30% effort). \$3,816,604.00 (total cost, 49.4% indirect cost).

## DR. SATOSHI KOMATSU

ATF4 leads to pleural fibrosis by promoting extracellular matrix synthesis. UT-2021-01 S. Principal Investigator.

## DR. VIJAY BOGGARAM

Research Project A: Poultry dust exposure and lung inflammation. NIH. Principal Investigator \$1,305,000, total costs.

Southwest Center for Agricultural Health, Injury Prevention and Education National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Grant (PI: Levin, Jeffrey).

Role of protease from organic dust in induction of lung inflammation National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Grant 2 U54 OH007541 (PI: Kusampudi, Shilpa; Mentor: Boggaram, Vijay), \$17,500, total costs.

## DR. GUOQING QIAN

DOCK2 in pleural mesothelial cell migration and invasion. UTHSCT, Seed Grant, Principal Investigator; (August 2021 to August 2022).

## DR. MITSUO IKEBE

Myocardin in the pathogenesis of pleural remodeling. NIH/NHLBI Principal Investigator HL142853 \$1,972,395 (Total cost).

## DR. RAMA KRISHNA VANKAYALAPATI

CRDF Global DAA3-19- 65679-1: Vankayalapati (PI).

The goal of this proposal to understand innate immune responses of HIV+LTBI+ children. R01 AI142672-01A1: NIH Vankayalapati (PI).

The goal of the proposal is to determine IFN- $\gamma$  independent inhibition of MTB growth in human macrophages. R01AI123310-01A1: NIH Vankayalapati (PI).

## DR. MAOLIN LU

Gilead Research Scholar in HIV-1 “Conformational landscape and dynamics of HIV-1 fusion protein required for virus entry” Funding period: 1/3/2022-1/2/2024. Total Award Amount: \$130,000.

UT System Rising STARs Award, September 2021. Total Award Amount: \$250,000.

Funding period: 2021-2022.

Mathilde Krim Fellowship Phase II, The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR).

Funding period: Total Award Amount: \$80,000.

## DR. PIERRE NEUENSCHWANDER

Co-Investigator on internal grant with Dr. Carla Lacerda: Development of a novel EGF-eluting scaffold for wound healing applications. \$39,996.

## DR. SHASHI KANT

PK/PD-optimized cephalosporin combination regimens for children with MDR-TB.

1R01HD099756-01 (PI: Kant) 3.0 calendar NIH/NICHD \$1,091,020/\$1,629,565.

Reinforcing old warriors to treat Mycobacterium kansasii in shorter duration. [Role: PI].

1R21AI148096-01 (PI: Kant) 1.8 calendar NIH/NIAID Total Award- \$412,862.

## DR. GUOHUA YI

Novel CRISPR-Cas9 protein delivery to T cells in vivo by targeting CD7 UG3 AI150550 (PI: Guohua Yi) Total Amount: \$2,250,000.

## DR. SREERAMA SHETTY

Development, Formulation and Inhalational Delivery of a New Peptide for ILD. NIH R01HL151397-01A1, 4.32 Cal Months, Total \$2,333,406, and Role: PI.

Role of p53 and PAI-1 in tobacco smoke-induced lung injury DoD: W81XWH-19-PRMRP-DA, 1.2 Cal Months, \$299,000, and Role: PI.

Development of a novel drug candidate, CSP7 for the treatment of COVID-19. DoD: W81XWH2110095, 1.20 Cal Months, 299,000 and Role: PI.

## DR. TORRY A. TUCKER

Fibrinolytic proteases, meso-mesenchymal transition and pleural remodeling. NIH/NHLBI Principal Investigator (30%). \$362,500/year. Totaling 1.8 million for the grant funding period.

Myocardin in the pathogenesis of pleural remodeling. NIH/NHLBI co-Principal Investigator (25%) \$475,566/year. Totaling 1.9 million for the grant funding period.

## DR. VIJAY RAO

Membrane Phospholipids: The key regulator of tissue factor encryption/decryption NIH/NHLBI 2R01HL124055-06 \$310,907/year Role: PI Effort: 30%.

The Role of Gab2 Signaling in Thromboinflammation NIH/NHLBI 1R21AI163558-01 \$125,000 to \$150,000/year Role: Co-investigator Effort: 10%.

Tissue Factor’s Role in the Pathogenesis of Hypercoagulability in COVID-19 NIH/NHLBI 1R21AI163608-01 04/01/22 – 03/31/24 \$125,000 to \$150,000/year Role: PI Effort: 10%.

The role of FVIIa-released endothelial extracellular vesicles in hemophilia therapy National Hemophilia Foundation (PI: Das K) 12-01-20 to 11-31-2022 \$104,000/2 year Role: Mentor.

The role of FVIIa-released endothelial extracellular vesicles in hemophilia therapy National Hemophilia Foundation (PI: Magisetty J) 07-01-20 to 06-30-2022 \$104,000/2 year Role: Mentor.

## DR. ANDREY A. KOMISSAROV

Delivery of PAI-1-targeted intrapleural fibrinolytic therapy for empyema NIH/NHLBI MPI: Florova, G; Idell, S; Komissarov, A (Contact) \$1,422,612.

Optimization of a Rabbit Retained Hemothorax Model for Evidence-Based Pharmacologic Interventions R33 HL154103-01 Idell S (Contact) Komissarov A, Florova G MPI \$884,000.

Enhanced Delivery of Thrombolytic Carriers for Empyema R01HL152059-01A1 Komissarov A, Klegerman M (MPI) Idell S, Co-I \$2,500,000.

Convalescent Plasma Study Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences - (Idell, MPI).

National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences \$2,253,118 Co-I.



**DR. STEVEN IDELL**

Fibrinolytic Proteases, meso-mesenchymal transition and pleural remodeling NIH/NHLBI Tucker (PI) Idell S (Co-I) \$ 1,812,500.

Delivery of PAI-1-targeted intrapleural fibrinolytic therapy for empyema NIH/NHLBI MPI: Florova, G; Idell, S; Komissarov, A (Contact) \$1,422,612.

UTH MD Anderson UTRGV/UTHSCT CTSA U54 TRO02804-01 CTSA S. Idell, UTHSCT Site PI: \$37,000,000, aggregate funding.

Myocardin in the Pathogenesis of Pleural Remodeling NIH/NHLBI. S. Idell, M. Ikebe (Contact) and T Tucker, MPI \$2,000,000.

Optimization of a Rabbit Retained Hemothorax Model for Evidence-Based Pharmacologic Interventions R33 HL154103-01 Idell S (Contact) Komissarov A, Florova G MPI \$884,000.

Enhanced Delivery of Thrombolytic Carriers for Empyema R01HL152059-01A1 Komissarov A, Klegerman M (MPI) Idell S, Co-I \$2,500,000.

Extramurally funded projects awarded to SMBS faculty generated over \$8 million dollars for work done at the University of Texas at Tyler. These projects add to the international recognition of our scientific community, address key biomedical problems and provide novel high impact remediations of benefit to society at large.

# SCHOLARSHIP AND FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT

**DR. SACHIN MULIK**

Sen Santara S#, Crespo AC#, Mulik S#, Ovies C, Boulenouar S, Strominger JL, Lieberman J. Decidual NK cells kill Zika virus-infected trophoblasts. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2021 Nov 23;118(47):e2115410118. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2115410118. (#Equal contribution, Co-first author). PMID: 34785597.

**DR. DEEPAK TRIPATHI**

Deepak Tripathi\*, Kamakshi Prudhula Devalraju, Venkata Sanjeev Kumar Neela, Tanmoy Mukherjee, Padmaja Paidipally, Rajesh Kumar Radhakrishnan, Igor Dozmorov, Mohammad Soheb Ansari, Varalakshmi Mallidi, Anvesh Kumar Bogam, Vijaya Lakshmi Valluri, Ramakrishna Vankayalapati. Metabolites enhance innate resistance to human Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection. (Accepted, in press, JCI insight) \*Corresponding author.

**DR. SHIVA KESHAVA GADDAM BALA KRISHNA**

NADPH and xanthine oxidases control induction of inflammatory mediator expression by organic dust in the lung. Meganathan V, Hamilton CE, Natarajan K, Keshava S, Boggaram V. *FASEB J*. (July 2022), 36 (7): e22381.

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Das K, Keshava S, Pendurthi UR, Rao LVM. Factor VIIa suppresses inflammation and barrier disruption through the release of EEVs and transfer of microRNA 10a. *Blood*, (2022) 139 (1): 118-133.

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**DR. NAGARJUN KONDURU VENKATA**

Venkatesan S, Fang L, Tang H, Konduru NV, Shetty S. Caveolin-1 scaffolding domain peptide abrogates autophagy dysregulation in pulmonary fibrosis. *Sci Rep*. 2022 Jun 30;12(1):11086. doi: 10.1038/s41598-022-14832-4.

Adduri RSR, Vasireddy R, Mroz MM, Bhakta A, Li Y, Chen Z, Miller JW, Velasco-Alzate KY, Gopalakrishnan V, Maier LA, Li L, Konduru NV. Realistic biomarkers from plasma extracellular vesicles for detection of beryllium exposure. *Int Arch Occup Environ Health*. 2022 May 12. doi: 10.1007/s00420-022-01871-7. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 35551477.

Adduri RSR, Cai K, Alzate KV, Vasireddy R, Miller JW, Poli de Frías S, Poli de Frías F, Horimasu Y, Iwamoto H, Hattori N, Zhang Y, Gibson KF, Pal AK, Nicastró D, Li L, Cherian S, Sholl LM, Schwartz DA, Kass DJ, Rosas IO, Konduru NV. A novel protein signature from plasma extracellular vesicles for non-invasive differential diagnosis of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. *medRxiv*. 2021 May.

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**DR. XIA GUO**

Guo X, Adeyanju O, Sunil C, Mandlem V, Olajuyin A, Huang S, Chen SY, Idell S, Tucker TA, Qian G. DOCK2 promotes pulmonary fibrosis by mediating fibroblast to myofibroblast transition. *Am J Physiol. Cell Physiol*. doi: 10.1152/ajpcell.00067.2022. Online ahead of print.

