



PROVOST
ANNUAL REPORT
2024-2025



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A LETTER FROM *The* PRESIDENT

DEAR FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

The Provost's Annual Report reflects our educational commitment to academic excellence, student success and research innovation. As we continue to grow as a leading institution in East Texas, this report highlights the remarkable progress we've made in advancing our mission of empowering students, faculty and staff to make a lasting impact.

At UT Tyler, we are dedicated to student success, ensuring that every Patriot not only completes their degree but thrives in an environment designed to foster engagement, discovery and lifelong achievement. Through enhanced support services, innovative degree pathways and flexible programming, we are eliminating barriers and preparing our students for a future filled with opportunity.

Our commitment to research and community engagement remains stronger than ever. By strengthening student-faculty interactions, expanding research infrastructure and deepening our ties with East Texas, we continue to drive meaningful change that benefits both our university and the broader community.

Partnerships with community colleges and school districts are designed to broaden opportunities for students as well as provide necessary resources to address the health of our Pre-K-12 students.

Our colleges and schools continue to expand academic programs to ensure that students are prepared to meet the needs of the workforce.

As we recognize these achievements and look ahead to new opportunities before us, we know that together we will continue to build a legacy of excellence and transformation.

Philly

**"OUR MISSION IS
EMPOWERING
STUDENTS,
FACULTY
AND STAFF
TO MAKE
A LASTING
IMPACT."**

JULIE V. PHILLEY, MD
PRESIDENT



**“...TAKE PRIDE
IN MAJOR
ACCOMPLISHMENTS
OF OUR STUDENTS,
FACULTY & STAFF
OVER THE LAST
DECADE, FROM
ENROLLMENT
GROWTH TO
IMPROVED
RETENTION &
GRADUATION...”**

DR. AMIR MIRMIRAN
PROVOST, CHIEF ACADEMIC
OFFICER

A LETTER FROM *The* **PROVOST**

DEAR FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

The 2024-25 academic year was another year of excellence for UT Tyler. Our School of Nursing kicked off a yearlong celebration of its “50 Years of Inspiring Care,” while having grown significantly to our largest college, comprising 25% of our student enrollment. Our School of Medicine celebrated its first joint Graduate Medical Education graduation while planning to launch its Physician Assistance program in Longview this coming fall. Our School of Health Professions is expanding its footprint in health-related programs in East Texas, starting its Master of Speech Language Pathology, this fall. Our Soules College of Business celebrated the success of its accounting students for placement on the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy’s top 10 list for the fourth consecutive year. Our Honors College enjoyed another year of growth, with a record-breaking number of freshman applicants, and graduating its largest class in its sixteen-year history. Our College of Arts and Sciences’ debate team had an outstanding season, reaching the quarterfinals in the National Championship Tournament and our College of Education and Psychology partnered with the Tyler Independent School District to mentor their new teachers. And, last but certainly not least, Dr. Alwathiqbellah Ibrahim in our College of Engineering received the prestigious National Science Foundation’s Faculty CAREER Award for his research on smart hip implants.

I must add that it has been a great honor for me to serve as the provost of this incredible institution since July 2015. As I transition to my new role of Chief Research Officer and Dean of Graduate School, I would like to congratulate the incoming provost, Dr. Barbara Haas, who has served as our Dean of Nursing. I also want for all of us to take pride in major accomplishments of our students, faculty and staff over the last decade, from enrollment growth to improved retention and graduation, and from decennial reaffirmation of our SACSCOC accreditation to our successful merger with The Health Science Center, transforming our excellent Honors Program into Honors College, transitioning from a regional to a national university in the US News & World Report, advancing two levels in Carnegie Classification from Masters/Large to Doctoral University with High Research Activity (R2), and being ranked by the Chronicle of Higher Education among the top 10 fastest growing public doctoral universities in the nation, receiving Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s STAR Award for best response and recovery in support of student success during the pandemic, and last but not least, achieving high national ranking for many of our programs from nursing to engineering and from business to criminal justice. Many thanks to our students, faculty and staff for their investment of time and effort in this incredible institution of higher education!

Dr. Amir Mirmiran

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. NEIL GRAY

The College of Arts and Sciences had a year of extraordinary achievement and creative innovation that had a positive impact on the university, region and students. I am very pleased to share our accomplishments below.

We stand at the heart of UT Tyler's academic mission, and every undergraduate benefits from our exceptional programs, regardless of major. Our faculty teach core courses that develop essential critical thinking, communication, scientific literacy and quantitative reasoning skills needed for career development.

Our programs span several disciplines and contribute to each student's education. The sciences provide problem-solving tools while humanities deepen understanding of human experience, history and culture, fostering empathy and ethical reasoning. The arts ignite creativity, self-expression and innovation while social sciences give insight into human behavior, governance and societal structures, which prepare graduates to address policy, law and public health challenges. Together, these disciplines create an educational ecosystem that prepares graduates to lead, serve and inspire.

Partnering with the Caldwell Zoo, our biology faculty launched the new Zoo Science and Management course, which is one of only a few programs in the nation that connects students

directly with wildlife conservation work. Our Studio Art and Art History students transformed Mineola's public spaces with vibrant murals that tell the city's history. Our Chemistry and Biochemistry department's programs were recognized by the American Chemical Society for innovative, student-centered approach and historic growth. The School of Performing Arts expanded its reach by providing dynamic performances, educational programs and community partnerships.

Our excellence continues with accomplishments, research and exceptional public engagement activities, including hosting the only high school ethics bowl in Texas, conducting fieldwork in Belize with the Maya Research Project and launching the new Crime Scene Complex. These activities provide our students with transformative and career-defining experiences.

We also are UT Tyler's academic backbone, where curiosity meets expertise, theory meets practice and our students discover the breadth of human knowledge and depth of their own potential.

As you read this, I hope you see what I see every day — a college alive with discovery, creativity and a deep commitment to serving students and East Texas. Our work is vital to UT Tyler's and East Texas' future, as well as the success of students who walk through our doors.

Dr. Neil Gray

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

BIOLOGY MEETS THE WILD: UT TYLER LAUNCHES ZOO SCIENCE COURSE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CALDWELL ZOO

In a unique blend of classroom instruction and hands-on field experience, the Department of Biology at UT Tyler partnered with the Caldwell Zoo in May 2024 to launch a new course: Zoo Science and Management. Taught by biology faculty members Jessica Coleman and Marsha Williams, the course provides students with direct insight into the inner workings of a modern zoological institution, ranging from animal care and conservation to operational logistics and public engagement.

The collaboration represents a pioneering step for UT Tyler and a rare academic opportunity in undergraduate science education. “There are only a handful of programs like this in the country,” said Marsha Williams. “It’s an immersive experience that places students alongside zookeepers, veterinary staff and wildlife managers, allowing them to connect classroom theory to real-world conservation and care.”

The course was co-developed with the expertise and full participation of Caldwell Zoo staff, who opened their facilities to UT Tyler students and faculty for guided observation and training. Topics covered in the course included animal husbandry, enrichment, nutrition, veterinary science and the ethical challenges of captive wildlife care.

The Caldwell Zoo, located in Tyler, has long been a regional leader in wildlife conservation and education. This course marks a deepening of its ties to higher education and a shared commitment to science-based stewardship.

“One of the zoo’s strategic imperatives is to be recognized by regional higher education facilities as a trusted scientific resource,” said Hayes Caldwell, president and CEO of the Caldwell Zoo. “This UT Tyler biology course, along with our other ongoing partnerships, does just that. It is our daily goal to provide the very best care for every animal and to allow these students and our guests to discover and understand their connection to nature and the value of wildlife and wild spaces.”

The course was well received by both students and staff, and due to its success, Zoo Science and Management is scheduled to be offered again in May 2026. Plans are already underway to expand the scope of the curriculum to include deeper dives into wildlife conservation policy and emerging technologies in animal care.

Through this partnership, UT Tyler students are gaining access to career pathways in zoological science and building a greater appreciation for the interconnected world we share with the wild.



“There are only a handful of programs like this in the country.”

Marsha Williams



PAINTING A COMMUNITY: SAAHA STUDENTS BRING PUBLIC ART TO LIFE IN MINEOLA

This spring, students from UT Tyler's Studio Art and Art History Association (SAAHA) brought color, creativity and community engagement to East Texas with a series of murals completed in partnership with Wood County Walls and the Flint & Steel Coalition. Over several weeks in May 2025, Art and Art History students, Lisa Horlander, Jason Kirby, Emily Everitt, Makenzie Bierma, Isa Feris and Jennifer Jernigan, designed and painted four striking murals at the Reel Inn Lodge on Lake Fork in Mineola

The project is part of a growing regional movement to integrate public art into rural community development. Flint & Steel, a not-for-profit coalition based in Mineola, champions artistic and educational opportunities with a special focus on youth and young adults. What began as an effort to enhance a local skate park has since evolved into a broader initiative supporting creativity and civic pride throughout the area.

Wood County Walls, a collaborative project involving six communities in the region, is transforming the landscape with an interactive street art trail. By partnering with local organizations, businesses and artists, the initiative has established a countywide outdoor gallery, encouraging visitors to explore, interact and linger in East Texas towns.

It's a hands-on way to experience the impact of art beyond the classroom.

Our students are not just learning technique, they're learning how art shapes place and builds relationships. It's a hands-on way to experience the impact of art beyond the classroom.

For the students, the experience offered not only a chance to contribute to a lasting piece of public art, but also to collaborate directly with community members, nonprofit organizers and fellow artists. Each mural reflects a different aspect of Mineola's local identity, from nature and wildlife to cultural history, turning once-blank walls into vibrant storyboards of place.

The murals now serve as a point of pride for the town and as a testament to the power of student creativity in public life. As part of the Wood County Walls trail, these pieces will continue to inspire locals and visitors alike for years to come.

Lisa Horlander, Jason Kirby, Emily Everitt, Makenzie Bierma, Isa Feris and Jennifer Jernigan, designed and painted four striking murals at the Reel Inn Lodge on Lake Fork in Mineola



CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY EARN NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT FOR INNOVATIVE, STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at UT Tyler experienced a year of remarkable progress marked by substantial program growth, outstanding student retention and national recognition from the American Chemical Society (ACS).

In recognition of its innovative, student-centered approach, the department was invited to present at the ACS National Meeting in March 2024, contributing to a symposium on implementing the new ACS guidelines and increasing student engagement. This positioned UT Tyler as a national leader in shaping the future of undergraduate chemistry education. That leadership has continued to grow. The department was also invited to lead ACS national training sessions for new chemistry department chairs, sharing best practices in curricular development, retention and advising.

The student-centered approach is working!

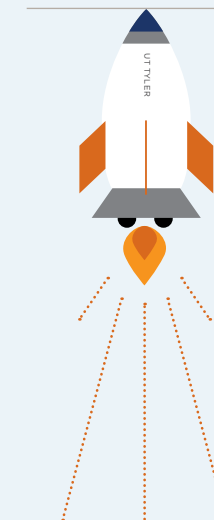
In Fall 2024, total majors in the department reached 208, a 20% increase over the previous year. The Biochemistry B.S. program grew by 25%, while the Chemistry B.S. program increased by 15%, reflecting growing interest in UT Tyler's rigorous and professionally-aligned degree paths. Just over a decade ago, the department had only 32 majors. Their dedication to student engagement and academic quality has led to an incredible 550% growth in majors since then.



The department continues to be fully accredited by the ACS. All graduates of the department's B.S. degrees in Chemistry and Biochemistry are ACS-certified chemists or biochemists, meeting national standards for professional competency and scientific training. This certification gives students a competitive edge in employment, graduate study and professional school admissions.

With strategic program expansion, high-impact student support and continued national visibility, the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry is not only growing, it is defining what modern undergraduate science education can achieve.

208 MAJORS
2024



550%
GROWTH
IN
MAJORS

32 MAJORS

2014

UT TYLER SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS EXPANDS ITS REACH ACROSS EAST TEXAS

The UT Tyler School of Performing Arts continues to deepen its impact across East Texas through a dynamic blend of education, outreach and artistic excellence. In 2025, the school celebrated the 10th anniversary of its free All-State Preparation Workshops, which have helped hundreds of high school musicians receive expert guidance and early exposure to UT Tyler’s world-class faculty. This decade-long tradition reflects the school’s enduring commitment to musical access and excellence.

Summer programs flourished as well. The eighth annual Jazz Camp and third annual Percussion Camp welcomed students from across Texas for immersive ensemble experiences. Another major milestone was the inaugural Trumpet Day, which brought over 80 middle and high school trumpeters to campus for a day of learning led by Stuart Stephenson, principal trumpet of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.



Throughout the year, the school’s Ambassador Ensembles, including the Swoop Jazz Collective, Patriot Brass Quintet and Patriot Singers, represented the university through performances at schools, ceremonies and community events. The Chamber Strings program reached a new milestone by partnering with Tyler Junior College to present the region’s first-ever collaborative full orchestra, broadening performance opportunities and fostering inter-campus connections.

One of the most significant initiatives of the year was a partnership with the Stage Notes Academy of Performing Arts (SNAPA) in Athens, Texas. Together, the two institutions presented a joint production of Into the Woods, with student actors, musicians and production staff staging performances in both Tyler and Athens. The project gave participants professional-level experience in musical theatre while demonstrating the potential of regional partnerships to bring the arts to broader audiences.



SPA faculty and students also extended their performances into nontraditional spaces, including long-term care facilities, hospitals and hospice centers. These intimate performances provided healing and comfort, illustrating music’s ability to uplift and connect on a personal level.

Student composers further explored artistic boundaries by collaborating with local singer-songwriters, blending classical composition with contemporary storytelling and showcasing the rich creative diversity within East Texas.

From large-scale productions to deeply personal outreach, the UT Tyler School of Performing Arts remains a cultural cornerstone, enriching lives, building partnerships and inspiring audiences across the region and beyond.



STUDENT MEDIA SHINES: UT TYLER EARNS 60 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN MASS COMMUNICATION

In one of the most successful years in program history, UT Tyler students earned an impressive 60 awards at the 2025 Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA) Convention, the premier gathering of collegiate journalism and media programs across the state. Representing excellence in writing, editing, photojournalism, videography, design, social media and broadcast, these awards reflect the outstanding dedication, talent and professionalism of UT Tyler’s student media teams.

The Patriot Talon, the university’s student-run media outlet, received top honors in categories ranging from headline writing to multimedia storytelling. The university also took home the Best Use of Social Media Among Texas Colleges award showcasing how UT Tyler students are effectively leading conversations across digital platforms.

Senior mass communication major Nathan Witt of Mineola, Patriot Talon editor-in-chief and outgoing TIPA student board vice president, was among the most decorated contributors, earning multiple individual awards. He was joined by David Chapek, senior from Big Sandy, who placed third for the prestigious 2025 TIPA Student Reporter of the Year award. Chapek’s work included impactful stories on sex trafficking in Smith County, domestic abuse resources and UT Tyler’s role in addressing the fentanyl crisis through Narcan access.

Several students won first place awards in highly competitive categories. These included general news writing, sports game coverage, multimedia storytelling, audio and video reporting and magazine design. The awards spanned both on-site competition and previously published work, confirming the quality of both deadline performance and semester-long editorial efforts.

Behind the scenes, faculty support played a critical role. Student media adviser and lecturer Danny Mogle provided mentorship and direction, guiding students through the reporting and production process. His leadership has helped shape a student newsroom that is both resilient and responsive to real-world challenges.

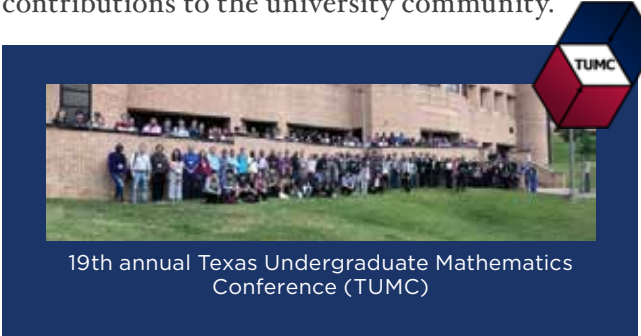
With students earning top honors in categories from Longview to Texarkana, the achievement showcases the regional diversity and creative strength of UT Tyler’s media programs. The department’s commitment to professional development and civic engagement ensures that students are not only building award-winning portfolios, they are also telling the stories that matter to East Texas communities.

This year’s TIPA results confirm that UT Tyler’s student media are setting the standard for excellence in Texas collegiate journalism and that their work is being noticed statewide.



MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT
SHOWCASES TEACHING
EXCELLENCE AND EXPANDS
RESEARCH IMPACT

The Department of Mathematics at UT Tyler continues to demonstrate its commitment to excellence in both teaching and scholarship, with faculty and students engaging in high-impact learning and statewide collaboration. At the center of this year’s achievements is Dr. Madeline (Maddie) Dawsey, whose dedication to student success earned her multiple recognitions. In 2024–2025, she received the Department of Mathematics Faculty Teaching Award and was selected as the recipient of the Jack and Dorothy Faye White Fellowship for Teaching Excellence. Her exemplary work in the classroom led to her nomination as UT Tyler’s candidate for the UT System Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award, one of the most prestigious honors in the university system. She was also named a recipient of the President’s Service Award, reflecting her broader contributions to the university community.



Beyond the classroom, the department played a key role in advancing undergraduate mathematics engagement across the state by hosting the 19th annual Texas Undergraduate Mathematics Conference (TUMC) in fall 2024. Funded by the National Science Foundation, the event welcomed 180 participants from across Texas and beyond. The conference provided a platform for undergraduate students to present original research and attend talks from professionals working in academia and industry.

Two standout plenary speakers included Dr. Rebecca Garcia of Colorado College and Daniel du Preez, a UT Tyler alumnus and software developer at SpaceX currently working on the Starlink project. Daniel, who graduated in 2021 with a double major in mathematics and computer science, spoke to students about how mathematical training continues to shape his career in aerospace technology.

The department continues to blend academic rigor with real-world application, creating opportunities for students to thrive in both scholarly and professional environments. With dedicated faculty, nationally supported events and strong alumni engagement, the Department of Mathematics remains a vital part of UT Tyler’s academic landscape.

MODEL UN BRINGS GLOBAL
DIPLOMACY TO UT TYLER AND
EAST TEXAS CLASSROOMS

The Department of Political Science continues to build a strong culture of diplomacy, critical thinking and global engagement through its thriving Model United Nations (Model UN) program. In 2024–2025, UT Tyler students earned national recognition while also extending international education opportunities to high school students across East Texas.

In April, twelve UT Tyler students traveled to New York City to participate in the 2025 National Model United Nations (NMUN) Conference, one of the world’s most prestigious simulations of the United Nations. Representing the Kingdom of Sweden, students engaged with peers from around the globe in formal debates, resolution drafting and negotiations across multiple committees. The university’s delegation performed at a high level, with two students earning individual awards. Toby Benson received the Outstanding Position Paper award in the General Assembly First Committee and Blanca Kellerman Jimenez was named Outstanding Delegate in Committee for her leadership in the Peacebuilding Commission.

These honors reflect UT Tyler’s commitment to experiential learning and the development of informed, globally minded leaders.

9th Annual High School Model UN
Conference

Closer to home, the department also hosted the 9th Annual High School Model UN Conference in March 2025, welcoming 90 students from four East Texas schools: University Academy Tyler, University Academy Longview, Bishop T.K. Gorman and Texas High (Texarkana). High school delegates represented a range of countries and practiced formal debate, negotiation, and public speaking throughout the day.

Guided by UT Tyler’s Model UN student leaders and faculty, participants tackled pressing international topics such as the South China Sea

territorial dispute, safeguarding global water networks, and informational integrity in the age of social media. The conference introduced many participants to diplomacy and international relations for the first time, sparking an interest in public service, global affairs and higher education pathways.

Together, these two initiatives illustrate the department’s dedication to both excellence in undergraduate education and regional civic engagement.

Through Model UN, students at UT Tyler and beyond are gaining firsthand experience with the complexity of international issues, preparing them to be thoughtful leaders in a rapidly changing world.



MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

SKATEABLE SCULPTURE COMING TO MINEOLA PARK

Sculpture professor Dewane Hughes is teaming up with Flint & Steel to create a 20-foot skateable sculpture shaped like a giant skateboard for the Mineola skate park. Designed in collaboration with local skaters, the stainless steel bench will double as functional art, both durable and Instagram-worthy. “It’s pretty cool looking,” said Flint & Steel’s Nathan Witt. Built for both performance and rest, the piece will offer shaded seating and a rugged surface for tricks. Hughes is donating his time and designing the sculpture to withstand weather, wear and creative use — true to the spirit of “by skaters, for skaters.”



UT TYLER DEBATE TEAM BREAKS INTO NATIONAL TOP 10

The UT Tyler Debate Team had an outstanding season, with four students ranked among the top 32 partnerships nationwide and the top team earning a #8 national ranking. The team qualified for the National Championship tournament and advanced to the quarterfinals, placing among the final eight competitors. With all debaters returning for the 2025–2026 season, the program is poised for continued success. This summer, team members will help host a high school speech and debate camp at the College of Arts and Sciences, strengthening regional outreach and recruitment.



CBS 19 HIGHLIGHTS FACULTY WORK TO SAVE ENDANGERED SPECIES

Dr. Sara Rumbelow was recently featured by CBS 19 for her research on the endangered Texas Pigtoe mussel. Alongside co-authors Dr. Lance and Marsha Williams, her study — published in Hydrobiology — investigates how rising river temperatures in East Texas are threatening the survival of these vital freshwater mussels. As natural water filters, mussels play a key role in protecting water quality, yet they are among the most endangered groups of organisms globally. The coverage spotlights UT Tyler faculty leadership in addressing urgent conservation challenges through science.



DISCOVERY SCIENCE PLACE ENGAGES 70,000 VISITORS WITH HANDS-ON STEM

The Discovery Science Place welcomed over 70,000 visitors this year, offering interactive STEM experiences for families, students and schools across East Texas. Two major exhibits debuted: a synthetic ice-skating rink for active play and field trips, and Powering the Future, which explores energy sources and their impact on daily life. Signature events like Darwin Day, Engineer’s Week and STEM Like a Girl featured UT Tyler students and faculty leading hands-on demonstrations and mentoring young learners, fueling curiosity and inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers.



HISTORY STUDENTS AND FACULTY EXCEL IN RESEARCH AND GLOBAL LEARNING

The Department of History saw strong student and faculty achievement in 2024–2025. Six students presented original research, one published and earned the Boe Prize from the Great Plains Honors Society and two Master of Arts students completed theses. Two undergraduate majors were selected as Archer Fellows in Spring 2025. The department also co-led a successful travel-study program to Poland with the Department of Psychology and Counseling. Faculty remained highly engaged, with six members presenting or speaking at 10 academic conferences across regional, national and international platforms. One faculty member also celebrated the publication of a co-edited scholarly volume.



HISTORY STUDENTS AND FACULTY



MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

LITERATURE & LANGUAGES FACULTY LEAD IN GRANTS, INNOVATION AND AI INITIATIVES

Faculty in the Department of Literature & Languages were awarded multiple internal and external grants in 2024-2025, including Active Learning, AI Course Innovation and Ethics Teaching grants. Dr. Miriam Rowntree secured a \$118,430 THECB grant in partnership with the Department of Mathematics to support TSI students through a new summer boot camp. Dr. Catherine Ross was awarded the Provost's J. Burns Brown Fellowship and Glenn Blake was elected East Texas Representative to the Texas Institute of Letters. An interdisciplinary team led by Dr. Ann Beebe received a \$7,500 IDEA grant to propose a certificate and symposium on AI writing and ethics.

