



# College of Nursing and Health Innovation



## 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON



**“Our College is primed for greatness, and each of us, through our shared values and mission, gets one step closer to realizing that dream for our students, community, and the broader society.”**

**W**hen one hears about The University of Texas at Arlington College of Nursing and Health Innovation, they are showered with stories of resilient and extraordinary students, accomplished alumni supporting their communities, and impactful research that is making a significant difference in the advancement of translational research. This is a name we have made for ourselves across Texas and beyond, thanks to our dedicated faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and community partners—and this year’s annual report is dedicated to you, the trailblazers and difference makers.

In this year’s report, I am proud to share inspirational stories about our trailblazing students who are pursuing their passion no matter their age or circumstance, and who work hard to use their educational experience to support their community. We have stories of our pioneering researchers and faculty who are leaders among their peers and tackling some of today’s toughest health issues and crises.

We also spotlight our alumni who are making a difference across the globe—from being the first from UTA to be accepted to the Harvard Interprofessional Palliative Care Fellowship Program to overcoming COVID-19, which shaped their career ahead in unexpected ways. And we thank our difference makers, including generous donors who are bringing advanced technology and training to our students with the opening of the new Smart Hospital in 2023.

The current year concludes our 50th anniversary, and while we have spent much time celebrating this historic milestone, we are excited to step into our next 50 years. Our College is primed for greatness, and each of us, through our shared values and mission, gets one step closer to realizing that dream for our students, community, and the broader society. Encapsulated in this year’s annual report is the culmination of a rigorous year towards our journey into the future.

As we look ahead at who we want to become, I am excited to invite you to join us by learning about our most recent progress in the 2021-22 College of Nursing and Health Innovation Annual Report.

**Elizabeth I. Merwin**  
Dean, College of Nursing and Health Innovation

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### UNDERGRADUATE NURSING

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing
  - Prelicensure BSN
  - RN to BSN
  - Honors Degree Program

### GRADUATE NURSING

- Master of Science in Nursing
  - Adult Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
  - Adult Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
  - Family Nurse Practitioner
  - Neonatal Nurse Practitioner
  - Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner
  - Pediatric Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
  - Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner
- Master of Science in Nursing Administration
- Master of Science in Nursing Education
- Nursing Educator Certificate
- Post-Master’s Certificate
- Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing

### KINESIOLOGY

- Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science
- Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology
- Bachelor of Science in Public Health
- Master of Science in Exercise Science
- Master of Science in Athletic Training
- Master of Public Health
- Doctor of Philosophy in Kinesiology
- Graduate Certificate in Public Health Practice

### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- FitSTEPS for Life at UTA
- MavFit Exercise and Wellness Counseling
- Little Mavs Movement Academy

### CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

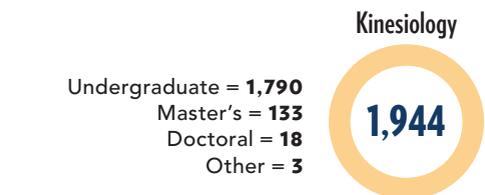
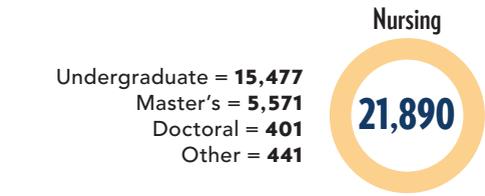
- Graduate Gerontology Health Care
- Undergraduate Telehealth
- Postbaccalaureate Graduate Health Care Informatics

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is a National League for Nursing Center of Excellence.

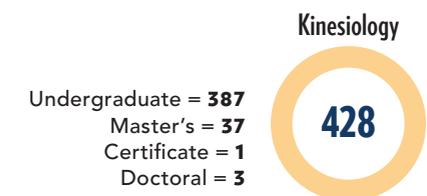
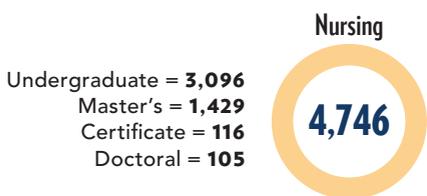
The baccalaureate degree program in nursing, master’s degree program in nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice program, and postgraduate APRN certificate program at The University of Texas at Arlington are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, 655 K Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20001, 202-887-6791.

The athletic trainer program in the Department of Kinesiology is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education.

2021-22 ENROLLMENT  
**23,834**



2021-22 GRADUATES  
**5,174**



**CONHI SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED\***

FALL 2021  
Recipients = 419 **\$534,105**

SPRING/SUMMER 2022  
Recipients = 410 **\$604,556**

*\*total includes endowed scholarships and others from fellowships, grants, and Dream Makers*

**FACULTY**  
Both on-campus and online

<b>NURSING</b>	<b>KINESIOLOGY</b>
Full-time = 142	Full-time = 34
Part-time = 403	Part-time = 23

2021-22 GRANT PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS

**94 \$47.1M**

FY 2021 SPONSORED PROJECTS\*

**\$7,153,499**

*\*new and continuing*

**CLINICAL PLACEMENTS**

<b>UNDERGRADUATE NURSING</b> Placements = 6,365 Sites = 130	<b>MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ATHLETIC TRAINING</b> Placements = 105 Sites = 53
<b>GRADUATE NURSING</b> Placement = 4,652 Sites = 2,166	