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Qian GQ, Sunil C, Adeyanju O, Huang SK, Chen SY, Tucker T, Idell S, and Guo X. (2021). Deducator of Cytokines 2 (DOCK2) Deficiency Attenuates Lung Injury Associated with Chronic High-Fat and High-Fructose Diet-Induced Obesity. *Am J Pathol*. 2021 Nov 10; S0002-9440(21)00474-0. doi: 10.1016/j.ajpath.2021.10.011.

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**DR. BUKA SAMTEN**

Dai L, Jung BG, Chen J, Samten B, Forrest JC, Post SR, Qin Z. The potential impacts of early secreted antigenic target of 6 kDa of Mycobacterium tuberculosis on KSHV-infected cells. *J Med Virol*. 2021 Jun;93(6):4028-4032. doi: 10.1002/jmv.26291.

Jung BG, Vankayalapati R, Samten B. Mycobacterium tuberculosis stimulates IL-1 $\beta$  production by macrophages in an ESAT-6 dependent manner with the involvement of serum amyloid A3. *Mol Immunol*. 2021 Jul;135:285-293. doi: 10.1016/j.molimm.2021.04.022. PMID: 33957478.

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**DR. HUA TANG**

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**DR. HONG LONG JI**

Li X, Wang L, Hao J, Zhu Q, Guo M, Wu C, Li S, Guo Q, Ren Q, Bai N, Yi F, Jiang B, Zhang W, Feng Y, Xu H, Jiang H, Zhai X, Zhang G, Ji HL, Yang X, Zhang D, Fu J, Chang J, Song X, Cao L. The Role of Autophagy in Lamellar Body Formation and Surfactant Production in Type 2 Alveolar Epithelial Cells. *International Journal of Biological Science.* 2022 Jan 1;18(3):1107-1119. doi: 10.7150/ijbs.64285. eCollection 2022. PMID: 35173542

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**DR. OSAMU SATO**

Sakai, T., Choo, Y.-Y., Sato, O., Ikebe, R., Jeffers, A., Idell, S., Tucker, T., Ikebe, M. Myo5b Transports Fibronectin-Containing Vesicles and Facilitates FN1 Secretion from

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Sato, O., Sakai, T., Choo, Y.-Y., Ikebe, R., Watanabe, T. M., and Ikebe, M. Human myosin 19 is a mitochondrial associated processive motor. (2022) *J. Biol. Chem.* 298(5), 101883.

Chung, J-M., Sato, O., Ikebe, R., Lee, S., Ikebe, M., and Jung H-S. Structural Analysis of Human Fascin-1: Essential Protein for Actin Filaments Bundling. (2022) *Life*, 12, 843, doi: Members of the SMBS faculty also serve as invited peer reviewers for a wide array of funding entities including the NIH, DOD and the American Heart Association.

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**DR. SATOSHI KOMATSU**

Komatsu S, Fan L, Idell S, Shetty S, Ikebe M. Caveolin-1-Derived Peptide Reduces ER Stress and Enhances Gelatinolytic Activity in IPF Fibroblasts. *Int J Mol Sci.* 2022 Mar 18;23(6):3316. doi: 10.3390/ijms23063316. PMID: 35328736.

**DR. ANNA KURDOWSKA**

Texas Society for Biomedical Research (Promoting Health Through Science & Research) – Board of Directors.

International Journal of Molecular Sciences – Editorial Board Member.

Ad hoc reviewer for various NIH study sections.

2022 UT System Environmental Health and Safety Academy.

2nd Annual UT Tyler Compliance Conference – presenter.

**DR. AMY TVINNEREIM**

Director of Core Facilities.

Chair of IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee).

Chair of IORRC (Infectious Organisms Research Review Committee).

Radiation Safety Officer for CT Scanners.

**DR. VIJAY BOGGARAM**

Meganathan V, Stenhouse M, Kusampudi S and Boggaram V. Aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) regulates induction of lung inflammatory mediators by organic dust. Abstract 9370, ATS International Conference, 2022

Kusampudi S, Meganathan V, Keshava S and Boggaram V. Purification and characterization of trypsin-like protease(s) from organic dust and studies of their effects on induction of inflammatory mediator expression in lung epithelial cells. Abstract 9236, ATS International Conference, 2022.

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**DR. GALINA FLOROVA**

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**DR. GUOQING QIAN**

Guo X., Adeyanju O., Sunil C., Mandlem V., Olajuyin A., Huang S., Chen S-Y., Tucker T.A., Idell S., and Qian G. (2022). DOCK2 promotes pulmonary fibrosis by mediating fibroblast to myofibroblast transition. *Am J Physiol. Cell Physiol.* doi: 10.1152/ajpcell.00067.2022.

Guo X, Sunil C, Adeyanju O, Parker A, Komatsu S, Huang S, Ikebe M, Tucker TA, Idell S, and Qian G. (2022) PD-L1 mediates lung fibroblast to myofibroblast transition through Smad3 and  $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathways. *Sci Rep.* 2022, Feb;12(1):3053. doi: 10.1038/s41598-022-07044-3.

Qian G, Adeyanju O, Ayobami, O, and Guo X. Abdominal aortic aneurysm with a focus on vascular smooth muscle cells. *Life.* 2022. 12, 191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/life12020191>.

Guo X, Sunil C, and Qian G. Obesity and the development of lung fibrosis. *Front Pharmacol.* 10 January 2022. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.812166>.

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## DR. MITSUO IKEBE

Qian, G., Adeyanju, O., Roy, S., Sunil, C., Jefferes, A., Guo, X., Ikebe, M., Idell, S., and Tucker, T. A. (2022) DOCK2 promotes pleural fibrosis by modulating mesothelial-mesenchymal transition. *Am. J. Respir. Mol. Biol.* 66, 171-182. Doi:10.1165/rcmb.2021-0175OC

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## DR. BOCKGIE JUNG

Jung BG, Dean K, Wadle C, Samten B, Tripathi D, Wallace RJ Jr., Brown-Elliott BA, Tucker TA, Idell S, Philley JV, Vankayalapati R. Impaired expression of the TWIK2 channel leads to reduced IL-1 family cytokine production by macrophages in patients with nontuberculous mycobacterial lung disease. (Under Review)

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## DR. RAMA KRISHNA VANKAYALAPATI

Reduced thyroxine production in young household contacts of tuberculosis patients increase active tuberculosis disease risk. Kamakshi Prudhula Devalraju, Deepak Tripathi, Venkata Sanjeev Kumar Neela, Padmaja Paidipally, Rajesh Kumar Radhakrishnan, Ramya Sivangala Thandi, Karan P. Singh, Mohammad Soheb Ansari, Martin Jaeger, Romana T. Netea-Maier, Mihai G. Netea, Sunmi Park, Sheue-yann Cheng, Vijaya Lakshmi Valluri, Ramakrishna Vankayalapati. *JCI Insight* 2021 Jul 8; 6(13):148271.

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## DR. MAOLIN LU

Ghimire D, Han Y, and Lu M. (2022) Structural Plasticity and Immune Evasion of SARS-CoV-2 Spike Variants. (2022 June). *Viruses.* 14(6):1255. doi: 10.3390/v14061255.

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## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Summer Research and Clinical Externship program at The University of Texas at Tyler Health Science Center was cancelled. This summer externship provides high school and undergraduate college students the opportunity to spend four weeks of the summer learning about biomedical research and clinical professions. Founded in the realm of health sciences, the externship provides stimulating exposure to scientific research, as well as insight into a multitude of medical specialties by shadowing doctors, nurses and medical technicians. Within the program, students interact with top-notch scientists, meet with expert physicians and work with other research and clinical professionals to gain a true insight into all aspects of medicine. The SMBS did resume their participation in the Medical Scholar Academy by hosting students in the Center for Biomedical Research. These scholars participated in guided research experiences and seminars to familiarize them with diverse aspects of biomedical research.

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## INTERNAL FUNDING

The School of Medical and Biological Sciences routinely offers seed grants to support “high risk high reward” research projects. These awards are offered biannually and support meritorious and collaborative projects. In the past, these “seed projects” have supported the acquisition of critical preliminary data to support NIH applications which were subsequently funded. This year, seed grants were awarded to three postdoctoral fellows and three junior faculty.

### Postdoctoral Fellow Seed Grants

- Dr. Josimar Dornelas- Identification of host lysine acetylated proteins with critical roles in innate immune cell control of Mycobacterium tuberculosis growth.
- Dr. Jue Wang- The critical role of sphingomyelin mediated tissue factor activity in SARS-CoV-2 induced thrombosis and inflammation.
- Dr. Weshley Kujur- Aquaporin 9 regulate antiviral and anti-tumor function by NK cells.
- Junior Faculty Seed Grants.
- Dr. Satoshi Komatsu- ATF4 leads to pleural fibrosis by promoting extracellular matrix synthesis.
- Dr. Shiva Gaddam- Biogenesis of Extracellular Vesicles by APC-EPCR signaling- Role in Pleural Fibrosis.
- Dr. Guoqing Qian- Deducator of cytokinesis 2 promotes pleural fibrosis by mesothelial cell migration and invasion.
- Dr. Deepak Tripathi- Alcohol induced dysbiosis in Mycobacterium tuberculosis infected mice.

## STUDENT SUCCESS

Students in our biotechnology graduate program have the opportunity to work with world-class NIH-funded scientists while earning their master’s degree. Often their hard work is recognized by being published in peer-reviewed journals and presented at national and international conferences. Achievements for 2021-2022 include:

- Guo X, Sunil C, Adeyanju O, Parker Andrew, Huang S, Ikebe M, Tucker TA, Idell S, Qian G. PD-L1 mediates lung fibroblast to myofibroblast transition through Smad3 and  $\beta$ -catenin signaling pathways. Sci Rep. 2022 Feb 23;12(1):3053. doi: 10.1038/s41598-022-07044-3.
- G. Qian, C. Sunil, O. Adeyanju, Andrew Parker, S. K. Huang, M. Ikebe, T. A. Tucker, S. Idell, X. Guo. PD-L1.

Mediates Lung Fibroblast to Myofibroblast Transition Through Smad3 and SK3beta/Beta-Catenin Signaling Pathways, May 2022, Conference: American Thoracic Society 2022 International Conference, May 13-18, 2022 - San Francisco, CA.

