

UTAhealth 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON \ COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH INNOVATION



50

**PAST AND
FUTURE
EXCELLENCE**

The College of Nursing
and Health Innovation
celebrates 50 years.



A nursing student helps with the assessment of a pediatric patient, circa 1966.

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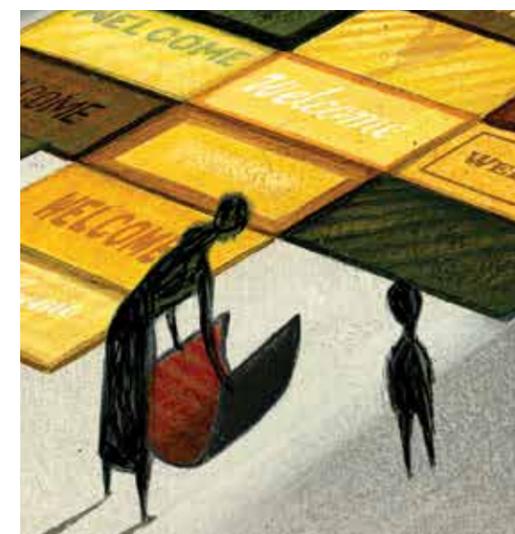
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UTAhealth

COLLEGE OF NURSING AND
HEALTH INNOVATION

DEAN
Elizabeth Merwin

**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
& COMMUNICATIONS**
Sarah McBride

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
& COMMUNICATIONS**
Amanda Wenzel

MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER
Daniel Grigg

CONTRIBUTORS
Meghan Gallagher Jessica Sirkin
Precious Olowokere Doug Shaffer
Alexandra Pirkle

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

VICE PRESIDENT AD INTERIM
Salma Adem

SENIOR ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT
Joe Carpenter

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND
MEDIA RELATIONS**
Jeff Carlton

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICES
Lee Coburn

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL
SERVICES**
Amber Scott

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DESIGN SERVICES
Melissa George

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UTA
College of Nursing and
Health Innovation

NOTES FROM THE DEAN



AS I REFLECT ON THE LAST 50 YEARS of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, the singular, yet incredibly powerful way I hear the journey encapsulated is *transformation*. A transformation from a new and proud baccalaureate nursing program to a renowned College with programs in nursing, kinesiology, and public health.

I can think of no greater way to describe the path our College and its three departments have made from 1971 to today. Our student body has grown tremendously in numbers while maintaining an exceptional level of academic quality, our programs have expanded to meet industry needs and changing market demands, our faculty have brought forth discoveries and innovation into education and research, and our alumni have gone on to make a remarkable impact both locally and globally.

As we look at who we once were and who we are now, it is not by chance that we are the No. 1 producer of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in Texas. Our nursing programs have grown from enrollment in the hundreds to enrolling well over 20,000 students each year. Our newest undergraduate and graduate programs in public health have seen increased enrollment, and graduates are landing competitive jobs in the workforce. The academic success of all our programs reaches beyond the boundaries of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. From rural communities across Texas to online programs across the country to national and international collaboration and exchanges, our students enter the workforce prepared to tackle any challenge anywhere. This year we are also pleased to add both undergraduate- and graduate-level certificates focusing on health informatics, an important and fast-growing field in need of trained health professionals like those graduating from our College.

Our research is no exception either. While the College has a long history of research endeavors, today it has surpassed expectations never thought possible 50 years ago. With over 40 research programs across our College, from interdisciplinary centers to physiology and cardiovascular laboratories, our body of research has forever left an important mark on the scientific community and will continue to do so for years to come. We offer exciting undergraduate research opportunities like our new summer program that you can read more about in this edition. To highlight just a few aspects, we have researchers focusing on community interventions, making important strides in public health, and endeavoring to improve patient safety.

In this year's edition of *UTA Health*, I invite you to read about the academic and research work happening across our College. Take a trip through our programs and see where we once were, where we are today, and where we are heading next. As we honor our 50th anniversary this year, I am humbled by the impact this College has made across Texas and beyond. I encourage you to stay in touch with our College as we honor 50 years of excellence, innovation, and progress—and look ahead to the next 50 years.

Elizabeth I. Merwin, Ph.D., RN, FAAN
Dean, College of Nursing and Health Innovation

CONTINUING EDUCATION FLOURISHES

Alumni and faculty will continue to benefit from professional development provided by the College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI), as the college recently received reaccreditation by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. This credential certifies CONHI as an accredited provider of nursing professional development activities, which allows registered nurses to earn nursing contact hours toward fulfillment of renewal requirements for relicensure specified by their state boards of nursing.

"It is extremely valuable to be an accredited provider," says Becky Baird, clinical assistant professor and director of faculty development. "It's beneficial for our faculty, who can take advantage of the many continuing education opportunities we offer, as well as our alumni and other nurses who have 24/7 access to our free programs."

CONHI offers an array of free continuing education activities at uta.edu/conhi, and plans are underway to add more throughout the year. The activities are available to alumni, preceptors, and other stakeholders and can go toward fulfilling their required hours. The College also provides high-quality online live activities for faculty, focusing on topics in academia.

"Upon graduation and licensure, students can look to us to be a provider of continuing nursing education to fulfill their professional development needs," says Baird.



Leading Health Technology Research

Professor Mari Tietze recognized for her work

UTA recently selected Mari Tietze for the Myrna R. Pickard Endowed Professorship for her ability to lead collaborative research that reflects practical applications for nursing education, practice, and administration.

As an experienced nursing educator and researcher, Dr. Tietze works closely with CONHI faculty to advance interprofessional research and innovation in technology, health informatics, and nursing education. This year, she played a critical role in launching CONHI's graduate health informatics certificate.

Recently, Tietze was the co-lead researcher for a series of statewide studies to assess the experiences of practicing nurses with electronic health records, from which a toolkit to address the issues was constructed and made publicly available. This work was in collaboration with a partnership between the Texas Nurses Association and the Texas Organization for Nurse Leaders.

Tietze's research continues to support the nurse's need to navigate ever-evolving health technology. One current project is evaluating nurses' knowledge of how to use electronic information to care for patients who have socioeconomic needs. Another project is developing case studies that support faculty as they transition to teaching nurses more technology-based care of the patient. One future study will help teach beginning researchers how to analyze health data that addresses the needs of diverse, underserved populations.

"I am honored to represent the Myrna R. Pickard Endowed Professorship," says Tietze. "Experiencing such support for my research in this role and being involved in bringing up the new graduate health informatics program excites me for its potential impact on local and national communities."

1971
-75



1972

Hazel Jay directed the Continuing Education program from 1972-74. The Center for Continuing Nursing Education was dedicated to meeting the needs of registered nurses at all levels.



1974

Myrna Pickard became the first dean of nursing at UTA.

1976
-80



1977

UTA initiated the Rural Health Outreach program, a precursor to the Center for Rural Health and Nursing.



1978

Eugene Anderson became the chair of what was then called the Department of Exercise, Sport, and Health Studies.



Elanda Douglas, Aspen Drude, and Elizabeth Merwin

Rural Outreach

CONHI opens Center for Rural Health and Nursing

This year, CONHI launched the Center for Rural Health and Nursing to enhance access to health care for Texas' rural communities. Funded by a \$4 million legislative appropriation by the state of Texas, the center will support efforts to improve rural nursing education and the health outcomes of rural populations.