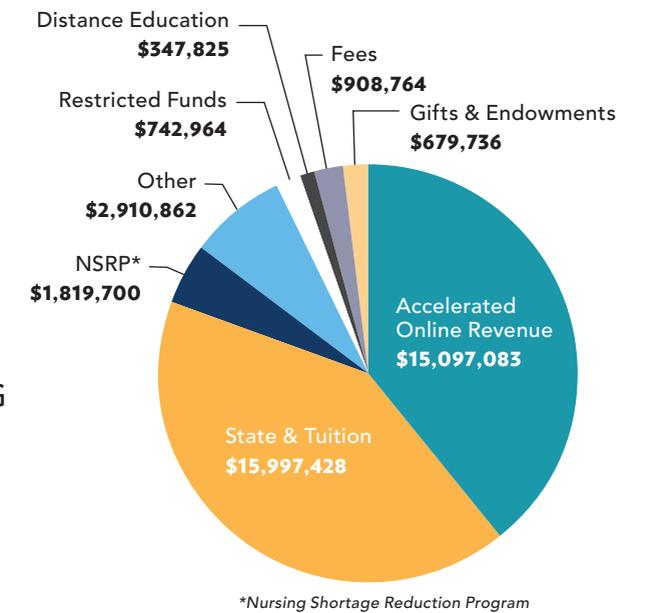
**FIRST-GENERATION TO COLLEGE IN CONHI**

2021-22 ENROLLMENT **7,987**

**34%** of CONHI enrollment was first-generation students.

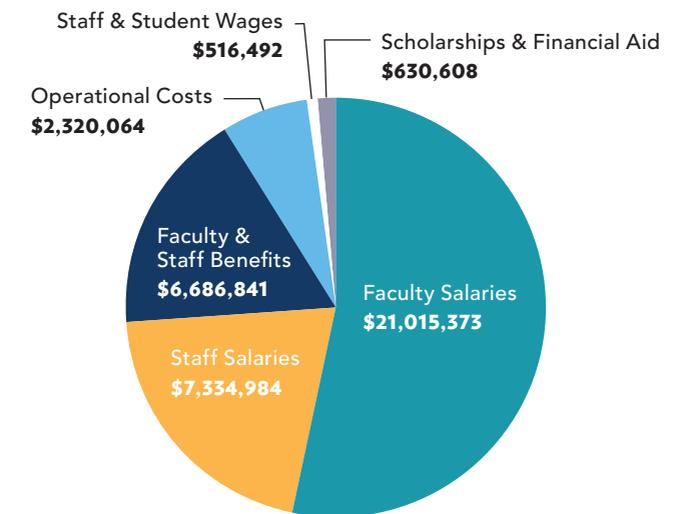


2021-22 SOURCE OF FUNDS



**\$38,504,362**

2021-22 EXPENDITURES



**\$38,504,362**

## UTA ONLINE MSN RANKED AMONG BEST IN NATION

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI) has been ranked as one of the top 10 online Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs in the country.

According to *Fortune's* Best Online MSN Programs in 2022, CONHI ranked no. 8 overall. CONHI is also the largest public college of nursing in the country and fifth among public and private universities.

The College offers an array of online master's specialty degrees that prepare students for advanced practice, management, and education endeavors to address a changing health care landscape. *Fortune's* rankings were based on selectivity of programs, success scores, and demand scores.

"It is an honor to be recognized for this stand-out achievement of our online program, one we know to be exceptional," shared John Gonzalez, chair of the graduate nursing program. "We know we have something special in our programs, and our dedicated faculty help produce leaders among the advanced nurse health care workforce."

*Fortune* reports that between 2020 and 2030, it is

estimated that 121,400 advanced practice registered nurses will be added to the U.S. workforce, a 45% growth in employment for nursing jobs that require master's degrees.

For nurses looking to advance their skills while working full-time, an online degree is a flexible option. CONHI's programs offer asynchronous communication, multiple start dates throughout the year, and are designed for a continuously progressing full-time student to finish in 24 months.



- #1 Ranked Online RN to BSN Program in Texas by RegisteredNursing.org
- #2 Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program by RegisteredNursing.org
- #4 Ranked Nursing Administration Program by RegisteredNursing.org
- #5 RN to BSN Program in Texas by EveryNurse.org
- #6 Best Colleges for Nursing by Scrubsandbeyond
- #8 Online MSN in the U.S. by *Fortune*
- TOP 25 PhD in Kinesiology Programs in U.S. by National Academy of Kinesiology (2020 report)
- #49 Best Nursing Schools for 2023: Master's by *U.S. News & World Report*
- #99 Best Nursing Schools for 2023: DNP by *U.S. News & World Report*



From left, Gabriela Wilson, Kathryn Daniel, and Mari Tietze

## CERTIFICATES FOSTER COLLABORATION TO PRODUCE BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

The health care industry is evolving, becoming increasingly reliant on telehealth and health informatics. The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is evolving right alongside it.

A telehealth certificate program for undergraduate students and a postbaccalaureate graduate certificate in health care informatics aim to train students early in their careers on the value of technology and health care data.

Telehealth is the distribution of health-related services via electronic and telecommunication technology, while health informatics is the storage and use of health care information. Both are meant to foster better collaboration among health-related providers and produce better health outcomes for patients, said Gabriela Wilson, professor of kinesiology and co-director of the Multi-Interprofessional Center for Health Informatics (MICH) at UTA.

"The pandemic really showed the value of telehealth because we were all confined to our homes," Dr. Wilson said. "Health informatics has become a very important discipline in the past few years with the full transition to electronic health records across the health care industry."

Kathryn Daniel, CONHI associate dean for academic affairs, said the certifications add immense value to a student's education.

"These certificates will set our students apart from the competition in the workforce upon graduation," Dr. Daniel said. "Understanding of the field will help our future graduates improve health outcomes, both for patients and providers. The skills discussed and taught in the programs are definitely tools health professionals can add to their arsenal of ways to care for people."