- Fan Yang, Baojun Yang, Alireza Labani-Motlagh, Sahil Patel and Guohua Yi. In Vivo gene editing of T cells in Ai9 transgenic mice. NIH Somatic Cell Genome Editing Consortium Meeting. June 3 & 4, 2021. Virtually presented.
- R. Emerine, K. Sarva, Charlotte Huckestein, G. Florova, S. Idell, and A. A. Komissarov, I-DOT 2.0 as a Tool to Accelerate Developing Novel Point of Care Test (POCT) for Empyema. ATS 2022, San Francisco, CA.
- C. DeVera, G. Florova, A. Buchanan, A. Azghani, R. Girard, R. Emerine, K. Sarva, Charlotte Huckestein, A. Tvinnereim, S. Norwood, A. Cook, A.A. Komissarov and S. Idell, Validation of a New Rabbit Model of Retained Hemothorax Amenable to Testing of Novel Pharmacological Interventions, ATS 2022, San Francisco, CA.
- Meganathan V, Stenhouse Maxine, Kusampudi S and Boggaram V. Aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) regulates induction of lung inflammatory mediators by organic dust. Abstract 9370, ATS International Conference, 2022.

The Biotechnology Graduate Program in the School of Medical Biological Sciences had seven students who participated in May 2021 graduation ceremonies.

## VISITING STUDENTS

The School of Medical and Biological Sciences established a student exchange agreement with the Tokyo University of Technology in 2021. This year, Kasumi Sato, a M.S. candidate from Tokyo University of Technology, joined the laboratory of Dr. Mitsuo Ikebe to learn about molecular cloning techniques, confocal microscopy and imaging analyses techniques that have been established in his laboratory.

Sato’s thesis project is to study the role of BRCA1 in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease. BRCA1 is a cancer suppressor with various functions, and it was reported recently that BRCA1 has a role in centrosome replication. She hypothesized that BRCA1 dysfunction may lead to the increase in centrosome numbers presumably due to the modulation of misfolded proteins since centrosome is involved in elimination of misfolded proteins using autophagy. She also hypothesized that microtubule motors such as kinesins might be involved in such a process.

# THE OFFICE *of* RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP +

# THE OFFICE *of* SPONSORED PROJECTS



## INTRODUCTION

The Office of Research and Scholarship (ORS) on the UT Tyler main campus and the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) on the Health Science Center campus assist faculty and staff in achieving their research goals by helping them navigate the increasingly complex and competitive world of external funding sources. In addition, they support and collaborate with several committees on all UT Tyler campuses. The staff provide services from identifying funding sources and preparing proposals to post-award management and compliance.

The ORS and OSP serve under the leadership of Steven Idell, MD, PhD, Senior Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School and Kouider Mokhtari, PhD, Associate Vice President for Research and Associate Dean of the Graduate School. A new director, Panda Powell, MBA, CRA, was hired to oversee both the ORS and OSP. Bob Armstrong was promoted to senior accountant for the OSP at the Health Science Center campus and Jessica Hernandez was hired for the post-award account analyst position in the OSP. Rachel Lee was hired as a new grants and contracts specialist to provide post-award support for the OSP office in the Health Science Center, and Amanda Whitt was hired to provide post-award support for the ORS office on the main campus.

Anna Kurdowska, PhD is the Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and Compliance Officer. She oversees research compliance on both campuses including the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUC). Dr. Kurdowska is the director and Jennifer Stipe is the animal resource supervisor for the vivarium. Dr. Kurdowska also serves as director for the vivarium. Jennifer Stipe serves as the Animal Resource Supervisor for the vivarium. Dr. Kurdowska also oversees the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), Infectious Organism Research Review Committee (IORRC), intellectual property and export control efforts for both campuses.

The Office of Research and Scholarship continued initiatives from previous years, including offering faculty development workshops and the Research Fellows Program. The Research Design and Analysis Lab offered workshops as well as individual guidance in developing research designs and methods and conducting data analysis. In addition, the ORS and OSP hosted the East Texas Research Conference virtually during April 2022, designated as Research Month for UT Tyler.



## SPONSORED RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS

The number of grant proposals submitted by the ORS decreased slightly while the number of grant proposals submitted by OSP through June, 2022, increased slightly over the same time period in AY 20-21. Grant proposals submitted to external sponsors by each office are provided in the table below.

Number of proposals submitted to external sponsors through June 2022,

| Sponsor   | Main Campus | HSC |
|---|-------------|-----|
| National Institutes of Health                       | 10          | 39  |
| National Science Foundation                         | 12          | 0   |
| Other Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education | 34          | 50  |
| Private Non-Profit Foundations                      | 18          | 15  |
| Private For-Profit Organizations                    | 1           | 2   |
| Total   | 75          | 106 |

The number of active awards and amount of research expenditures managed by the two offices increased in AY 21-22 through June, 2022, as compared to the same time period in AY 20-21.

Number of active awards from external sponsors managed by the ORS and OSP and research expenditures through June 2022,

|                       | Main Campus | HSC          |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Active Awards         | 83          | 211          |
| Research Expenditures | \$907,112   | \$21,725,783 |

## SPONSORED RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS

The Internal Grants Program at UT Tyler supports faculty and staff research and programs that advance the university’s research productivity, scholarly output and creative endeavors. In AY 21-22, proposals were requested from faculty on both the main and Health Science Center campuses, and collaborations between principal investigators from both campuses were strongly encouraged. Grants were awarded through a competitive process held in the spring. Fifteen applications were submitted in response to the request for proposals for the 2022-23 academic year. Seven applications were awarded for a total of \$230,867. Funding was made available to the awardees beginning June 1, 2022. These awards are expected to pay substantial dividends in coming years by leading to an increase in the number of and success rate of grant proposals submitted to external sponsors.

## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT LEAVE PROGRAM

The Faculty Development Leave Program provides faculty with opportunities to enhance their research and scholarship portfolio, develop national and international collaborations and reinvigorate their academic career in support of student success and the strategic plan of the university. Awards in the form of release time are granted to tenured faculty through a peer-reviewed, competitive process. A request for applications was issued in April with applications due May 21, 2022. Eight applications were received for faculty development leave to be taken in AY 22-23 and five were awarded.

## STARS AND RISING STARS AWARDS

The ORS and OSP support advancement of research at UT Tyler by assisting in the preparation and submission of packages seeking UT System funding in the form of STARS and Rising STARS awards to attract talented faculty and scholars and then support their research and scholarship pursuits. Rising STARS awards were given to three main campus faculty in AY 2021-22, totaling \$300,000. In addition, one STARS award of \$250,000 was given to a faculty member on the HSC campus.

## STUDENT SUCCESS

The Office of Research and Scholarship administers the Internal Grants Program that provides research opportunities for students. The ORS also supports faculty efforts to acquire extramural funding for research and programs that enrich student education and success. In AY 2021-22 internally- and externally-funded research and sponsored programs helped support 10 graduate students and 31 undergraduate students attending UT Tyler. ORS staff also provided two workshops for students on finding funding using Pivot.

## RESEARCH COUNCIL

The UT Tyler Research Council, chaired by Dr. May Abdelaziz, Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes, provides consultation and guidance on programs and policies pertaining to faculty research. The council has several responsibilities including providing oversight of the institution’s research committees, reviewing internal grant and faculty development leave proposals and making award recommendations to the Senior Vice President of Research. The committee met eight times during AY 21-22 in addition to conducting a review panel on May 5, 2022, for the internal grant applications. A new Canvas course portal was designed for the council. All current members of the council were added to the course, and meeting agendas and minutes were uploaded after approval for documentation. The council’s bylaws were updated to reflect changes in UT Tyler’s reorganization in the research enterprise after the merger of the two institutions. The new bylaws were approved and uploaded to the Canvas site.

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) previously consisted of three boards – two on the Health Science Center campus and one on the main campus. In AY 21-22, the committees were combined and are under the supervision of Lisa Bush, MS, CIP, Director of the Human Research Protection Program and IRB Director. In addition, IRBManager, an online tool, was selected and implemented as the unified online IRB management platform for submission and management of IRB protocols. Felicia Calico and Corrie Warren were hired as IRB coordinators. Interviews are underway to hire a third IRB coordinator position. The IRB consists of three committees that serve the main campus, the Health Science Center campus and the UT Health East Texas Healthcare System. The IRB committees reviewed 102 new IRB protocols, 104 renewals and 143 modifications submitted through June 2022, and closed out 118 protocols.

## INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE (IACUC)

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, chaired by Dr. Brent Bill on the UT Tyler main campus, reviewed annual reports for eight ongoing protocol renewals and reviewed two new research protocols through June, 2022. Four ongoing protocols were discontinued, three of which will be submitted to the IACUC on the HSC campus as the unification of the two committees continues. On the UT Tyler HSC campus, the IACUC, chaired by Amy Tvinnereim, PhD, reviewed annual reports for 80 ongoing research projects and reviewed 15 new research protocols through June 2022.

## BIOSAFETY

The UT Tyler Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), chaired by Dr. Galina Florova, provides oversight for recombinant DNA research on the main campus and the HSC campus. The primary goal of the committee is to help ensure that all activities involving recombinant DNA and biohazardous materials are conducted in compliance with federal, state and local regulations and applicable university policies. The IBC reviewed 10 rDNA and 13 hazardous chemical protocols through June 2022.

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS LAB

The ORS Research Design and Data Analysis Lab operates under the direction of Kim Nimon, PhD, with a mission to “support research at The University of Texas at Tyler by providing students, faculty and staff with expert guidance in developing research designs and methods and conducting data analyses that are based on quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method approaches.” During AY 21-22, the lab provided 33 one-hour webinars/workshops with over 220 participants. Lab personnel also provided over 100 hours of consulting with faculty, staff or students. Additionally, a Canvas course was developed that focused on academic writing. The new course was piloted in the spring with graduate students from the Soules College of Business and the College of Engineering.



## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

The Office of Research and Scholarship develops and provides workshops that are free to faculty, staff and students on topics that support the development of well-written funding proposals that meet sponsor priorities. Additional workshops are provided to help awardees manage their grants or contracts in compliance with the university and sponsor requirements. In AY 2021-22, the Office of Research and Scholarship in collaboration with the Office of University Advancement and the Muntz Library provided seven research development workshops on topics such as searching for funding sources, creating biographical sketches, conducting a literature review and writing successful National Science Foundation proposals. In addition, the Office of Research and Scholarship on the main campus and the Office of Research on the HSC campus conducted a grant award management workshop for the seven recipients of internal awards and administrative staff in May. A Sponsored Programs Account Coordinator Training was offered by the Office of Sponsored Programs to HSC campus faculty and staff. All faculty, staff and students involved in research activities on both campuses are required to complete Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Responsible Conduct in Research training and 415 people have completed the training since September 1, 2021.

The Research Fellows Program graduated a cohort of eight faculty and staff from both campuses in AY 21-22 from multiple disciplines. The program is designed to help faculty and staff refine their project ideas, develop concept papers and prepare funding proposals. Several of the participants submitted internal grant proposals, proposals to external sponsors or both.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## EAST TEXAS RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The third East Texas Research Conference was hosted virtually on April 11, 2022. The conference featured a keynote address, oral presentations and panel discussions around the theme of Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Conference participants had an opportunity to hear and interact with an array of academic and health professionals who shared new and emerging research in health and wellness, education, engineering, business and industry and arts and sciences.



*the*  
**GRADUATE  
 SCHOOL**



**A MESSAGE FROM  
 THE DEAN** STEVEN IDELL, MD, PHD

The Graduate School at The University of Texas at Tyler is committed to advancing graduate education and graduate student success.

The Graduate School oversees 47 graduate programs, including six doctoral programs across the university, working closely with colleges, schools and departments to advocate for graduate students through the duration of their educational experiences.

The newly established Graduate School team, referenced in this report, collaborates with deans, program directors, professional staff and faculty advisors to recruit and retain graduate students, foster interdisciplinary research and academic programs, offer professional development and academic support, and develop/disseminate changes in policies and procedures related to graduate education.

Furthermore, the Graduate School works collaboratively with the Office of Academic Affairs, Graduate Council, Office of Research, Scholarship and Sponsored Programs, Divisions of Student Success, Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, Office of Marketing and Communications, Office of Internal Programs and active graduate student organizations to develop academic, cultural and social programming that enriches the UT Tyler experience for an increasingly diverse graduate student community.

The Graduate School is proud to share its 2021-2022 annual report, which provides a summary of some of the school's activities and accomplishments. The pandemic dramatically changed the way we worked during the past two years, but it did not diminish the school's commitment to our students and to UT Tyler's educational, research and health missions.

*Dr. Steven Idell*

Senior Vice President for Research and  
 Dean of the Graduate School



## REORGANIZATION

In January 2022, we announced a reorganization of the Graduate School that we envision will lead to a higher level of service to graduate education, with a focus on graduate student recruitment, retention and student success.

The reorganization was informed by input from various university stakeholders, as well as recommendations from an external review of the graduate school conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools in September 2021. The purpose of the external review was to guide

us toward best practices for administering graduate education, particularly considering the recent merger of our academic and health campuses and plans for a new medical school.

In support of our commitment to advancing graduate education and graduate student success, our new Graduate School team is reorganized along three principal support service areas, namely graduate student recruitment, graduate student admission and graduate student success.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

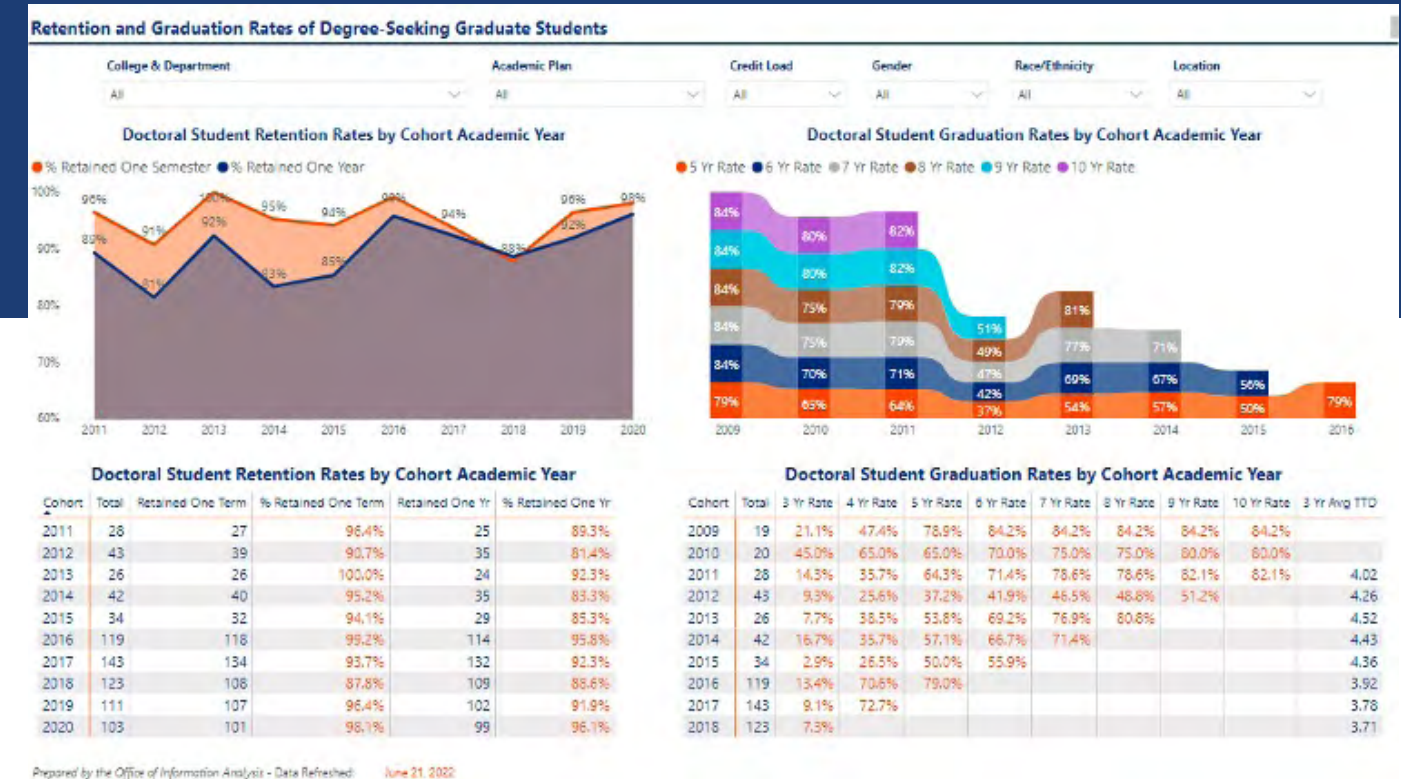
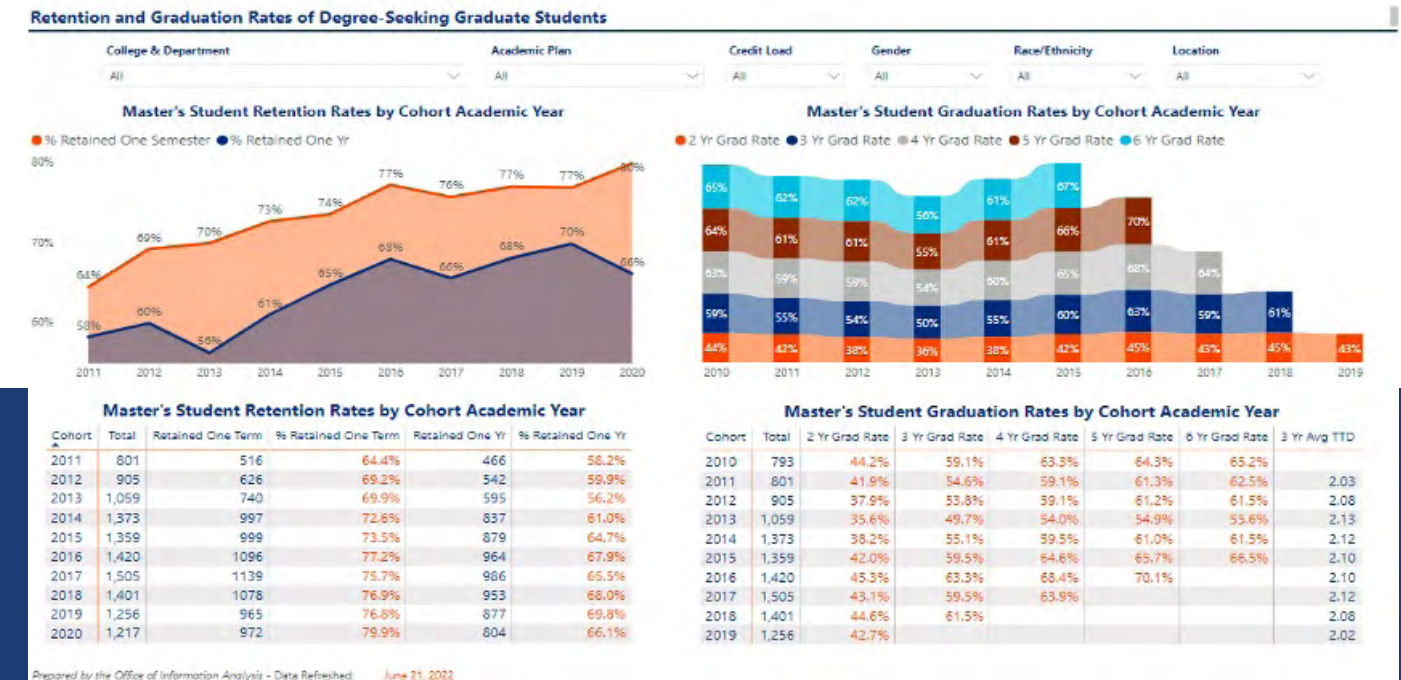
During AY 2021-2022, we put in place a set of initiatives and programs aimed at increasing graduate student applications, graduate student admission, graduate student enrollment, and graduate student retention. Examples of these programs and initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Making needed investments in human resources to support new student recruitment, admission, enrollment, and retention;
- Streamlining recruitment, admission, and enrollment processes;
- Providing incentives such as Tuition Reduction Benefits (TRB) for targeted graduate programs;
- Encouraging departments and colleges to offer new or existing programs using online venues;
- Providing various fellowships and scholarships for eligible graduate students;
- Providing other incentives to students such as book allowances to encourage early enrollment; and
- Adopting a collective impact approach to advancing graduate education based on greater cross-sector partnerships, collaboration, and teamwork with various constituencies across the university campuses.