Elizabeth Merwin, the center's 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 those students while they reside in their home communities. It will also aim to reduce the shortage of nurses and other health providers to support access to health care for Texas' rural populations.

"Thanks to generous funding by the state of Texas, CONHI will be able to form sustainable partnerships with rural communities that improve the quality of life for underserved populations in those areas," says Dr. Merwin.

Aspen Drude, the center's manager, says the center aims to support existing providers and engage young people from rural populations to become nurses in their communities. The center's nursing education initiatives will be supported by Elanda Douglas, a clinical assistant professor and nurse practitioner.

"Our rural health curriculum will prepare students with a broad set of skills to meet the day-to-day demands of rural care," Douglas says.

Reshma Thomas, a first-year student in CONHI's Master of Science in Nursing program, is a student research assistant at the center. 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," she says. "Providing preventive care and raising the health care standards in these communities is vital."



Anderson lecture attendees

LECTURES KEEP FUTURES IN FOCUS

The Anderson Sport Performance lecture series has been bringing significant professionals from sports culture to UTA for over 40 years and is a highlight for many students each semester.

The series was paused due to the pandemic, but it has been back in action since fall 2021. The series returned with Dallas Mavericks General Manager Nico Harrison. Most recently, the Department of Kinesiology hosted Elaine Vassie, general manager of Dallas Jackals Rugby, to speak.

"This lecture series provides unique insight to our students who are looking to go on to sports-related professions," says Priscila Tamplain, associate chair for undergraduate programs in the Department of Kinesiology. "Whether they want to work for a professional sports team, go on to work in a clinic, or much more, this is valuable insight into the kinesiology field that our students can hear about firsthand."

Alec Eskenazi, a senior in the undergraduate exercise science program, clinical and applied physiology track, says the lecture series helped illuminate future career prospects.

"The Anderson sports lecture provided me with an extensive knowledge of rugby, which I did not know was very popular outside the United States," he says. "My health and fitness career is unpredictable since there is not a specified sport that I will work with when training athletes, so attending the lecture put into perspective the variability of different types of sports trainings."

REDUCING THE STIGMA

One CONHI researcher's timely findings are pivotal to reducing the stigma around mental health and advocating for more resources for graduating nurses as they transition to practice.

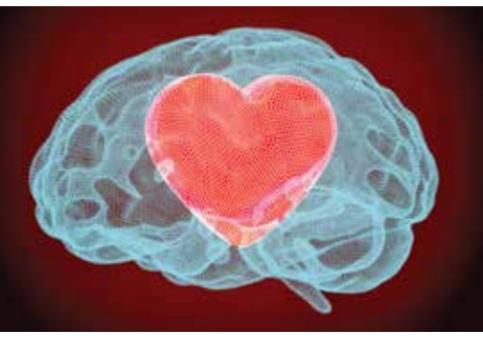
"We are just now normalizing conversations around the mental health of health care providers, and this has been due in part to COVID-19," says Regina Urban, assistant professor, who studies the relationship between nursing, stress, and resilience.

With 24 years of nursing experience in both nursing and psychology, Dr. Urban is uniquely suited to this line of study. In addition, over the past two years, she's seen firsthand the pandemic's profound impact on new nurses' mental health.

"You take an event that's already complex, the transition to nursing practice [which] takes by our best estimation about a year to accomplish, and then you throw on top of it a pandemic...this has been a challenging time for new graduate nurses," she says.

Urban's latest study, performed during the height of the Delta variant, gathered quantitative data from 192 nursing alumni who graduated between December 2019 and 2020. In her study, she found a marked increase in stress, anxiety, and depression in new nurses, particularly four to eight months into their transition. This valuable information, says Urban, "will help move the conversation forward on nurses' mental health."

Now more than ever, new graduate nurses need to develop practical skills to unpack the mental and emotional challenges that arise during the transition to practice. "Now the real question," Urban says, "is what can we do to help?"



Krystal Craft

An Eye-Opening Experience

Nursing student inspired after conference

Krystal Craft, a first semester junior in CONHI's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, recently attended the 2022 National Student Nurses Association (NSNA) Conference, where she experienced delegate proceedings and learned how resolutions were created, advocated for, and passed.

"It was an eye-opening process that showed me how we can stand up for ourselves, our patients, and the nursing profession," she says. "By teaming up with one another, getting more involved in advocacy and policy change, and putting patient care at the very heart of what we do, we can achieve things tomorrow that seem like only a dream today."

Though not yet a graduate, Craft has received great advice from those in the nursing profession, both new to the field as well as seasoned professionals. It is advice that was reinforced from her experience at the NSNA Conference.

"Each individual nurse is in control of how they practice. Being an informed, competent nurse who engages in evidenced-based practice is a choice," she says. "While the nursing profession has maintained a No. 1 spot as the most trusted profession in America, we as individuals must work each day to continue to hold that spot and maintain the public's trust."

While Craft does not yet know where her career will go once she graduates in 2023, she knows her passions will lead her in the right direction.

"I have always been deeply passionate about women's health," she says. "I will use this nursing degree to empower and encourage women with education about the incredible things they are capable of."

1981
-85



1981

The School of Nursing received a grant from the DFW Hospital Council to increase undergraduate enrollment.



1982

The School of Nursing moved into the newly constructed Nursing Building.



1984

The school achieved National League for Nursing reaccreditation.

1986-90



1987

The Texas American College of Sports Medicine lecture series established.



1988

Undergraduate Research Day established.

A LASTING IMPACT

When Seth Holwerda ('10 MS, Exercise Physiology) was looking for a graduate program, he knew he wanted to learn from the best—so he chose UTA in order to study under David Keller, associate dean and chair of the Department of Kinesiology. He was particularly interested in Dr. Keller's work on neural cardiovascular control and blood pressure regulation.

"The underlying physiology I learned at UTA is critical for ongoing research," he says. "If I could go back, I would not have gone to study anywhere else. It was the best decision to study with Dr. Keller."

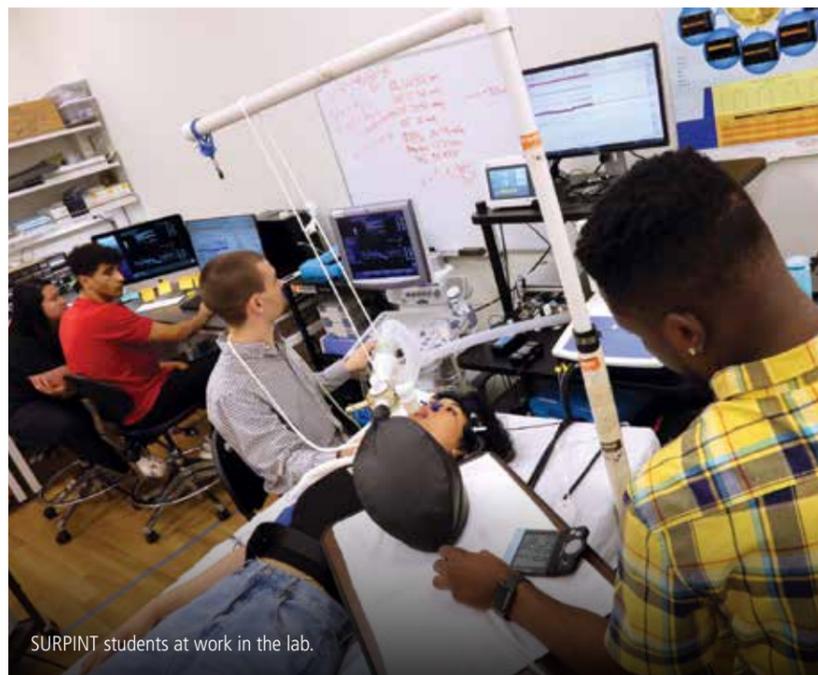
Dr. Holwerda went on to earn his PhD from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and today, he is director of the Kansas Neural Cardiovascular Control Laboratory and an assistant professor in the Kansas University Medical Center Department of Anesthesiology. He continues to study the baroreflex—a body mechanism that helps maintain blood pressure at near constant levels—something he began while working with Keller.