The **undergraduate telehealth certificate** is geared toward upper-level pre-baccalaureate students. Developed in collaboration with MICH, certificate consists of three courses:

- Introduction to Health Informatics, offered annually in the fall semester
- Interprofessional Collaborative Practice, offered annually in the spring semester
- Fundamental Telehealth Skills, offered annually in the summer semester

The new postbaccalaureate graduate certificate in health care informatics aims to train students on health care data, how to gather it, and how to make informed decisions with it.

"Some students may want to be on the analytics side. Others may want to be on the clinical decision support side. There is a broad spectrum of what they can do," said Mari Tietze, Myrna R. Pickard endowed professor and an affiliate of MICH. "But the bottom line is patient safety and quality. That has to be at the core of what they want to do."

The **postbaccalaureate graduate health care informatics certificate** is designed for students who have earned their bachelor's degrees. It consists of four courses that can be completed in as little as two semesters:

- Principles of Healthcare Informatics
- Healthcare Data Management and Analytics
- Health Information Systems Management
- Social Determinants of Health and Healthcare Informatics

Interested in adding a certificate to your degree plan? Email [telehealthadvising@uta.edu](mailto:telehealthadvising@uta.edu).



## CONHI STUDENT'S CAPSTONE PROJECT MAKES A HUGE IMPACT

**Keisha Holland's** capstone project helped more than 150 students in Houston start their school year off on the right foot. The recent CONHI graduate donated backpacks filled with pencils, crayons, notebooks, and folders to the Women's Home in Houston.

For the Accelerated Online (AO) MSN program capstone project, each student partners with a nonprofit to create an initiative connected to the organization's mission and goals. Students can complete the project in their local communities to make a direct impact on the health and wellness of the populations closest to them.

Holland reached out to the Women's Home and learned school supplies were in dire need. She worked with the Home's volunteer coordinator to establish what supplies were needed and organized the drive.

With a goal of 150 backpacks, Holland reached out to friends, neighbors, and the community for support. She passed out flyers in her neighborhood and placed donation boxes at a local church and ice cream shop.

Holland, who plans to pursue a career in nursing administration, said it was a challenge to balance the project with writing final papers and working full time at Houston Methodist, but she is grateful that it is required.

"Completing this capstone project gave me the opportunity to truly make a difference," Holland said. "To see how happy the Women's Home was to have received all the supplies was awesome."



## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

**Brent Crabtree** decided in 2020 to return to school at age 53 to complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, then enter the Master of Science in Nursing Family Practitioner program.

"I live and work in rural New Mexico, which is medically underserved. There are just not enough primary care providers, and I want to do my part in providing quality health care to my community," Crabtree said.

This is one of the main reasons Crabtree is back in school.

His journey has been an inspiration to many to follow their dreams, including his colleagues. Crabtree noted that he might just be the oldest CONHI student in the BSN program, but that will not stop him from achieving everything while he can.

"I also want to mention the instructors and coaches in CONHI, all have been top-notch professionals and have been nothing short of helpful. They genuinely want to see CONHI students succeed," Crabtree said. He learned how to balance work, family, and school all by staying organized and staying on top of everything by prioritizing and making lists.

Crabtree's advice to others who would like to return to school: "Don't be afraid! UTA CONHI has numerous resources to assist you. I can honestly say that I have not run into any issues whatsoever with people not being helpful. Taking that first step is the hardest part of the journey."

## STUDENT'S LONG COMMUTE A SYMBOL OF HER COMMITMENT



For **Yazmin Silva**, earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) from UTA is so important that she has been willing to make a six-hour, same-day roundtrip commute along the Texas border to complete her required clinical hours.

She does so while balancing single parenthood and a full-time job teaching high school Spanish. But Silva believes the commitment to her future is worth the effort.

"The program seemed like it worked for me," she said. "I saw it as something that was very doable."

Silva is able to pursue her UTA degree from South Texas thanks to the College's accelerated online BSN, created in response to a strong need for better access to education, especially in rural areas of Texas. She first looked at nursing programs near her Laredo home, but couldn't find one that fit her packed schedule. That's when an advisor at a local university told her about UTA and its online programs.

That access has proven especially valuable for Silva, who cites the flexibility of UTA's online nursing program as a key element of her success. And though she lives hundreds of miles from Arlington, she always feels connected to the Maverick experience.

"I really feel like this is my calling," she said. "Even though I am so far from campus, it feels like I'm right there. I'm an email away from reaching out to someone. The University is so responsive."

## STUDENTS SHINE AT UT HEALTH CONFERENCE



*Ariel Hall*

UTA College of Nursing and Health Innovation students presented at the UT Health School of Public Health (UTHSPH) Research Beyond Boundaries Conference, organized by the UTHSPH Dallas Student Association. This conference is held annually to highlight student, faculty, and professional research.

Bala Yadu Vamsi Sankuratri and Racquel Owino, recent Master of Public Health graduates, were invited to be presenters, along with Portia Ebgu,

a sophomore nursing student, and public health students Jhoceline Moza, Hannah Affleck, and Danny Dabroy.

Faculty research mentors included Kyrah Brown, Erin Carlson, Tiffany Kindratt, Yue Liao, and Ben Taleb.

Graduate public health student Berford Monciffe placed third for his research, "Cognitive Limitations and Diabetes Comorbidity Among Racial and Ethnically Diverse Older Adults by Nativity Status in the United States." This research was funded by the Michigan Center for Contextual Factors in Alzheimer's Disease and the National Institute on Aging.

Ariel Hall, an MPH graduate, won the first-place research award winner for her work titled, "Using Community-Based System Dynamics Modeling to Address Racial Disparities in Maternal Health." The CONHI Center for Research and Scholarship (CRS) Pilot Grant Program funded this research.

## DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE (DNP)

**Misturat Adesanya**, *Effects of DSMES on Self-Management of Type 2 Diabetes in Minority Population*

**Michael Agyemang**, *Tapering and Discontinuing Opioid Medications Among Veterans in Primary Care*

**Jessica Allen**, *Motivating Change in the Prediabetic Hispanic Patient*

**Veronica Anene**, *Reducing Medication Discrepancies Among Adults Aged 65 Years and Older in Home Health*

**Melissa Arana**, *Colorectal Cancer Screening in Rural Primary Care Clinics*

**Anna Asagba**, *Improving Providers' Utilization of I-PASS Handoff in Hospitalized Adult Gerontology Leukemia Patients*

**Kristina Ballard**, *Palliative Care Screening*

**Tricia Banks**, *Improving Blood Pressure in African Americans Through Education*

**Tonita Bates**, *The Administration of Pre-Medications Prior to Blood Product Transfusions*

**Gayle Boring**, *Evaluation of an Educational Intervention to Increase the Reporting of Workplace Violence*

**Heather Borowiec**, *Introducing Adult Mock Trauma Codes into the Pediatric Emergency Room*

**Kelley Bowman**, *Improving Documentation in Older Adults with Diabetes*

**Courtney Brandt**, *Implementation of a Rapid Ocrevus Infusion Protocol*

**Sarah Cabrera**, *Use of CHG to Aid in the Prevention of SSI in Lumbar Surgeries*

**Emma Carriker**, *Effect of Targeted Provider Education on Standardized Protocol Knowledge and Compliance*

**Veronica Cedillo**, *Implementation of an Ostomy Care Pathway for Patients with a Stoma After Colorectal Surgery*

**Carolyn Charles**, *Measuring the Effectiveness of Provider Education about Chronic Pain Management*

**Kavita Chitale**, *True Prevention Starts With Food*

**Claudette Cook**, *EGS Post-Hospital Discharge Clinic*

**John Cook**, *Texas Mask Mandate Effectiveness on Reducing the Transmission of COVID-19*

**Polly Cordova**, *Educating Prenatal Care Providers About Human Trafficking and Screening for Child Sex Trafficking*

**Undria Criss-Ayelagbe**, *Antibiotic Stewardship and Prescription Guidelines in Reducing Inappropriate Prescribing of Antibiotics*

**Joanne Dalusung**, *Improving Clinical Practice Through Education on Guidelines on Peripherally Inserted Central Catheter Appropriateness Selection*

**Sheeba Daniel**, *Diabetes Self-Management Education*

**Ramiro Del Bosque III**, *Implementing a Chest Pain Assessment Tool in the Outpatient Setting*

**Michael Delaby**, *Implementation of an Inpatient Mental Health/Geropsychiatric Fall Prevention Program*

**Jordan Dudley**, *Decreasing Delayed Inpatient Colonoscopies*

**Laura Duran**, *Burnout and Resilience in Critical Care Nurses*

**Peymaneh Ebadehahwazi**, *Health Care Policy on COVID-19 Prevention*

**Shelli Ellis**, *Effectiveness of Educating Charge Nurses on Incivility: A Quality Improvement Project*

**Onorie Eshareturi**, *Effectiveness of Stress Management Training to Decrease Oncology Nurse Burnout in Internal Medicine Ambulatory Center*

**Sarah Fedak**, *Promoting Adjunct Psychotherapy for the Treatment of Depressive Disorders*

**Heather Garcia**, *Effect of Simulations on Nurse Self-Efficacy and Knowledge of Hypertensive Crisis Treatment in Pregnancy*

**Marilyn Garcia**, *Lessening (Decreasing? Improving?) Time from Referral to Treatment*

**Divina Gato-Hogno**, *The Effect of Full Practice Authority for Nurse Practitioners on Health Care Access in Arizona*

**Tammie Gore**, *Diabetes Education: An Evidence-Based Project*

**Cody Greenwood**, *Assessing Caregiver Discharge Readiness in Neonatal Populations to Reduce Seven-Day Readmission Rates*

**Teresa Griffin**, *Improving Clinical Practice Guideline Adherence in Acute Coronary Syndrome*

**Joane Grissett**, *Bundled Approach to Pressure Injury Prevention in the Geriatric Long-Term Care Setting*

**Claudia Guerra**, *Improving Antibiotic Stewardship in Pediatric Urinary Tract Infections at the Urgent Care Setting*

**Kristina Hammon**, *Improving Timeliness of Antibiotic Administration in the NICU*

**Rebel Heasley**, *The Impact of Teach-Back Method on Hospital Readmissions*

**Eyleen Hidalgo**, *The Effect of Written or Oral Acknowledgement and Feedback from Nurse Leaders on the Nurse's Intent to Stay*

**Lindsey Holden**, *Implementation of a Pre-Surgery Checklist for Total Joint Arthroplasty Patients*

**Audrey Hubbard**, *Reduction of Community Acquired CLABSI*

**Stephanie Huckaby**, *Reducing Workplace Violence in Medical-Surgical Nursing*

**Tera Huffman**, *Introducing a New PCA Workflow*

**Trenel Jackson**, *Implementation of Lung Cancer Screening Program*

**Courtney Johnson**, *AIRING It Out: Addressing Inequities Rooted in Implicit Bias in Nursing with Graduate-Level Curriculum Revisions*