CURRICULUM REVAMP, STUDENT SUCCESS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE HUMANITIES

The department reorganized the Bachelor of Science in English into four focused tracks and updated the Writing Technologies & Digital Rhetoric minor to better reflect AI integration. A pilot 7-week course for TSI students was launched, and a study abroad trip to Peru is planned for May 2026. The revived Multimodal Exchange showcased student work, and the department newsletter, Between the Lines, featured voices from alumni, students and faculty. Michaela Murphy MA, English, was featured in Amazon's The College Tour. Faculty presented at 22 conferences, published nine articles, and launched initiatives to support adjuncts and promote humanities career readiness.

UT TYLER HOSTS TEXAS' ONLY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL

The UT Tyler High School Ethics Bowl continues to grow as the only regional competition of its kind in Texas, drawing teams from across the state—including as far as Houston. In 2025, the event welcomed 9 teams from 7 schools, with 31 students, 7 coaches, and more than 25 volunteer judges participating. The winning team advanced to the regional playoffs for a chance to compete at the National High School Ethics Bowl in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. UT Tyler's event is nationally recognized for fostering thoughtful dialogue, critical reasoning, and ethical engagement among high school students.

9 TEAMS
7 SCHOOLS
31 STUDENTS
7 COACHES
MORE THAN
25 VOLUNTEERS





A

NEW CRIME SCENE COMPLEX ELEVATES CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING

The Department of Social Sciences advanced its commitment to career-ready education with the launch of a new Crime Scene Complex on UT Tyler's North Campus. The Criminal Justice program acquired four cottages to serve as fully equipped training sites, allowing students in the Forensic Sciences concentration to practice crime scene investigation techniques in realistic, controlled environments. Under the direction of Dr. Danielle Bailey, students gain hands-on experience in evidence collection, documentation and scene processing, preparing them for careers in law enforcement, forensic analysis and criminal investigation.

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM EARNS FULL CSWE ACCREDITATION

UT Tyler’s Bachelor of Social Work program earned full accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), marking a major milestone in the program’s development. Accreditation is effective through February 2032 and affirms that UT Tyler meets rigorous national standards in social work education. This recognition enables graduates to pursue licensure, apply to advanced-standing master’s programs and demonstrates the university’s commitment to preparing ethical, competent professionals to meet the growing social service needs of East Texas and beyond.

SUMMER MUSIC CAMPS SPARK PASSION AND PERFORMANCE

UT Tyler’s School of Performing Arts welcomed aspiring musicians from across Texas to its eighth annual Jazz Camp and third annual Percussion Camp. Led by UT Tyler faculty, students explored improvisation, ensemble performance and technique in a fun and collaborative environment. The camps continue to grow as key outreach initiatives that inspire musical excellence and connect young artists with the university’s vibrant music community.

GRANT SUPPORTS FINANCIAL LITERACY OUTREACH FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Distinguished Senior Lecturer Susan Doty secured a \$100,000 grant from the WoodNext Foundation to launch First Responder Finance, a new initiative through UT Tyler’s Center for Economic Education and Financial Literacy (CEEFL). The three-phase program includes coursework, micro-credentialing, professional development for helping professions and targeted community outreach in Northeast Texas. A highlight of the initiative was Family Financial Fun Night, held in April, to celebrate Financial Literacy Month—an event where UT Tyler students gave back by engaging families in interactive learning around personal finance.



\$100,000 GRANT
FROM THE WOODNEXT FOUNDATION
TO LAUNCH FIRST RESPONDER FINANCE

STUDENTS DIG INTO GLOBAL LEARNING WITH THE MAYA RESEARCH PROJECT

Now in its 33rd year, the Maya Research Project offers UT Tyler students an unparalleled opportunity to engage in hands-on archaeological fieldwork in Belize. Led by Dr. Thomas Guderjan, UT Tyler students participated directly in excavation, mapping, artifact analysis and cultural preservation at ancient Mayan sites. The project fosters immersive global learning, encouraging students to work alongside international scholars while gaining field experience in disciplines like GIS, bioarchaeology and conservation. Many students return for multiple summers, citing the program as a formative experience that deepens their academic knowledge and inspires future careers in archaeology and anthropology.



UT TYLER INSTRUCTOR HITS A HIGH NOTE WITH GRAMMY-NOMINATED ALBUM

Dr. Ricardo “Rico” Allen II, adjunct instructor of saxophone and jazz studies, performed with his saxophone quartet, Lotus, on Impossible Dream — nominated for a Grammy Award in Best Traditional Pop Album. The project featured Broadway legends like Josh Groban and Kristin Chenoweth. A passionate performer and educator, Allen joined UT Tyler in 2023 and has toured internationally with artists including Jon Faddis, Wycliffe Gordon and The Four Tops.



PEP BAND DEBUTS WITH PATRIOT SPIRIT ON FULL DISPLAY

The UT Tyler Pep Band launched during the Spring 2025 basketball season, energizing home games with live music and school spirit. Directed by Dr. Tyree Hastings, the ensemble brought together music majors and nonmajors to perform high-energy sets that excited fans and players alike. After a successful first season, the band is set to become a new UT Tyler tradition.

SOULES

COLLEGE OF

BUSINESS



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. KRIST SWIMBERGHE

It is hard to believe we are already looking back at AY 2024-2025 ... and what a successful year it has been!

In the following, you will be able to read highlights that exemplify how the Soules College of Business continues to **prepare students for success**. Examples of this include the continued superior CPA passing rates of our accounting alumni compared to Texas peer institutions. University of Texas/Texas A&M Investment Management Company Scholars that continue to represent the College and themselves in an extraordinary fashion in Austin. The Hibbs Institute for Business and Economics Research, collaborating with the Center for Economic Education and Financial Literacy, to successfully start a student research fellowship program that generates useful knowledge and data for our communities.

Additionally, Soules College of Business faculty continue to be recognized for their excellence in teaching. Ms. Jennifer Reynolds, Mr. David Marks, Ms. Kerri-Anne Clark, Dr. Venugopal Gopalakrishna-Reman and Dr. Marwan Al-Shammari all received awards and recognition for their **teaching excellence**. Faculty members continue to be productive researchers and take pride in involving students in meaningful and innovative research. For instance, Dr. Sagnik Dakshit and one of his students, Ms. Ayesha Khalid, collaborated on a project utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) to improve student learning outcomes.

The College is also expanding its graduate program portfolio to meet student needs and market demand. Graduate programs in Marketing Insights, Finance and a Higher Education Leadership track in the HRD doctoral program were successfully launched and developed.

Furthermore, the Soules College of Business faculty, staff, students, as well as College auxiliaries continue to **serve East Texas** in meaningful ways. Dr. Marilyn Young was instrumental in leading the initiative that led to the City of Tyler formally being designated as a Veteran-Friendly Community by the East Texas Community of Governments (ETCOG). Several clients of the UT Tyler-Longview SBDC an auxiliary unit housed within the College, received awards from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Finally, I am grateful for the continuous commitment and investment that our Soules College of Business Corporate Advisory Council members make in our students. I am appreciative for the generosity of all industry stakeholders that made our first sponsorship program that benefits students in the Department of Accounting, Finance and Business Law successful. A big thank you to our education partner, Risepoint, for the establishment of the Risepoint Recognition of Excellence Fund. Humbled and thankful for the continuous involvement and support of the Soules family.

Dr. Krist Swimberghe

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

CPA EXAM PASS RATE

For the fourth consecutive time, UT Tyler earned a place on the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy's Top 10 list! Our graduates had the third highest CPA exam pass rate among Texas public universities and ranked sixth overall statewide. Our pass rate is consistently above the national average which is a testament to the students' hard work and the faculty's commitment to quality education. We are beyond proud!



**UT TYLER EARNED A
PLACE ON THE TEXAS
STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC
ACCOUNTANCY'S
TOP 10 LIST**

**RANKED
6TH OVERALL
STATEWIDE**

**3RD HIGHEST
CPA EXAM PASS RATE
AMONG TEXAS PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES**



2025 UTIMCO SCHOLARS

Six students have participated in the 2025 University of Texas/Texas A&M Investment Management Company Scholars. The UTIMCO Scholars program prepares undergraduate students for careers in the financial industry. Scholars participate in an eight-week internship where they learn from UTIMCO leaders as well as leaders from top financial firms such as JP Morgan, Bridgewater, Greystar and Fortress. Susan Doty, UT Tyler Distinguished Teaching Professor, is the UTIMCO coordinator for UT Tyler.

**6
STUDENTS**

**HAVE PARTICIPATED
IN THE 2025 UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS/TEXAS A&M
INVESTMENT
MANAGEMENT
COMPANY SCHOLARS**

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

FACULTY SERVES ON FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jennifer Reynolds, assistant professor in practice in Accounting, is a member of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel, a federal advisory committee. TAP’s mission is to identify taxpayers’ issues and make suggestions for improving IRS service and customer satisfaction.



UT TYLER HOSTS VEX ROBOTICS TOURNAMENT

En-Tze Chong, University Academy-Tyler science and engineering teacher, and Dr. Mark Miller, chair and professor of the Department of Technology, have organized the UT-Terly VEX-tacular Final Countdown V5 Tournament. The robotics competition will be at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Feb. 15, in the Soules College of Business. “We are working to make UT Tyler a VEX Robotics event partner in the East Texas region to provide local STEM robotics events. There is a lack of such opportunities in our community, and we hope to spark that interest in innovative robotics design and development by offering such local events,” said En-Tze.

Nearly 150 students from eight schools in East Texas and the DFW area will participate. The top teams will advance to a future VEX Robotics state meet.



WE ARE WORKING TO MAKE UT TYLER A VEX ROBOTICS EVENT PARTNER IN THE EAST TEXAS REGION TO PROVIDE LOCAL STEM ROBOTICS EVENTS.

UT TYLER-LONGVIEW SBDC CLIENTS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BY U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Two clients of The University of Texas at Tyler - Longview Small Business Development Center were recognized with 2025 US Small Business Administration awards in the North Texas region.



BOBBIE O'DELL
CEO/co-founder of Arpeco Valves & Controls, LLC, received Woman-Owned Business of the Year.



THE SHOULTS FAMILY
Founders of Bear Creek Smokehouse in Marshall received “Family- Owned Business of the Year

Both were nominated by the UT Tyler - Longview SBDC.



NEARLY **150** STUDENTS



DR. MARK MILLER
Chair and professor of the Department of Technology

EN-TZE CHONG
University Academy-Tyler science and engineering teacher

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

NEW VIRTUAL TEACHING ASSISTANT TO MONITOR LEARNING PERFORMANCE, ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING

Dr. Sagnik Dakshit, assistant professor of Computer Science, and Dr. Kouider Mokhtari, School of Education Anderson-Vukelja-Wright Endowed Chair, are leading a project designed to utilize modern artificial intelligence technologies to provide personalized support to faculty and students by monitoring learning performance and attitudes toward learning. “This initiative plans to elevate teaching excellence and support East Texas learners with world-class technology,” said Dr. Dakshit. “By blending cutting-edge research with community impact, UT Tyler is emerging as a leader in the AI-driven future of higher education.”



Dr. Marilyn Young and the Veterans Committee of Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce received an award from the East Texas Council of Governments. Dr. Young’s research helped the Tyler MSA (Smith County) become the first city in Texas designated as a Veterans Friendly Community. Dr. Young’s study covered veterans’ demographics, services and more, making Tyler a model for supporting veterans.

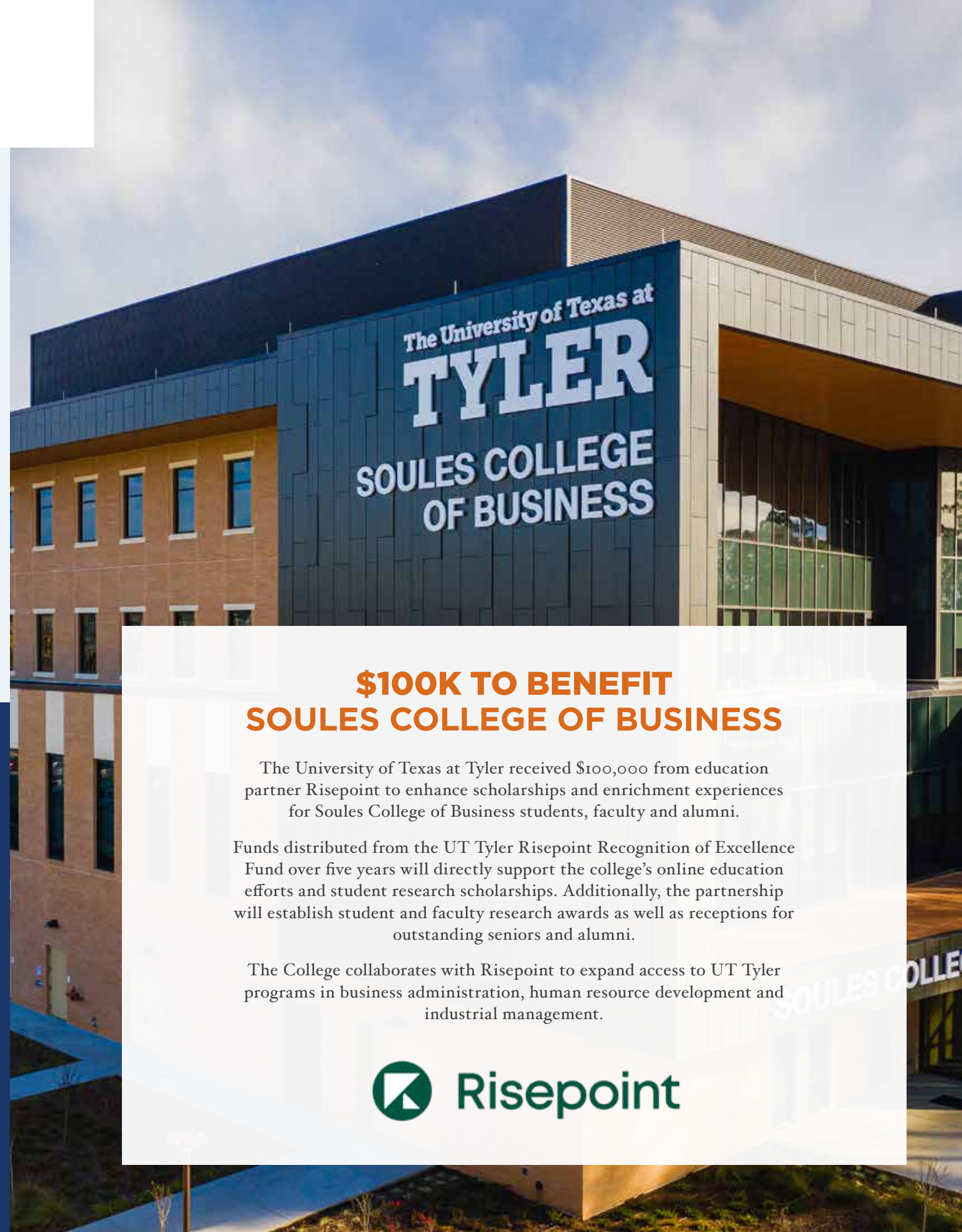


\$100K TO BENEFIT SOULES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

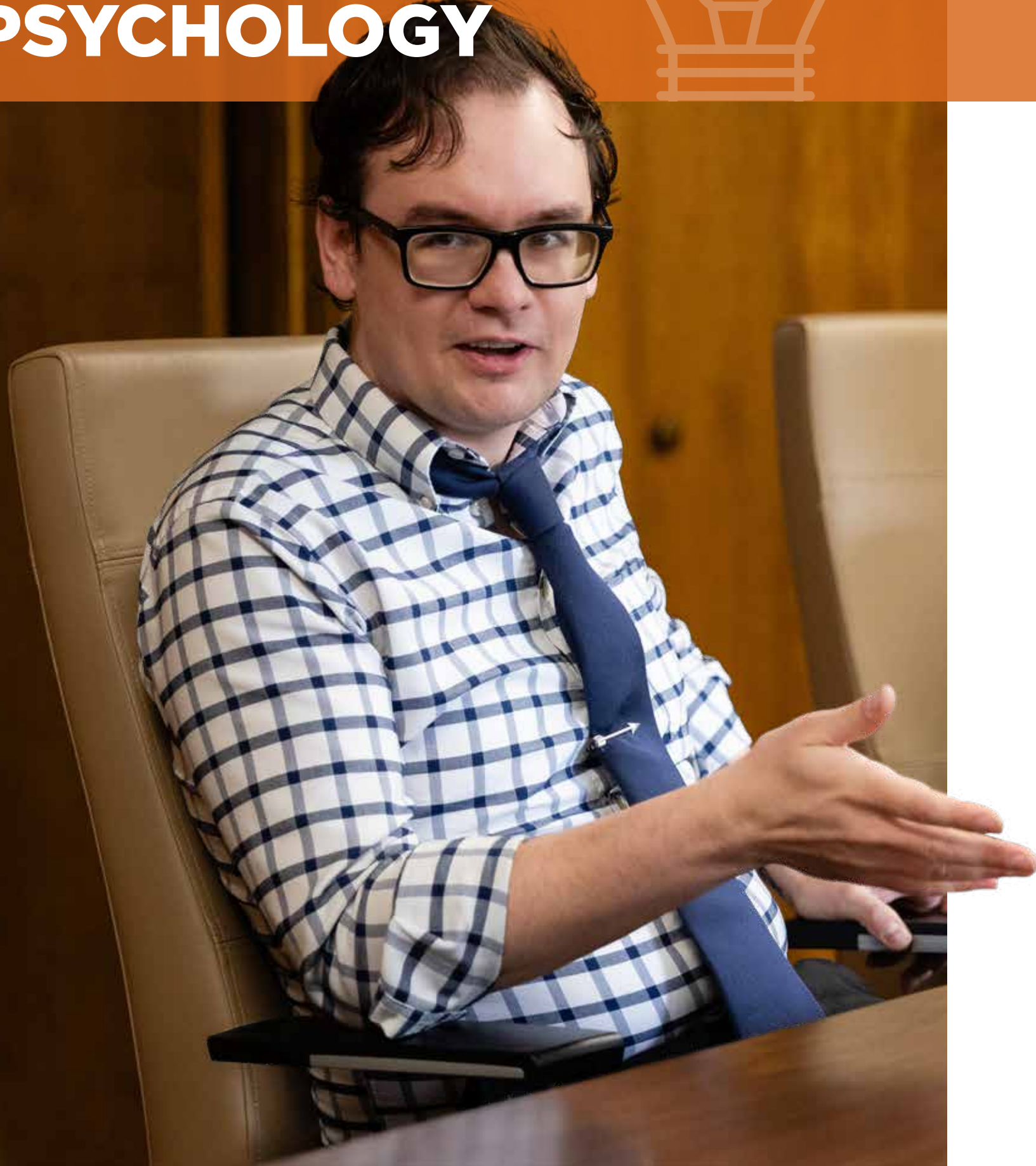
The University of Texas at Tyler received \$100,000 from education partner Risepoint to enhance scholarships and enrichment experiences for Soules College of Business students, faculty and alumni.

Funds distributed from the UT Tyler Risepoint Recognition of Excellence Fund over five years will directly support the college’s online education efforts and student research scholarships. Additionally, the partnership will establish student and faculty research awards as well as receptions for outstanding seniors and alumni.

The College collaborates with Risepoint to expand access to UT Tyler programs in business administration, human resource development and industrial management.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & PSYCHOLOGY



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. PRADEEP "MAX" DASS

The 2024-2025 academic year was busy and exciting for the College of Education and Psychology. The academic and scholarly activities involve strong community engagement and provide service to the community. We prepare future K-12 teachers through our undergraduate teacher education and provide professional enhancement through graduate degree and certificate programs. We also prepare school counselors with an undergraduate psychology degree and train our graduate counseling and psychology students. Our graduates serve and positively impact the communities they live in, mostly within the East Texas region and statewide.

The college is home to three academic disciplines: psychology, education and counseling. We offer two undergraduate degrees in psychology, one in education, seven master's degrees, two doctoral degrees and two certification programs. Psychology had the second largest enrolled undergraduate major during this past academic year.

The University Academy is a public charter K-12, STEM-focused school district with campuses in Tyler, Palestine and Longview, and serves as the college's laboratory school. Led by District Superintendent Dr. Jo Ann Simmons, each campus has its own campus director. Our centers also have been consistently engaged in research and outreach activities in such fields as literacy, STEM education, clinical neuropsychology and K-12 education.

Our faculty are continually engaged in scholarly activities, generating new knowledge and advancing disciplinary fields that have an immediate impact on students' learning. Some of their scholarly activities included research projects, journal articles, books and book chapters and presentations at local to international conferences, meetings, colloquia, seminars, webinars and workshops. Our projects have been externally funded by state and national level agencies, including the US Department of State and the THECB.

Our faculty and students are also actively and extensively engaged in the Tyler area and East Texas. Our activities included internships, clinical teaching, professional development, consulting and community research projects. These activities are conducted in collaboration with several organizations, such as area school districts, Humanities Texas, Alzheimer's Alliance of Smith County, Andrews Center and East Texas Crisis Center.

Congratulations to everyone for what we have accomplished together during this past year and for advancing our ongoing mission to serve East Texas in the areas of education, counseling and psychology. I am pleased to share the following examples of our best accomplishments below.

Dr. Pradeep Max Dass

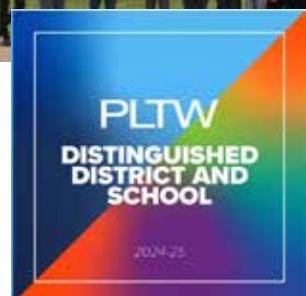
HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

UNIVERSITY ACADEMY

The University Academy had a stellar year with a number of noteworthy achievements. All three UA campuses and the district as a whole received an ‘A’ rating on state assessment and ranked within the top 1% of schools statewide in performance. The district and each campus also received an ‘A’ rating from Niche. The instructional excellence of UA teachers is reflected in the fact that 42 UA teachers received the Teacher Incentive Allotment designation from the Texas Education Agency, with accompanying funds to pay for this honor.

In addition to continuing academic excellence, as a school district, the UA has been actively involved in addressing community needs. This year the Longview student council raised over \$1,000 for Alzheimer’s research and their Turkey of the Year food drive collected a record-breaking 12,488 items for needy families in Longview. Palestine Junior Ambassadors organized a baby items drive for local organizations and the Palestine Scholars collected and delivered over 2,000 items to the UT Tyler food pantry on the main campus.