"I have a strong interest in the nerves that control blood pressure and how they facilitate getting blood to where it needs to go in the body," says Holwerda, who is currently exploring blood pressure regulation in obesity, as well as separately in those with chronic pain.

"When I'm creating a research protocol, I go back to my days at UTA and use the principles behind the techniques that I learned with Dr. David Keller," Holwerda says. "I still apply those today."



Seth Holwerda



SURPINT students at work in the lab.

Summer Scientists

SURPINT program provides student research opportunities

"I wasn't standing in the corner; I was working hands-on as a scientist this summer," says Natalia Cardenas, a biology major who plans to graduate in 2022. Cardenas participated in the Summer Research Program in Integrative Physiology, or SURPINT.

A new program offered by CONHI, SURPINT had its inaugural year in 2021 and started up again in the summer of 2022. The program was founded by R. Matthew Brothers and Michael Nelson, both associate professors in kinesiology.

The first cohort was made up of 10 undergraduate students from various science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs. The fellows spent 10 weeks during the summer pursuing individual research projects in the laboratory with distinguished CONHI faculty.

In this format, students not only gained laboratory experience and new research skills, but they also saw firsthand what postgraduate research and education are like.

"Dr. Brothers does an amazing job of incorporating first-generation students and students who don't have the prior knowledge of what research is and giving those students opportunities to work in the lab," says Cardenas, who was mentored by Dr. Brothers. "It was truly a highlight of my undergraduate program."

Julie Mireles, a biological chemistry major also graduating in 2022, studied under Dr. Nelson for her research project on cardiac mechanics.

"Having the opportunity to dive deeper into my fascination about cardiac function has been a great experience," she says. "Working in the lab has truly aided in my personal growth and allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation for research."



AO BSN students

FACILITATING DEGREE ATTAINMENT

With around a quarter of the state's population living in rural communities, CONHI's Accelerated Online (AO) Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program aims to provide baccalaureate-level nursing experiences for students in local clinical settings. By partnering with rural facilities, students can complete the majority of their degree requirements while remaining in the geographic region in which they live.

"We hope this initiative will assist hospitals in rural areas by providing a pathway for education of their current staff wishing to pursue a BSN or graduate degree," says Pam White, AO BSN program manager. "We also hope to develop a pipeline for recruitment of other non-employee individuals as they come through our programs."

There are currently three clinical sites participating in the initiative: Childress, Gatesville-Coryell Health, and Lampasas-AdventHealth Rollins Brook. This fall, Hill Country Memorial Hospital will join as a partner, followed by Val Verde Medical Center and Graham Regional Medical Center in spring 2023. The plan is for each site to host eight to 16 AO BSN students per year, providing them with the opportunity to meet the majority of their clinical requirements without having to travel to a more metropolitan area.

White shares that the student response has been overwhelmingly positive, as students cite lower stress levels during clinicals as well as positive interactions with the nursing staff.

"By offering students this option, it's also hopefully allowing rural hospitals to attract more nurses after they graduate," she says. "Rural health nursing is important, and by expanding into these areas, we are trying to provide nursing resources and new nurses to help the nursing shortage."

From Concept to Clinic

Exercise science grads get hands-on experience as interns

Hundreds of recent UTA graduates with bachelor's degrees in exercise science are entering the workforce with invaluable hands-on experience. As part of their degree requirements, students are required to complete internships at participating organizations in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

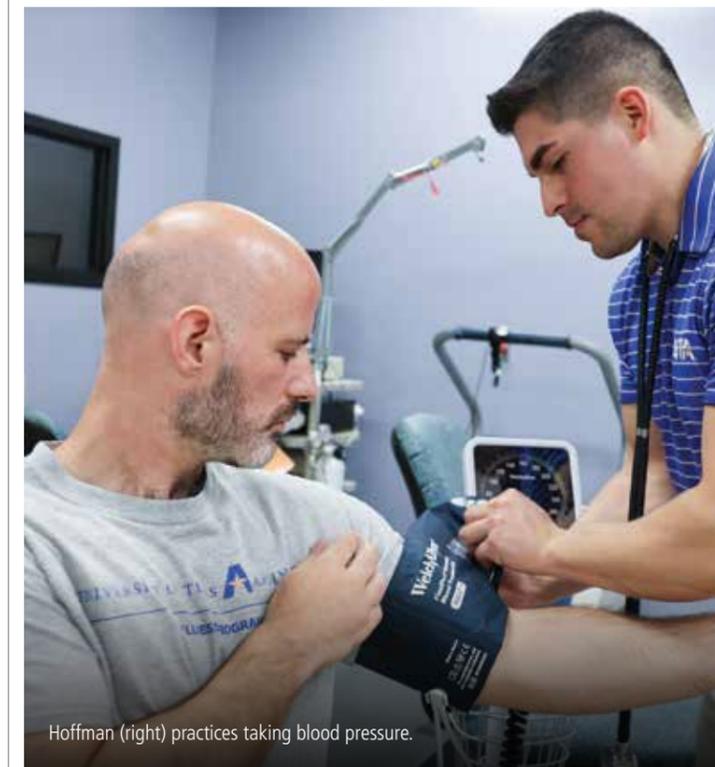
"The time I had interning at Texas Health Arlington Memorial in their cardiac rehabilitation department was incredible," says Joshua Hoffman ('22 BS, Exercise Science).

According to Priscila Tamplain, associate chair for undergraduate programs in the Department of Kinesiology, the list of benefits from an internship for CONHI's exercise science students is a long one.

"The internship allows students to experience several areas of exercise science while being guided by a mentor in the job," says Dr. Tamplain. "The best thing about having that experience as a class is that students get to connect the concepts they've learned in their academic career with the real-life job market and professions."

For Hoffman, the internship is already opening doors.

"I have had multiple interviews with Texas Health and Baylor Scott & White Hospitals and have received offers," he says. "Everyone at UTA has been amazing throughout the undergraduate program as well."



Hoffman (right) practices taking blood pressure.

1991-95



1991

The Rural Health Outreach Program contributed to the development of a grant from the Office of Rural Health Policy for a nurse-managed clinic in northern Bosque County to provide direct care to medically underserved populations.



1995

The Bachelor of Science in exercise science degree launched.

1996
-2000



1997

Carolyn Cason named associate dean for research and director of the Center for Nursing Research.



2000

The Department of Exercise, Sport, & Health Studies renamed the Department of Kinesiology.