**Natasha Jolivette**, *Self-Care Behavior in the Reduction of Heart Failure Hospital Readmissions*

**Basanta KC**, *Diabetes Educational Program*

**Samjhana Gautam Kafle**, *Effect of Daily Huddles on Teamwork and Team Communication*

**Sheila Kibbons**, *Identification of OSA Risk in Surgical Patients STOP Bang Questionnaire*

**Alebachew Kindie**, *Guideline Utilization to Improve Adherence to Serum Lithium Ordering*

**Kassandra Kube-Robertson**, *Cessation of Smoking and Pregnancy*

**Gaurab Lamsal**, *Impact of Structured Multidisciplinary Care Rounding on the Patients' Length of Stay in Hospital Setting*

**Eula Lee**, *Improving Cultural Competency Levels Among Nurses in a Prison Setting*

**Audrey Lemon**, *Quality Improvement for CAUTI Mitigation in Critical Care unit*

**Jennifer Luna**, *Implementation of High-Fidelity Resuscitation Simulation Training Program*

**Michael Martinez**, *A Focus on High-Fidelity Simulation*

**Kindra McWilliam-Ross**, *Changing Osteoporosis Knowledge and Behaviors Through Structured Education*

**Megan Meer**, *Adolescent Depression Screening Implementation*

**Tracey Martinez Mendez**, *Hackinski Ischemic Scale and Mini-Cog Screening Tools in Palliative Care*

**Ijeoma Mgbaraho**, *Reducing Failure to Rescue in the Hospitalized Adult-Gerontology Patients*

**Marilyn Miller**, *High Risk and Cancer Genetics Clinic*

**Samantha Mitchell**, *Patient Satisfaction with PrEP Program Post Virtual-Care Interface Implementation*

**Garrick Naylor**, *A Simple Exercise Regimen to Decrease Depressive Symptoms: An Evidence-Based Project*

**Maryrose Obidiaku**, *Sexually Transmitted Diseases Consultation and Education for Adolescents and Young Adults*

**Olasumbo Oladunni**, *The Impact of ED Provider Education Regarding Management of Asthma Exacerbations in Pediatric Patients*

**Emerson Olayon**, *Use of an Evidence-Based Checklist Tool to Decrease the Incidence of Bioburden on Surgical Instruments*

**Jesus Olivares**, *Safe Same-Day Discharge for Cardiovascular Procedures in Ambulatory Surgery Centers and Surgical Hospitals*

**Rodolfo Olivares**, *Implementation of Structured Patient Hand-Offs from the OR to PACU*

**Elo Omakor**, *Combining Psychotherapy with Antidepressant for Treatment-Resistant Depression*

**Vane Omosa**, *Impact of Legislative Policy on Young Women's Breast Cancer Health*

**Lauren Ann O'Neill**, *Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, Social Determinants of Health, and Emergency Department Overcrowding*

**Favor Osakwe**, *Improve Medication Adherence in Psychiatric Patients: A Quality Improvement Project*

**Domingo Parra**, *Mobility Team to Decrease Length of Stay*

**Poonam Patel**, *Vitamin D Protocol for Patients with Chronic Spinal Cord Injury/Disability (SCI/D)*

**Kashiris Perryman**, *Nurse Practitioner Preceptor Education to Increase Role Preparedness*

**David Pickett**, *Daily Huddles: A Quality Improvement Intervention to Bridge Effective Communication*

**Sarah Quinsa**, *CHG Bathing to Aid in Preventing Lumbar Surgical Site Infection*

**Cherri Radford**, *Reducing Compassion Fatigue During a Pandemic*

**Wendi Rice**, *Improving Postpartum Depression Screening*

**Tiffany Richardson**, *Fall Bundle Impact on Pain Procedure Patients Aged 65 and Older*

**Stephanie Robison**, *Pre-Treatment for Peripheral Intravenous Catheterization*

**Thomas Roha**, *Pressure Injury Prevention Using Nursing Education*

**Michelle Rohlfs**, *Specialized Discharge Education to Decrease Readmission Rates in Patients Admitted with Immune-Mediated Toxicities*

**Kellye Roper**, *Evaluating the Effect of a Nursing Intervention on Advance Care Planning for Medicare Advantage Patients*

**Silvia Rose**, *Sepsis Bundle Compliance*

**Sheeba Roy**, *Purposeful Hourly Rounding to Reduce Patient Falls*

**Jose Santos**, *Improving HPV Vaccination in Hispanic Adolescents*

**Diane St Pierre Runnels**, *Improving Glycemic Control by Increasing Patient Engagement*

**Nicole Stell**, *Interventions for Type 2 Diabetes to Improve Self-Management in the Employees of an Employee Health Clinic*

**Aniwelyn Tan**, *Implementing Diabetes Screening in At-Risk Populations in the Multispecialty Clinic*

**Deshonna Taylor**, *Nurse Injuries Related to Patient Movement*

**Victoria Thomas**, *Increasing Documentation of Obesity and Intermittent Fasting*

**Latonya Tyler**, *Decreasing Falls by Use of Four-Hour Rounding*

**Mary Ukeni**, *Increasing Knowledge and Awareness About Needlestick Injuries Among Nurses in the Hospital*

**Jamyl Walker**, *Discharge Preparedness from Skilled Nursing Facilities*

**Jennifer Walston**, *Impact of Digital Diabetes Education on Glycemic Control in Uncontrolled Diabetics*

**Prajnawati Wibowo**, *Delirium Assessment in Hospitalized Older Adults*

**Cameron Wilson**, *A Scavenger Hunt Gamification Simulation to Enhance Novice Nurse Competence*

**Jeffrey Zipparo**, *A Music Therapy Intervention to Reduce Perioperative Anxiety During Office-Based Gastroenterological Procedures*

#### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN NURSING (PHD)