## APPLICATION, ADMISSION, AND ENROLLMENT TRENDS

The newly instituted programs and initiatives have so far resulted in higher level of service to graduate education, which has in turn resulted in increased graduate student applications, admission and enrollment.

As of July 2, 2022, preliminary admission funnel counts show a 36.6% increase in domestic graduate student applications received in fall 2022 (1,994-1459), an 18% increase in admitted students (683-578), and a 246% increase in international student applications (217-751) over the prior year, with a favorable trend for increased enrollment of new graduate students as well as increased retention of returning students.



To assist with graduate student recruitment, admission and retention, we work collaboratively with the Office of Information Analysis to create new customized Power-BI dashboards that will give us additional insight into applicant profiles by individual program. The new dashboards allow us to work with faculty and program advisors within programs on developing recruitment, admission, enrollment and retention plans, creating meaningful predictors of success for admission and retention initiatives that can be tailored to each program.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As we reflect on this past year, we are encouraged with progress that has been made in key areas elaborated upon below.

## TUITION REDUCTION BENEFIT (TRB) PROGRAM

The goal of this scholarship program, which provides 50% tuition reduction, is to support UT Tyler graduate student growth in programs with available capacity by creating scholarships to reduce the resident (in-state) portion of tuition.

TRB funding will be provided proportionally based on every student enrolled greater than the last fall semester enrollment number for the program, up to 10 half tuition waivers. To get the full funding for the 10 half tuition waivers, the program must enroll at least 10 more students than the previous fall semester.

TRB rates are provided for fall and spring semesters. Graduate students employed as GRAs are eligible for the TRB, the amount of which is determined by the number of hours employed per week during the fall or spring.

It is important to note that the TRB does not pay out directly to the student, but instead is applied to the student's tuition bills. If a student has paid their tuition bill prior to the application of the TRB to their tuition bill, a refund will be issued in the amount of the TRB.

## NEW GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS

The New Graduate Fellowship (NGF) is available to graduate students in their first semester. This is a \$1000 award that may be renewed each academic year. The scholarship also grants in-state tuition. To be eligible, students must meet the following:

- Be admitted to a graduate, degree-seeking program.
- Be in the first semester of graduate study at UT Tyler.
- Be enrolled full-time (nine credit hours).
- Meet or exceed at least one of the following criteria:
  - Final undergraduate GPA of at least 3.25.
  - Final GPA of at least 3.25 on a prior master's degree.
  - Combined GRE score of 307.
  - Total GMAT score of 500.
  - Total MAT score of 410.

## EARLY ENROLLMENT INCENTIVE

This incentive is open to newly admitted graduate students to help them reach their academic goals. Eligible students need to enroll for fall 2022 by July 15 to qualify for a \$200 book allowance.

# APPROVALS, REVIEWS AND RANKINGS

## SCHOOL OF MEDICINE ACHIEVES MAJOR ACCREDITATION STATUS

President Calhoun announced on June 20, 2022, that the UT Tyler School of Medicine received notification from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) that it has been granted preliminary accreditation, a monumental milestone which allows the school to begin recruiting its first class of medical students in 2023.

## SOULES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ACHIEVES APPROVAL FOR NEW GRADUATE DEGREE IN CYBER SECURITY AND DATA ANALYTICS

On April 21, 2022, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved and authorized the request from UT Tyler to create a Master of Science degree with a major in Cyber Security and Data Analytics to be delivered fully online with a start date of fall 2022.

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING ACHIEVES APPROVAL FOR NEW GRADUATE DEGREE IN ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP

On June 13, 2022, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved and authorized the request from The University of Texas at Tyler to create a Master of Science degree with a major in Engineering Leadership to be delivered fully online with a start date of fall 2022.

## PATRIOT-ADMIT AND 4+1 PROPOSAL

In May 2022, a Patriot Admit 4+1 Proposal was approved by the Council of Deans in consultation with department chairs, Graduate School, Provost Amir Mirmiran and Vice Provost Lou Ann Berman. The UT System Board of Regents will review the proposal at the August Meeting. If approved, the Patriot Admit and 4+1 programs will launch fall 2023.

• **Patriot-Admit:** UT Tyler will streamline its admissions process to allow current undergraduate students and alumni to pursue graduate degrees through a fast-track Patriot-Admit application review process. To facilitate auto admission, UT Tyler proposes to waive the application fee, statement of purpose, letters of recommendation and the GRE/GMAT for eligible students. Qualifying students and alumni will have at least a 3.00 Cumulative GPA. Note: participating degree programs may have additional criteria for eligibility.

• **4+1 Program:** The streamlined admissions process will allow eligible students currently enrolled in participating programs to enroll in up to 9 semester credit hours of graduate coursework. While departments set their own admission requirements and policies, 4+1 students will be expected to have at least a 3.00 Cumulative GPA, a faculty recommendation, and approvals from the department chair, academic dean, and graduate school dean. Note: participating degree programs may have additional criteria for eligibility.

## MPH GRADUATE PROGRAM UNDERGOES SUCCESSFUL EXTERNAL REVIEW

In June 2022, the Master of Public Health underwent a successful Graduate Program External Review in compliance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board guidelines. The MPH program faculty and administration will use the external review to plan for professional program accreditation with the Council on Education for Public Health.

## PHD IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY COMPLETES PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF APPLICATION FOR INITIAL APA ACCREDITATION

In June 2022, a preliminary review of an application for an initial American Psychological Association accreditation was successfully completed. A site visit has been authorized for the program and is tentatively scheduled to occur in spring 2023-fall 2023.

### U.S. NEWS 2022 RANKINGS

Three of UT Tyler's online programs are ranked in the top 100 according to the 2022 U.S. News and World Report Best Online Program rankings. The 2022 national rankings are:

- Master of Science in Nursing program 29th; Fifth for veterans.
- MBA program 98th.
- Master of Education program 93rd.

The online Master of Science in Nursing is ranked the third best program in Texas and the second best in the UT System. These UT Tyler degree programs are 100% online and provide students with the same quality education as they would receive in an in-person environment.

### GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING

During AY 2021-2022, the Graduate School in partnership with the Office of the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost funded a total of 39 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) during fall 2021 and spring 2022 (\$3,500 per semester). These awards are provided by the Graduate School with the goals of facilitating faculty and graduate student research.

### GRADUATE STUDENT AND FACULTY RESEARCH SUPPORT

During AY 2021-2022, several faculty members across all colleges and schools requested and received funding to support the hiring of Graduate Research Assistants, Lab Technicians and Post-Doctoral Research Fellows. Funding ranged from \$1,500 to \$60,000 per faculty member. These awards are designed to support high quality research and faculty acquisition of extramural funding.

### GRADUATE RESEARCH FACULTY APPLICATIONS

During AY 2021-2022, the school reviewed and approved a total of 38 applications for Graduate Research faculty status. These applications include 10 Visiting Graduate Research Faculty, 20 new Graduate Research Faculty and eight Graduate Research Faculty renewals.

### GRADUATE THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

During AY 2021-2022, the school reviewed and approved a total of 63 applications for faculty appointments to thesis and dissertation committees. It also reviewed and published 50 theses or dissertations in Scholar Works, our online digital repository.

Scholar Works, our online digital repository of over 3800 scholarly works, surpassed 38,600 downloads from 181 countries during the past year.



### GRADUATE DEGREES CONFERRED

The table below outlines counts of graduate degrees conferred in AY 2021-22. Summer conferrals are not included.

| Degree  | Number Conferred |
|---|------------------|
| DNP—Doctor of Nursing Practice                | 12               |
| MA—Master of Arts                             | 59               |
| MACC—Master of Accountancy                    | 5                |
| MBA—Master of Business Administration         | 208              |
| MED—Master of Education                       | 125              |
| MFA—Master of Fine Arts                       | 2                |
| MHA—Master of Health Administration           | 16               |
| MOT—Master of Occupational Therapy            | 21               |
| MPA—Master of Public Administration           | 5                |
| MPH—Master of Public Health                   | 9                |
| MS—Master of Science                          | 96               |
| MSCE—Master of Science Civil Engineering      | 3                |
| MSEE—Master of Science Electrical Engineering | 1                |
| MSME—Master of Science Mechanical Engineering | 3                |
| MSN—Master of Science Nursing                 | 100              |
| PHARMD—Doctor of Pharmacy                     | 65               |
| PHD—Doctor of Philosophy                      | 6                |
| Grand Total                                   | 751              |



### GRADUATE STUDENT AND FACULTY ACCOLADES

Congratulations to Dr. Thomas Kramer, HRD doctoral student, who received the Dissertation Award in the Advancing Talent Development category from the Association of Talent Development.

Congratulations to Dr. Kim Nimon, HRD Interim Chair, and doctoral candidate Amanda Legate, for being invited to participate in a new NSF funded virtual program called "Designing Research for Broader Impacts."

### UT TYLER HOSTS 3MT® COMPETITION DURING ANNUAL RESEARCH MONTH



Building on several years of successful programming in the presentation of the student research, the UT Tyler Graduate School hosted a Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition during the spring 2022 semester. The 3MT® provides an excellent opportunity for graduate students to showcase their research and its significance to a non-specialist audience in three minutes or less. It challenges their ability to communicate and present complex aspects of their research to a general audience in an engaging manner, using only one slide. Winners of the 2022 competition were:

**First Place:** Combating the Gay Panic Defense, Annika Wurm

**Second Place:** ML 360: Machine Learning Based 360 Degree Video Caching, Md Milon Uddin

**Third Place (Tie):** Machine Learning Models for Classification of Alzheimer's Stages based on CSF Biomarkers, Vivek Kumar Tiwari

An Integrated Electronic-skin patch for real-time and continuous monitoring, Tanzila Noushin

### GRADUATE COUNCIL

Dr. Torey Nalbhone, Chair, and members of the Graduate Council navigated a very busy and productive year. The Graduate Council acts in an advisory capacity to the Dean of the Graduate School, providing consultation and information on issues relating to graduate policies and procedures.