The UA was one of only 28 school districts nationwide to receive the honor of being named the Project Lead The Way Distinguished District. And, teachers Ms. Jenny Calk (UA Palestine) and Mr. Oscar Urieta (UA Tyler) were named 2024-2025 Outstanding Teachers by Project Lead The Way! They are two of only 103 teachers receiving this honor nationwide.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

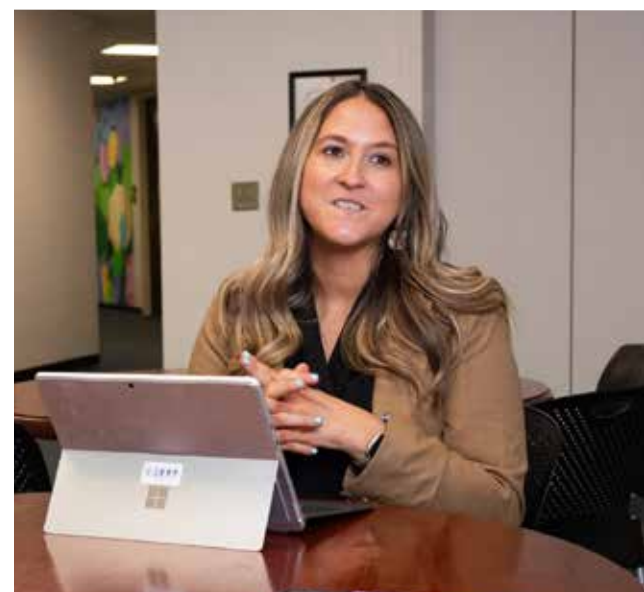
The School of Education (SOE) was laser focused this year to develop programs and pathways to address the teacher shortage issue and the need for more certified teachers. These efforts include undergraduate degree completion pathway for paraprofessionals, alternative certification pathway named GradTeach, for degree holding uncertified teachers and education pathways for high school students. To offer these pathways, the SOE is building partnerships with school districts locally as well as in the East Texas region.



Recruiting and graduating more new teachers is only half the solution to the issue of teacher shortage. The other half is retaining these teachers in the profession for the long term. The SOE launched two new efforts to help with the issue of new teacher retention: UT Tyler New Teacher Induction Program and the THRIVE New Teacher Mentorship Program, both co-led by the SOE director Dr. Staci Zolkoski and the undergraduate education program coordinator Ms. Cynthia Sherman.

The Induction Program provided support via monthly meetings to 22 pre-K through high school first year teachers, representing seven school districts and the US Park System and 14 school campuses.

The THRIVE Mentorship Program is being implemented in Tyler ISD where mentor teachers selected by Tyler ISD are being trained in the THRIVE model, which is developed at UT Austin, to mentor the new teachers assigned to them for mentorship. The goal is to start with our local school district (Tyler ISD) and then expand to other neighboring districts in the upcoming years.



PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELING

The Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology received the prestigious accreditation from the American Psychological Association (APA) and graduated three candidates during Summer 2025. The Mental Health Matters project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, continued its third year of activities with a Mental Health Matters conference held on campus in October 2024, which was attended by participants from school districts that are partners in this project as well as school districts that are members of the East Texas Center for School Based Research and Instruction.

Psychology & Counseling faculty member Ms. Kristie Allen redesigned the Mentor Center, both in structure and in programming. Using the “near-peer mentoring” approach, Ms. Allen engaged upperclassmen from Education and Psychology undergraduate majors to serve as mentors to all freshman and transfer students in both majors. This redesigned mentoring approach provided individual mentoring to students as well as a mentor speaker series on topics of general relevance to all students new to UT Tyler.

Another faculty member, Ms. Lauren Deaton, has developed a robust internship program for undergraduate psychology majors. In collaboration and partnership with a variety of organizations such as the Monarch Prep, East Texas Crisis Center, Choice Hospice, etc., the undergraduate psychology program now has a well-structured internship component in which the students can participate for up to three semesters. These internships provide valuable hands-on learning, preparing students for the careers they might pursue.

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

THE UNIVERSITY ACADEMY

The University Academy graduated 49 students this year, of which approximately 50% will be attending UT Tyler. Of this year's high school graduates, approximately 70% will be majoring in STEM fields.

UA-Palestine A+ Academics participated for the first time in a UIL District A+ Academic meet with other 1A schools, bringing home 13 first-place finishes, and 28 additional second- to sixth-place finishes.

UA UIL students won big at the District UIL competition with over 50 medals, and 30 qualifying for the Regional competition.

UA-Longview student council named a 2025 Sweepstakes Award Winning Council by Texas Association of Student Councils and recognized nationally as a 2025 National Gold Council of Excellence by the National Association of Student Councils.



PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELING

Psychology & Counseling department faculty member and assistant chair Dr. Ramona Grad co-led a summer study abroad course in Poland in collaboration with UT Tyler History faculty member Dr. Matthew Stith on the topic of Holocaust, WW II and Intergenerational Trauma. As an interdisciplinary course, it provided a transformational learning experience to 20 UT Tyler graduate and undergraduate students who participated.

Psychology & Counseling department faculty member and coordinator of the Clinical Psychology master's degree program Dr. Adam McGuire received the President's Scholarly Achievement Award.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

School of Education faculty member and coordinator of the Curriculum & Instruction M.Ed. program, Dr. Jennifer Watters received the prestigious White Fellowship for Teaching Excellence award.

\$50,000 GRANT

SOE faculty member, coordinator of the School Improvement EdD program and the UTeach Program for undergraduate science and mathematics teacher education, Dr. Michael Odell, and faculty member Dr. Teresa Kennedy, received \$50,000 grant from the US Department of State's 100K Strong in the Americas program. This grant focused on developing climate education capacity in a partnership between UT Tyler and Universidad Nacional de Comahue in Argentina.

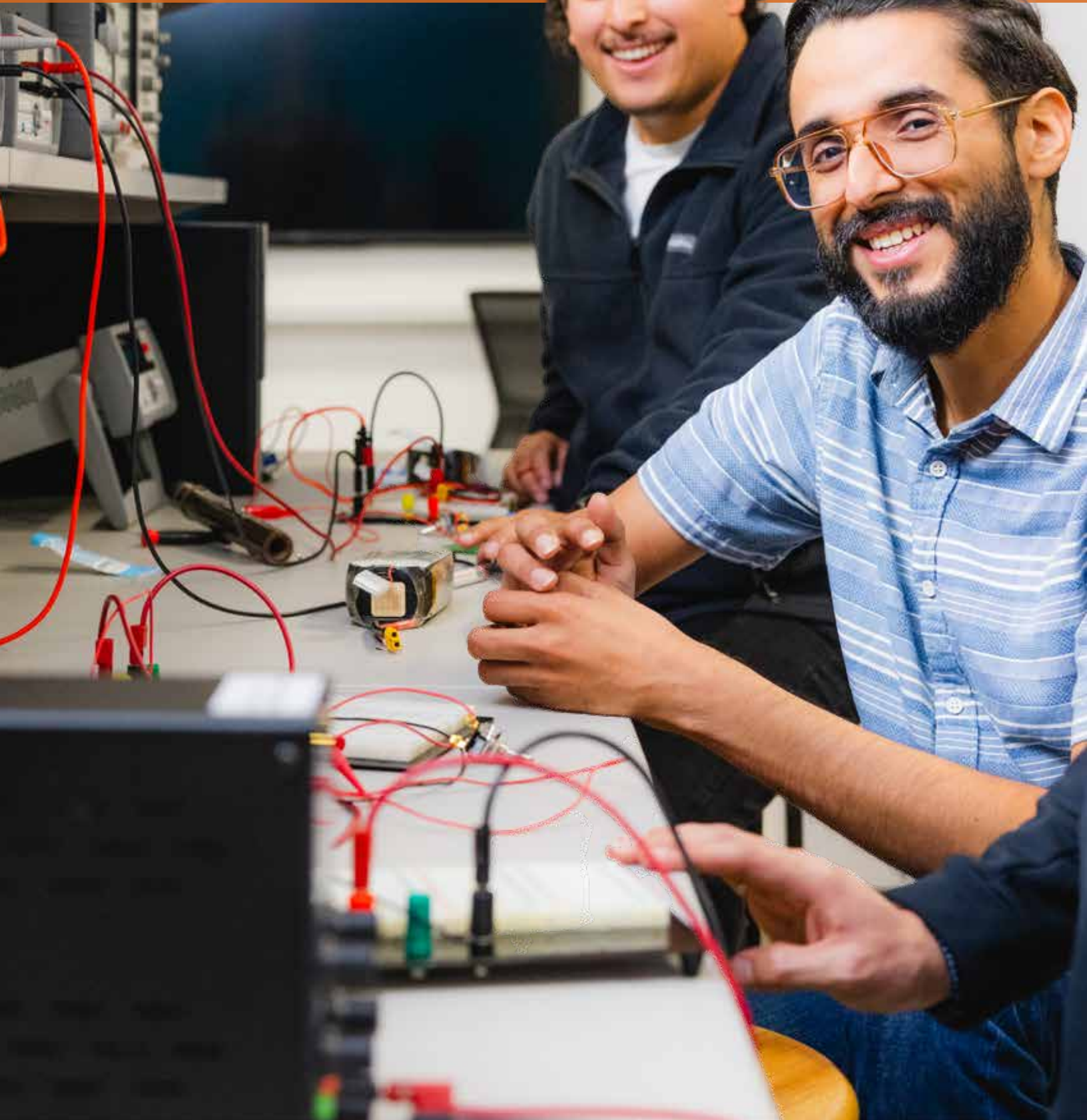
Dr. Ramona Grad co-led a summer study abroad course in Poland



UT Tyler and Universidad Nacional de Comahue in Argentina



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. JAVIER KYPUROS

The 2024–2025 academic year marked a period of continued momentum, growth and distinction for the College of Engineering at The University of Texas at Tyler. As a community of scholars, researchers and learners, we remain committed to preparing the next generation of engineers while advancing the knowledge and solutions that benefit our region and beyond.

Throughout the year, we saw evidence of the remarkable work taking place across our college. Faculty advanced research in areas ranging from biomedical devices to sustainable energy to smart farming while also playing leadership roles in national accreditation and policy conversations. Our students secured placements in highly competitive internships and research programs, continuing to distinguish themselves through academic excellence, innovation and community engagement.

At the core of our progress is a commitment to hands-on, student-centered education. Our programs continue to blend strong fundamentals with meaningful experiential learning – from first-year design through senior capstone – and we are continually evolving to meet the needs of a rapidly changing workforce. With strong ties to industry and national laboratories and research centers, our students are gaining the skills and confidence needed to thrive in diverse professional and research settings.

We are also expanding access and opportunity. Our presence at the Houston Engineering Center, our engagement with regional community colleges and our efforts to create more welcoming learning environments all reflect a shared belief that talent is everywhere, and it's our responsibility to create the pathways and opportunities that help it flourish.

Looking ahead, the College of Engineering is well positioned to support the university's broader goals. We are investing in research growth, pursuing interdisciplinary collaboration and strengthening our ability to serve as a catalyst for regional economic development. We are also focused on faculty recruitment and development, expanding high-impact learning opportunities and deepening our engagement with alumni, donors and corporate partners.

It is a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated and forward-thinking community. I remain deeply grateful for the faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters who make our progress possible. Together, we are shaping a future where engineering remains a driving force for innovation and opportunity.

Dr. Javier Kypuros

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

FIRST CAREER AWARD FOR UT TYLER

The UT Tyler College of Engineering continues to distinguish itself through its commitment to high-impact research and student-centered learning. This year, the college reached a new milestone when Dr. Alwathiqbellah Ibrahim, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, received a National Science Foundation CAREER award. His project will develop “smart” hip implants that harvest and store energy to monitor patient health, blending biomechanics, materials science, and healthcare innovation. It is the first CAREER award in the college’s history and reflects UT Tyler’s growing reputation for faculty-driven research with real-world applications.



Dr. Alwathiqbellah Ibrahim

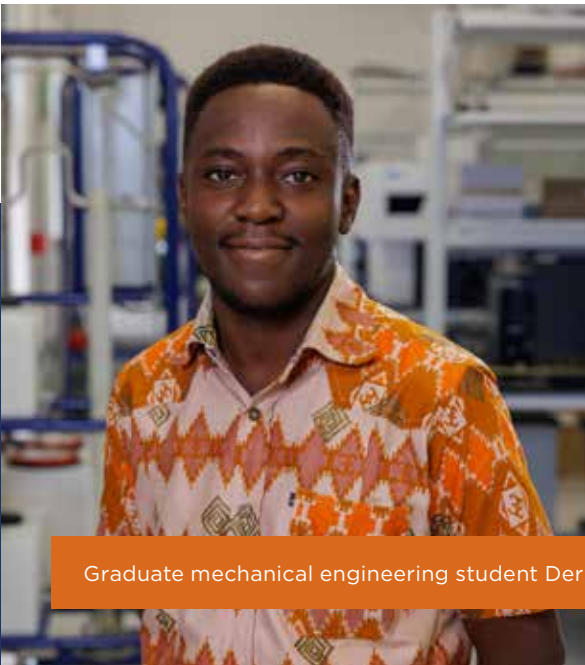


STUDENTS ACHIEVING NATIONAL DISTINCTION

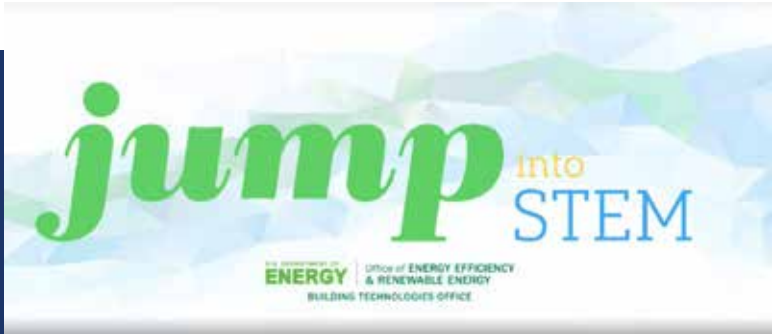
Additionally, our students are achieving national distinction. Mechanical engineering senior Mohammed Barakat was selected as a National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) scholar, earning a placement at Texas A&M University to work on machine learning applications in materials science. Graduate mechanical engineering student Derick Phanos from Ghana was one of only 10 students selected nationwide for the prestigious 2025 JUMP into STEM Building Technology Internship at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. This opportunity allows him to work with cutting-edge laser scanning equipment to analyze flat roof ponding, advancing building safety and energy efficiency, based on his success in the 2024-25 U.S. Department of Energy backed Collegiate Building Science Competition.



Mohammed Barakat
Mechanical Engineering Senior
National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) scholar



Graduate mechanical engineering student Derick Phanos



U.S. DEPARTMENT of ENERGY

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN RECOGNITION

This year also brought national recognition for our efforts in sustainable design. A team of undergraduate students advanced to the finals of the Department of Energy’s Collegiate Building Science Competition, one of only 12 teams selected nationwide. The team’s proposal focused on cost-effective energy efficiency improvements for underserved communities, underscoring our college’s commitment to both technical excellence and community impact.

ONE OF ONLY
12 TEAMS
SELECTED
NATIONWIDE

FACULTY SUPPORT

These achievements are supported by our faculty’s ongoing leadership in engineering education. Dr. Nael Barakat, chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, was appointed to the ABET Engineering Accreditation Commission, helping to guide national standards for engineering programs across the U.S. Additionally, Dr. Torey Nalbone, associate dean, was appointed as an ABET delegate and Dr. Mena Souliman, chair of the Department of Civil and Construction Engineering and Management, will serve as an ABET Civil Engineering Program Evaluator.



Dr. Nael Barakat
Chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering



Dr. Torey Nalbone
Associate Dean



Dr. Mena Souliman
Chair of the Department of Civil and Construction Engineering and Management

“Whether it’s cutting-edge medical technology, student success in federal research programs, or sustainable solutions that benefit Texas communities, the College of Engineering continues to deliver on its mission. We are proud of our progress and remain focused on providing meaningful opportunities for students, expanding our research enterprise, and preparing engineers who lead with purpose and innovation.” – Dr. Kypuros

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

TOP RANKINGS

The UT Tyler College of Engineering earned a spot in the 2025 U.S. News & World Report Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs list, ranking 62nd nationally and securing the highest position among Texas public institutions without doctoral offerings. This milestone marks our sixth consecutive year in the national top 100, up from 86th in 2024, highlighting our sustained growth and commitment to high-quality undergraduate engineering education in East Texas.



INSPIRING

After surviving cancer, UT Tyler mechanical engineering student Emily Gonzalez found a new calling: biomedical imaging research. Working alongside Dr. Tasin Khajah of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Gonzalez contributes to a cutting-edge NIH-funded project aimed at making ultrasound imaging faster, safer and more affordable. Her experience seamlessly blends personal meaning with professional growth, strengthening her technical skills while shaping her future in biomedical innovation. Inspired by her journey and the possibilities of noninvasive diagnostics, Gonzalez hopes to improve lives through engineering. Her story exemplifies how resilience, opportunity and mentorship can transform adversity into a purposeful endeavor. She plans to graduate in May 2027 with a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering.

DESIGN OF A LUNAR ROVER

Junior mechanical engineering student Tanjina Islam, studying at UT Tyler’s Houston Engineering Center, was selected for the competitive NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) program in November 2024. Working with a team on NCAS Missions to “Discover” and “Explore,”

she helped design a lunar rover aimed at studying the effects of radiation and partial gravity on microorganisms. Islam says the experience underscored the importance of teamwork, time management and networking with NASA engineers. As a hands-on learning opportunity, it highlights both her personal drive and the college’s dedication to preparing students for real-world STEM careers.

THANK YOU

Dr. Ken Gibbs, retired engineer and benefactor of the College of Engineering, **committed \$100,000 as a founding gift to establish the College of Engineering Student Enrichment Fund.** The College of Engineering Student Enrichment Fund will be used to support student enrichment experiences, including capstone projects, completions sponsored by professional societies (e.g., Concrete Canoe, Chem-E Car, SAE Formula E and IEEE Robotics) and undergraduate research. These are co-curricular activities that enhance mastery of critical marketable skills and student learning outcomes. They are proven high-impact practices that have been shown to foster student success, persistence and well-being. This endowment will facilitate the College’s goal to provide every graduate with multiple student enrichment experiences.



Dr. Ken Gibbs and Mrs. Claire Gibbs

UT TYLER ROSE SCHOLARS

Two civil engineering students were honored as 2024–2025 UT Tyler Rose Scholars. Senior Ralph Mangondoza from Tyler and junior Madyson Tate from Gilmer each earned full scholarships covering tuition, books and fees, recognizing their leadership, collegiality and Patriot pride. Rose Scholars serve as ambassadors at Rose Festival community events throughout the year. Their selection highlighted not only their personal achievements but also the College’s dedication to fostering high-caliber talent and supporting future engineering leaders. Ralph graduated in May 2025; Madyson will complete her civil engineering degree in May 2026, equipped to make a strong impact in East Texas and beyond.



Madyson Tate



Ralph Mangondoza



RATLIFF RELAYS

The College of Engineering hosted its third annual Ratliff Relays in fall 2024, bringing together students, faculty and staff for a day of spirited competition and community building. Named in honor of former Lt Gov Bill Ratliff, the event featured hands-on engineering challenges, relay races and team-building activities designed to celebrate innovation, collaboration and school pride. The tradition continues to grow each year, fostering a strong sense of belonging within the college and encouraging students to connect across disciplines. The Ratliff Relays exemplify the college’s commitment to an engaging and student-centered experience beyond the classroom.



SCHOOL OF NURSING



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. BARBARA HAAS

The 2024-25 academic year for the School of Nursing was a whirlwind of activities, growth and celebration. With 110 full-time faculty and 31 full-time staff, and an enrollment of 2,585 students, the School of Nursing now comprises 25% of the university's student population. Programs are currently offered in three locations (Tyler, Longview and Palestine) and are held in face-to-face and online environments. New programs launching in fall 2025 will expand nursing to the UT Health North campus as well.

Undergraduate students enroll in one of three baccalaureate tracks: the accelerated BSN, a RN-BSN completion track, or the concurrent associate degree (ADN)-BSN track. Graduate students pursuing a master's degree in nursing specialize in one of five areas: administration; education; informatics, quality and safety; family nurse practitioner; or psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner. Certificates are also available within each of these specialties. Two doctoral programs offer students the option to pursue a clinically-focused Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or a research-focused Ph.D. in nursing. The first doctoral-level certificate at the university, adult-geriatric acute care nurse practitioner (AGACNP), began in fall 2024.

A third doctorate, the DNP-Nurse Anesthesia was accredited in summer 2025. The first class of future nurse anesthetists will begin in fall 2025.

The creation of a critical care transport certificate to be started in fall 2025 is very exciting. This program is the second of its kind in the country and will prepare nurses and paramedics to care for critically ill patients during helicopter and ambulance transport.

The SON had significant growth in research activity this past year. A new data analytics lab on the north campus contributed to the growth and will be expanded with a second lab on the main campus when the new building is completed in summer 2025.

It was exciting to watch the new addition to the School of Nursing come to fruition. Phase One was completed in summer 2024, allowing the advising center, student commons and the simulation center to open for students in fall 2024. Phase two will be completed in summer 2025, just in time for our 50th anniversary of the SON celebration!

Malcolm X is quoted as saying, "The future belongs to those who prepare for it today." At the School of Nursing, we are committed to preparing today for the nursing leaders needed for the future. We continue to innovate, build and reinvent our School, all while staying true to our mission to "empower students, faculty and staff to excel as leaders, scholars and nurse clinicians, in a caring, person-centered, strengths-based environment."

Dr. Barbara Haas

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES



50 Years of INSPIRING CARE

THE SCHOOL OF NURSING IS 50 YEARS OLD!

The SON kicked off a yearlong celebration of “50 Years of Inspiring Care” in January 2025. Harkening back to 1975, the kick-off event was a 70’s themed disco party, complete with music, costumes and food from the decade.

Throughout 2025, we are highlighting alumni and their contributions to healthcare and our communities. UT Tyler SON alumni are at the patient’s bedside and in remote areas serving in missions. They are in classrooms and boardrooms, conducting research and advocating at national and state level legislatures. They are entrepreneurs and business owners. Our alumni are everywhere!

The SON is also focusing on 50 ways of caring, in which we acknowledge the volunteer and service efforts of SON faculty, staff and students in our community. For example, the SON served as a major sponsor to support organizations and events such as the Walk to End Alzheimer’s, Tyler Run for Autism and Paint Palestine Pink.





BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

A soft grand opening was held in fall 2024 to celebrate the partial opening of the new SON addition and remodel. Phase one of the project included an advising center, a student commons and a state-of-the art simulation hospital and skills labs. One of the simulators is so advanced, we were the second program globally to have the technology (the first was in Norway)! Students and faculty love the new space, and we are all looking forward to completion of Phase two in summer 2025.



A NEW AND INNOVATIVE BSN CURRICULUM

After a year of planning, the BSN program introduced a new curriculum for students entering the university in fall 2024. The new curriculum, focused on preparing nurses for the future, is innovative in several ways. Rather than waiting to be admitted as juniors, which is standard for nursing programs nationwide, students are now admitted directly to the nursing program as freshmen and begin taking classes their first year. Two classes in the sophomore year take an innovative approach to teaching pharmacology, pathophysiology and health assessment. Rather than three individual courses, the content is integrated into courses across two semesters, helping provide context for learning difficult concepts. By moving these required courses to the first two years, faculty were able to add three elective courses to upper-division coursework. Students have the option to focus on a particular pathway, such as critical care or maternal-child health or they can sample a specialty course from several different areas. This unique aspect of the curriculum is preparing students to stand out among peers in the job market.



PREPARING NURSES FOR THE FUTURE



MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS



WE EXCEL

The SON had a 33% increase in the number of graduate students this past year! Growth does not come at the expense of quality. First-time pass rate on certification exams for Family Nurse Practitioner (96%) and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (100%) far exceeded the 83% national average and 96% of BSN graduates passed the initial RN licensure exam, well above the 90% national average. Our faculty’s commitment to high educational standards is evident in their participation in the Association of College and University Educators Effective Teaching Practices Certification.



WE EXPLORE

Students engaged in trips to India and Guatemala this past year, where they immersed themselves in new cultures, learning about nursing in other countries and serving patients in missions.