**Shorok Alahmedi**, *Nursing Students' Cultural Awareness and High-Fidelity Simulation Skills Validation*

**Donnalee Pollack**, *Pressure Ulcer Risk Factors Associated with Level of Paralysis in Persons with Spinal Cord Injury: An Analysis of the National Spinal Cord Injury Database*

#### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN KINESIOLOGY (PHD)

**Samuel Lauman**, *Investigation into the Relationship between Posture and Psychology: The Psychological Ramifications of Forward Head and Rounded Shoulder Posture*

**Zachary Martin**, *Elevated Cardiovascular Disease Risk in Black Females: The Impact of Social Determinants of Health and Novel Preventive Strategies*

**Samantha Moss**, *Reducing Disparities in Physical Activity and Early Child Development: A Systematic Review and Observational Approach*



From left, Ziyad Ben Taleb, Danny Dabroy, and Farjana Yesmin

## TEAM INVESTIGATING EFFECTS OF HOOKAH USE

A team of public health researchers has begun first-of-its-kind research on the health effects of hookah use.

Led by Ziyad Ben Taleb, assistant professor of public health and director of UTA's Nicotine and Tobacco Research Laboratory, the team will study how the size of a hookah device—also known as a water pipe—impacts its user's health.

"There is not much research about hookah use," he said. "In order for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate it, there is a need to gather evidence."

The study will focus on the idea that hookah use is less harmful than tobacco products—a misconception that he says stems from users' belief that the smoke is filtered through water—and on marketing aspects.

Dr. Ben Taleb also will use a device designed by American University of Beirut that, when integrated into the hookah itself, can measure real-time statistics, such as the number of puffs, total volume inhaled, and breaks taken between each puff.

Danny Dabroy, a former smoker, took immediate interest in the study. He is a graduate of CONHI's Bachelor of Science in Public Health program and a Master of Public Health student.

"At the end of our research sessions, we usually give participants a pamphlet with facts about smoking and quitting," Dabroy said. "We want to change behavior, ultimately, which is why we collect data."



## EXAMINING PEDIATRIC WORKFORCE DECLINE

Over the past five years, the number of medical students who pursue a career in pediatrics has declined, while the number of pediatric positions needed has steadily increased. Pediatrics is the only major medical discipline that has experienced this stark shortage.

The whys and hows of this dilemma are what graduate nursing Assistant Professor **Kristin Gigli** and her colleagues hope to uncover. Dr. Gigli was selected to serve on the National Academy of Medicine's Committee on the Pediatric Subspecialty Workforce and its Impact on Child Health and Well-Being.

Topics considered by the committee include how the pediatric workforce has evolved in general pediatrics and pediatric subspecialties. The committee will look into the role of state and federal policies and resources in developing and supporting a well-trained pediatric clinical and research workforce with appropriate competencies to improve child health.

"It's exciting for me to bring my expertise as a nurse practitioner to this report," Gigli shared. "I have been part of the workforce group that has been building momentum toward getting this report put together and off the ground."

The committee will recommend strategies and actions to ensure an adequate pediatric clinical and research workforce.

While the committee is just beginning its search, Gigli knows that what it finds will have a lasting impact.

"I think there is lots of potential impact for this work in the future," she noted.



## CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN DEPRESSION AND IMMUNE HEALTH

Ann-Katrin “Anka” Grotle, a postdoctoral fellow in the Human Neural Cardiovascular Control Lab, was honored with the Neural Control Autonomic Regulation Section Research Recognition Award and an invitation to speak at the Experimental Biology Conference.

Dr. Grotle’s research, “Inflammatory phenotype and T-cell mitochondrial reactive oxygen species in young adults with major depressive disorder,” was a CONHI collaborative project between the Neurovascular

Physiology Laboratory, the Integrative Immunology Laboratory, and the Human Neural Cardiovascular Control Laboratory.

The project focused on how major depressive disorder (MDD) affects T-cell function and circulating inflammatory markers. The study focused on younger, healthy adults with MDD.

“MDD is a prevalent mood disorder affecting approximately 280 million individuals globally and is a leading cause of disability,” Grotle explained. “This means it can significantly reduce one’s ability to work and perform daily functions. The prevalence of MDD accelerates in young adulthood, with many patients battling with this illness into midlife and later.”

Her findings supported the hypothesis that young adults with MDD show an early marker of having a weakened immune system.



## CENTER FOR RURAL HEALTH AND NURSING OPENS

The new Center for Rural Health and Nursing will enhance access to health care for Texas’ rural communities.

The center is funded by a \$4 million legislative appropriation by the state of Texas to improve nursing education and the health outcomes of rural populations.

Elizabeth Merwin, center executive director and dean of CONHI, hopes the center will develop and foster a model for providing nursing education to rural residents aiming to become registered nurses and nurse practitioners. This model will support and educate students while they reside in their home communities. It also will aim to reduce the shortage of nurses and other health providers to support access to health care for Texas’ rural populations.

“Our goal is to form close relationships with key organizations and stakeholders within rural communities in Texas to improve access to health care by enhancing the health professional workforce,” Dr. Merwin said.

Aspen Drude, center manager, said the center aims to support existing providers and recruit young people from rural populations to become nurses in their communities.

“We want to make sure students who are in rural high schools and community colleges have paths into our programs,” Drude said. “We hope that our continuing education programs will meet the needs of current nurses and increase opportunities for rural residents, while meeting the workforce needs of the rural community.”

Reshma Thomas, a first-year Master of Science in Nursing student, joined the center as a student nursing assistant. As a family nurse practitioner in training, Thomas is passionate about serving vulnerable rural populations.

“Nearly 25% of Texas’ population lives in rural communities and suffers from harmful health disparities and lack of care,” Thomas said. “Providing preventive care and raising the health care standards in these communities is vital.”