Safely Numb

UTA researcher helps ensure high-caliber anesthesia patient safety research

Yan Xiao, professor of undergraduate nursing, has been charged with ensuring anesthesia patient safety research meets the highest standards. As chair of the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) Scientific Evaluation Committee, Dr. Xiao leads the committee that selects research projects for funding from APSF and provides feedback to applicants so they can learn and improve their research projects.

“As chair, my responsibility is to ensure the credibility and caliber of the committee members and to conduct rigorous scientific reviews,” he says.

With members from across the globe, APSF is one of the foremost organizations in anesthesia patient safety and has awarded over \$13.5 million in research grants. Applicants for APSF funding are mostly anesthesiologists from the U.S. and Canada who are passionate about patient safety.

“The APSF has a long tradition of working at the cutting-edge of patient safety theory and practice,” says Xiao, a human factors researcher. “The work I have done, specifically around anesthesia patient safety, lends credibility to lead this group.”

Xiao’s research is closely aligned with patient safety, and he sees his role as chair as an opportunity to influence trends in patient safety through working with committee members, as well as an opportunity to advance the science.



Yan Xiao



HNCC Lab participants

GROUNDBREAKING STUDENT RESEARCH

The Human Neural Cardiovascular Control (HNCC) Lab, led by Paul Fadel, focuses on investigating neural cardiovascular control in human health and disease. Under Dr. Fadel’s expert guidance and mentorship, his students have been at the forefront of producing groundbreaking research.

The success of the students extends beyond the lab, as several lab members were recently invited to present their research at the prestigious Experimental Biology conference in Philadelphia. Ann-Katrin “Anka” Grotle won an award for her work.

The achievements of each lab member are impressive, but many attribute their success to the guidance and mentorship of Fadel.

“The success I’ve achieved during my graduate career at UTA was a direct result of Dr. Fadel. Under his mentorship, I was able to further my research abilities, collaborate with like-minded people, and connect with fellow scientists across the nation,” says Brandi Stephens. “With such a wonderful and unique experience working in the lab and being a part of UTA, if I had the option, I would choose the program all over again!”

As several students near graduation, their research and contributions have helped move the needle forward in critical areas such as women’s health and medical racial disparity. It is only a matter of time before each student graduates from CONHI and makes their own distinctive mark in the health research field. Grotle will begin a new faculty position in fall 2022 as assistant professor in the Department of Sport, Food, and Natural Sciences at the University of Western Norway.

BINGE WATCH

At the intersection of heart health and alcohol consumption lies a common misconception Chueh-Lung “Laura” Hwang hopes to debunk.

“Many people believe ‘light-to-moderate’ alcohol consumption is good for heart health,” she says. “The truth is, the connection between heart health and alcohol is complex and we don’t really know its full impact.”

Following postdoctoral research at the University of Illinois–Chicago, where she studied blood vessel function and binge drinking in young adults, Dr. Hwang joined CONHI’s Kinesiology Department in January 2022 as an assistant professor. In addition to her research, she also brings extensive experience as a physical therapist for patients with cardiopulmonary diseases.

At UTA, Hwang plans to continue her investigation and begin studies that focus on the relationship that binge drinking and exercise have on blood pressure. She knows firsthand the need for more research around the impact of alcohol on our well-being, as some patients would report drinking in excess and claim it was good for their health.

Without a proper understanding and more scientific evidence about the ill effects of alcohol on the heart, it can be difficult to recognize its effect in younger adults. This, along with her passion for scientific discovery of cardiovascular physiology, prompted her to explore the correlation between alcohol and heart health as we age.

“As we age, our cardiovascular function declines. Does drinking accelerate the decline in cardiovascular function during aging?” asks Hwang. “This is one of the questions I would like to answer through my research program.”



Chueh-Lung Hwang



CJ Talley pursues his passion in CONHI.

Sometimes Life Intervenes

Student pursues his purpose at CONHI

When a 2017 car accident landed Curtis “CJ” Talley in physical rehabilitation, the care he received changed his outlook on the practice of athletic training.

“I was treated by a chiropractor, athletic trainer, and a physician, and the most consistent person in my care was the athletic trainer,” Talley says. “He was with me from beginning to end.”

Talley’s experience defined his career goals. When he enrolled at UTA following his accident, he began pursuing a degree in athletic training and is now in his first year of the Master of Science in athletic training (MSAT) program at CONHI.

“I’ve had the opportunity to work with amazing programs that not only allowed me to grow in my love for the profession, but as a clinician,” he says. “They’ve opened the door for me to chase my dream of working in professional sports as I secured my internship with New York Giants for this summer.”

Talley says that the MSAT program has been challenging in the best possible way.

“My professors have been great at not only preparing me for the profession, but pulling more out of me,” he says. “It’s been a great opportunity for me to be better each day and set a new standard for myself.”

2001
-05



2003

The undergraduate program in Athletic Training received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs.



2003

The first Exercise Science Research Laboratories built in the Maverick Activities Center.

2006-10



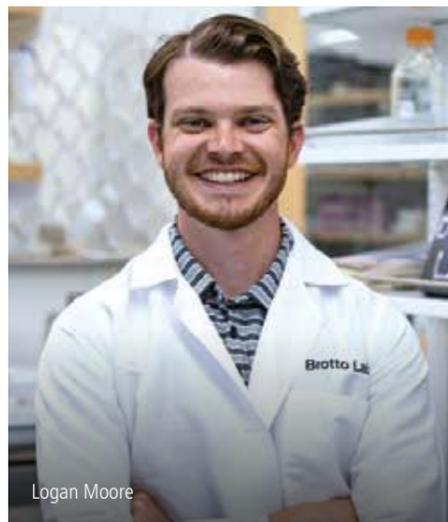
2009

In recognition of the need to promote the field of kinesiology, the Department of Kinesiology joined the American Kinesiology Association.



2010

The University of Texas System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the University's request for a name change, and the School of Nursing became the College of Nursing.



Logan Moore

GOOD BONES

Logan Moore, a doctoral student in the Department of Kinesiology, is focused on understanding how osteoarthritis affects people and what can be done to prevent and treat it.

"I have always been interested in how the body works and moves," Moore says. "My academic career led me to recognize that there is a huge gap in osteoarthritis research. My hope is that my work will help bridge those lapses."

For his research and accomplishments as a student and graduate research assistant in the Marco Brotto Laboratory, Moore was named one of 29 recipients of the 2021 American Society for Bone and Mineral Research Young Investigator Awards.

"Participating in the masterclass was an incredibly valuable opportunity to learn and share my work with peers and other professionals in the field," Moore says.

Marco Brotto, George & Mary Hazel Jay Endowed Professor and director of the Bone-Muscle Research Center (BMRC), says Moore has "a true passion for science."

"It's another example of how great our environment is for interdisciplinary training at the Science & Engineering Innovation & Research building and the BMRC," says Dr. Brotto, who directed the PhD in nursing program until June 2022. "This recognition is a great honor for Logan, the Brotto Lab, the BMRC, and the Department of Kinesiology."

Impactful Care

Alumnus making a difference in health policy

Philanthropist, bedside nurse, leader: All of these describe Tonychris Nnaka ('15 BSN). Born and raised in Nigeria, Nnaka has been driven to make a difference in health care from a young age after witnessing the heartbreaking death of his sister from a waterborne illness. He moved from Nigeria to the United States when he was 17 in search of an education that would help him achieve his goals.

"UTA was my first choice," Nnaka says. "It was where I wanted to go." A focused student, he was also in the Honors College, where he found a lifelong mentor from the program.