WE ADVOCATE

BSN students spent several days learning about serving as advocates at the AACN Student Policy Summit in Washington prior to visiting with representatives on Capitol Hill. Closer to home, faculty and students attended Nurses Day at the Capitol in Austin to meet with state representatives and discuss issues related to nursing and healthcare.



WE SERVE

Several faculty members serve in leadership positions on local, state and national boards, including Texas Nurse Practitioners, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty, Neurodivergent Board, Alzheimer’s Association, Texas Organization of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nurse Educators and the UT System Nursing Collaborative.



WE INVESTIGATE

Faculty and students are heavily involved in research and scholarship that makes a difference to East Texas. Significant program grants from the Department of Education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board support several initiatives that will occur in the new nursing building. Foundation and Department of Justice grants support research that addresses mental health among young people and the healthcare needs of marginalized members of society, including the homeless and addicts.



WE CELEBRATE!

In addition to the 50th anniversary celebrations, the SON had numerous opportunities to celebrate nurses and the profession.

Each semester, BSN students are honored during a white coat ceremony to mark the beginning of their clinical experiences and graduating BSN students are welcomed to the profession during a pinning ceremony. Graduate and doctoral students are celebrated during a reception the evening prior to graduation.



*Nurses
&
The Profession*



NURSES WALK

The inaugural Nurses Walk honoring the nurses of East Texas was sponsored by the SON and held on campus during Nurses Week with 500 nurses from different agencies and specialties participating.

**500
NURSES**
FROM DIFFERENT
AGENCIES AND
SPECIALTIES
PARTICIPATING



**FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S
BIRTHDAY**

A party was held on the final day of Nurses Week, coinciding with Florence Nightingale's birthday, who made a special appearance! She was joined by Congressman Nathaniel Moran who gave an inspiring talk to students about the impact of nursing on our community.



*"The future's so bright,
we gotta wear shades"*

WE PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Each spring, the SON faculty and staff gather to review the year, engage in professional development and plan for the future. This year's theme was especially apropos: "The future's so bright, we gotta wear shades"! Indeed, it is!

Ben & Maytee Fisch

COLLEGE OF
PHARMACY



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. PAMELLA OCHOA

The 2024-2025 academic year at the Ben and Maytee Fisch College of Pharmacy (FCOP) was distinguished by significant achievements in academic excellence, student success, research and community engagement.

Academically, the FCOP ranked first in Texas among nine pharmacy programs for its 88.9% first-time pass rate on the Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination (MPJE) for the Class of 2024 — well above the national average of 76% across 121 schools of pharmacy. The college also achieved an 80% first-time pass rate on the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) — the third highest in Texas. For two consecutive years, the FCOP has exceeded the national average on both the MPJE and the NAPLEX. In addition, the FCOP celebrated a 100% residency match rate in 2024, the highest in Texas and nationally.

Enrollment at the FCOP continues to trend upward, with enrollment growth for the third consecutive year, reflecting the college's momentum and reputation for student success.

The FCOP's impact extends beyond the classroom. The college hosted its 7th annual pARTnership exhibition through Art Connection via Valerosa, LLC – blending art, education and community collaboration. In experiential education, the college partners with over 1,000 pharmacists and 450 training sites, providing nearly 44,500 experiential hours for pharmacy students in the past year alone.

In Fall 2024, the FCOP launched Wellness Wednesdays, a health initiative reaching 657 faculty, staff and students across the university through interactive education and wellness-based events offered by pharmacist faculty and pharmacy students.

In March 2025, the FCOP hosted the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) for a comprehensive accreditation site visit. In June 2025, the FCOP received continued accreditation with compliance across all standards which is a strong endorsement of the college's strategic direction and sustained academic strength.

Research and pharmacy practice at the FCOP continues to flourish. To date, the college has secured seven external grants totaling over \$2.1 million within the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes. In the Department of Clinical Sciences, faculty contributed more than 9,500 hours towards direct student training at their respective practice sites, demonstrating a strong commitment to experiential learning and student professional success.

In July 2025, following a national search, I was honored to be selected as the Dean of the Fisch College of Pharmacy. It is a privilege to lead and help shape the future of the FCOP, united by a shared commitment to student success and advancing health in East Texas and beyond.

Dr. Pamela Ochoa

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

STUDENT PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Pharmacy students at the FCOP actively engage in professional organizations as part of their ongoing professional development. Participation in national, state and regional organizations fosters meaningful opportunities for students to grow as leaders, advocates and practitioners.

LEADERSHIP ROLES

Students hold leadership roles in national organizations such as the Student National Pharmacy Association SNPhA, Student Society of Health-System Pharmacy (SSHP) and Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International (CPFI). Many are also members of pharmacy fraternities such as Phi Delta Chi (PDC), which emphasizes service, leadership and scholarship, and Rho Chi, which recognizes academic excellence and intellectual leadership. Additionally, many students are actively involved in the Texas Pharmacy Association-Academy of Student Pharmacists (TPA-ASP), fostering advocacy and elevation of the pharmacy profession.



SNPhA

In November 2024, the SNPhA chapter received national recognition for their Fighting Diabetes Initiative. President Aiga Ale and Patient Liaison Jessica Ramos earned honorable mentions in the Clinical Skills Competition at the SNPhA Region 3, 4 and 5 Conference.



The chapter will be honored at the 2025 national conference in August with the following distinctions:

- Chapter President of the Year: Top 5 Finalist
- Chauncey I. Cooper Excellence Award: Top 5 Finalist (Medium-Sized Chapters)
- Ranked #3 nationally among medium-sized chapters for Chauncey I. Cooper points

STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES HAD A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

COMPETITION

Fourth-year pharmacy students Mikkie Stout and Alanna Kology represented the FCOP at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacy Clinical Skills Competition Semi-Finals in New Orleans in December, showcasing excellence in patient care. Additionally, students Jordan Chapin, Ashitha Saji and Aysha Ehsan advanced to the third round of the 2025 American College of Clinical Pharmacy Research Challenge.



“MOTIVATION MONDAYS”

The FCOP student chapter of CPFI hosted “Motivation Mondays” to promote student well-being and served the Tyler community by distributing care packages at Interprofessional Clinic Under the Bridge (iCLUB), an initiative founded by Dr. Takova Wallace-Gay. This interprofessional program includes pharmacy, medical, nursing, psychology and dental students and provides healthcare services to underserved and unhoused individuals in East Texas.



TPA-ASP

In November, TPA-ASP partnered with the Tyler Police Department to support the DEA Drug Take Back Day, collecting unused medications for proper disposal. They also promoted tobacco cessation through the Peers Against Tobacco: Catch and Quit initiative and competed in statewide Self-Care and Patient Counseling competitions. At the July 2025 TPA Conference, three FCOP students were awarded scholarships for their accomplishments and **P3 student, Jordan Chapin, placed third in the TPA Patient Counseling Competition.**



WE ARE SO PROUD OF OUR STUDENTS FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE PROFESSION, THEIR LEADERSHIP IN SERVICE AND THEIR LASTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

ADVANCING RESEARCH,
SCHOLARSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Research at the FCOP continues to grow in scale, impact and recognition. Faculty were awarded over \$1.4 million in NIH funding, advancing science in key areas that affect healthcare:

- **Dr. Santosh Aryal** and **Dr. Farah Deba** received \$441,000 to support research that advances nanotechnology with immune cell biology.
- **Dr. Ayman Hamouda** secured \$974,090 subaward as part of a collaborative R1 grant, focusing on the development of new compounds to target the brain’s nicotine receptors to advance nicotine addiction research.

To further support recruitment and retention of researchers, UT System STARS funding, matched locally, continues to invest in faculty research initiatives. In 2025, Drs. Chowdhury Abdullah and May Abdelaziz were each awarded \$300,000 to advance their research.

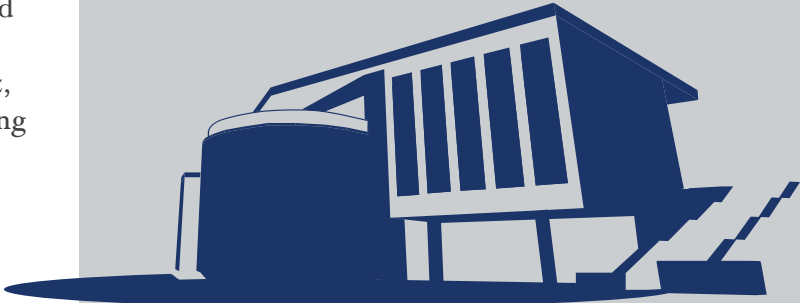
Faculty across the FCOP are also engaged in collaborative, student-centered projects. For example, Drs. Pamela Ochoa and Osama Shoair lead three international research initiatives focused on well-being in experiential education, involving 26 colleges of pharmacy and 36 pharmacists. In other efforts to support community health, Drs. Frank Yu, Amy Schwartz, and Julie Feimster received a National Association of Chain Drug Stores grant to investigate and screen for mental health challenges among men in East Texas.

The FCOP Office of Experiential Education continued its commitment to training excellence by hosting a Preceptor Conference in March 2025. The conference offered six hours of CE-accredited programming for FCOP alumni and preceptors, with engaging sessions led by Drs. Erika Gutierrez, Pamela Ochoa and Michelle Beall – demonstrating the college’s investment in lifelong learning and professional development.

FACULTY CONTRIBUTIONS
TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
CONTINUE TO BRING
RECOGNITION TO THE FCOP

- **Dr. Pamela Ochoa** was elected chair of the Experiential Education Section of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) for 2025-2026.
- **Dr. Young Lee** served as president of the East Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacy.
- **Dr. May Abdelaziz** was invited to serve on the NIH Review Panel in March.
- **Dr. Joe Glavy** serves as the co-chair for the Science Communication, Outreach and Public Engagement Committee for the American Society for Cell Biology and was appointed to the Coalition for Trust in Health and Science as well as the Professional Development Task Force.
- **Dr. Shelby Go** earned a Pharmacotherapy Specialty Certification (BCPS), reflecting continued excellence in clinical training.
- **Dr. Amy Schwartz** presented on student NAPLEX preparation strategies at the AACP Annual Meeting in July.

From valuable discoveries to national leadership, FCOP faculty are shaping the future of pharmacy through research, education and service, making lasting impact across the region and nation.



MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

In Fall 2024, students were welcomed back to the FCOP with new artwork displayed throughout the halls of W.T. Brookshire Hall. This year's pARTnership exhibition included pieces by local artists with backgrounds in health care. In March 2025, community members, faculty, staff and students gathered for the pARTnership event to appreciate the art and connect with each other and the artists, fostering a sense of creativity, collaboration, and shared experience.

As part of Homecoming Week festivities, the FCOP hosted a fireworks and drone show viewing from the C.J. Wrenn Terrace. Overlooking Lake Harvey, attendees enjoyed the beautiful evening under the lights while celebrating Patriot spirit and community.

The FCOP was also honored to welcome the Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce Medical Committee for a campus visit. Dr. Pamella Ochoa provided an overview of the pharmacy profession and the FCOP academic program, followed by a guided tour of the W.T. Brookshire Hall.

The FCOP established partnerships with eight colleges and universities throughout East Texas for the Early Assurance Program (EAP). The EAP strengthens the pipeline to the Doctor of Pharmacy program, by engaging students at these universities and colleges with the FCOP. By providing workshops on applying for pharmacy school, mentorship and professional development opportunities, the FCOP aims to foster future pharmacists to serve the region. The partnering institutions include Tyler Junior College, East Texas Baptist University, Panola College, Sam Houston State University, Stephen F. Austin State University, Trinity Valley Community College, Texas State Technical College, Northwestern State University and UT Tyler.



WHITE COAT CEREMONY

In September 2025, the FCOP celebrated the White Coat Ceremony for the Class of 2028, a class of 42 students. Dr. RoxAnn Dominguez, Texas Pharmacy Association Chief Executive Officer, served as the keynote speaker. Jordan Chapin, a second-year pharmacy student, served as the class representative and guest speaker. During the ceremony, students recited the Pledge of Professionalism and donned their white coats, symbolizing their commitment to patient-centered care. Dr. Becky Barr, a Fisch College of Pharmacy Preceptor of the Year and Director of Pharmacy at CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Rehabilitation Hospital, led students in reciting the pledge.



PHARMACY DAY AT THE CAPITOL

The FCOP was well-represented at the 2025 Pharmacy Day at the Capitol. Through their involvement in the Texas Pharmacist Association (TPA), student pharmacists shared helpful information and answered questions about the pharmacy profession. Students were joined by hundreds of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other student pharmacists from programs throughout Texas. Students were accompanied by Dr. Michelle Beall, faculty advisor for the FCOP chapter of TPA, who taught important information on how laws are developed and the value of advocacy in health care advancements.



SOUTHERN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING CONFERENCE

The FCOP is proud to host the 41st Southern Biomedical Engineering Conference, taking place September 11-14, 2025. This conference will showcase innovative international research through podium and poster presentations, featuring contributions from faculty, students and global scholars. Dr. Santosh Aryal, associate professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Health Outcomes at the FCOP, is serving as the Program Chair, alongside Dr. H. Benghuzzi of the Mississippi Academy of Sciences, who will serve as the conference co-chair.

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. THERESA BYRD

I am happy to provide an overview of the School of Health Professions. We currently have three departments within the school and across the two campuses in Tyler. These are: Kinesiology, Rehabilitation Sciences and Population Health Leadership and Analytics.

Our new Master of Speech Language Pathology program begins this fall and our clinics are up and running. We are so excited to have the new SLP faculty and clinical staff, and we look forward to serving the Northeast Texas region! Our Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program has grown quickly and we are anticipating a Doctorate in OT very soon. Our MHA and MPH programs continue to grow and both are anticipating being fully accredited by their respective boards in 2027. Kinesiology is a popular program for both undergraduate and graduate students and the faculty and chair are working on new concentrations in their program. We are planning for a Physical Therapy program in the future and have a consultant on board to help us through that process.

Our Family-Nurse Partnerships home visiting program continues to serve moms and babies in our region and has expanded to Cherokee County in addition to Henderson and Smith counties. We are very proud of the work they do to develop healthy moms and babies and to provide physical assessments, counseling and education. In addition, our Kinesiology department continues to provide services for community members through Kourage Health. And, our Rehabilitation Sciences faculty provide education for our students, as well as staff working in assisted living facilities using dementia simulation training. This allows caretakers to better understand the needs of people with dementia.

Our faculty, staff and students are working together to make our school more integrated and community focused, and we look forward to what we will do in the future.

Like all good that is the result of higher education, the following summary of the past year was a concerted effort of department chairs, faculty and staff.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Theresa Byrd

DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EVENTS

Fitness and Nutrition Expo

On April 10, 2025, the Department of Kinesiology sponsored the annual Fitness and Nutrition Expo, held in the University Center. This event brought together a variety of local organizations and businesses to share information on health, wellness, exercise and nutrition with the campus community.

Students in the department played a key role by:

- Conducting fitness assessments
- Providing nutritional guidance
- Presenting infographics on topics such as healthy aging and physical wellness

ACSM Spring 2025 Lecture Tour

Later in April, the department hosted the Texas Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Spring 2025 Lecture Tour, featuring Dr. Hirofumi Tanaka, professor of Kinesiology and Health Education at UT Austin. Dr. Tanaka presented a seminar titled: “Master Athletes: Superhumans with Grey Hair”, which drew interest from students and faculty alike.

COMMUNITY-BASED CLINICAL PARTNERSHIP

The department continues its collaboration with Kourage Health, a local nonprofit serving individuals with chronic illness.

Under the supervision of Lecturer Ashley Dalby, Kinesiology student interns provided:

- Individualized exercise prescriptions
- Supervised exercise sessions

In 2025, the UT Tyler Kourage Health facility served 24 active participants, giving students hands-on experience in clinical fitness applications.

FACULTY RESEARCH & GRANTS

Biomechanics and Fall Risk Research

- Dr. Woohyoung Jeon (PI) and Ashley Dalby (Co-PI) were awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Myositis Support and Understanding Association for the study Biomechanical and Neuromuscular Balance Control and Fall Risk in Older Adults with Inclusion Body Myositis (IBM). This funding supports the collection of pilot data for future federal grant proposals in this important area of geriatric health and biomechanics.

Vascular Health Study

- Dr. Arturo Arce-Esquivel, in partnership with faculty from the School of Nursing, received a \$25,000 gift from the Whiteside Foundation to support research on The Effect of Passive Elevation on Vascular Function and Health Outcomes.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Joyce Ballard

In January 2025, the department mourned the loss of Dr. Joyce Ballard, Emeritus Professor of Kinesiology. Dr. Ballard’s impactful career and dedication to the field were honored by her family, who established the Dr. Joyce Ballard Memorial Kinesiology Scholarship.

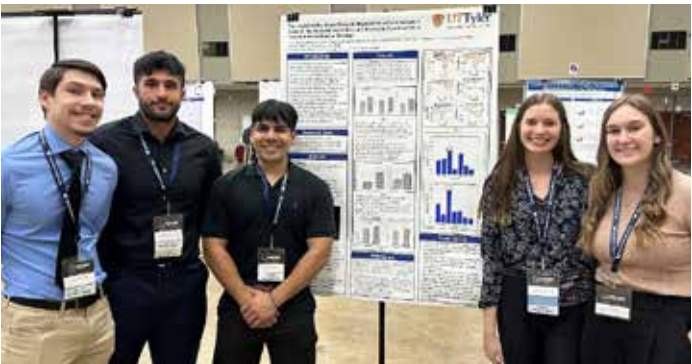
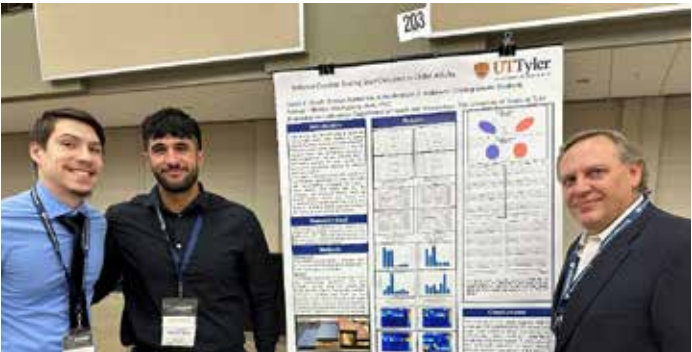
Endowed in her memory by her family from Saranac, Michigan, this scholarship will support future generations of Kinesiology students.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS & CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Texas ACSM Conference – Waco, TX (February 20–21, 2025)

Seven undergraduate Kinesiology students represented UT Tyler at the annual Texas ACSM Conference. Highlights include:

- Two undergraduate students presented research posters
- Participation in the TACSM Student Bowl
- Senior student Amirhossein Sanaei Ardakani named UT Tyler TACSM Major of the Year



SENIOR STUDENT AMIRHOSSEIN SANAEI ARDAKANI NAMED UT TYLER TACSM MAJOR OF THE YEAR

SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ALUMNI SUCCESSES

Andrea Grzybowski, MS Health Sciences Graduate was co-author of two 2025 peer-reviewed studies:



Shaw et al. (2025)

Prevalence and Early Identification of Autism Spectrum Disorder Among Children Aged 4 and 8 Years - Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, 16 Sites, United States, 2022

Published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Surveillance Summaries



Nazari et al. (2025)

Large-scale Examination of Early-age Sex Differences in Neurotypical Toddlers and Those with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Other Developmental Conditions

Published in Nature Human Behaviour

DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION HEALTH LEADERSHIP AND ANALYTICS

DEPARTMENT FORMATION AND STRUCTURE

In January 2025, the Department of Population Health Leadership and Analytics (PHLA) was formed through the merger of the Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Policy, Economics and Management. This newly unified department oversees the following programs:

Graduate Programs

- Master of Public Health (MPH) in Rural Population Health
- Master of Health Administration (MHA)
- Master of Science in Health Sciences (MSHS – currently in teach-out)

Undergraduate Programs

- Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS)
- Two BAAS specializations:
 - > Health Care Management
 - > Health Occupations

LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

- Dr. Gilbert Ramirez, DrPH: Chair, PHLA; Associate Dean for Operations and Assessment
- Dr. Kimberly Elliott, Ph.D.: Associate Chair (HSC Campus)
- Dr. Hosik Min, Ph.D.: Assistant Chair (Academic Campus)

PROGRAMMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

New Graduate Certificate Programs

- Essentials of Health Insurance and Reimbursement
- Population Healthcare Risk and Value Management

Accreditation Activities

- MPH Program: Accreditation self-study underway with the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
- MHA Program: Accreditation self-study underway with the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME)

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Faculty Retirements

- Kit Covington
- Mike Kennedy
- Thom Maryon
- John Sloan
- Agatha Borne (also served as assistant dean)

New Faculty Appointments

- Dr. Gilbert Ramirez
- Dr. Hosik Min
- Dr. Edward (James) Dotherow

Staff Transitions

- Retirement: Kit Covington
- New Hire: Heather Powell

Faculty Searches

- Two ongoing faculty searches:
- HSC Campus
 - Academic Campus

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Publications

- 2024: 15 publications
- 2025: 8 publications, including three book chapters and five peer-reviewed articles

Individual Highlights

- Dr. Byrd: Completed the second Public Health Informatics (Get PHIT) Bootcamp on May 23
- Dr. Elliott: Awarded the Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship for community engagement (\$8,500)
- Dr. Ramirez:
 - > Pursuing an MA in Religious Studies from Florida International University
 - > Developing graduate and undergraduate courses on Religion and Health
 - > Leading two research projects involving undergraduate students

STUDENT SUCCESSES

- All eight MSHS students who took the comprehensive exam this semester passed.
- Samina Khan successfully defended her MSHS thesis.
- PHLA student presenters at SoM Research Day:
 - > Narisha Habib
 - > Kayla Hopper
 - > Miranda Guerriero
 - > Fariba Yadanpanah (also delivered an oral presentation)
 - > Rebecca Brovina (Health Sciences): Named one of the Top 100 DFW Nurses



PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SCIENCES

HIGHLIGHTS – 2025

Program Growth and Leadership Transitions

The Department of Rehabilitation Sciences has experienced significant growth and structural development throughout 2025, particularly in the Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) programs.



WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT FACULTY SUPERVISING ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Leadership Updates

- Dr. Amy Louise Schwarz was appointed program director and will oversee the launch of the new graduate SLP program in Fall 2025.
- Dr. Tina Melamed, who served as interim program director, led key curriculum updates for both undergraduate and graduate programs in close collaboration with campus deans and the department chair.
- Courtney Vinson, clinical coordinator and speech-language pathologist, hired two expert clinical educators and ensured the seamless operation of clinic services for the East Texas community.
- Dr. Andrea Gohmert, audiologist, is actively developing audiology services at the Health Science Center with a focus on pediatric hearing loss. She is working closely with regional partners to expand service availability across East Texas.

These strategic leadership efforts have positioned the department to support both academic excellence and community healthcare impact in speech and hearing services.

MASTER OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (MOT) PROGRAM MILESTONES

The MOT program achieved multiple advancements in 2025:

Faculty Expansion & Specialization

- The program hired new full-time and adjunct faculty, bringing expertise in neonatal care and neurorehabilitation to the curriculum.

Enrollment Growth

Enrollment has doubled for Fall 2025:

- 20 entry-level pathway students (maximum capacity met)
- 24 bridge pathway students
- This marks the largest cohort in program history

Program Innovation

- In collaboration with Dr. Lou Ann Berman and Dean Byrd, the program is developing a post-professional doctoral option for practicing occupational therapists, with many future enrollees expected to be program alumni.
- A shortened program structure and revised curriculum will be implemented in Fall 2025, reducing both the time to degree and tuition costs for students.