During AY 2021-2022, members of the council reviewed and approved various graduate course proposals and course changes initiated by departments or other academic units. They also reviewed and made recommendations regarding new graduate program proposals and program modifications of graduate policies and procedures for student admission, continuation, graduation, graduate faculty credentialing and other program-related matters initiated by departments, colleges or other units.



# LOOKING AHEAD

Moving forward, the Graduate School will be offering several initiatives and programs, which are aligned with commitment to advancing graduate education and graduate student success.

## GRADUATE STUDENT ORIENTATION

New Graduate Student Orientation is an optional and non-credit online course provided to all incoming graduate students and is available within days of admission. The self-paced course aims to familiarize new students with campus resources and services as well as describe some of the expectations of students as they pursue their graduate degrees. As we return to face-to-face events, we look forward to complimenting online orientation with a redesigned on-campus orientation event that will include more connections to resources, staff and faculty.

## GRADUATE STUDENT APPRECIATION WEEK

Graduate students are valued and have a significant positive impact on the campus community. To show our appreciation of graduate students, the Graduate School will be hosting an annual Graduate Student Appreciation week during the spring semester. On-campus and online events will feature various virtual and in-person events.

## NAVIGATE

The Graduate School is pleased to offer EAB's Navigate, an advising platform, for the first time to graduate students. Whether it's making an advising appointment, reviewing advisor meeting notes, viewing a degree plan or receiving timely notifications, Navigate streamlines the connection between students, staff and faculty.

## GRADUATE STUDENT PEER MENTORING

The Peer Mentoring program is designed to enhance the academic and personal student success of both mentors and mentees while navigating their higher education journey. This includes the growth of academic and interpersonal skills that are imperative for success in a graduate program and beyond. Through peer mentor resources tailored specifically for the college and planned events, this program will contribute to a positive campus community. The program will launch with biotechnology students in summer 2022.

## GRADUATE STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The Graduate Student Experience Survey will provide a formal opportunity to share student experiences and suggestions with the Graduate School leadership team. Collected anonymously, topics will survey the different aspects of the graduate student experience including resources and needs. These data will allow the Graduate School to continuously improve the experience for graduate students, as well as the services the university provides to support them.



# ACADEMIC SUCCESS & UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES



## INTRODUCTION

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the division of Academic Success and Undergraduate Studies provided comprehensive academic and curricular supports to UT Tyler students and faculty. Academic Success and Undergraduate Studies partners with colleges and schools serving undergraduate students to provide supports and resources for students and faculty that supplements the student achievement work occurring in the colleges and schools. Our work is purposeful and laser-focused on meeting the student achievement targets in the following table.

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT CRITERION AND TARGETS

| Criterion                           | Results                           |      | Targets |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                     | AY 21                             | AY22 | AY 23   | AY 24 | Ay 25 | AY 26 | AY 27 |
| 1-Year Full-Time Freshman Retention | With CAP: 65%<br>Without CAP: 79% | TBD  | 83%     | 86%   | 90%   | 90%   | 90%   |
| 1-Year Transfer Retention           | 83%                               | TBD  | 84%     | 87%   | 90%   | 93%   | 95%   |
| 6-Year Freshman Graduation          | With CAP: 43%                     | TBD  | 45%     | 47%   | 49%   | 52%   | 55%   |
| 4-Year Transfer Graduation          | 66%                               | TBD  | 65%     | 66%   | 67%   | 68%   | 70%   |

In addition, the Associate Provost for Academic Success oversees the undergraduate curriculum, addresses undergraduate student and faculty issues, facilitates support for specialized student populations, offers faculty professional development experiences, collaborates with other UT Tyler divisions, works with the UT Tyler community and Texas community colleges, serves on UT System and THECB committees and tasks forces, makes recommendations on policies and practices that impact undergraduate students and faculty and supports other Academic Affairs activities as directed by the Provost.

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Academic Success is committed to providing undergraduate students and special populations with academic supports and services needed for success in their coursework. Academic Success has a stance of equity and access to ensure all student groups are successful and strive to close achievement gaps among groups.

Two academic resources supporting the historically most challenging lower division courses are the PASS Tutoring Center and Supplemental Instruction programs. As we strive for excellence in these areas, we are proud to have received program accreditation renewals for Supplemental Instruction (SI) and the PASS Tutoring Center (PTC). We offer SI and PTC face-to-face and virtually through Zoom to provide students flexibility in accessing services. As noted in the tables below, students that use tutoring and supplemental instruction see a positive grade difference.



|                                 | Total Sessions | Unique Students Served | Student Contact Hours | GPA for Participants | GPA for Non-Participants | % DFW from Participants | %DFW from Non-Participants |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Supplemental Instruction</b> |                |                        |                       |                      |                          |                         |                            |
| Fall 2021                       | 2,554          | 938                    | 6,533                 | 2.71                 | 2.25                     | 16%                     | 33%                        |
| Spring 2022                     | 1,496          | 445                    | 2,874                 | 2.58                 | 2.32                     | 22%                     | 30%                        |
| <b>PASS Tutoring Center</b>     |                |                        |                       |                      |                          |                         |                            |
| Fall 2021                       | 3,253          | 224                    | 1,624                 | 2.63                 | 2.35                     | 15%                     | 29%                        |
| Spring 2022                     | 2,118          | 220                    | 1,522                 | 2.78                 | 2.57                     | 21%                     | 26%                        |

Academic Success also provides tutoring for nearly every undergraduate course through Upswing. This 24/7 online tutoring service enables students to have live interactions with tutors and expands the flexibility and access to academic support for our undergraduate students.

| Upswing     | Unique Students Served | Hours of Tutoring Used | Number of Tutoring Sessions |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fall 2021   | 129                    | 977                    | 720                         |
| Spring 2022 | 105                    | 870                    | 685                         |

# SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Academic Success offers targeted services to special populations to address equity issues related to student achievement. We provide three examples of these specialized services.

### I'M FIRST

In fall 2020, Academic Success established an "I'm First!" program to support first-generation students. "I'm First!" addresses the needs and challenges first-generation college students often experience, with understanding jargon, deadlines, knowledge of resources and financial pressures being the most common barriers. The "I'm First!" program provides a vertically integrated community of support from peer mentors, faculty and staff across campus through workshops, events, a new student organization and a living-learning community in Ornelas Hall starting in the fall 2022 semester. Due to a student-led initiative in fall 2021, graduating "I'm First!" students were presented with a first-generation stole at the Student Success Multicultural Ceremony to wear at this year's commencement ceremonies. These program efforts support the first-generation students' sense of belonging and ensure holistic academic success, retention and degree completion.



### DUAL CREDIT

The UT Tyler Dual Credit program offers high school students the opportunity to simultaneously earn college and high school credit and prepare them for the rigor and pacing of a university course. UT Tyler's Dual Credit program partners with the University Academy (Longview, Palestine and Tyler campuses), Port-Neches Groves ISD, Waxahachie Global ISD, All Saints Episcopal School and several homeschool families. Courses are taught by UT Tyler faculty or credentialed high school instructors under the guidance of UT Tyler faculty. Dual Credit students have access to tutoring and supplemental instruction, library services, and other academic services alongside their traditional college student peers. In the 2021-2022 school year, this program served approximately 400 students.

### BAAS

Approximately four million Texans have some college credit but no academic credential. The Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) program is designed to assist Texans holding an associate degree at a community college or who are in the workforce with college credits and decided to return to school to advance their careers. The BAAS degree program has a required 33-credit curriculum comprising an 18-credit Professional Core, designed in consultation with workforce partners and a 15-credit thematic concentration in Health Occupations, Healthcare Management, Business Occupations, Entrepreneurship, General Studies or Human Behavior. This coursework provides a focused pathway for employment and the marketable skills needed to succeed. Students can transfer credits from their associate degrees or other eligible credits previously earned into the BAAS degree plan. The BAAS curriculum is offered online and taught in a seven-week format allowing



students to focus on a few courses at a time while still earning 12-credits per semester.

UT Tyler continues to expand the reach of the BAAS program through financial assistance. Eligible students have benefitted from funding made available through the Reskilling Texas Workers Grant, awarded in 2021-2022. In fall 2022, a new fixed tuition rate of \$9,900 for the 33-hour required BAAS curriculum will assist working adults in earning a needed baccalaureate degree in a cost-effective manner.

All the work done to make the BAAS a user-friendly degree for students and the commitment of the faculty to support these students has resulted in better retention rates. AY 22 retention rates for BAAS students increased by 11.2% over the past academic year. With increased engagement with BAAS students, we expect to grow enrollment and increase retention in the upcoming year. With 97% of BAAS graduates noting they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the BAAS program (source: UT Tyler 2020-2021 graduation exit survey), the BAAS program continues to impact our citizens and strengthen the East Texas community.

### ACADEMIC ADVISING AND ONBOARDING

Literature notes that advising is a significant component of student success; hence, Academic Advising and Onboarding strive to advance the work of undergraduate advisors. Our undergraduate advisors recorded 31,650 interactions with students from the start of fall to June 17, 2022. To continue to improve the experiences students have with our advisors, Academic Advising and Onboarding engaged in the following activities.

Over the 2021-2022 academic year, the Office of Academic Success hosted over 150 hours of training and professional development for undergraduate academic advisors. The comprehensive training helps advisors better understand university resources, standard practices and enhanced communication skills necessary to advise undergraduate students more effectively and efficiently. This professional development also supported the initial onboarding of 11 new academic undergraduate advisors.

Advising tools gives students ownership over their degree plan. Therefore, Academic Advising and Onboarding has worked to design tools to empower our students. One example of the type of tools is the EAB Navigate website and app. Short instructional videos were created so students can quickly contact their advisor, select Study Buddies in their courses and more.