Nnaka went to work at Baylor University Medical Center. It was then that he also began saving for the elementary school that he would eventually establish in Nigeria. The school now has over 200 students.

After earning his master's degree from the University of North Texas Health Science Center, Nnaka enrolled in a PhD program in nursing, with a concentration in precision health and health policy, at the University of Texas at Austin. He also serves as a policy advisor to Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson, informing the mayor on health and environmental policy strategies and executions.

"I love nursing. It's one of the best decisions I've ever made," Nnaka says. "It has given me the opportunity not to just work, but gain real-life experiences that I take with me into every new role."



Tonychris Nnaka



Priscila Tamplain (top photo) and other LMMA volunteers and participants.

Mastering Movement

Ten Years of Little Mavs

Celebrating its 10th year, the Little Mavs Movement Academy (LMMA) is a motor-skill intervention program to improve the lives of children and adolescents with movement and coordination difficulties. In helping to address these motor issues for kids, Little Mavs also provides hands-on training for CONHI students, who gain real-world research experience by assisting the program.

"The Little Mavs Movement Academy started as a way to serve the needs of the community," says Priscila Tamplain, director of LMMA. "We launched in 2012 with only six children in a small room. Today we see over 25 children every semester."

The Little Mavs program combines physical training along with social skill development, which helps children and families feel included and like they belong to a community.

"We have seen children and families grow," says Dr. Tamplain. "The growth is not only from improving their motor skills, but also in how they gain confidence and love for movement and physical activity, something they initially had a hard time with."

To learn more about the program, visit littlemavs.uta.edu.

NO APPOINTMENT? NO PROBLEM!

CONHI brought enhanced hours for advising to nursing and kinesiology students in 2022 with walk-in advising options. Beginning in the spring, students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program could walk in daily to the Office of Enrollment and Student Services (OESS) in Pickard Hall from Monday through Friday to receive advising for their major. Bachelor of Science in exercise science and Bachelor of Science in public health students also had walk-in options weekly on Thursdays.

Walk-in opportunities were made available to students who had met at least once with an advisor before, and the walk-in advising slots could be secured upon arrival.

"We are excited to offer daily walk-in options for our students in order to better serve them," says Candice Calhoun-Butts, assistant dean of OESS. "We fully understand that life can be challenging as students with managing classes, studying, family obligations, and work. They may not know what their day looks like or an unexpected question might pop up, so we want to ensure we are easily accessible and available to our students as much as possible."

In OESS, students meet with CONHI's trained professional advisors during walk-in times and receive guidance to help them through the pursuit of their educational, personal, and career goals. CONHI's advisors are vital resources for students to receive information pertaining to their progress in their academic program, and it is recommended that students meet with an advisor regularly.



Dr. Candice Calhoun-Butts, assistant dean

2011-15



2012

The Little Mavs program founded.



2014

CONHI's Office of Enrollment and Student Services founded.

2016
-20



2016

The College's Clinical Translational Research forums began.



2020

The College became a member of the National Hartford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence.

Developing Medical Humanities

CONHI co-hosts first Medical Humanities Symposium

In April 2022, UTA hosted its first Medical Humanities Symposium as part of National Public Health Week. Led by Grace Brannon and Sonia Kania from UTA's College of Liberal Arts (COLA), the goal of the symposium was to connect professionals, practitioners, students, and patients to show the practical application of the medical humanities program in health-related fields, particularly the importance of empathic communication and patient-centered approaches.

Along with academics and professionals, students from different fields of study had opportunities to be involved with the symposium's development and execution. UTA student organizations assisted with the logistics and formulating questions beforehand to ensure an interactive audience.

"The first part of the symposium really was to educate others on what medical humanities is," says Tiffany Kindratt, assistant professor of kinesiology and a member of the planning committee. "Then we were able to bring in different aspects like medical humanities through art, where patients expressed themselves and their experiences with disease through art."

Other speakers, including representatives from UT Southwestern, explored topics such as taking personal bias out of medical note-writing. Another speaker highlighted the importance of addressing and maintaining eye contact with a patient who is using a language interpreter.

Paid for by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the symposium was a collaborative effort between CONHI, COLA, and UTA's Department of Philosophy, who together provide coursework for students related to medical humanities topics in their programs at UTA.

"The symposium was good exposure for students that may be interested in nursing, kinesiology, or public health, who may be more interested in looking at these other sides of communication between providers and patients," says Dr. Kindratt.



Tiffany Kindratt and students discuss medical humanities.



Kathryn Daniel

ADVANCING CARE

To meet the health care needs of our growing population of older adults, CONHI now offers a Graduate Gerontology Healthcare Certificate. The certificate program is designed to provide health care professionals the skills they need to offer the best care to adults age 65 and older.

"The goal of the certificate program is to give a generalist in any health care field extra information on caring for older adults so they can be better prepared and skilled providers," says Kathryn Daniel, associate dean of academic affairs in nursing.

The certificate program has been open for two years, accepting graduate students, most of whom begin with some experience as health professionals. The program is completely online but tied to the campus calendar, includes some synchronous meetings, and can be finished in as little as two semesters. These courses cover more than the clinical management of disease, including everything from health policy to health insurance to social work. The program also prepares RN students to sit for the Gerontological Nursing Certification offered by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. APRN students would be prepared to sit for the Gerontological Specialist exam offered by the Gerontological Nursing Certification Commission.

Current student Ka'Shiris Perryman, a nurse practitioner, joined the program when she realized there was still more for her to learn in order to take the best care of her patients. According to Dr. Perryman, the certificate program has encouraged her to find creative ways, think through, and explore strategies to care for older people. She loves how well-rounded the program is and feels like the opportunity to study social work has been tremendously beneficial.

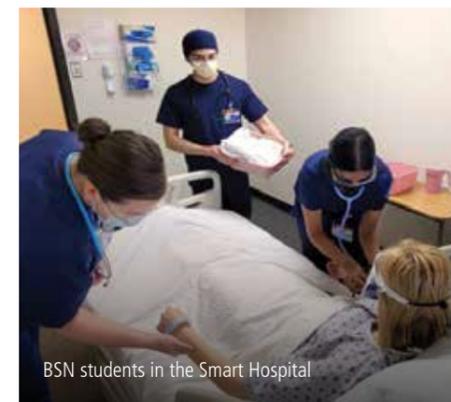
"It's really about being someone that my patients feel comfortable with," she says.

ENHANCED NURSE TRAINING

Our manikins are turning human! More aptly, CONHI recently swapped some of our training practice from manikins to real-life simulated participants. Simulated participants are trained individuals who portray a real patient to simulate a set of symptoms or problems.

Beginning in 2021, our first semester junior BSN students experienced the "bed, bath, and beyond" training, where they practiced morning care and changing sheets for patients in a hospital setting with a simulated participant playing the role of the patient.

"These types of trainings had previously been done with manikins. While effective, we have a closer experience to the real-life situation students will encounter by using real people for them to interact with during these simulations," said Jennifer Roye, assistant dean for simulation and technology in CONHI.



BSN students in the Smart Hospital

"Having simulated participants is a great opportunity because they give you real-life experiences, such as responding or reacting back," says Rizzy Reyes, a student in the BSN program.

The Smart Hospital and Smart Lab continue to identify additional trainings where they can bring in simulated participants to provide a more realistic experience for our students.