Program Reputation & Success

The Bridge Pathway, the only program of its kind in Texas and among a handful nationwide, continues to attract students from across Texas and out of state.

- The NBCOT board exam pass rate remains strong at 97–100%, with graduates consistently securing employment without delay.

CLINICAL PRACTICE AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION

Faculty within the department continue to maintain active clinical practice in their respective fields. This ongoing clinical engagement:

- Keeps faculty connected to evolving trends in patient care
- Enhances their teaching with real-world relevance
- Strengthens mentorship and relatability with students

This practice-based model is highly encouraged within the department and contributes to producing graduates who are well prepared for clinical careers in rehabilitation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FUTURE GROWTH

Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) Planning

- The department is working with a consulting physical therapist to begin planning for the development of a future Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

Upcoming Hires

To meet the department’s growing academic and administrative needs, plans are underway to hire:

- 1-2 new full-time faculty members
- A graduate program manager

These additions will support both program expansion and the student experience, helping to solidify the department’s long-term goals.

VISION FORWARD

With new leadership, program innovation and continued commitment to excellence in both education and clinical practice, the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences is positioned to:

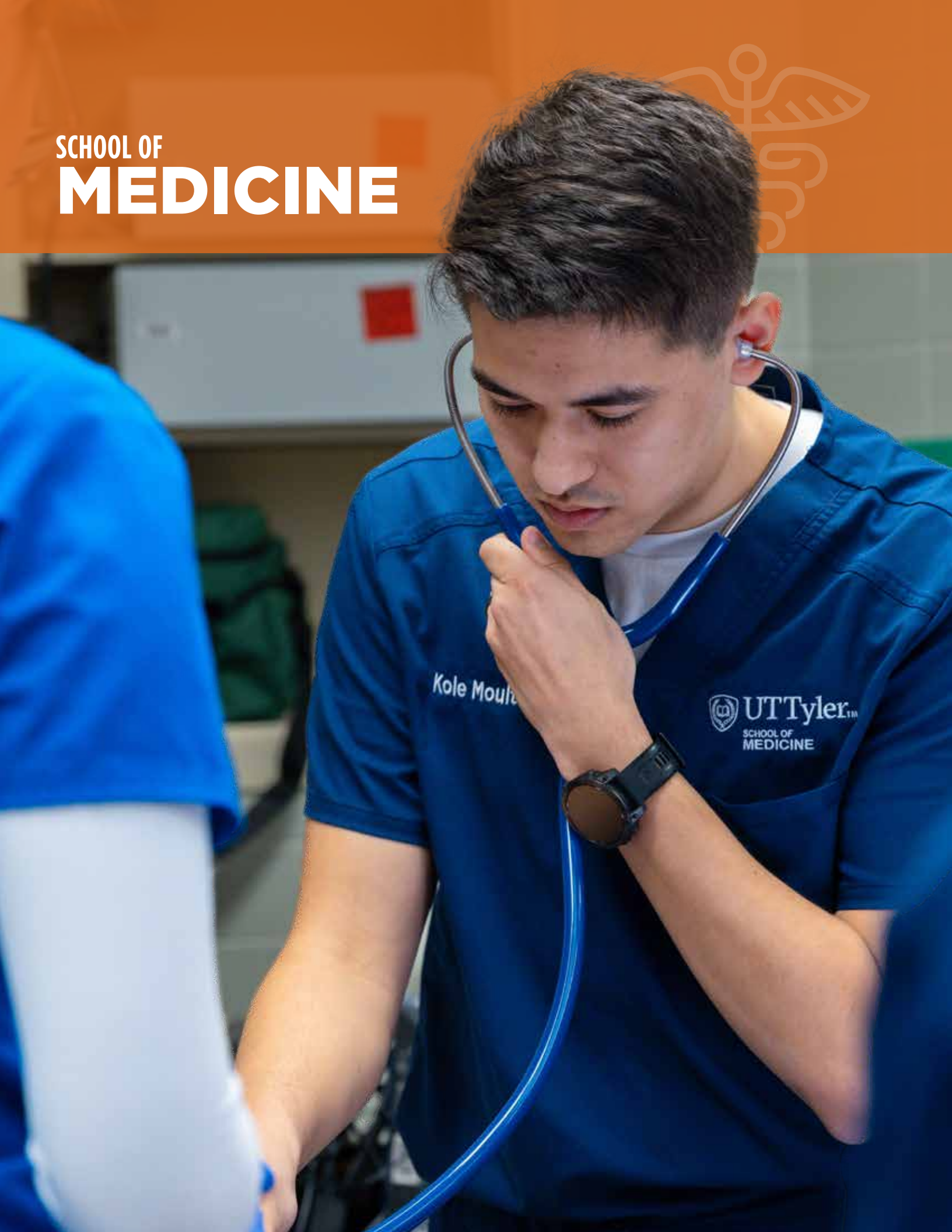
ADVANCE
academic opportunities in
rehabilitation disciplines

EXPAND
access to care in
East Texas

GRADUATE
career-ready professionals
prepared to make a
meaningful impact

We remain dedicated to training the next generation of rehabilitation science professionals who will thrive in healthcare, education and beyond.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

DR. SUE COX

The 2024-25 academic year was a defining chapter for the UT Tyler School of Medicine — one marked by firsts, by milestones and by meaningful momentum. Since our establishment in 2022, we've continued to expand our clinical reach, research impact, educational depth and regional partnerships, all while remaining grounded in our mission to serve East Texas through excellence in education, care and service.

This spring, we proudly hosted our first joint Graduate Medical Education graduation ceremony, honoring 66 residents and fellows across 14 programs. Among them were the inaugural graduates of our general surgery residency and our rural psychiatry residency — another historic moment for our institution and our region. Events like these underscore the deep value of training and retaining the next generation of physicians to serve Texas. With more than half of Texas GME graduates staying in-state to practice, our program is helping to build a sustainable, skilled workforce pipeline, dedicated to improving local health outcomes.

In December, we also celebrated our first Student Clinician ceremony, recognizing the inaugural cohort as they transitioned from classroom-based instruction to clinical practice. Since January, our second-year students have rotated through 58 clinical sites, gaining valuable experience in a wide range of specialties. The ceremony's renewal of the Physician's Oath, led by Dr. Andi Cooley, reaffirmed the humanistic foundation that guides each student's work.

This year also saw the founding of our Center for Alzheimer's and Dementia Care, supported by a generous \$2 million gift from the Byers Family Foundation. With an interdisciplinary advisory board, expert faculty recruitment and plans to offer early detection and comprehensive care services, the center represents a bold step forward in addressing the region's growing need for comprehensive memory care services.

We also celebrated many moments of academic and professional growth. Research Day brought together more than 50 faculty, staff and students to showcase discoveries that address our ongoing clinical and translation research priorities. Our faculty community expanded with nationally recognized leaders in oncology, infectious disease and biomedical science, reinforcing our vision for academic and clinical excellence. In May, our Simulation in Medicine and Immersive Learning Experience Center hosted a large-scale interprofessional mass casualty simulation, preparing students for leadership in crisis response across healthcare disciplines.

As we look ahead to the opening of our new Medical Education Building and the continued growth of our faculty and programs, I am filled with gratitude and optimism. Each of these accomplishments reflects the shared dedication of our students, faculty, staff and partners. We are contributing to something greater than ourselves — working together to create a healthier future for East Texans.

Dr. Sue Cox

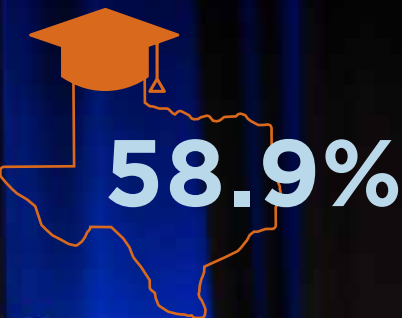
HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

UT TYLER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE CELEBRATES FIRST JOINT GME GRADUATION

The UT Tyler School of Medicine proudly hosted its first joint Graduate Medical Education graduation ceremony, honoring 66 graduating residents and fellows across 14 of its 23 residency and fellowship programs.

This milestone event brought together programs from across the region to celebrate the achievements of those who have completed the rigorous training required to advance in their medical careers. Among the highlights, the general surgery residency and the rural psychiatry residency programs marked a historic moment with the graduation of their inaugural cohorts.

According to the Texas Physician Pipeline Model, 58.9% of physicians who complete their graduate medical education in Texas choose to stay and practice in the state. This graduation not only represents a celebration of individual accomplishment but also reinforces our mission to grow and retain a skilled physician workforce dedicated to improving access to care and health outcomes in East Texas.



OF PHYSICIANS WHO COMPLETE THEIR GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS CHOOSE TO STAY AND PRACTICE IN THE STATE

66
GRADUATING
RESIDENTS
AND FELLOWS
ACROSS 14 OF ITS
23 RESIDENCY
AND FELLOWSHIP
PROGRAMS

CENTER FOR ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA CARE

Fall 2024, we assembled a community advisory board to assess how to meet the region's needs for Alzheimer's and dementia care. Approximately 12% of Texans over 65 suffer from Alzheimer's and the state has the second highest mortality rate for Alzheimer's in the nation.

12% OF TEXANS OVER 65 SUFFER FROM ALZHEIMER'S

The Byers Family Foundation offered a transformative gift of \$2 million to establish a new center to advance research and education for Alzheimer's and other types of dementia while delivering comprehensive, high-quality care.

The center, operated out of the Riter Center on the North Campus, will offer early recognition, early testing, imaging studies, cognitive testing and early diagnoses with a goal of improving the lives of patients and their caregivers throughout East Texas. The university has recently gained faculty with expertise in cognitive-behavioral neurology and is currently searching for a director. This is a major win for advancing comprehensive neurological care in East Texas.

CELEBRATING FIRST STUDENT CLINICIAN CEREMONY

In December 2024, we celebrated a major milestone with our inaugural Student Clinician Ceremony, honoring the Class of 2027 as they transitioned into Phase 2 to begin clinical clerkship rotations.

The event marked a pivotal transition from classroom-based learning to hands-on patient care. Since January 2025, second-year students have rotated across 58 East Texas clinical sites, gaining experience in specialties such as psychiatry, neurology, pediatrics, women's health, surgery, internal medicine and more. This phase pairs students with faculty and residents, allowing them to apply their knowledge in real-world settings.

The ceremony included a renewal of the Physician's Oath, led by Dr. Andi Cooley, assistant dean of Clinical Experiences, reinforcing the ethical responsibilities students carry into their clinical roles.

As these future physicians step into hospitals and clinics across the region, they do so with a strong foundation, a sense of purpose and a commitment to compassionate care.

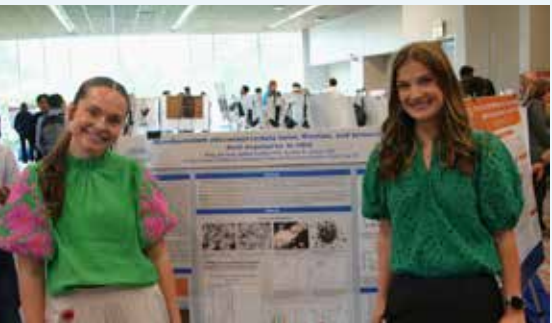


Student Clinical Class of 2027 transitioned into Phase 2 to begin clinical clerkship rotations.

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RESEARCH DAY

In April 2025, the School of Medicine hosted Research Day, a dynamic showcase of innovation and discovery. More than 50 participants — including graduate trainees, students and faculty — presented research on topics ranging from rural health to new treatment alternatives, highlighting the school’s commitment to advancing research. This annual event fosters collaboration and celebrates the pursuit of novel ideas that drive medical progress in our region.



SMILE CENTER HOSTS MASS CASUALTY SIMULATION

In May 2025, the UT Tyler School of Medicine’s SMILE Center hosted a large-scale, hyper-realistic mass casualty simulation. The training involved students from medicine, nursing, pharmacy and respiratory therapy programs, who responded to a simulated campus crisis involving a biohazard threat. Participants triaged and treated simulated patients in real time, practicing critical decision-making, communication and teamwork skills. The event was made possible through collaboration with local, state and national partners, reinforcing the university’s commitment to preparing future healthcare professionals for leadership in high-pressure emergency situations.

AAMC LEARN SERVE LEAD TEXAS TRAILBLAZERS RECEPTION

At the 2024 AAMC Learn Serve Lead conference, the UT Tyler School of Medicine co-hosted a reception with other UT System schools, bringing together medical educators, leaders and alumni from across the Texas. The event celebrated collaboration, innovation and the shared mission of advancing medical education in Texas. Attendees connected over regional initiatives, research and the future of healthcare training. The reception highlighted UT Tyler’s growing presence on the national stage and its commitment to building strong partnerships that support excellence in academic medicine.

MARION COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH COALITION

One standout example of community engagement excellence is our DSHS-funded coalition serving rural Marion County. This coalition was established to strengthen local engagement efforts and support health fairs by providing essential resources. In a region facing significant healthcare access, the coalition has made remarkable progress — gaining structure, building partnerships and achieving non-profit status within just two years of its inception.

MEB BUILDING MILESTONES

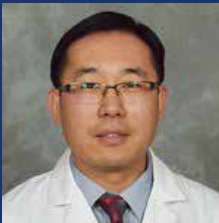
As we celebrate year three, much growth has occurred, including the advancement of our medical education building project nestled in UT Tyler’s Midtown campus. Last fall, we celebrated the final major milestone until our grand opening with the successful placement of its final structural beam. This beam lift, signed by our faculty, staff and students, symbolizes the rapid progress of the state-of-the-art facility.

FACULTY AFFAIRS FEATURES

The past academic year ushered growth and expansion of our faculty affairs including recruiting top faculty to advance research, education and healthcare.



Dr. Jose Serpa previously served as the Infectious Diseases Fellowship Training Program director and vice chief of Education for Infectious Diseases at Baylor College of Medicine. While there, he was recognized as the Faculty of the Year, received the Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award three times and the Fulbright & Jaworski LLP Faculty Excellence Award. In his current role, as a professor of medicine and the vice chair for Education and Faculty Development in the Department of Medicine, he develops and oversees the department’s educational strategy, collaborates to ensure cohesive educational programs and promotes faculty development.

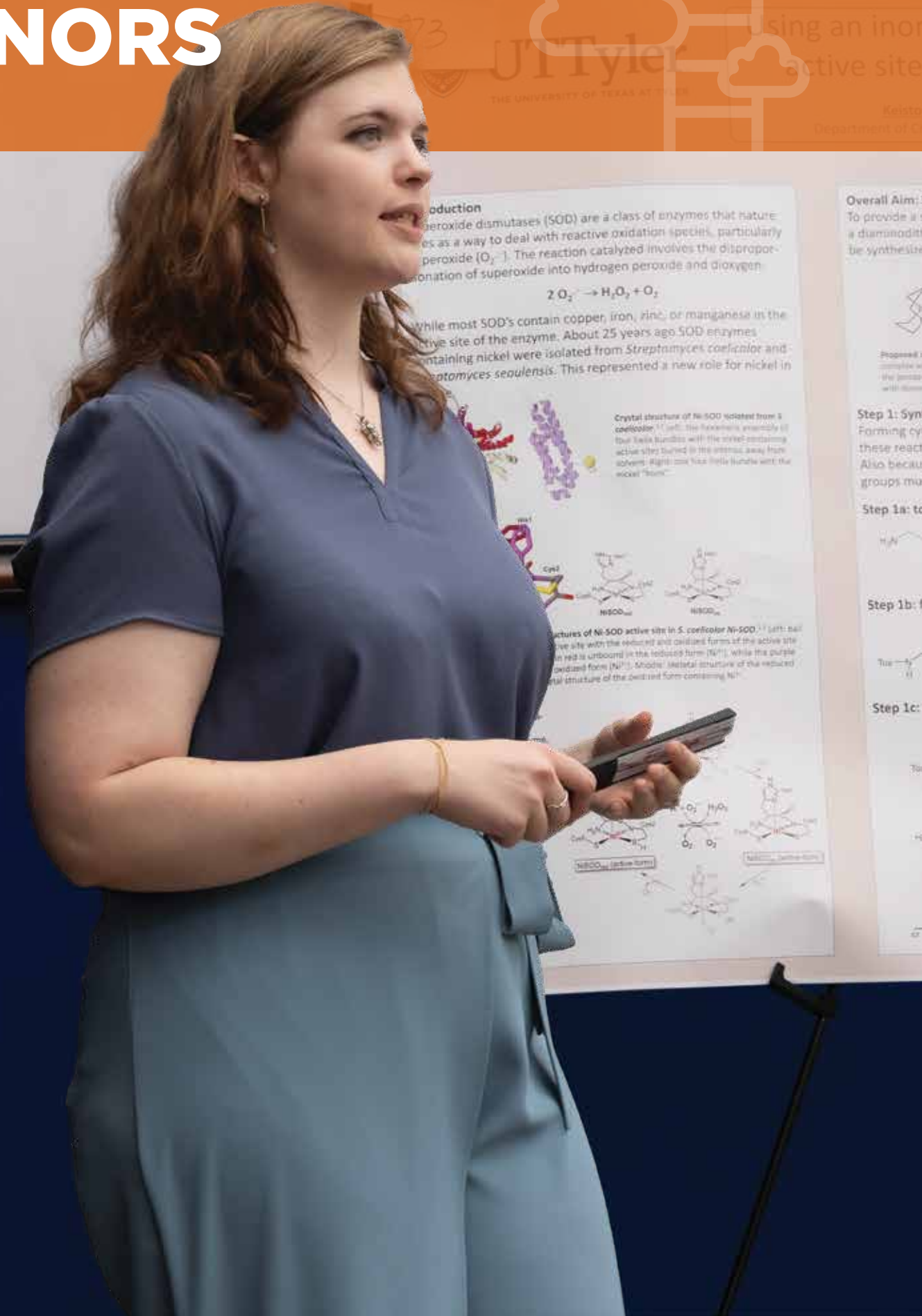


Dr. Guoqing Qian, associate professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Biology, serves as a biotechnology curriculum committee member and a core faculty of integrated biomedical sciences Ph.D. program. He was previously a postdoctoral fellow and scientist in the Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology at Emory University. He has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles, is an active reviewer for many academic journals, including JCI insight, iScience, Advanced Science, American Journal of Physiology - Cell Physiology and is an active member of both the American Heart Association and the American Thoracic Society.



Dr. Erminia Massarelli, Division Chief of Oncology and Hematology, fosters faculty development, collaborates to implement the strategic plan and assists in growing clinical, educational and research programs. She has a robust background in translational research in head and neck and lung cancer and is the principal investigator of an ongoing Department of Defense Idea Award grant. She has clinical research experience as principal investigator of numerous phase I-II and III trials in solid tumors, lung and head and neck cancers. She has published over 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals and spoken at national and international conferences.

HONORS COLLEGE



A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDING DEAN DR. PAUL STREUFERT

The UT Tyler Honors College enjoyed another year of growth, connection and curiosity in Academic Year 2024-25. Since becoming a college in January 2023, the Honors College has grown to a record 256 students as of the start of the Fall 2024 semester, up nearly 10% from last year, even as we graduated the largest class in our sixteen-year history. Our search for the next honors cohort also saw a record number of freshman applicants – 511 – a more than 20% increase from the previous year. Beyond the numbers, Honors College students, staff and faculty had an outstanding year in the areas most central to our mission: teaching and learning, research and career preparation.

May 2025 brought the welcome return of the Honors College travel study, as Professor Robert Sterken and Senior Coordinator Codee Scott led a group of 17 students to Italy. Few things bond students to each other and to their alma mater more strongly than travel, and we plan to build on the success of this course by offering travel studies every other year at minimum. Honors students also built connections in the research community, as they presented on a national stage, as well as at our regional conference, where Nixon Gorka, a junior history major, won the top prize

for her essay on the British Secret Service during the Cold War. This year, we celebrated the tenth Lyceum, the annual research symposium hosted by the Honors College. That first year, in 2016, 48 students presented their work while this year's event saw 120 students share their ideas with our campus. We are so proud to host the forum for UT Tyler students to take their first steps into joining the scholarly community.

In government, the Honors College supported UT Tyler students on both the federal and state levels. Five undergraduate Archer Fellows had transformative experiences in Washington, D.C., this academic year, interning with organizations like the United States Supreme Court, the Library of Congress and Al Jazeera News. UT Tyler also sent two interns to Austin for the inaugural year of the Texas Legislative Fellows Program. Honors College senior Dane Adams, a marketing major, was selected to serve in Governor Greg Abbott's office.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for every member of the Honors College who worked tirelessly to build these connections during this wonderful year. The curiosity and commitment of our students is inspiring and the care shown by our faculty and staff made it a year to remember.

Dr. Paul Straufert



HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES

UT TYLER HONORS PANEL AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This fall, UT Tyler Honors students and faculty enjoyed a unique opportunity to contribute to the field of knowledge in honors education. Honors faculty member Dr. Randy LeBlanc, accompanied by Dean Paul Streufert and four honors students from last year's HNRS 2351 course, presented a panel entitled *From Havel to Daisies or: How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Czech Film* at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in Kansas City, Missouri. NCHC panels offer honors educators and students a chance to network, exchange ideas and report on innovative curricula with peers from around the country. Our panel explained and explored Dr. LeBlanc's use of Czech film in his sophomore-level course, HNRS 2351, which engages students in a final project — the creation of an original short film using techniques and themes from the films studied throughout the semester.

Dr. LeBlanc and Dr. Streufert discussed the pedagogical, logistical and administrative challenges to this type of project-based learning while student filmmakers Elizabeth Nixon (biochemistry), Cade Parker (computer science), Rachel Smith (nursing) and Amber Withers (kinesiology) discussed their films. The student filmmakers detailed their learning through all the different steps of the process, including puzzling through films from a different culture, drafting their own scripts and even technical concerns like shooting video, recording sound and editing the final cut of each group's film.

NCHC organizers assigned our panel to present on the conference mainstage, allowing students to show clips of their films on a full-size cinema screen. Sharing our work from HNRS 2351 with our colleagues at NCHC was a powerful professional experience, one that helped both students and faculty reconsider the learning process. Our participation at the conference reaffirms our commitment to creating experimental courses that challenge the way we all think about knowledge, communication and our responsibilities to each other.

HONORS STUDENTS SPEND TWO WEEKS IN ITALY

Each year the Honors College strives to provide enriching opportunities to its students. In May 2025, we offered an honors travel study to Italy led by Dr. Robert Sterken, a professor in the Department of Political Science who teaches the honors freshman sequence every year as well as the honors section of Introductory Texas Politics each fall. Over the course of the spring semester, 17 students met once per week and each student presented on one of the sites on the travel itinerary. The class allowed students from different majors and classifications to build a camaraderie during the semester, which ultimately culminated with the students spending two weeks in Italy together. The jam-packed schedule included, but was certainly not limited to, the Colosseum, the ancient ruins of Pompeii, the Trevi Fountain, the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Medici Chapels. This was truly a life-changing trip for the students, many of whom had never traveled abroad prior to the travel study and a few who had never even flown before. Throughout the rigor of the itinerary,

students remained engaged and excited to learn and see for themselves the sites and places they had previously only seen on their classmates' PowerPoint slides. This travel study gets at the heart of what the Honors College is: a place for intellectually curious students to build bonds through shared experiences, whether that is in the classroom, at our events or spending two weeks together in Italy. The memories created with each other will stay with these students for the rest of their lives. This trip not only fostered their independence and empowered them, but also cultivated a love of travel in many. Even before the end of the trip, some students already spoke of returning. Our students made it in Italy, and they can make it wherever life takes them.