In November 2021, Academic Advising and Onboarding launched the Degree Completion Program Bar in the Patriot Advisement Report (PAR), the online official degree plan for all undergraduate students. This progress bar gives students and advisors a visual and numerical representation of the degree requirements completed, the percentage of credits currently in progress and the percentage of credits remaining in the degree program. This new progress bar allows students and advisors to accurately prepare for timely graduation. It also enables departments to identify students who are not making timely progress in their programs.

### CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING & LEARNING

The Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) is committed to elevating faculty professional learning. When UT Tyler faculty thrive and continue to learn, our students succeed. The primary activities of the CETL are: New Faculty Orientation, Professional Learning Communities (PLC) events, Keynote Speakers and Workshops.

For 2021-2022, the CETL hosted 45 events attended by 620 faculty and staff. These 45 events comprised 20 faculty and librarian-hosted workshops, 19 PLC events and six keynote speakers. The CETL fosters collaboration across the UT Tyler community through the workshops offered by personnel from Academic Affairs, the Health Science Center, CETL, Digital Learning, the Robert R. Muntz Library and Student Success. The CETL also partnered with the Honors Program to support the Lyceum.

This year's keynote speakers, requested by UT Tyler faculty, crossed disciplinary boundaries and allowed our entire community to grow. The keynote speakers were:

- Dr. Lisa Nunn: First Generation & First Year Students.
- Dr. Maha Bali: Creating Equitable Caring Communities.
- Dr. Carolyn Hushman: Active Learning Strategies in STEM Courses.
- Dr. Jean Mandernach: Moving Beyond Proctoring.
- Dr. Barbi Honeycutt: Designing Courses for Active Learning.
- Dr. Judy Willis: How Emotion Impacts the Brain's Successful Learning and What to Do About It.

This year, the CETL, Office of Digital Learning, Academy of Distinguished Teachers and Faculty Senate collaboratively worked to redesign the CETL and Digital Learning space

to form the Faculty Collaboration and Professional Learning Hub. The newly designed space enables faculty to collaborate on projects and provides a consistent place for professional learning activities.



During the spring semester, the inaugural CETL director, Dr. Julie Delello, decided to return to full-time faculty status effective April 30, 2022.

We thank Dr. Delello for her outstanding service and look forward to a new chapter for the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning. Under her leadership, the CETL has a firm foundation to continue to grow.

### ACUE EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES COURSE

Of the factors that we control for student success, our faculty is the most important one. Our faculty engage with our students and give them a reason to be successful in their coursework, stay at UT Tyler and earn their degree. UT Tyler is committed to helping faculty transform the teaching and learning experiences, and one way we do this is through participation in the ACUE Effective Teaching Practices Course.

UT Tyler hosted our second cohort of faculty taking a year-long 25-module course created by the Association of College and University Educators and endorsed by the American Council for Education. This year, 25 faculty completed this course and earned a certificate in Effective College Instruction. One senior faculty member from the School of Nursing shared, "ACUE changed my world!"

## CERTIFIED UT TYLER ACUE FELLOWS FOR ALL COHORTS

UT Tyler is excited to continue our work in this fantastic course and will start the third cohort in August 2022.

| College or School  | Certified ACUE Fellows |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Arts & Sciences    | 11                     |
| Business           | 12                     |
| Education          | 4                      |
| Engineering        | 9                      |
| Health Professions | 3                      |
| Nursing            | 10                     |
| Pharmacy           | 3                      |





## DIGITAL LEARNING

The Office of Digital Learning continues to partner with UT Tyler colleges, schools and departments to advance digital learning in online, hybrid and face-to-face settings for faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders. Though the Digital Learning staff is small, their work has a significant impact across UT Tyler.



Digital Learning staff diligently work to support faculty and students to ensure learning experiences that utilize instructional technologies, regardless of delivery mode, are effective

for teaching and learning. All Digital Learning staff were certified or re-certified as QM Reviewers after completing the Quality Matters Higher Education Course Design Rubric, which shows their deep commitment to excellence.

Digital Learning served the UT Tyler community in the following ways this academic year:

- Hosted 30 workshops focused on Canvas, academic integrity software (i.e., Unicheck, ProctorU), video lectures and closed captioning, enhancing online engagement and other online instructional activities.
- Transitioned 407 videos and quizzes from a video quizzing tool to Canvas Studio for faculty.

## HONORS PROGRAM

This academic year, the Honors Program stayed focused on our mission to provide transformative learning experiences for UT Tyler students, while remaining flexible as we welcome and direct the most significant growth in our history. The Honors Program also oversees the Lyceum, the Archer Fellowship and the Freshman Book, which connect the UT Tyler student body intellectually and experientially.

The Honors Program transforms learning experiences for gifted UT Tyler students. This year's Honors Program supported 160 students across our five undergraduate colleges who earned an average GPA of 3.72/4.0. The Honors Program positively influences important student achievement metrics such as GPA, retention and graduation rates.

|                                       | Retained in Honors | Retained at UT Tyler |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Entering Fall 2021-2022 Cohort        | 92.5%              | 97.5%                |
| All Honors Students Active in Honors  | 89.6%              | 96.2%                |
|                                       | Incoming Cohort    | Graduation Rate      |
| Most Recent Four-Year Graduation Rate | 2018-2019          | 74.41%               |
| Most Recent Six-Year Graduation Rate  | 2016-2017          | 83.3%                |

- Assisted the Health Science Center faculty in moving credit and non-credit courses into Canvas.
- Assisted in implementing the COVID education course in fall 2021, which 8,335 students completed as part of UT Tyler's safe return to campus strategy.
- Hosted 2,636 face-to-face or hybrid courses and 838 fully online courses in Canvas.
- Supported 16,234 unique users (students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders) in Canvas.
- Responded to over 4,900 phone, email or virtual visits with the UT Tyler community.
- Supported 846 requests for 24/7 help through 24/7 Canvas Help.

Digital Learning also supports the tools faculty and students use to ensure academic integrity. This year, over 12,000 exams were delivered using ProctorU. In addition, over 9,000 students submitted almost 79,000 papers through UniCheck, our plagiarism detection software.

Digital Learning remains committed to advancing excellence in digital learning experiences and looks forward to partnering with and supporting faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders during the upcoming year.

The following five accomplishments provide additional evidence of the Honors Program's commitment to student and faculty success and engagement and our focus on research and academic excellence.

### 1. The addition of the Honors Scholars

AY 2021-22 saw the most significant growth for the Honors Program since its inaugural year in 2009. With the addition of the Honors Scholar, our recruitment pool tripled in a year. Our incoming fall 2022 cohort promises to be our strongest on record, with several valedictorians and salutatorians. Many of our 65 recruits are coming from Smith and surrounding counties.



The Honors Scholars also generated a burgeoning Living Learning Community for Honors.

With the growth in the program additional UT Tyler faculty joined the Honors Program teaching faculty.

The following five accomplishments provide additional evidence of the Honors Program's commitment to student and faculty success and engagement and our focus on research and academic excellence.

### 2. Lyceum - The UT Tyler Student Research Showcase

Over 30 faculty and staff members served as judges, moderators or volunteers and were integral to the resounding success of this event. A complete listing of the 2022 Lyceum Research Showcase, including the program and winning presentations, can be found on the Lyceum webpage.



The seventh annual Lyceum returned to a face-to-face format in spring 2022, and boasted a total of 112 undergraduate and graduate student research presentations.

Students from all six colleges participated in the Lyceum Research Showcase, which included poster, oral and creative presentations.

### 3. UT Tyler Honors Students' Research Accomplishments.

AY 2021-22 saw the most significant growth for the Honors Program since its inaugural year in 2009. With the addition of the Honors Scholar, our recruitment pool tripled in a year. Our incoming fall 2022 cohort promises to be our strongest on record, with several valedictorians and salutatorians. Many of our 65 recruits are coming from Smith and surrounding counties.



AY 2021-22 saw a partial return to honors students' attendance at conferences.

Seven students had original research accepted for presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council meeting in October 2021. Due to COVID conditions in the host city of Orlando, Florida, students did not travel but presented their research to a UT Tyler campus community.

- Zoe Santos, Beckett Preston, Justin Melendez: "Understanding Stigma Encountered by People with Parkinson's Disease" (faculty mentors Melinda Hermanns & Beth Mastel-Smith).
- Danitza Castillo, Arianna Bowlin, Carlos Reyes: "Stigma towards Parkinson's Disease Portrayed in Social Media and Literature" (faculty mentors Melinda Hermanns & Beth Mastel-Smith).

- Ana Zaidan: “The Effects of Different Levels of Physical Activity on Working Memory” (faculty mentor Adam McGuire).

On the regional level, eight students presented at the Great Plains Honors Council conference in March 2022, hosted by Wichita State University. This group presented from various disciplines, including history, biochemistry, psychology and exercise physiology. The group also included two award-winners at the conference:



Jacob Williams

- Jacob Williams won the prestigious Dennis Boe Award for Best Upper-Division Research Paper for his project, “Nātūra Rōmam Dēlēverat (Nature had Destroyed Rome).” Faculty mentors: Edward Tabri and Colin Snider.

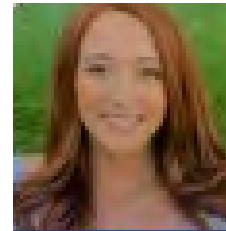
- Joseph Hudson won the John Britt Award for Best Upper-Division Poster in Health Sciences for his project, “Accessibility of Walking and Biking as Forms of Exercise in Harris County, Texas, USA.” Faculty mentor: Wycliffe Njororai.

On the local level, UT Tyler Honors students were well represented among the award winners at the seventh annual Lyceum.

- Baily Cox won first place for undergraduate poster for her project, “The Synthesis of Dragonamide E to Determine its Effects on Leishmaniasis.” Faculty mentor: Sean Butler
- Gavin Clarke won second place for oral presentation for his project, “Trumpet Mutes and a Discussion over their History and Timbres.” Faculty mentor: Jeremy McBain
- Honors alumni, now in graduate programs at UT Tyler, also brought home awards: Benjamin Stewart (Civil Engineering) won first place for his graduate poster, and Bethany Collier (History) won third place for her graduate oral presentation.