Adding Depth

New professor enhances gerontological research

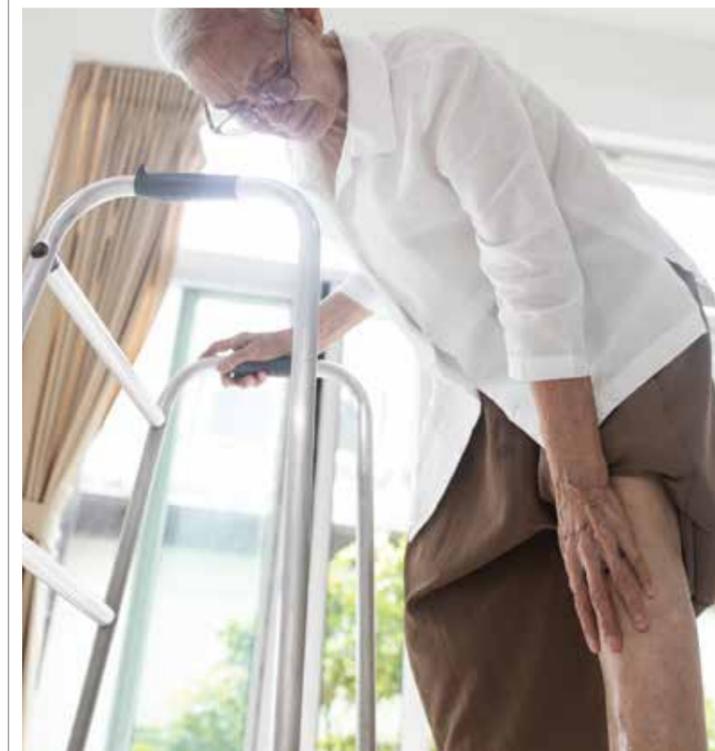
This past winter, Barbara St. Pierre Schneider joined UTA as a professor in the Department of Graduate Nursing. As the Endowed Chair in Gerontological Nursing Excellence, she brings with her an accomplished background of extensive clinical and research expertise, with work focused on skeletal muscle injury, inflammation, and recovery.

Dr. Schneider has spent several years studying how muscles recover after trauma. At UTA, she will begin examining how the recovery process of muscle injuries is affected by the aging immune system.

"My goal is to look at it from both perspectives: What's going on with the muscle as well as how the aging immune system performs during this recovery," says Schneider. "The immune system plays a key role in this process. Also, there are other opportunities to examine how the aging immune system influences the development of other aging-related problems, like frailty."

Schneider is currently focused on establishing a lab and is looking forward to planning and conducting studies. In addition to her own research goals, she aims to enhance and strengthen gerontological nursing research in CONHI.

"There's a lot to learn, but I'm so fortunate to have the resources available to continue my research at CONHI. I'm hoping there are more nurses here at UTA doing research in this area," says Schneider. "Part of it is generating a pipeline of nurse scientists who have the skills to conduct physiological-type gerontological research. CONHI currently excels in multiple domains of gerontological nursing research, and I am confident we will continue to advance even further."



2021
-22



2021

UTA broke ground on the new School of Social Work/Smart Hospital Building.



2022

Barbara Schneider appointed as CONHI's Endowed Chair in Gerontological Nursing Excellence.



The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is preparing students for success outside the classroom through rural and global immersion programs.

BY ANGELA BALDWIN

IN ARLINGTON AND BEYOND

At The University of Texas at Arlington, students are prepared for successful careers through programs, classes, and immersive experiences. And in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI), students are going even deeper. Not only are they learning how to work in the health care field, but they are also being shaped into future leaders. They are focusing on research, clinical partnerships, and going far beyond Arlington, everywhere from small towns throughout Texas to global virtual exchanges. Study abroad programs, international partnerships, and rural area outreach help introduce CONHI students to a diverse range of health care needs, culture, and community.

LOCAL TO RURAL

CONHI students get to experience life outside Arlington during their graduate and postgraduate work through various local and rural experiences. Due to the pandemic, some of those experiences became virtual and brought students from different continents together to share their learnings and work together.

Finding opportunities for students to learn at the bedside is not as easy as it sounds. Nursing programs are competing for clinical positions at hospitals all over the country. DFW Region Partnerships and Dedicated Educational Units (DEU) were created to give students more opportunities to work within hospitals in rural areas and to expose them to potential future job placements.

IN ARLINGTON *AND BEYOND*

DEUs, which CONHI now has at Medical City Fort Worth and Medical City Plano, utilize practicing nurses as preceptors. The DEU model allows nursing students to work directly with an assigned lead nurse mentor for hands-on experience while being able to obtain feedback and ask questions in real-time during each patient encounter.

Another program CONHI offers is Rural Nursing Immersion. Through this program, students gain experience at Childress Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Childress, Texas. As students and nurses worked side by side, they shared knowledge and discussed innovative solutions to rural health care challenges, such as the benefits of telehealth for patients in rural areas.

“One of the many benefits for students is that they can learn about challenges rural nurses experience and how these nurses support their community,” says Jessica Smith, assistant professor.

Meagan R. Rogers, associate chair for undergraduate nursing, notes that in addition to connecting nurses with the community, it helps introduce them to new options for their careers.

“Rural areas can give students an opportunity to work with patients who have unique medical needs, witness small town hospital culture, and see beyond city life for future employment,” she says.

Jeana Bollinger ('22 BSN) said of her Childress experience, “I felt such a connection with CRMC after our visit, and I would have never had this experience otherwise. I was honored to have the opportunity to get this in-depth look at a

rural health care environment.”

For Dr. Rogers, her work goes beyond licensure—it’s about helping students to find the right fit for their future employment. As nursing students enter the nursing field, she hopes to show what rural opportunities there are through engaging experiences not only in Childress, but also in Plano, Fort Worth, and beyond.

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

The College’s community partnerships extend from hands-on nursing experience to research, a critical part of CONHI’s comprehensive programs. The work of researchers in the College can impact communities across the nation, and students have the opportunity to help.

Jaquetta “Jada” Reeves, graduate nursing assistant professor, is currently developing creative and innovative strategies to improve sexual health services, increase access to high-quality care, and decrease the spread of STIs and risk of HIV among at-risk populations in underserved communities. Students participating in this research take part in helping to remove the stigma associated with getting tested for HIV—which affects 1.2 million people in the U.S, according to HIV.org—and other sexually transmitted diseases.

“We want to remove the stigma around STI testing and equip people to do self-testing in the privacy of their home,” says Dr. Reeves, who has partnered with CAN Community Health Clinic and the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

In another project, researchers are working to address and reduce preventable harms associated with the use or misuse of medications. Leading the research is Professor Yan Xiao, who says that 750,000 patients visit emergency departments per year due to harms associated with medications. Focused on older adults, Dr. Xiao is working with patient advocates and primary care organizations to look at how patients manage medications at home or in nursing facilities. Research partners include John Peter Smith Health Network in Tarrant County, which primarily serves underserved and low-socioeconomic groups, and NorTex, a practice-based research network with over 200 primary care providers in North Texas. Xiao’s research program is primarily funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

“We want to understand what makes someone at higher risk to suffer medication-related harms and create interventions so that harms can be prevented,” he says.

INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE

Students in many of CONHI’s programs are also given the opportunity to learn from and with international students. Students have traveled to Canada, virtually, through the International Nursing Student Collaborative to Assess and Improve Access to Rural Healthcare Services Program. Supported by a grant Dr. Smith received from the Matson Halverson Christiansen Hamilton (MHCH) Foundation in collaboration with



DNP students abroad in London, England

using her Fulbright award to participate in a knowledge exchange with Colombian leaders in academia, city administration, and

nongovernmental organizations. Focused on Venezuelan immigrant health, Dr. Carlson is demonstrating to students how to utilize one’s own background and education to serve the communities they are passionate about.

the Global Rural Nursing Exchange Network, the partnership allowed students to learn about rural health care services, systems, and policies.

Smith facilitated virtual meetings with CONHI undergraduate nursing students and a Canadian nursing student cohort regarding the unique challenges and opportunities present in both countries for rural health care access. Students saw the real-life challenges hospitals in other countries face, from staffing shortages to unique medical needs that require telehealth services from local city hospitals.

Similar to the program in Childress, the Canadian partnership helps students learn about health care access in rural areas and how to equip patients when they leave urban hospitals and return to their surrounding communities. Smith’s personal experience with a hospital closing while she was a registered nurse helps fuel her passion to expose students to people who have to travel far for acute care. Like Rogers, she is also looking to inspire students to consider rural opportunities.

“It will be helpful for rural communities to expand this program for our nursing students as an effort to alleviate the rural nursing workforce shortage,” Smith says.

CONHI also has learning opportunities in London with a new Doctorate of Nursing Practice study abroad program, where students explore the history of nursing in the region and London’s relationship with its neighboring countries. By witnessing how other countries handle health care, students think critically and strategically about how they can make an impact.

“The London study abroad opportunity brought much of what I’ve been learning in the DNP program into real-world experience. It reinforced how important health care system concepts, such as social determinants of health, are impactful to the entire system and patient care outcomes,” says Sueanne Baddour, a nurse practitioner in the program working with adults and elderly patients in the primary care, hospice, and community palliative care settings.

Faculty are also gaining and sharing knowledge internationally. In Colombia, Erin Carlson, associate clinical professor and director of graduate public health programs, is

“To have the opportunity to work together with colleagues in Latin America on a Fulbright project is truly a decades-long dream come true,” she says. “This project applies all of the passions and interests that initially led me to public health 20 years ago—establishing equitable health services for recent Spanish-speaking immigrants in communities new to receiving immigrants.”

CONHI’s Department of Kinesiology also participated in a virtual exchange program coined by the department as Collaborative Online International Learning with physical therapy students at Mackenzie Presbyterian University (UPM) located in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Through this virtual exchange, students were able to build relationships with Brazilian students and practice asking questions, assessing situations, and making recommendations based on their findings.

“This experience really got students to ask questions and develop their interest in how things are done from an assessment and therapy perspective in another country,” says Priscila Tamplain, associate professor of kinesiology.

Likewise, UPM students in Brazil found value in engaging American students. Both groups of students had the opportunity to practice their cultural sensitivity, language adaptability, patience, and multicultural presentation skills.

Whether it’s a rural Texas immersion or a virtual exchange with Brazil, CONHI students have unique opportunities to go beyond the classroom and into homes, hospitals, patient care facilities, and more. Faculty and researchers are also broadening horizons and making CONHI an internationally known entity.

Students will remember these experiences well beyond their time at UTA, and many are inspired to continue their work in the environments they have been exposed to. 📍



Students from the spring 2022 rural nursing immersion program in Childress experience care in rural Texas.

“One of the many benefits for students is that they can learn about challenges rural nurses experience and how these nurses support their community.”



JON KRAUSE

Breaking Down **BARRIERS**

CONHI's Public Health program helps uplift vulnerable communities.

BY LAURA HENNIGAN

Whether examining disease outbreaks, preventing illnesses, developing policies, or analyzing disparities, public health professionals are focused on protecting and improving the health of people and their communities. It is an essential mission, with far-reaching effects that can be felt across the globe. Through studying different groups, from entire city populations to specific segments of people, public health is highly interdisciplinary, encompassing an expansive range of subjects.

This significant and comprehensive objective of improving public health is what motivates faculty, staff, and students in UTA's Public Health program. Established in 2018 within the College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI) and housed within the Department of Kinesiology, it is one of the College's newest programs. With both undergraduate and graduate offerings, it attracts a wide variety of students and faculty who are interested in making a difference in health and the human condition.

"The public health program has been a fantastic addition to our College," says Paul Fadel, associate dean for research in CONHI. "It's also very timely, with the COVID-19 pandemic and increased need for education and dissemination of accurate health information."

Breaking Down BARRIERS

Even though the program is young, it is already having a significant impact thanks to diverse faculty who are creating new knowledge through their research.

“Their research represents many distinct aspects of public health research,” says David Keller, associate dean, chair, and professor of kinesiology. “We have faculty doing fundamental, almost clinical-trial types of research, we have faculty doing epidemiological types of studies, we have faculty doing work with big data, and we have everything in between.”

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

“Our faculty has truly diverse expertise, which lends itself to lots of collaboration,” says Assistant Professor Kyrrah Brown. “We are small but mighty.”

Dr. Brown serves as the director of the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Equity Lab. Her lab examines the social and structural determinants of maternal health and outcomes. By analyzing factors like structural and gendered racism, she seeks to understand how and why Black women are disproportionately impacted by maternal and infant mortality compared to women of other racial and ethnic groups.

“We’re interested in a person’s health prior to pregnancy and trying to understand the factors that put people at risk for cardiometabolic issues and how that ultimately impacts their birth outcomes,” says Brown. “Recognizing when we are talking about maternal and infant health disparities, we can’t continue to focus only on the individual level. There are so many social and systems-level issues that drive these disparities. We must recognize that systems and forces such as structural racism are one of the main drivers of racial disparities in maternal and reproductive health.”

The MCH lab also recently completed a study exploring knowledge, attitudes, and barriers related to COVID-19 in pregnant and postpartum women.

“We launched in the early months of the pandemic when we noticed there was not a lot of tailored messaging for the perinatal population,” Brown says. “One main thing we discovered is that there weren’t many racial differences in COVID-19 knowledge, which shows the overall lack of knowledge with pregnant and postpartum women during that time.”

HEALTH IN ACTION

In another research project examining the effects of racial disparities on health, the Physical Activity and Wearable Sensors (PAWS) Lab is working with vulnerable populations to gain insight into people’s daily habits regarding physical activity and exercise through wearable trackers and sensors.

Led by Assistant Professor Yue Liao, the PAWS researchers are utilizing both research-grade monitors along with commercially available devices, like Fitbits, when working with target demographics, including cancer survivors and Black and Hispanic women with obesity.

“We know that racial minorities, particularly Hispanic and Black women, are the groups with the highest obesity rates and are less likely to meet the recommended levels of physical activity when compared to other racial groups,” says Dr. Liao. “That puts them at higher risk for developing chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.”

Liao continues to study these discrepancies, harnessing information at both neighborhood and personal levels.

“Everybody can get a Fitbit or other tracker,” she says. “I want to find out how we can better utilize these commercially available wearables so that it is not just a watch that people are wearing, it’s a tool to help improve their lifestyle choices.”

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

In a similar vein, the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Lab is currently exploring the framework by which residential environments can impact health and health disparities.