Honors students, faculty and staff at Pompeii

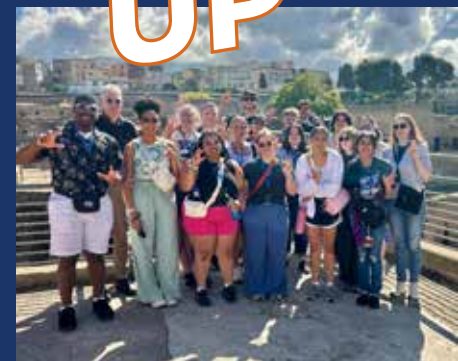


- 1 Students, staff and faculty at the NCHC Conference in Kansas City, Missouri
- 2 Cade Parker speaks about editing his team's short film "Frames"
- 3 Faculty and students presenting at the NCHC panel
- 4 Elizabeth Nixon speaks about her team's short film "Something Ordinary"



UT Tyler Honors College students visit the Colosseum

TALONS UP



Talons Up at the Forum Romanum

MINI HIGHLIGHTS & BRIEFS

LYCEUM

The Honors College hosted the 10th annual Lyceum, UT Tyler’s largest student research showcase, this past April. One hundred twenty undergraduate and graduate students presented their original research, scholarship and service projects. All of UT Tyler’s colleges and schools were represented, as well as students from the TJC Honors Program. Faculty and staff from across campus evaluated and scored each project, and first through third place in the categories of Undergraduate and Graduate Poster and Oral Presentations, as well as the People’s Choice winner, received cash awards sponsored by the Texas Alpha Xi chapter of Alpha Chi.

120

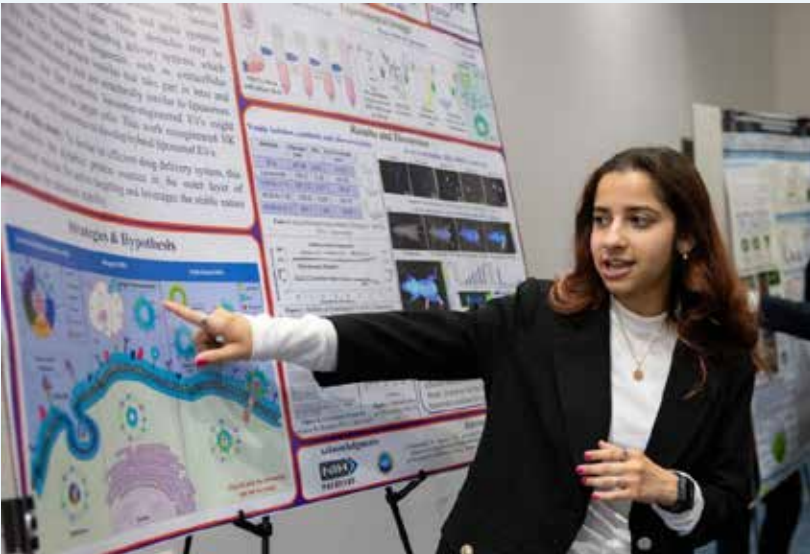
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS PRESENTED THEIR ORIGINAL RESEARCH



Student presenting at the poster session.



Honors College student Whitney Worley (marketing) presents her poster.



Student presents STEM research at Lyceum.



Honors College student Millie Jeske (math) presents her senior project at the Lyceum.



GB Tran visits an HNRS 1352 class
GB Tran giving his talk on *Vietnamerica* at the Honors College Colloquium



GB TRAN

Author GB Tran returned to the UT Tyler campus on March 11, one decade after his first visit in 2015. Honors students study Tran’s award-winning graphic novel, *Vietnamerica: A Family’s Journey*, in their freshman World, Text, & Image course. Tran visited each of the class sections, giving students the rare opportunity to discuss the novel in depth with its author and illustrator. That evening, Tran spoke to a campuswide audience in Mabry Theatre, followed by a fruitful question and answer session.

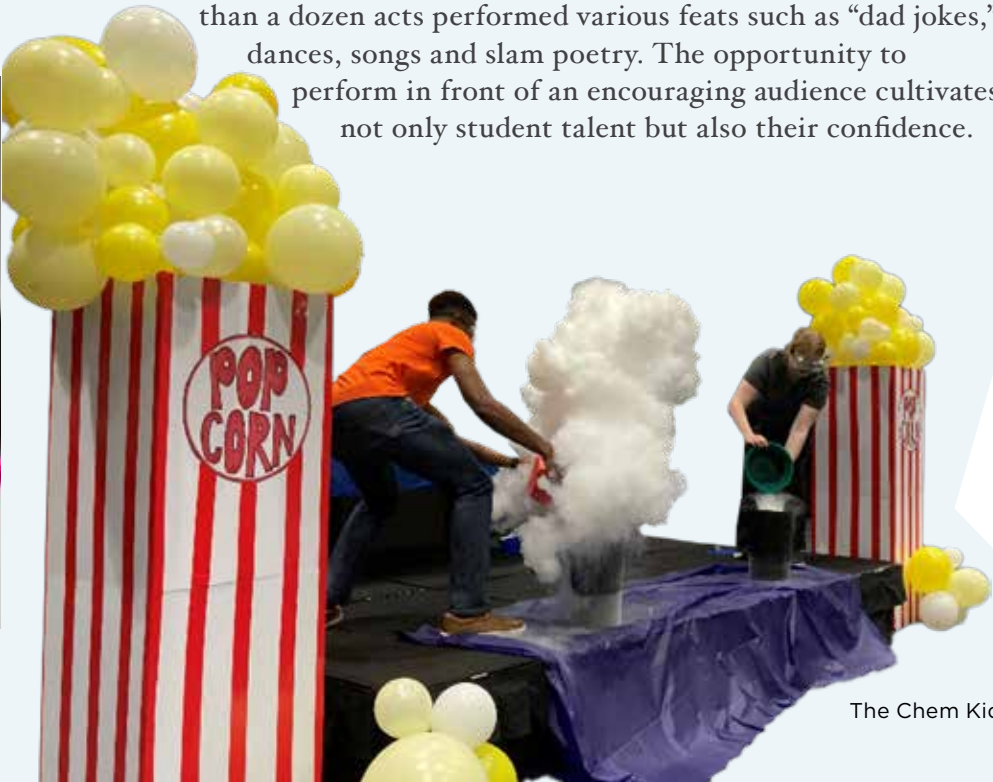
DIONYSIA

THE HONORS COLLEGE TALENT SHOW

LOGOS, the Honors Student Senate, holds the campus-wide talent show every spring semester. Called Dionysia, this event demonstrates the creativity, ingenuity and organization of our students, and this past February was no different. LOGOS provided popcorn, balloon animals, photo booths and more as part of the event’s carnival theme. At its core, the honors community is a supportive one for all our students. More than a dozen acts performed various feats such as “dad jokes,” dances, songs and slam poetry. The opportunity to perform in front of an encouraging audience cultivates not only student talent but also their confidence.



LOGOS VP and organizer of the Dionysia Sara Maldonado welcomes the crowd

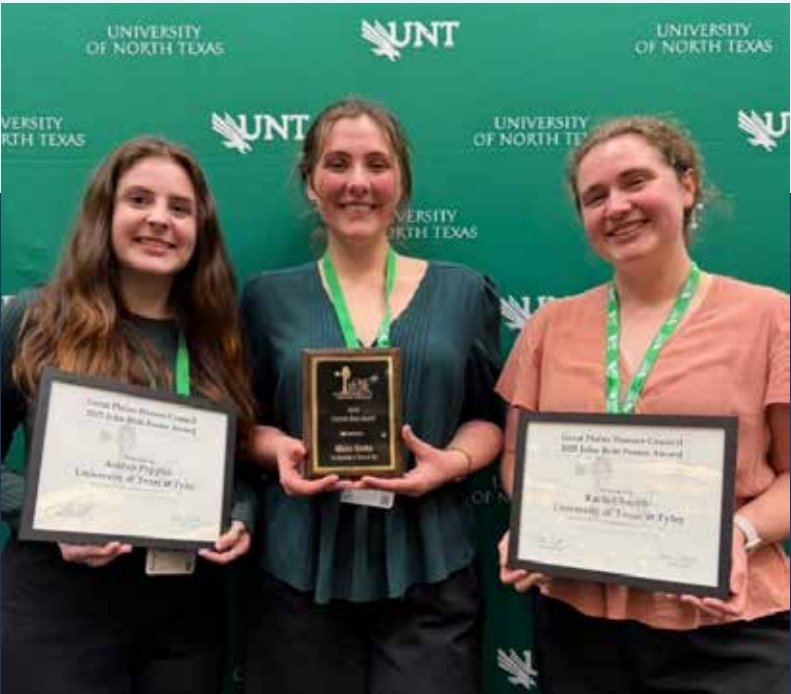


“dad jokes”
Why did the pie go to the dentist?
It needed a filling.

The Chem Kids show off their talent

REGIONAL HONORS CONFERENCE - GPHC

The Great Plains Honors Council hosts its annual meeting each spring, and this past March, 18 honors students presented their research at the meeting at the University of North Texas. In keeping with our track record of excellence, three honors students won awards for their research. Nixon Gorka (history) won a Boe Award for her paper, The Last Penumbra of Empire: Imperialism and the British Foreign Intelligence Service, and Ashlyn Peppler and Rachel Smith (nursing) won a Britt Award for their poster, A Secondary Analysis of the Psychological Capital and Gratitude of High School Students in Northeast Texas.



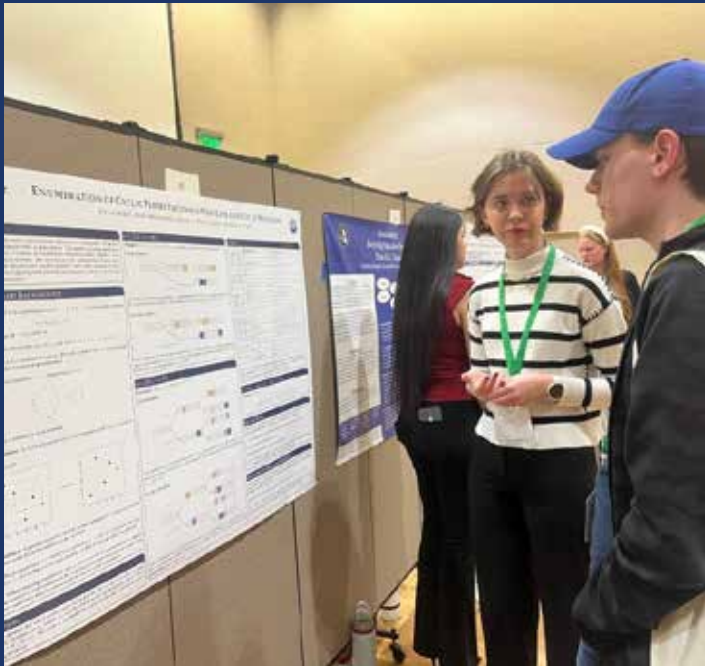
GPHC award winners (from left) Ashlyn Peppler, Nixon Gorka and Rachel Smith.



Economics major Sara Maldonado presents at GPHC.



Nursing major Lizbeth Salazar Sanchez presents a poster at GPHC.



Math major Millie Jeske presents a poster at GPHC.

ARCHER FELLOWS

The Honors College oversees UT Tyler's participation in the Archer Fellowship, a UT System program that sends students to Washington, D.C., for an intensive internship and academic experience. UT Tyler Archer Fellow undergraduate candidates had a 100% acceptance rate in the 2024-25 recruitment cycle. By serving our entire student body through the Archer Fellowship, the UT Tyler Honors College hopes to open professional doors for all students.



IN SUMMER 2025, TWO GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE REPRESENTING UT TYLER



Jim Clayton
Pursing an MA in
Political Science
Internship: TurnUp
Activism



Kendra Simms
Pursing an
EdD in School
Improvement
Internship: Karen
Wilson-Ama'
Echefu, Ph.D.

UT TYLER WILL HAVE FOUR UNDERGRADUATE ARCHER FELLOWS REPRESENTING OUR INSTITUTION IN THE UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR



Andrea Valdez
Political Science Major/
Pre-Law Minor



Asa Clark
Political Science Major/
Philosophy Minor
Current Honors College
Student



Kolten Knipp
Economics Major/History
Minor



Sara Maldonado
Economics Major/Math
and Political Science
Minor Current Honors
College Student

GRADUATE SCHOOL



A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

DR. KOUIDER MOKHTARI

We are pleased to present the Graduate School's 2024-2025 Annual Report, highlighting key achievements and activities.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone in the Graduate School community, students, faculty, staff and our partners across UT Tyler, whose hard work and dedication were essential to supporting our graduate students, faculty and staff throughout the year.

Looking ahead, the Graduate School team is eager to continue strengthening our programs and connections with students, faculty, staff and alumni, while further improving graduate student retention and graduation rates.

Please take a moment to review this report and feel free to reach out with any questions or feedback. We value your input and welcome your involvement.

Dr. Kouider Mokhtari



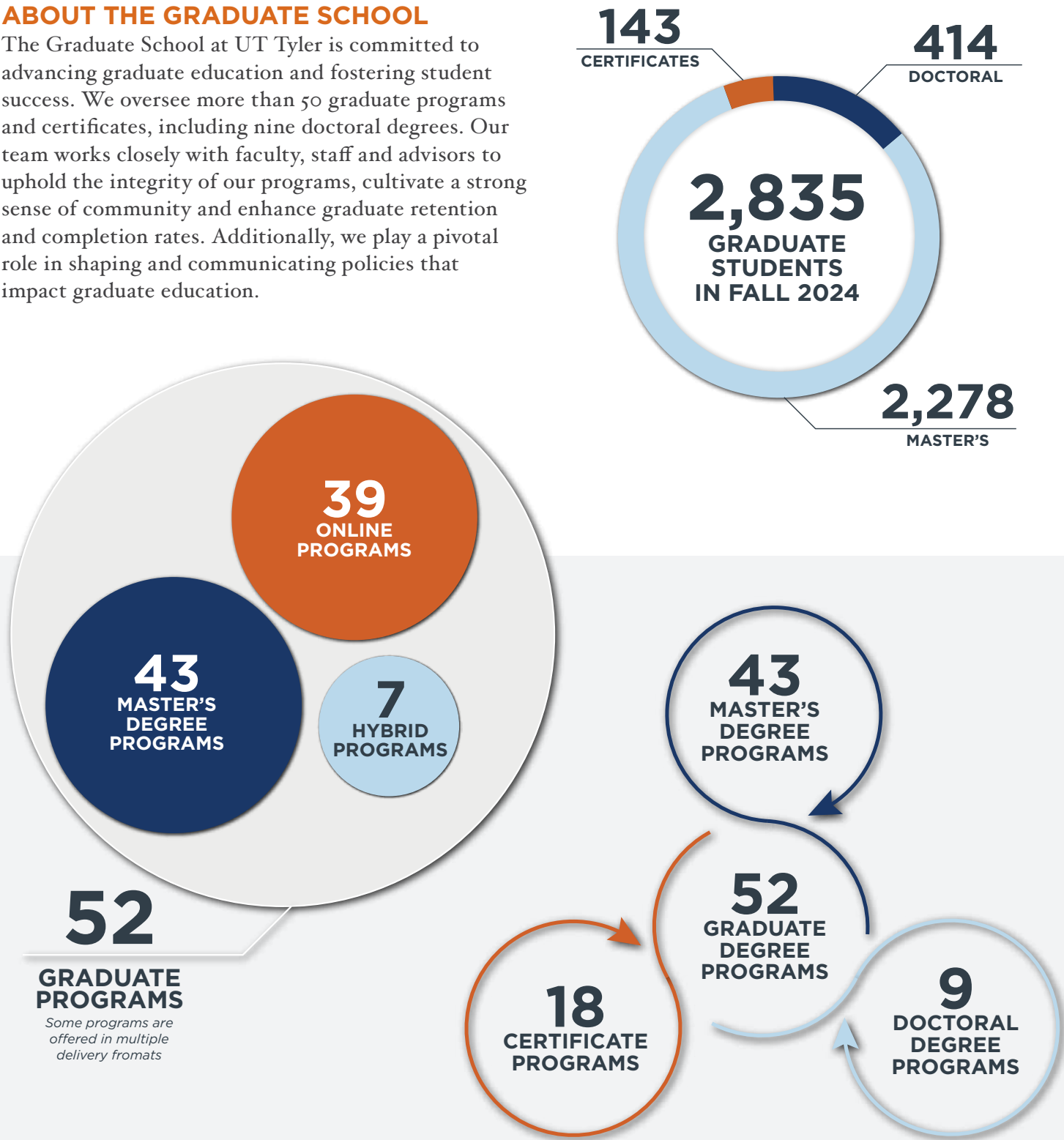
12:1

grad student-to-faculty ratio

GRADUATE SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

ABOUT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

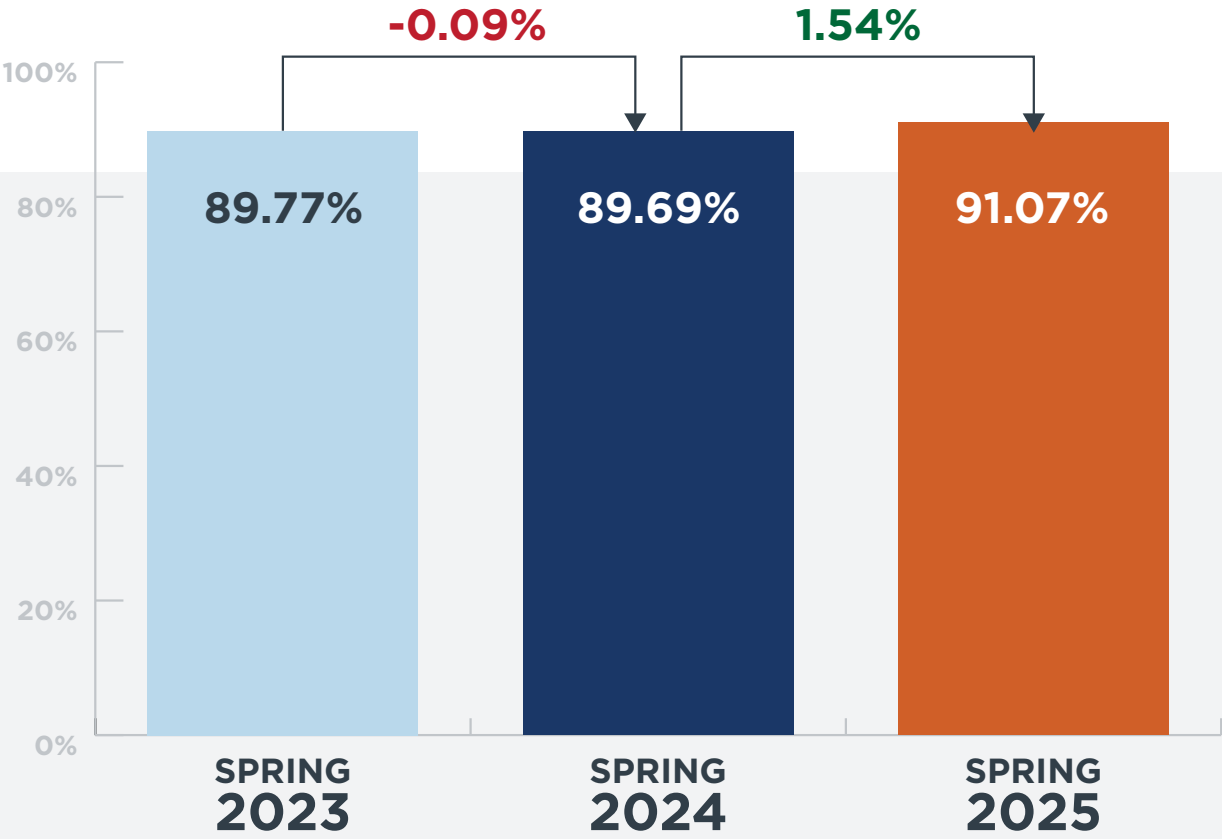
The Graduate School at UT Tyler is committed to advancing graduate education and fostering student success. We oversee more than 50 graduate programs and certificates, including nine doctoral degrees. Our team works closely with faculty, staff and advisors to uphold the integrity of our programs, cultivate a strong sense of community and enhance graduate retention and completion rates. Additionally, we play a pivotal role in shaping and communicating policies that impact graduate education.



GRADUATE STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

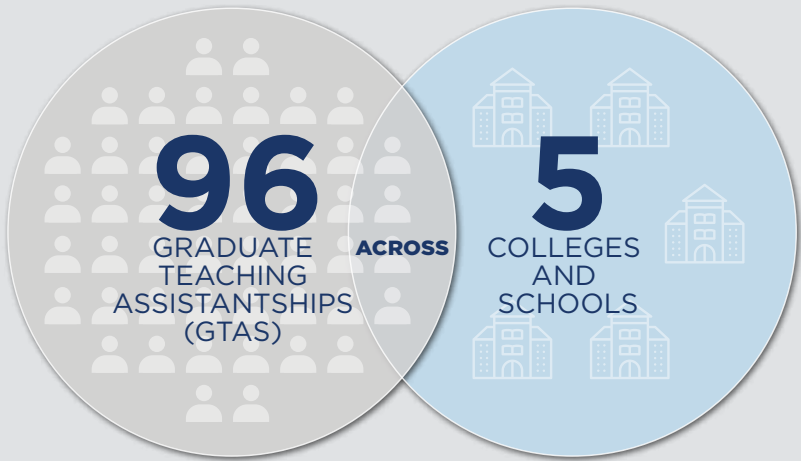
In 2024-2025, the Graduate School focused on enhancing student retention through a targeted re-enrollment campaign. This initiative included timely reminders, personalized outreach and clear pathways for continuing students. Fueled by data and cross-departmental collaboration, our efforts aimed to reduce attrition and maintain academic continuity. As a result, we achieved a 91.07% semester-to-semester re-enrollment rate in Spring 2025, exceeding the 90% institutional target. This represents a 1.54% increase from Spring 2024, signaling a positive upward trend. It highlights the effectiveness of our communication and support systems and the growing trust graduate students have in our ability to support their academic journeys. This success serves as a strong foundation for future retention initiatives.

OVERALL GRADUATE STUDENT RE-ENROLLMENT % (2023-2025)



GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Graduate School, in partnership with the Office of the Provost, provided funding and professional development for 96 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) across five colleges and schools. These assistantships offer graduate students valuable instructional experience while they pursue thesis and dissertation-level research, supporting their professional and career growth.