#### 4. Archer Fellowship

UT Tyler will have three Archer Fellows representing our institution in fall 2022:



Alexandria Smoot  
Political Science  
Fall 2022

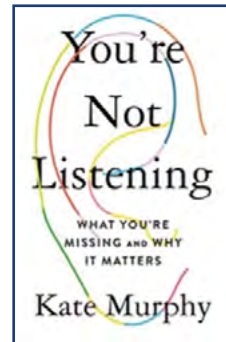


Taniyah Jones  
History  
Fall 2022



Alexandria Smoot  
Political Science  
Fall 2022

#### 5. Freshman Book and the Day of Listening



The 2021 Freshman Book was Kate Murphy’s *You’re Not Listening: What You’re Missing and Why It Matters*, a 2020 book that examines the lost art of listening. As in prior years, freshmen read the text in preparation for a discussion with faculty during the mock class segment within New Patriot Orientation. We also hosted a Day of Listening event attended by

over 120 students and faculty, which combined listening techniques from a variety of disciplines, including education, theater and music.



## LONGVIEW UNIVERSITY CENTER



The University of Texas at Tyler Longview University Center (LUC) houses bachelor’s degree programs in Nursing and Industrial Technology, dual credit courses for the UT Tyler University Academy and partners with Kilgore College, businesses, nonprofits, and community leaders to bring broader educational opportunities to Longview and surrounding communities.

This year, the LUC continued its traditions to honor and celebrate students and our community through events such as Finals Celebration Night, Homecoming BBQs and Nurses Appreciation Week in the Longview area.

For the 2021-2022 year, the LUC partnered with Kilgore College to offer multiple eight-week hybrid courses on the LUC campus. For the upcoming academic year, this partnership will expand to 15 eight-week hybrid Kilgore College courses offered on the LUC campus. These courses were selected so they can feed directly into the nursing or industrial technology program. This partnership allows students in the region to obtain the first- and second-year courses needed in a setting close to home and at convenient times.

UT Tyler’s Continuing Education (CE) program is housed at the LUC and provides continuing education opportunities for East Texas professionals. These non-credit courses offer a convenient, affordable way to increase knowledge in a particular field of study. Classes are available online and in person. The following three examples showcase UT Tyler’s work in Continuing Education:

The LUC was awarded two U.S. Department of Labor Susan Harwood grants totaling \$336,845 to educate employers and employees at no cost on workplace health and safety. The two training programs, Supporting Small Business Resiliency with Pandemic Planning and Prevention of Occupational Heat Related Disorders, were developed by UT Tyler physicians and certified safety professionals in collaboration with UT Tyler’s Continuing Education program.

UT Tyler and the United Way of Smith County partnered to enhance the East Texas Center for Nonprofits (ETCN) programs to prepare future leaders of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations through professional development (CE), graduate education, and research. The LUC participated in this vital partnership by providing a Certificate in Nonprofit Management for aspiring leaders. UT Tyler and the United Way joint planning committee for ETCN will continue to develop and deploy the Advanced Certificate in Nonprofit Management in fall 2022.

UT Tyler’s School of Nursing and the CE Program collaboratively worked to apply for and receive The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) accreditation. On June 27, 2022, the UT Tyler School of Nursing program was notified that we are accredited for two years. During the 2021-22 academic year, seven non-credit nursing education courses were provided through the LUC as part of the application process for ANCC accreditation. UT Tyler’s ANCC accreditation will be transformative for nursing and health professionals in East Texas.

# ROBERT R. MUNTZ LIBRARY

The Robert R. Muntz Library facility remains very important to students as a third space for study, collaboration and relaxation. Efforts are underway to improve the library building. The library received PUF LERR (Permanent University Fund Library, Equipment, Repair and Rehabilitation) funding to renovate the library restrooms, which are original to the 1981 building. Work on the first and second floors is complete and has just begun on the third and fourth floors, with completion expected at the end of summer.

In addition to the restrooms, the project will include renovating three large study rooms, the University Archives and Special Collections Department and the half of the third floor which contained stacks of print books. Two semi-trucks of little-used books have been transported to the Internet Archive (archive.org), where they will be digitized, stored in perpetuity and made freely available to the UT Tyler community and the world at no cost to the university. The library now collects almost entirely in electronic resources and has hundreds of thousands of electronic books, which are accessible to all regardless of location. The space will be furnished for interactive and collaborative study, which is in high demand by the students. The University Archives has been refreshed with paint and carpet, and new furniture is on the way.

Textbook costs for students have skyrocketed, with an increase of over 1,000 percent since 1977, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. To help address the problem, the library has been providing access to electronic textbooks to

students. Not all textbooks are available for library purchase, but if a title is available, especially with no limits on simultaneous users, and reasonably priced, the library purchased the book electronically for all to use. This project began in fall 2020, and the library has purchased 342 e-textbook titles at a cost of \$57,000. It is the library's most important initiative. We anticipate new business models that will allow more titles to be acquired in the near future.

Ann Darnley retired as the long-time manager of the help desk, and Geoff Doepker has assumed the role. Geoff has many years of library experience, both here and at Valdosta State University. There is also a new Social Sciences Liaison Librarian, Livia Garza, who covers Anthropology, Communication, Criminal Justice, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, Public Administration, Social Work and Sociology. Livia is a new librarian, with a master's degree from University of Illinois and Champaign-Urbana. She comes to us with a fine academic record and prestigious internships.



# WATSON W. WISE MEDICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

The Watson W. Wise Medical Research Library made substantial additions to its armamentarium of information resources.

The library began acquiring resources to support the first class and faculty of the planned School of Medicine (SOM). In coordination with the Dean of the SOM, the Chief Operating Officer of the Health Science Center, and/or the UT System Digital Library, the library negotiated access to Elsevier's ClinicalKey, McGraw-Hill's USMLE First Aid e-book database, Oxford University Press e-journals and SAGE Premier e-journals. Access to EndNote bibliographic management software was also expanded to include medical students, residents, fellows and faculty.

The Access Physiotherapy e-book database was acquired to support Family Medicine and the Sports Medicine Fellowship.

In addition, the CINAHL Complete (Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature) and Health Business Elite databases will be shared with

Muntz Library, with discounted pricing negotiated by that library. Sharing of the Web of Science database was achieved at no additional cost to either library. These databases primarily support the School of Community & Rural Health and the School of Medical Biological Sciences.

The library upgraded its subscription to JoVE (Journal of Visualized Experiments) to the Unlimited version, comprising the full suite of subject sections. It will support primarily the School of Medical Biological Sciences, research postdoctoral fellows and Clinical Psychology trainees.

The Wise Library also migrated to a hosted version of the Koha library information system, with a view to adding a discovery tool that will result in more integrated, efficient and comprehensive searching and retrieval of all the library's resources.



Tom Craig, Director of the Watson W. Wise Research Library and the current longest serving HSC employee, will retire on August 31, 2022, after 41 years of service. Tom has an incredible breadth of knowledge and has put it to good use helping others find the information they need since 1981. He is known for sharing a good story; his institutional memory, kindness and collegiality will be missed!

# ASSESSMENT & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OFFICE



## ASSESSMENT

The Assessment and Institutional Effective (AIE) Office is in the process of transitioning from Nuventive Improve (formerly TracDat) to a new cloud-based platform, Nuventive Analytics. This platform interfaces with Microsoft Power BI and will allow for more seamless reporting and assessment planning. All historical

information from assessment units will be migrated over, and workshops on using the new platform will launch later this summer. As a reminder, assessment updates for AY 2021-22 are due October 31 for non-academic plans and November 18 for academic plans.

### EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT DESIGNATION

The AIE Office staff and Assessment Professionals Team initiated planning and identification of implementation strategies toward attaining the Excellence in Assessment (EIA) as a five-year strategic goal. The EIA is a national recognition of institutions that successfully integrate assessment practices throughout the institution, provide evidence of student learning outcomes and use assessment results to guide institutional decision-making and improve student performance. The EIA designation's focus is on processes and uses of assessment data, rather than on student performance or accomplishment. The designation evaluation process is directly aligned with the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework and is co-sponsored by VSA Analytics and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

## ACCREDITATION SUPPORT

### UT TYLER MAIN CAMPUS AND HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE PROSPECTUS

The AIE Office staff facilitated completion and submission of the Prospectus on the Substantive Change for the Institutional Merger. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved the Merger Prospectus in December 2021.

## UT TYLER DECENNIAL REAFFIRMATION

The decennial Compliance Certificate Report (CCR) was developed in collaboration with all UT Tyler faculty, staff, students, alumni, community leaders and administrators. The CCR provides institutional information and support document as compliance evidence for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation. The commission's mission is the enhancement of education quality throughout the region and the improvement of the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that they meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students.

Accreditation by SACSCOC signifies that UT Tyler (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

An Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the CCR in the fall of 2021. A Focused Report to provide additional information was submitted to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee along with the original CCR and the UT Tyler Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) six weeks in advance of the campus visit March 14-17. During the visit, members of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee toured the Longview University Center, Health Science Center and Houston Engineering Center and met with faculty, students, staff and administrators. University participants met with committee members to discuss selected standards and review the QEP.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee visit fulfilled a mandatory USDE in-person site visit to complete the virtual Merger Committee visit in April 2021. Additionally, the On-Site visit fulfilled the required Extensive Off-Campus Instructional Site (OCIS) reviews for UT Tyler. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees will vote on the UT Tyler Reaffirmation in December 2022. The UT Tyler Fifth-Year Interim Report (FYIR) and the QEP Impact Report will be submitted in 2027.

## QEP

As part of the decennial reaffirmation, UT Tyler identified a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that focused on real-world problem solving in support of the UT Tyler Mission and Strategic Plan. The topic was identified through collaboration with the campus community. To prepare for the QEP launch in fall 2022, QEP College Teams, comprised of QEP faculty, students, career success coaches and librarians, succeeded in spreading QEP awareness throughout the colleges and encouraging discipline participation in the QEP. A QEP Student Advisory Committee was also formed to advise on QEP initiatives across the student body. A QEP Pilot was also implemented during the fall 2021 semester as part of the planning for the QEP Proposal submitted in advance of the spring 2022 site visit. Additionally, a QEP director began in September 2021, to facilitate and lead successful planning and implementation of the five-year QEP.





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