## CENTER FOR HEALTHY LIVING AND LONGEVITY

The center aims to improve the quality of life of older adults by improving physiological health with innovative, evidence-based physical rehabilitation programs.

## CENTER FOR HISPANIC STUDIES IN NURSING AND HEALTH

The CHSNH aims to advance the health and human condition of underserved and culturally diverse Spanish-language populations in the United States and abroad.

## SMARTCARE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SmartCare is a collaborative project between CONHI and the College of Engineering to develop, build, and deploy the next generation of intelligent care technologies enabling improvement in in-home health care. Kathryn Daniel is director.

Two University-wide research centers are led by CONHI faculty.

## MULTI-INTERPROFESSIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH INFORMATICS

MICHI draws from strengths and knowledge of multiple professions and disciplines with the ultimate goal of transitioning from sick care to health care. Marion Ball and Gabriela Wilson are co-directors.

## NORTH TEXAS GENOME CENTER

The center provides massive genome sequencing capabilities for biotech and health research. Florence Haseltine is medical director.

Amounts awarded to UTA in 2021-22

## NURSING

### MARCO BROTTO

*Osteocyte Regulation of Bone/Muscle with Aging;* Subaward with Indiana University via National Institutes of Health; **\$1,885,605**

### MEGAN ROGERS and JENNY ROYE

*Nursing & Allied Health Supporting Clinical Learning to Mitigate Impediments Due to COVID-19;* Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; **\$149,136**

### VENU VARANASI

*Antioxidant Implant Coatings for Rapid Bone and Vascular Regeneration in Compromised Wound Healing;* Osteo Science Foundation; **\$100,000**

### YAN XIAO

*PROMIS Learning Lab: Partnership in Resilience for Medication Safety;* Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; **\$2,499,999**

## KINESIOLOGY

### ZIYAD BEN TALEB

*Understanding the Effect of Waterpipe Size on Smoking Behavior, Toxicant Exposures, and Subjective Experiences;* National Institutes of Health; **\$154,000**

### PAUL FADEL

*Mechanisms of Exercise Intolerance in Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction: Precision Therapy Based on Patient Specific Pathophysiology;* Subaward with UT Southwestern Medical Center via National Institutes of Health; **\$1,903,916**

### CHUEH-LUNG HWANG

*Reducing Blood Pressure in Mid-life Adult Binge Drinkers: The role Microvascular Function and Sympathetic Activity;* National Institutes of Health; **\$249,000**

### YUE LIAO

*Personalized Feedback of Wearable Biological Sensor Data to Promote Active Living in Cancer Survivors;* American Institute for Cancer Research; **\$247,500**

### MICHAEL NELSON

*Mechanism and Modulation of Sex Differences in Myocardial Steatosis Induced Left Ventricular Dysfunction;* National Institutes of Health; **\$3,302,033**

### JINGSONG ZHOU

*Preserving Mitochondrial Function for Alleviating ALS Progression;* National Institutes of Health; **\$1,830,901**

The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is proud of our many alumni as they aspire to new heights and reach their goals. We are happy to learn of their success, after receiving an excellent education here at CONHI. Read about their experiences with the CONHI community.



### JAMYL WALKER, '22 DNP

Doctor of Nursing Practice graduate Jamyl Walker is serving in a year-long fellowship with Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital.

Dr. Walker is the first UTA student to be accepted into the Harvard Interprofessional Palliative Care Fellowship Program. She will go through training focused on palliative and hospice care in inpatient and outpatient settings.

Walker began as a registered nurse in the surgical/trauma intensive care. She transitioned into geriatrics and long-term care as a nurse practitioner, inspired by her grandmother who died at 99 and her mother, a cancer survivor.

"I knew I wanted to provide more supportive care for older adults and those with serious illnesses after my own family experiences," she said. "There's a shortage of providers in palliative and hospice medicine, and I want to increase education and application of this specialized care among our most vulnerable communities."

A geriatric nurse practitioner at Baylor Scott & White Medical Center before her fellowship, Walker said she would like to see better access to palliative and hospice specialists and care options, especially in long-term care settings.

"If curative treatment is not an option, what do we do for supportive care?" she said. "This additional training will provide evidence-based guidance regarding how to answer that question."



### ESPERANZA SANCHEZ, '10 BSN

#### What do you think is the value of your field?

The job is mentally, emotionally, and physically demanding, but in return you get to make an immediate and profound impact on people who find themselves at their most vulnerable. Nursing gives me a pure sense of fulfillment when I can meet someone's most basic needs during moments of anguish and catastrophe.

#### What advice do you have for prospective students?

Contemplate what you are asking for in applying. Nursing school will demand sacrifice and dedication, but that is because the registered nurse holds significant public trust. If you are lucky enough to gain admission into the nursing program, give that opportunity its due respect.

#### What was your most memorable CONHI moment?

My professors explained that nurses must work under untenable conditions because policymakers often do not understand the realities of nursing. Then, my nursing jurisprudence professor, Nancy Roper Wilson, said, "We need more nurses to go to law school." I took that as a call to action. On my 30th birthday, I drove to Washington, D.C., to begin law school.

#### Where are you in your career today?

As a lawyer, I work for the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Solicitor. As a nurse, I serve on the rapid response team at George Washington University Hospital.



### CHRISTINE CHASSE, '09 BSN

Christine Chasse's time with CONHI transitioned her from teenager to registered nurse. After acquiring her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2009, she was a nurse resident for Baylor (now Baylor Scott & White Health).

"I liked the camaraderie and the diversity of the student body. I never had friends who were biracial like me or met other third-culture kids—Americans born or raised abroad—until I went to UTA," said Chasse.