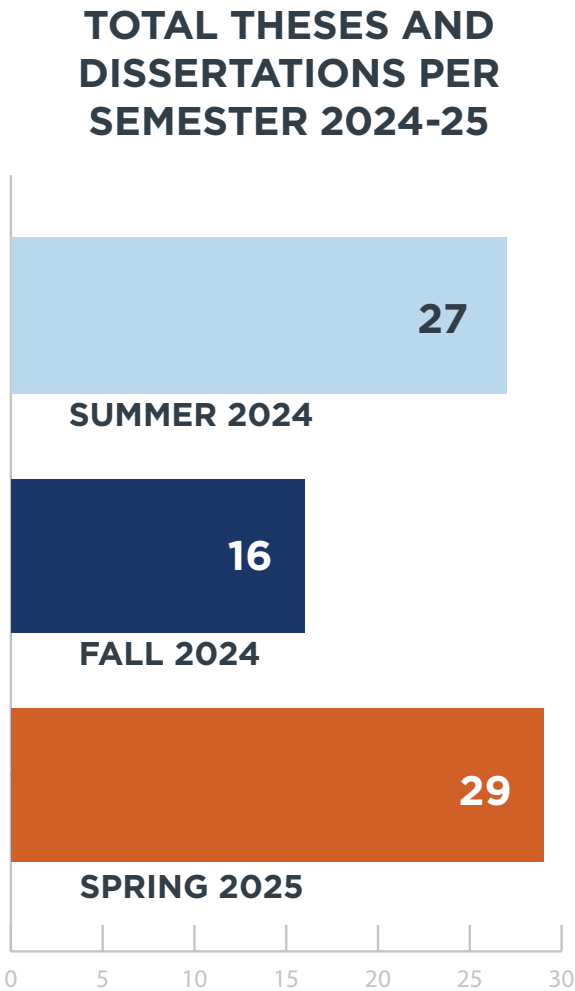


PROMOTING GRADUATE PROGRAM QUALITY

The Graduate School plays a critical role in maintaining the integrity of graduate programs by setting rigorous academic standards, overseeing program development and modifications and providing guidance on best practices in graduate education.

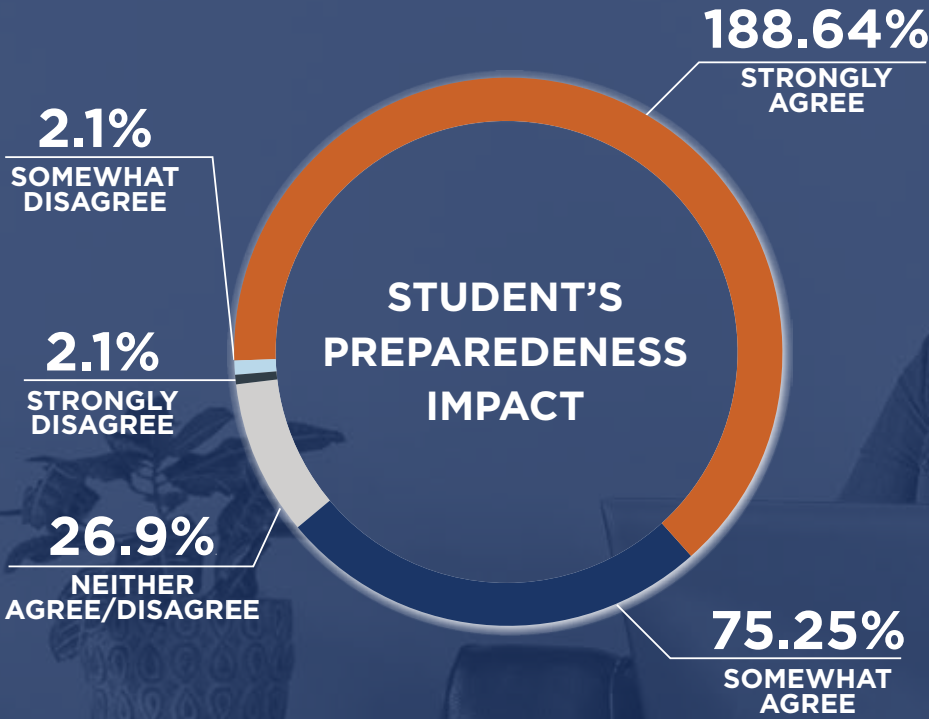
In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Graduate School worked closely with the Graduate Council to review and approve over 180 curriculum modifications for graduate programs. Additionally, we collaborated with the council to develop policies supporting military-affiliated students and those returning to complete degrees after a hiatus.

The Graduate School also continued to support graduate research by processing master’s theses, doctoral dissertations and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) projects.



REDESIGNED ONLINE GRADUATE ORIENTATION

In 2024-2025, the Graduate School introduced a fully redesigned, 100% online graduate orientation. This platform familiarizes students with essential academic policies, support services and expectations for graduate-level study. Among those who completed the orientation, 94% reported feeling more prepared to start their graduate program with the experience receiving an average satisfaction rating of 4.7 out of 5. Given that over 80% of graduate students are enrolled in fully or partially online programs, orientation remains a crucial and scalable resource for promoting student success.



“I feel better prepared to navigate graduate school at UT Tyler with the information in this orientation.”

RESEARCH AND MENTORSHIP: 2025 THREE-MINUTE THESIS AND FACULTY MENTOR AWARDS

On April 8, 2025, the Graduate School hosted the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT™) Competition, celebrating the outstanding achievements of graduate students and their faculty mentors. Three student winners were recognized and Dr. Alwathiqbellah Ibrahim (College of Engineering) and Dr. Rob Carpenter (Soules College of Business) were honored as the inaugural recipients of the 2025 Faculty Mentor Awards. The 3MT® competition challenges graduate students to present their research in just 180 seconds, showcasing their ability to communicate complex ideas effectively.



PLACE	NAMES	PROGRAM	TOPIC
First	Elizabeth Croft	Biology MS	Assessing conservation need of native Texas crayfish species through distribution analysis and ecological niche modeling
Second	Kirk Bradford	Doctor of Nursing Practice	Charting a course to Safer Care: A Nurse Education and Fall Prevention Strategy
Third	Andy Walker	Biology MS	Environmental tolerances and habitat association of three critically imperiled crayfish species in Texas

FIRST PLACE WINNER ELIZABETH CROFT

ACCELERATED PROGRAM PATHWAYS: ENHANCING ACCESS AND EFFICIENCY

The Graduate School supported the redesign of graduate admissions criteria by collaborating with programs, providing standardized examples and offering guidelines and best practices for establishing and communicating admissions requirements.

To streamline accelerated academic pathways, the Graduate School worked with campus offices to refine the structure of 4+1 programs. As of Spring 2025, more than 14 programs across four colleges offer 4+1 opportunities, allowing students to save money and complete their degrees in a reduced timeframe. These programs enhance affordability and facilitate early career entry. Since January 2025, 27 students across six degree programs have enrolled in a 4+1 pathway.



27 STUDENTS
ACROSS SIX DEGREE PROGRAMS
HAVE ENROLLED IN A
4+1
PATHWAY

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT LEAVE AWARDS IN AY 2024-2025

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Graduate School collaborated with the Office of the Provost and the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs to review and award Faculty Development Leave (FDL) to three faculty members.

FDL offers release time through a competitive, peer-reviewed process, enabling faculty to advance their research, foster national and international collaboration and revitalize their academic careers, ultimately contributing to student success and aligning with the university’s strategic goals.



Faculty Awards

GRADUATE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: FOSTERING CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

In the 2024-2025 academic year, the Graduate School organized a series of town hall meetings to connect graduate faculty, advisors and other student-facing stakeholders with key campus offices. Virtual sessions focused on a variety of topics, including online programs (Office of Digital Learning), student groups (Office of International Programs and Military and Veterans Success Center), academic program websites (Marketing and Communications) and the student lifecycle (Graduate Admissions and the Registrar’s Office). These town halls strengthened communication and collaboration between these offices and the graduate education community at UT Tyler.

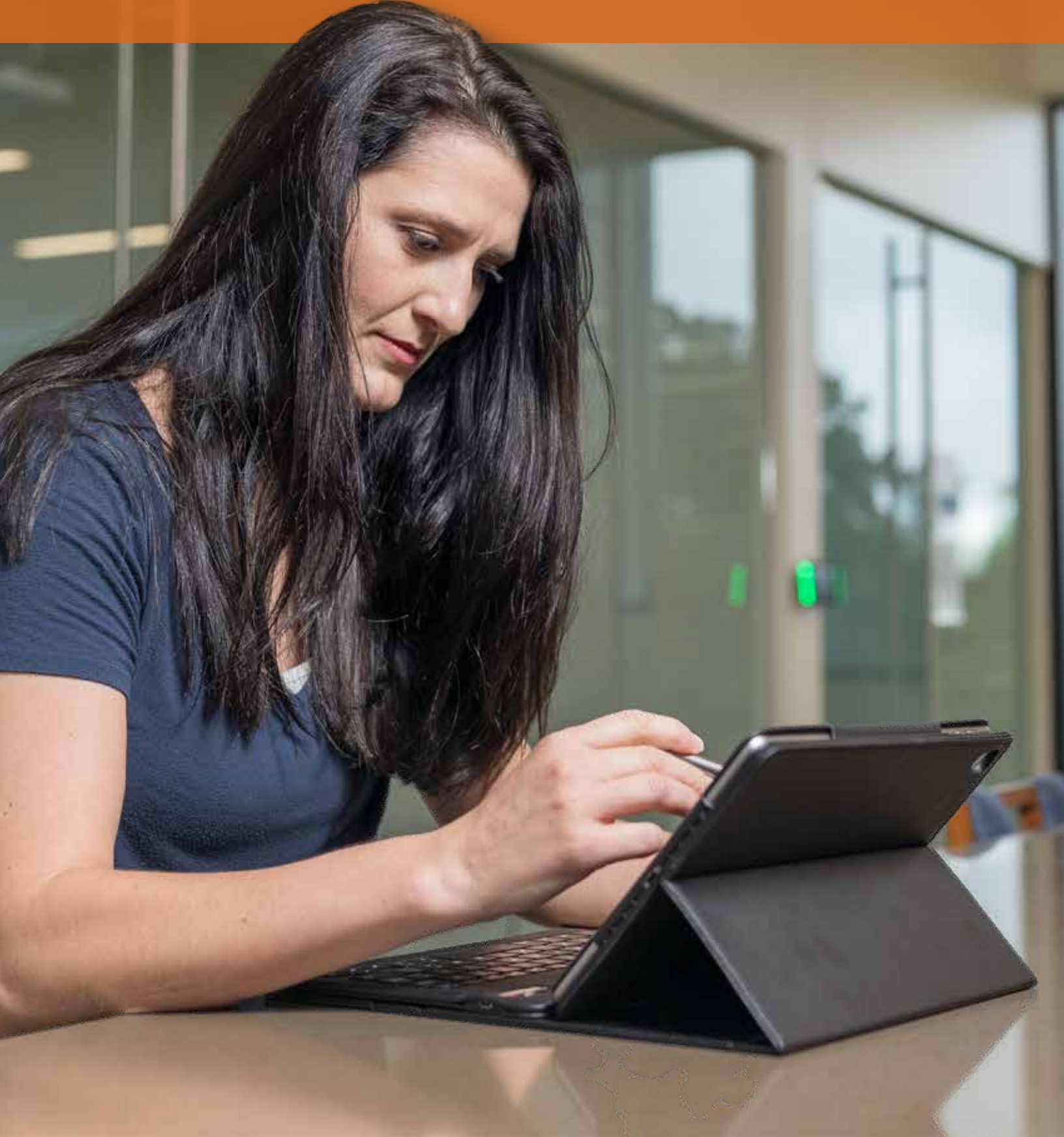
The Graduate Student Association (GSA) played a crucial role in student life through advocacy, professional development and social engagement. In AY 2024-2025, the GSA participated in campus events such as Graduate Discovery Day and the Midnight Breakfast. It also built community through monthly gatherings and hosted events during National Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week. The GSA was proudly honored with the Student Organization of the Year award by Student Success.



Students Award



OFFICE OF DIGITAL LEARNING



INITIATIVES



INTELLIGENT INSIGHTS

Intelligent Insights gives real-time data about your students, making it easier to spot issues early and take action quickly.



TURNITIN PLAGIARISM DETECTION

UT Tyler has selected Turnitin as its plagiarism detection software, with implementation supported by the Office of Digital Learning.



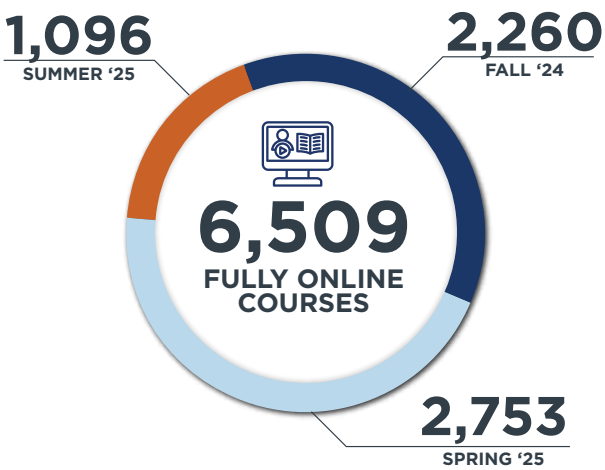
NEW PROCTORING PLATFORM

UT Tyler has selected Respondus Lockdown Browser+ Monitor as its proctoring platform, with implementation supported by the Office of Digital Learning.

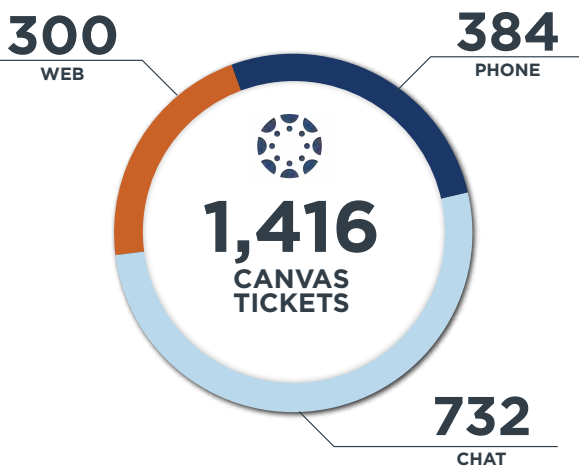


BY THE NUMBERS

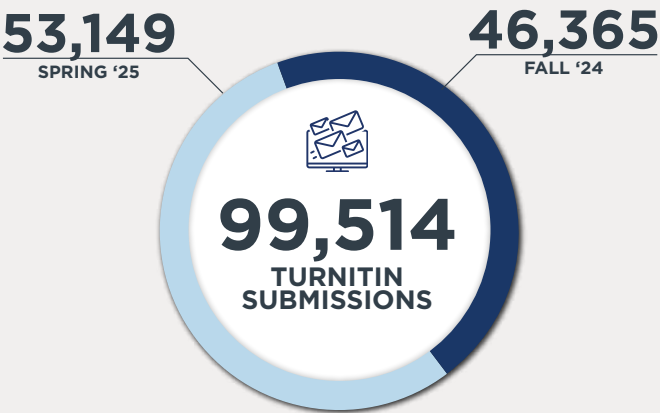
ONLINE COURSES



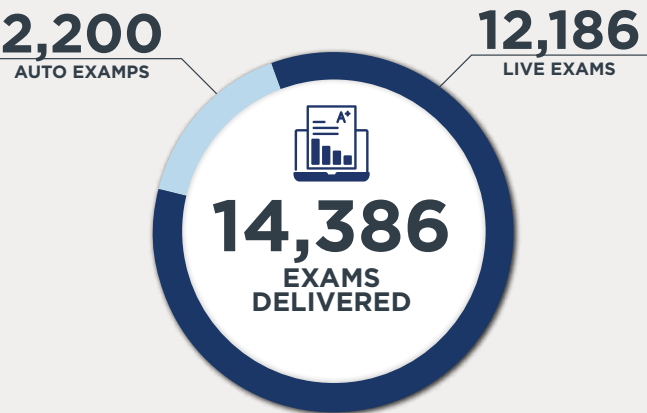
CANVAS



TURNITIN SUBMISSIONS



PROCTOR U



NEW MICROCREDENTIALS LAUNCHED

AI Enhanced Digital Learning
A microcredential course created by ODL for students to learn how to use AI responsibly and ethically.

Research Fundamentals in Nursing (I, II, III)
Partnered in developing 3 stackable badge pathways.

MOST POPULAR COURSERA CERTIFICATES

- DIGITAL MARKETING
- DATA ANALYTICS



3,813
CERTIFICATES
AWARDED



1,115
COURSERA
ENROLLMENTS



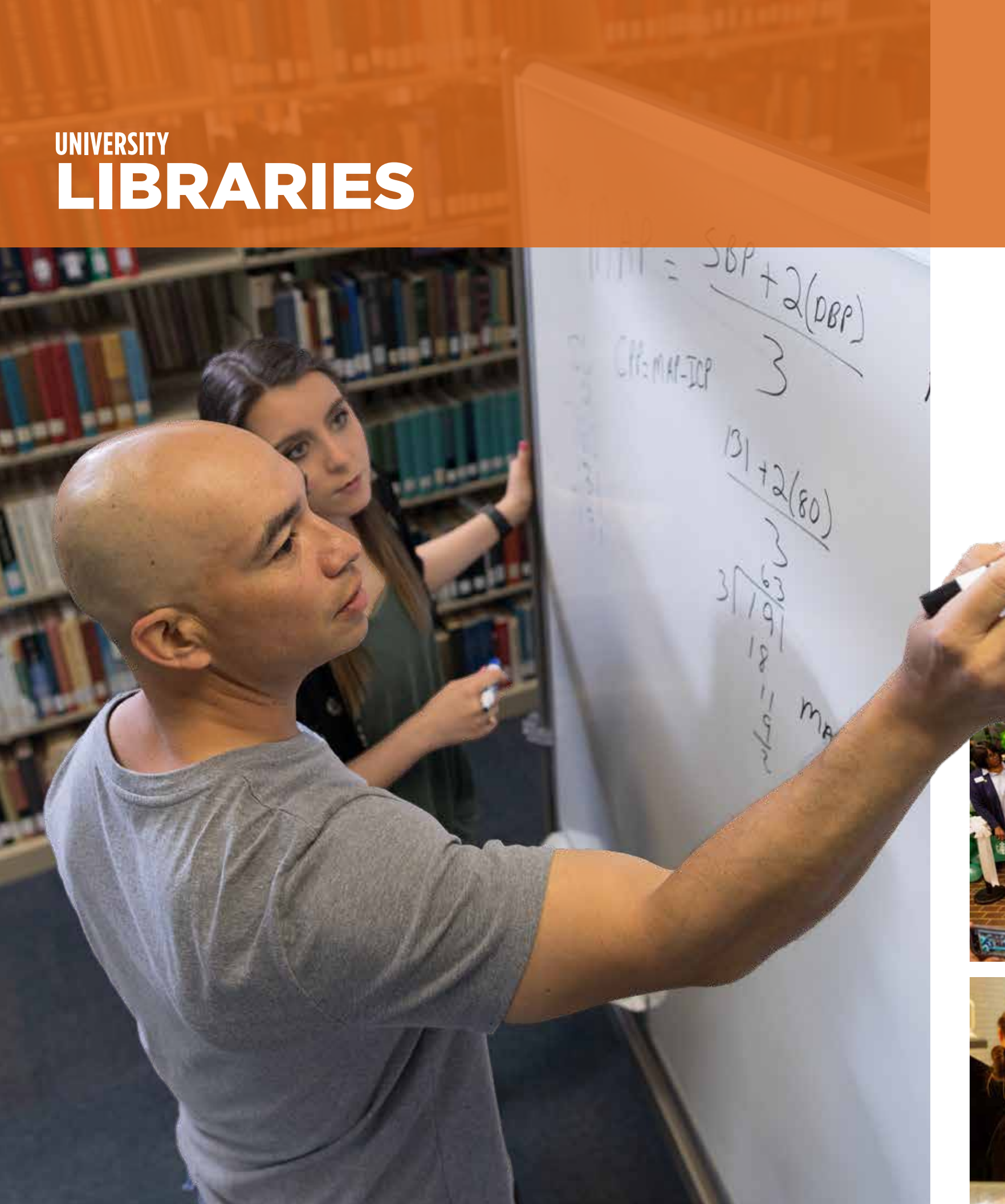
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

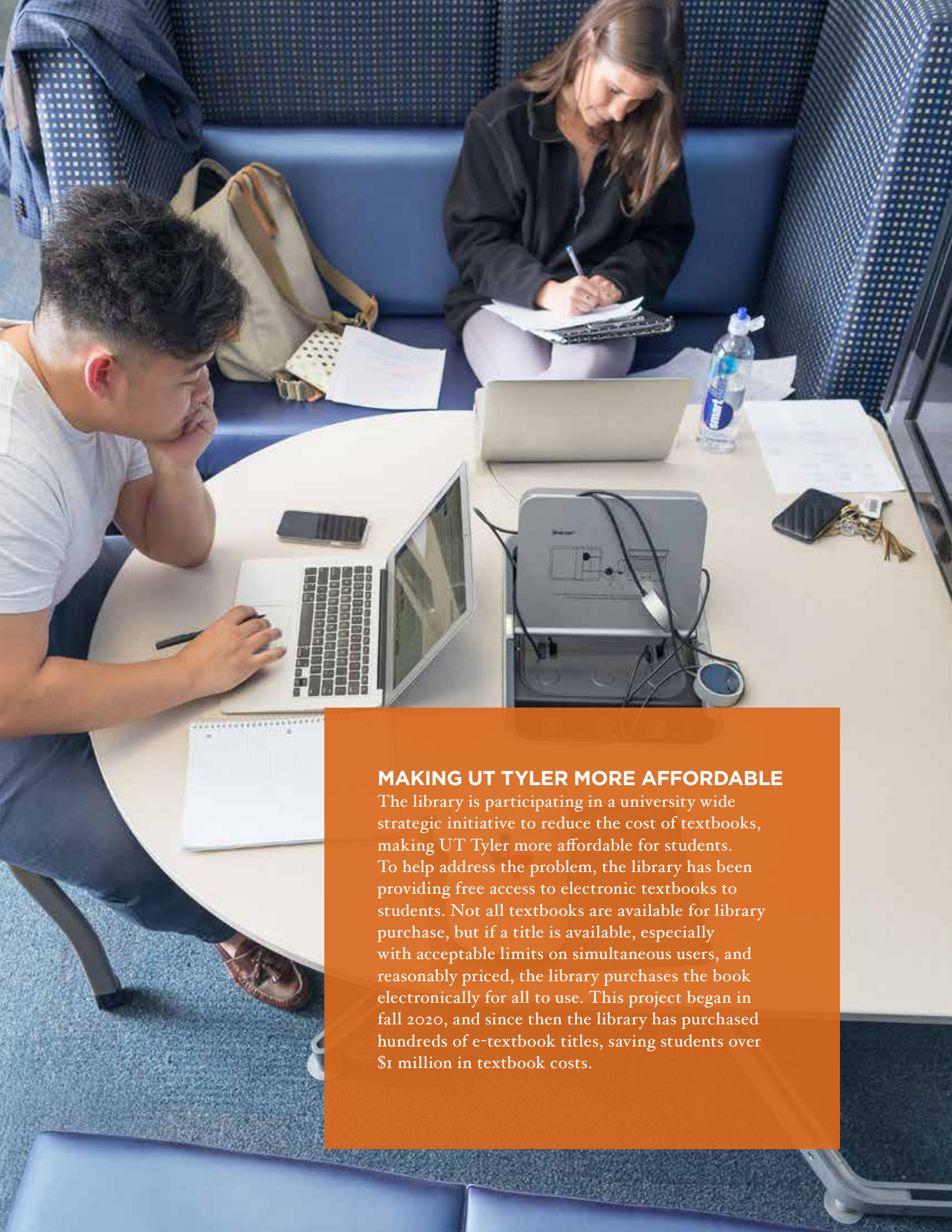
ROBERT R. MUNTZ LIBRARY AND WATSON W. WISE MEDICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

The university and the UT System generously support the library in terms of electronic resources and staff funding. There is a strong collection and full complement of eleven librarians and nine support staff between both libraries who provide knowledgeable, timely and friendly service a total of 195 hours per week.

11 LIBRARIANS 9 SUPPORT STAFF

The university continues to invest in renovating the Robert R. Muntz Library and creating a welcoming and supportive space for study and collaboration. Construction began in June 2024 for a Starbucks coffee shop on the main floor of the library and the grand opening was in September. It is a full-service shop, with a complete food and beverage menu that is accessible via the Starbucks app.





MAKING UT TYLER MORE AFFORDABLE

The library is participating in a university wide strategic initiative to reduce the cost of textbooks, making UT Tyler more affordable for students. To help address the problem, the library has been providing free access to electronic textbooks to students. Not all textbooks are available for library purchase, but if a title is available, especially with acceptable limits on simultaneous users, and reasonably priced, the library purchases the book electronically for all to use. This project began in fall 2020, and since then the library has purchased hundreds of e-textbook titles, saving students over \$1 million in textbook costs.

With the support of Academic Affairs, the library is also incentivizing the use of open educational resources by awarding grants to faculty members willing to adopt an OER for their classes. OER are “teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5-R activities—retaining, remixing, revising, reusing and redistributing the resources, as defined by Creative Commons. E-textbooks and OER are among the library’s most important initiatives as they make a college education more accessible to students.

The Muntz Library is involved in helping the campus understand and ethically adopt artificial intelligence. The STEM Librarian is the campus representative for the AI Committee. The library maintains an extensive guide about AI and various AI providers and applications and teaches workshops on the topic.



WATSON W. WISE MEDICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY

This was a year of advances for the Watson W. Wise Medical Research Library. The third class of the School of Medicine began in July and the Wise Library has purchased more materials for student textbooks, in addition to curriculum and research support resources. The Wise librarians are preparing for Library Manager Michael Skinner to move to the new medical school building in November. He will be joined by a paraprofessional being recruited now. Lori Fregoso will remain at the north campus.



Library Manager Michael Skinner

ACADEMIC SUCCESS & UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES



A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS & UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

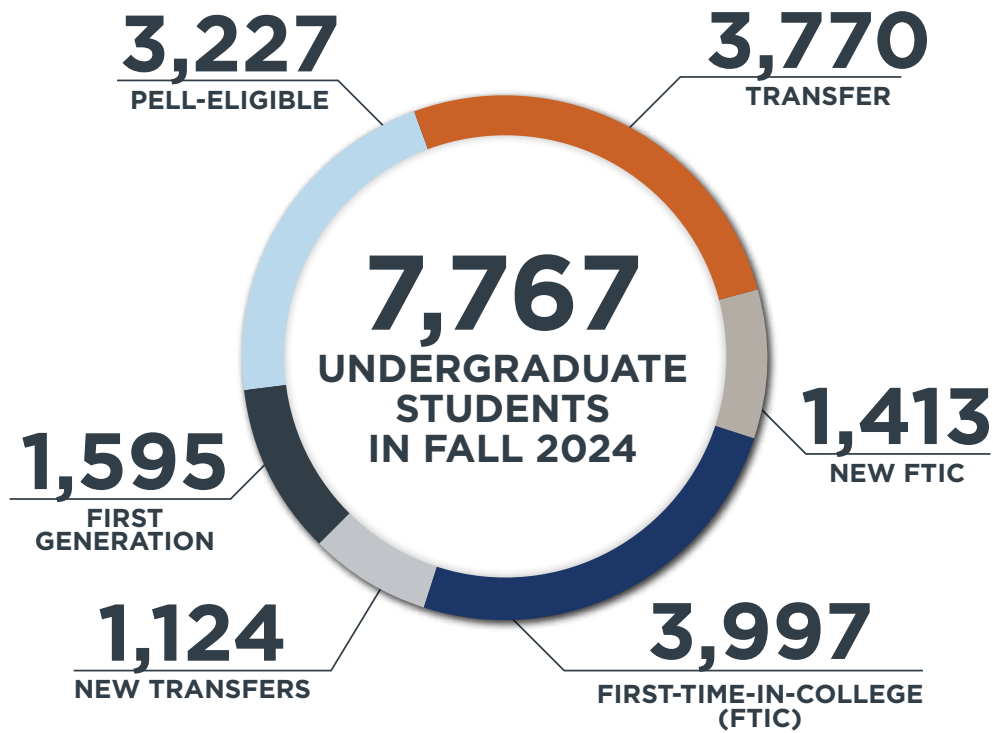
DR. COLLEEN SWAIN

Much like the College of Arts and Sciences is often described as the heart of a university, the undergraduate population is the lifeblood flowing through that heart, providing much of the energy and life-sustaining nutrients for the university. The Division of Academic Success and Undergraduate Studies supports students and faculty in their pursuit of high-quality degree programs through advising, academic coaching, transfer pathways and various academic resources, such as supplemental instruction. We also serve special populations, such as first-generation, transfer and foster-care students, who require additional support. The Dean of Undergraduate Studies collaborates with departments to ensure that undergraduate degrees, majors, minors and certificates are grounded in excellence, exemplary teaching and student success. The following infographics illustrate how UT Tyler ensures that all undergraduate students, regardless of their circumstances, are supported in achieving their goal of completing their degree. Retention is a crucial component in completing a degree program.

If you're interested in supporting this work or joining with us in this effort, I would welcome the opportunity to visit with you. The success stories are numerous!

Dr. Colleen Swain

HIGHLIGHTS & FEATURES



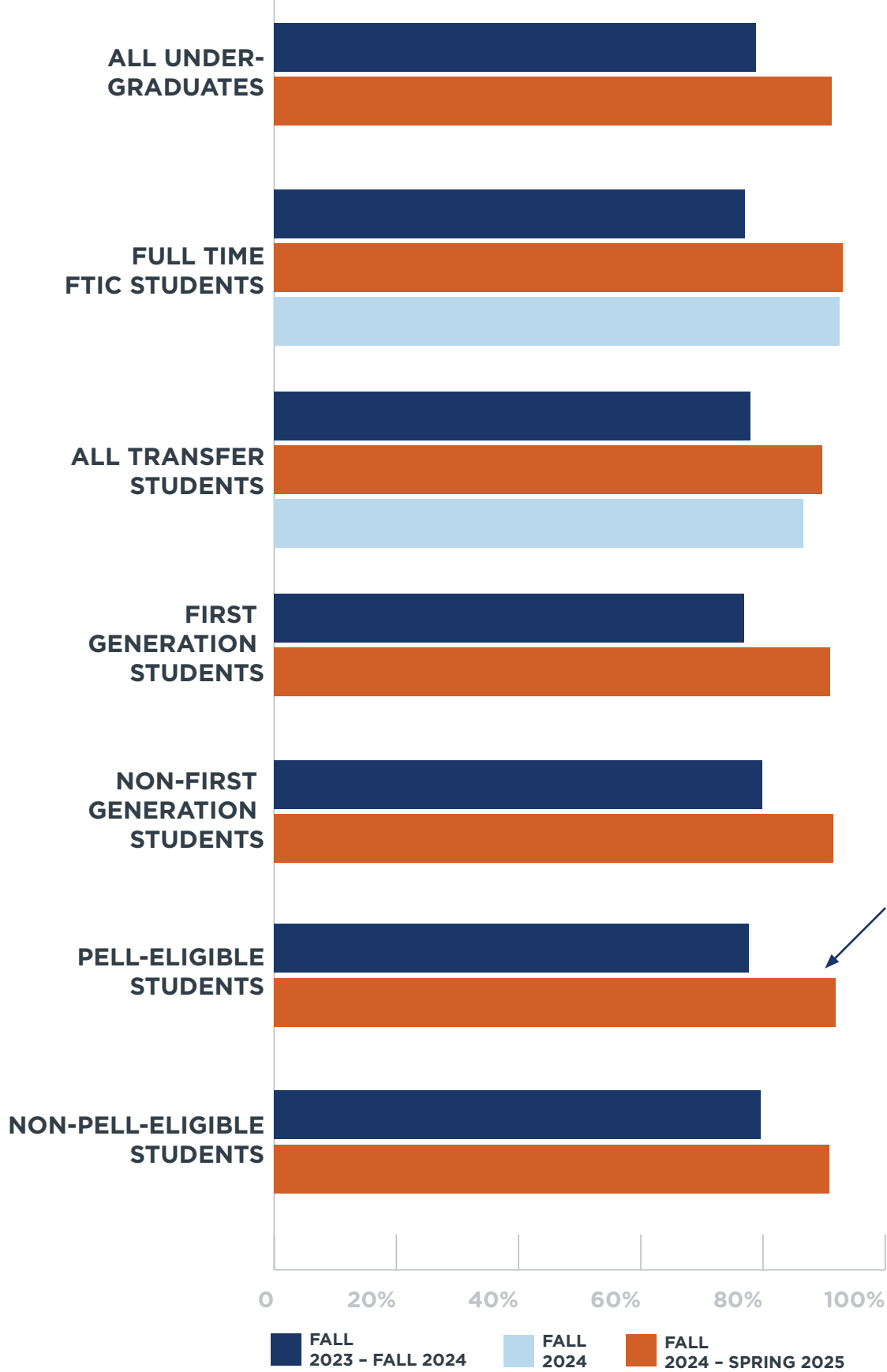
The UT System Chancellor’s Centurions Committee awarded UT Tyler with a **\$20,000 donation** in support of programming for first generation college students



Left to right: Guest speaker Tamam Waritu guiding an activity and a first-generation student at First Generation Day celebration.



RETENTION RATES



OUR PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS **OUTPERFORMED** OUR NON-PELL-ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AND ALL UNDERGRADUATES!

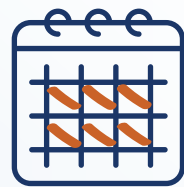
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN TEACHING AND
LEARNING

587.5
HOURS



Guest Speaker Christina Moore

120
PATHWAYS
EXECUTED



33,346 ACADEMIC
ADVISING
APPOINTS

SERVING

9,848
STUDENTS



Left: Guest speaker Cynthia Nebal
Above: attendees

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

MOST ACADEMICALLY
DISTINGUISHED
FRESHMAN COHORT
(TOP 10% AND 25% RANKINGS)

+8%
OVERALL
ENROLLMENT

+7%
FIRST-TIME
IN COLLEGE (FTIC) AND
FRESHMAN CLASS GROWTH

HIGHEST
NUMBER
OF FRESHMAN
- APPLICATIONS
- ADMITS
- CONFIRMATIONS
- AID AWARDS

+8.21%
INCREASE
IN STUDENT CREDIT HOURS (SCH)

+15%
GROWTH
IN GRADUATE
ENROLLMENT
THE LARGEST IN FIVE YEARS

The Division of Enrollment Management at The University of Texas at Tyler has made significant strides in advancing student services and enrollment strategies during the 2024-2025 academic year. Through strengthened community engagement and strategic partnerships, UT Tyler continues to emerge as the preferred four-year institution for East Texas students.

EXPANDED RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES

Early enrollment efforts in high schools, supported by College Readiness partnerships and Academic Advising, contributed to stronger freshman yield and community engagement.

TRANSFER PATHWAYS STRENGTHENED

New MOUs with six community colleges — including Tyler Junior College and Houston Community College — established long-term co-enrollment models and streamlined transfer pathways.

GRADUATE ADMISSIONS MODERNIZED

A new Slate-based Graduate Admission Application was launched, improving usability and operational efficiency across academic programs.

FINANCIAL AID INNOVATION

Despite FAFSA disruptions, the Office of Student Financial Aid awarded aid to more new students than ever. The BlackBaud scholarship tool enabled streamlined access to 376 endowments, resulting in record application volume and full fund utilization.

REGISTRAR ENHANCEMENTS

The launch of Validity, a free graduation verification service, and automated certificate conferral processes, improved service delivery and reduced administrative overhead.

ENROLLMENT SERVICES OPTIMIZATION

The Enrollment Services Center’s automated TSI eligibility improved access to low/no-cost course materials and maintained high-quality support throughout peak enrollment periods.

This year’s accomplishments reflect UT Tyler’s commitment to **innovation, access** and **excellence** in student service and enrollment strategy. The Division remains focused on sustaining momentum and expanding impact across all areas of enrollment management.



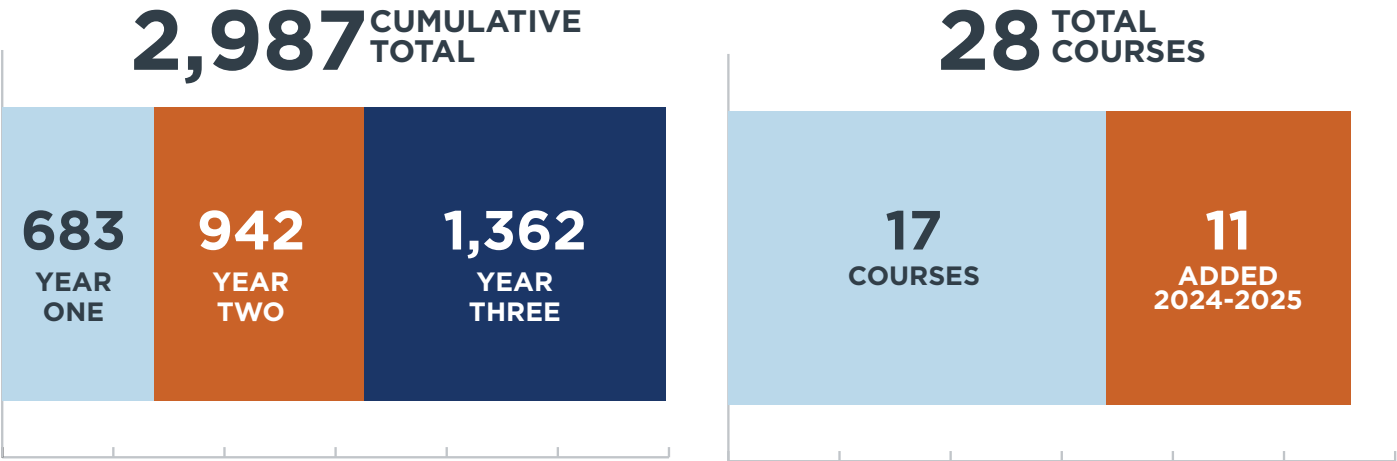
OFFICE OF
**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT AND
ACCREDITATION**



THE UT TYLER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The UT Tyler Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a five-year project to emphasize discipline-specific Real World Problem Solving in undergraduate degree programs and will culminate in a QEP Impact Report included in the 2027 SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim Report. The university QEP Steering Committee provides institutional review and planning in partnership with college and school QEP Leadership Teams chaired by a lead faculty member appointed by the academic dean. The QEP Leadership Teams evaluate student learning outcomes assessment to inform continuous improvement for implementation strategies and assessment practice. The college and school leadership teams promote awareness and encourage participation across undergraduate programs.

Faculty added 11 new undergraduate courses during the 2024-2025 academic year which brought the total number of QEP-designated courses to 28. The courses are offered across all colleges and schools that offer undergraduate degree programs. Two new QEP-designated courses have been identified by faculty to launch in 2025-2026 with 29 of the 49 UT Tyler baccalaureate programs included in the QEP. Student enrollment in QEP courses has increased, rising from 683 in year one to 942 in year two, and reaching 1,362 in year three, for a cumulative total of 2,987 students.



“The QEP experience has helped me gain confidence in my abilities such as critically thinking and evaluating situations and looking for logical solutions to solve problems.”

During 2025-2025, nine QEP instructors of record participated in the QEP Faculty Fellows Cohort and focused on two faculty development initiatives to support real world problem-solving instruction and curriculum design.

In Fall 2024, Dr. Arthur Hernandez, Professor of Higher Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, led a QEP teaching workshop. During the session, faculty explored the use of post-then-pre assessment methodology for evaluating student reflections on problem-solving skills. As a result of the workshop, QEP Faculty Fellows developed a QEP Student Reflection Survey. Spring 2025 survey results indicated a significant increase in student confidence, with the percentage of students reporting they felt “very confident” in solving complex, real-world problems rising from 16% to 48% after completing the QEP assignment.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU IN ABILITY TO SOLVE COMPLEX, REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS?



“The overall purpose of the QEP is something I will continue to apply to my everyday life. Being able to categorize issues based on their urgency and having the ability/knowledge to understand what plans could be viable is something that can be used no matter the context.”

UT TYLER STUDENT

2024 NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) RESPONSE AND REPORTS

NSSE is a benchmarking tool used to gauge student satisfaction with their overall academic experience. UT Tyler results are compared with UT System institutions, selected peer universities and with all NSSE results from hundreds of participating four-year colleges and universities nationwide. Since the survey launched in 2000, approximately 6.5 million students have completed the NSSE providing insight into how undergraduate students spend their time and their perceived gains from the college experience.

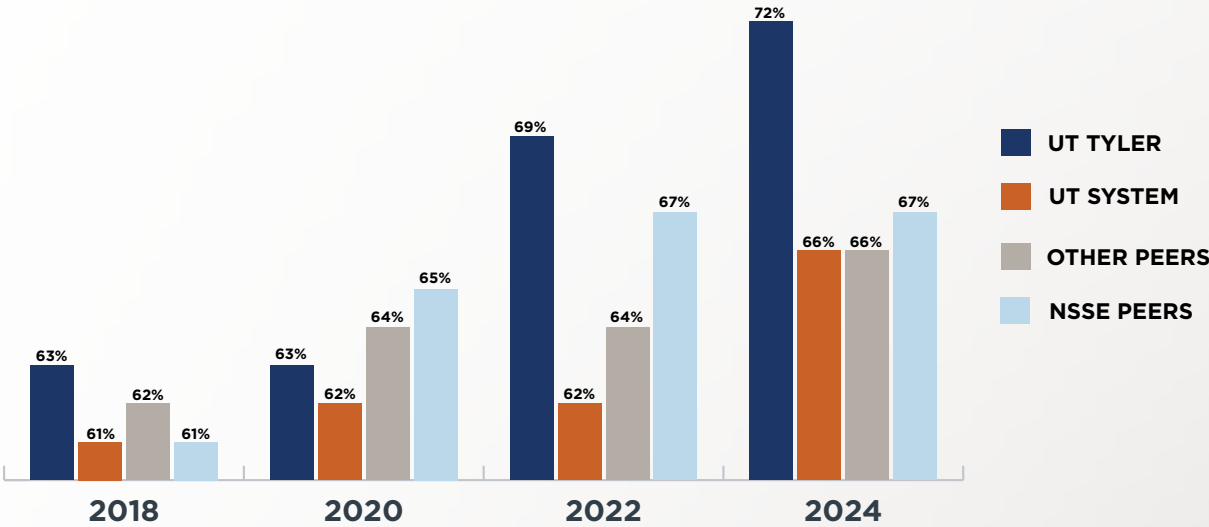
UT System hosts the NSSE survey for all general academic institutions in the System every other year in even-numbered spring semesters. The Office of Continuous Improvement (OCIA) collaborated with the Office of Information Analysis, the Office of Digital Learning, Information Technology and the Student Government Association to administer NSSE in Spring 2024. All first-year students and graduating seniors were invited to participate in the survey and the combined first year and senior student response rate was 45.3%.

In 2024, UT Tyler seniors reported strong engagement on these measures. The percentage of students responding, “Very Much” or “Quite a Bit” to the items “Solving Complex Real-World Problems,” and “Apply Facts, Theories, or Methods to Practical Problems or Solutions,” exceeded the average reported by UT System, Other Peers, and NSSE Peers. For the item “Connect Learning to Societal Problems or Issues,” UT Tyler seniors surpassed UT System peers and performed on par with other peers.

Survey reports were released in September 2024, shared with the campus community and published on the CIA NSSE webpage. In addition to the QEP, UT Tyler NSSE results have been utilized to support assessment and improvement efforts in academic and student support services, Core Curriculum planning, and accreditation self-studies.

Selected NSSE items were reviewed during the development of the QEP and have continued to serve as indicators of overall effectiveness. These items include student perceptions of their ability to “Apply Facts Theories, or Methods to Practical Problems or New Situations,” “Connect Learning to Societal Problems or Issues,” and “Solving Complex Real-World Problems.”

2018-2024 NSSE TREND DATA “SOLVING COMPLEX REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS” % OF SENIORS RESPONDING “VERY MUCH” OR “QUITE A BIT”



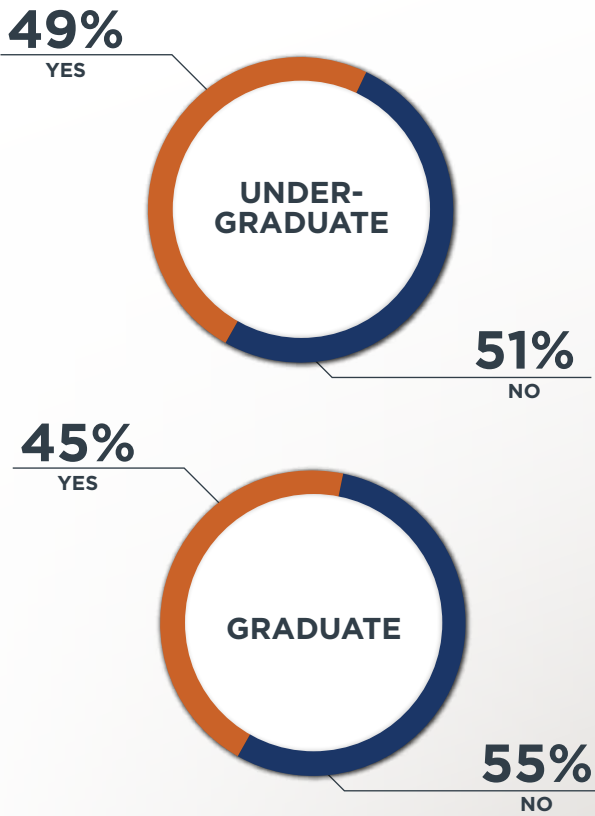
UT TYLER GRADUATION EXIT SURVEY

OCIA updated the UT Tyler Undergraduate and Graduate Student Graduation Exit Surveys (GES) administered to graduating students in Fall 2024, Spring 2025, or Summer 2025 with items related to student belongingness, completion of microcredentials and incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, applications or systems in their coursework. The 2024-25 GES will close later this summer and currently has approximately 2,000 responses from undergraduate students and approximately 1,000 responses from graduate students.

Preliminary data shows that both undergraduate and graduate students indicate feeling valued as a member of the UT Tyler campus community, almost half have completed coursework that incorporates AI, and among those who have completed a microcredential, most have completed either a for-credit academic certificate or an industry-certified credential.

The Undergraduate GES also contains items used to assess the overall effectiveness of the QEP. These items include “My understanding of problem solving has increased,” “My ability to demonstrate real-world problem solving increased” and “I am satisfied with opportunities at UT Tyler to practice real-world problem solving in the classroom.” Student perceptions of gains in real-world problem solving skills have remained consistent over the last three years.

Graduation Exit Survey reports are released annually and published on the CIA Graduation Exit Survey webpage. In addition to the QEP, GES items are utilized to support assessment and improvement efforts for all academic programs, the UT Tyler Core Curriculum and academic and student support services.



Almost half of UT Tyler Graduation Exit Survey respondents completed coursework that incorporated AI technology, applications or systems.