In 2013 she earned her master's degree in nursing administration with UTA and worked in nursing education at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas. Chasse later went into nursing management, before venturing out for her law degree.

As an undergraduate student, she made some of her best friends who taught her how to think globally and understand the differences between one another, ultimately making her a stronger and more understanding clinician.

"I made some of the best friends I have for life. I was challenged, I was humbled, and it was the best place to have my life's renaissance," she said.

Chasse is now a health care lawyer, and she plans to grow as a nurse attorney, as well as to show other nurses that the legal field is a solid career option, and they have other options in addition to being clinicians.

"I want to see CONHI maintain clinical excellence and their reputation in the community," she said. "When I went in, it was not a diploma mill, and I hope it remains that way. Being a UTA nurse means something."



### CLAIRE OLIVER-DEHAVEN, '22 MSAT

Claire Oliver-DeHaven overcame significant obstacles to graduate with her Master of Science in athletic training degree in May 2022.

In fall 2020, Oliver-DeHaven was hospitalized with COVID-19. Despite that hurdle, she was able to make up for the missed time and graduate with her class, even while still struggling with lingering effects of the disease.

"My clinical experiences have been the highest point of my MSAT career," she said. "I have learned so many things from my incredible preceptors and have had invaluable hands-on experiences that I may never get to have again. I have been not only challenged and pushed, but also encouraged in ways that I never expected. My preceptors are now my mentors, and those relationships will continue to grow beyond the program."

Oliver-DeHaven expressed how surprised she was about the knowledge required of athletic trainers and the depth of understanding to be able to graduate from the UTA MSAT program.

"I continued to be amazed by how much we were required to not just memorize, but truly comprehend," she said. "I honestly loved the challenge of it all."

Oliver-DeHaven's advice to students: "Live in the moment, every moment. This whole journey is stressful and exhausting and incredibly challenging, but through it all, do not forget to stop for a minute or two and remember how incredibly rewarding it will be to help people live their happiest, healthiest lives."

## CONHI STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM \$1.5 MILLION GIFT TO UTA

The University of Texas at Arlington has received more than \$1.5 million in support of scholarships for talented and deserving students.

Alumnus Edward Perez Jr.'s gift will create two endowed scholarships—one in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation and another in the College of Science. Both scholarships will be named the Edward and Dorothy Perez Scholarship Fund in honor of Perez and his late wife, Dorothy.

The funds were granted posthumously through a bequest that named UTA as the sole beneficiary of Perez's IRA account at the time of his passing in 2018.

"Mr. Perez's generous gift demonstrates his understanding of how vital scholarship funds are to helping students from all backgrounds achieve their educational goals," UTA President Jennifer Cowley said. "He has left a legacy that will have a life-changing impact on students in UTA's nursing and science programs for generations to come."

Perez received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the College of Science in 1975. He completed his courses while working full-time to support his family and went on to have a successful career at AT&T until retiring in 1997.

He is remembered as an exceptionally intelligent man who enjoyed working with remote control planes, collecting stamps, and photography.

Perez wanted to contribute to the well-being of hard-working individuals striving to complete physical sciences and nursing degrees at UTA.



Edward Perez Jr. (photo courtesy of Perez family)

In creating his bequest to UTA, his goal was to provide scholarship support to students who pursue their educations while employed.

Through the generosity of donors like Perez, promising scholars receive the financial assistance they need to achieve their academic dreams and become the next generation of professional and community leaders.

For more information about scholarship support, visit [uta.edu/giving/impact/scholarships](http://uta.edu/giving/impact/scholarships).

## OPENED JANUARY 2023

In 2021, UTA began building the School of Social Work/College of Nursing and Health Innovation Smart Hospital Building, a new facility that unites the University's celebrated School of Social Work under one roof and will house CONHI's modernized Smart Hospital, a training space that includes mock patient rooms and medical robots. The building began hosting its first courses in the 2023 spring semester.

The 150,000-square-foot facility is a mix of flexible, state-of-the-art, technology-enriched learning spaces; teaching and research labs; student engagement, study, and support spaces; faculty and staff offices; and the Smart Hospital simulation learning center.



## COLLEGE RECEIVES GIFT TO ADVANCE NURSING EXCELLENCE

A \$50,000 gift from the Delta Theta chapter 102 of Sigma will provide a collaborative space in CONHI's new Smart Hospital where faculty can engage with students, enhancing the nursing learning environment.

UTA will name the area the Sigma Learning and Engagement Space in recognition of the Delta Theta chapter's generous investment in educating the next generation of nurses. The gift qualifies for a match from the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation, doubling its total value to \$100,000.

"The Delta Theta chapter 102 of Sigma has long been one of UTA's most valued philanthropic partners," UT Arlington President Jennifer Cowley said. "This gift will accelerate our efforts to provide the technology-enriched experiences that nurses need to thrive in today's dynamic health care environment."

Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, or Sigma, promotes nursing scholarship, leadership, and service and was the first U.S. organization to fund nursing research.

UTA's Delta Theta chapter has established four endowments at the University that support

nursing research and nursing students at the graduate and undergraduate levels. The chapter also has provided annual scholarship funding through CONHI's Dream Makers event and has supported an endowed professorship and an endowed graduate fellowship.

"We continue to be proud partners in advancing student and faculty excellence in UTA's College of Nursing and Health Innovation," said Sandra Laird, president of the Delta Theta chapter 102 of Sigma. "We are pleased to make this commitment toward the new Smart Hospital to further stimulate learning within the nursing profession."

**"We continue to be proud partners in advancing student and faculty excellence in UTA's College of Nursing and Health Innovation."**





**UTA**

College of Nursing and  
Health Innovation

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