By examining a broad assortment of various neighborhood attributes, such as walkability, Assistant Professor Yeonwoo Kim and her SDOH team seek to determine the connections between where people live and their health outcomes. They are specifically looking at the influence that physical and social



Yue Liao and student research assistants

neighborhood environments may have on cardiovascular health and childhood obesity. Ultimately, SDOH seeks to provide empirical evidence that links these social determinants to a wide range of health inequalities.

“If this research does find neighborhood factors like racial segregation and income impact cardiovascular disease in minority and low-income people, then we can begin to approach those issues from a local policies perspective,” says Dr. Kim.

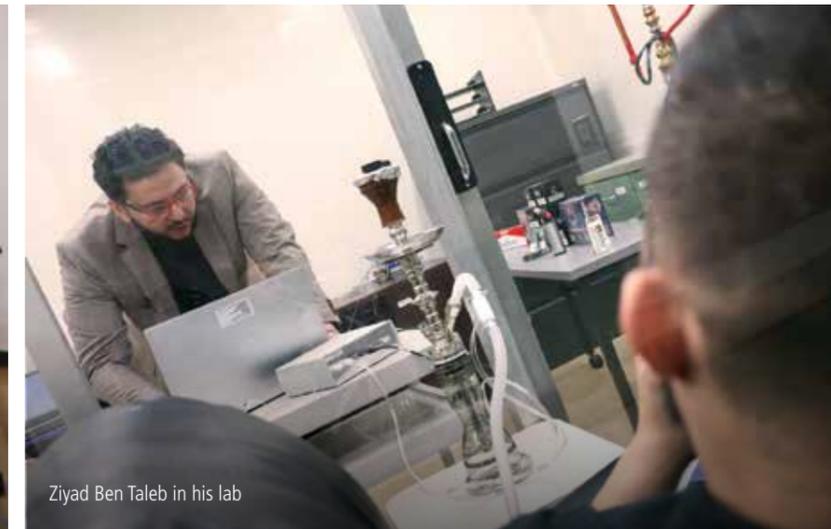
“Then, hopefully, we can reduce cardiovascular disease for the entire community.”

In addition to being influenced by residential environments, cardiovascular health and heart disease are also significantly affected by tobacco use. It’s an issue that Assistant Professor Ziyad Ben Taleb is closely examining in his work as director of the Nicotine and Tobacco Research Lab.

“My focus is on the importance of understanding the patterns and consequences of tobacco use, along with its impact on public health,” says Dr. Ben Taleb. “Much of my research has tobacco regulatory science playing into it. For the FDA to introduce tobacco regulations that make sense and that work, they need scientific evidence. A lot of my studies aim to provide evidence to guide policy for tobacco products.”

Recently his lab received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to begin examining the effects of hookahs on health, addiction, and behaviors. Ben Taleb understands the many benefits of collaborating with others to address this leading cause of mortality.

“It’s wonderful to collaborate with other faculty,” he says. “They genuinely want to see how they can add value to your research, as well as how you can add value to theirs.”



Ziyad Ben Taleb in his lab

DATA-DRIVEN

Behind nearly every public health issue is a mountain of data that has been compiled over time, and that is where Tiffany Kindratt and the Health Survey Research (HSR) Lab are focusing their efforts.

Established in 2019, HSR lab conducts epidemiologic research studies focused on predictive factors and how they influence behaviors like physical activity, disease diagnosis, and the use

of health services like cancer screenings. To do so, Dr. Kindratt is examining large national data sets through publicly available data and linking data sets in Dallas.

Specifically looking at the Arab/Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) American population, Kindratt is one of the first researchers to use Medical Expenditure Panel Survey data to examine patient experiences and the prevalence of diseases, including dementia and diabetes, among Arab/MENA Americans.

“One study we have is looking at cognitive limitations as a predictor for Alzheimer’s disease, because there is some evidence starting to suggest that Arab Americans do have a higher risk than other racial and ethnic groups,” she says. “There is an effort to find ways to uncover different health disparities among this group, while also trying to advocate for a policy change to give them their own category within the U.S. Census and including them in all minimum reporting guidelines within the U.S.”

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

While its research initiatives are centered on protecting and championing populations throughout the world, UTA’s Public Health program also seeks to create a learning environment that inspires ways to improve health and well-being.

“The students are central to our work,” says Ben Taleb. “We all think about the best interest of the students and how we can help them develop knowledge, perform well, and have the resources available for them to advance as researchers. It’s extremely rewarding to see them growing and starting to produce their own ideas and projects.”

Kindratt, who has developed a course related to research methods for graduate students, agrees. “We’re trying to equip students with the ability to do research in the future, which includes sharing the available resources that the department generously provides us.”

Bringing a new wave of distinctive voices to the public health sector will help to not only continue the conversation, but also allow the field to keep evolving as more evidence and challenges appear.

“There’s research in every field, of course, but public health is one that affects all of us and can directly make a difference,” says Dr. Keller. “With public health, we have such a diverse and collaborative faculty group that can impact so many aspects of human health. As our faculty and this program grow, it will hopefully not only affect our students, but also allow people to recognize the direct benefit of the work they are doing.” 🍌



Dean Elizabeth Merwin addresses attendees of the Dream Makers reception.

DREAM MAKERS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

The 2022 Dream Makers reception was a special one as it marked the 20th year of the program and the College of Nursing and Health Innovation's 50th anniversary. Every year, the Dream Makers reception honors scholarship donors who contribute to the futures of our CONHI students. This year, students and alumni turned out to share how the scholarship fund has changed their lives.

"Who had a dream and it came true?" was the question posed by Fatima Barker ('19 BSN), who spoke during the event. Her dream was to graduate and achieve her nursing license, and the contributions of donors made this possible for her. Barker advised future students to remember their goals and to persevere, knowing that their families, scholarship providers, and loved ones believe in them.

Barker now works as an operating room nurse on the neurology team at Clements University Hospital UT Southwestern Medical Center. At UTA, she was a recipient of the Ruby B. Dean Endowed Scholarship and the April Elizabeth Gillespie Memorial Nursing Scholarship.

Allison Bui, a senior in the BSN program and vice president of the Asian American Student Nursing Association, and Promise Robinson, a junior studying exercise science for Global Health and Human Services and a recipient of the scholarship award from the Advancing Healthcare in North Texas Endowed

Scholarship Fund, also gave remarks at the reception.

Other speakers included Erin Carlson, associate clinical professor and director of the graduate public health program in the Department of Kinesiology, former Interim President Teik C. Lim, and CONHI Dean Elizabeth Merwin.

"We know that the key to our students' success is ensuring that access to higher education is affordable by easing financial burdens. That is why, with donor help, we have given thousands of scholarships to deserving students over the years," says Dean Merwin. "This event was a chance for students and the College to thank and recognize donors for their support in making students' dreams come true."



Dream Makers emcee Erin Carlson with scholarship recipients and guest speakers Allison Bui, Fatima Barker, and Promise Robinson.

"We know that the key to our students' success is ensuring that access to higher education is affordable by easing financial burdens."

THEN & NOW

PATTI ALLARD ('12 BSN)
Clinical Assistant Professor, CONHI



Fondly remembers:
"The positive culture."

FRANCIS BASEBANG ('19 DNP, '17 MSN, '13 BSN)
Clinical Assistant Professor, CONHI



What stands out:
"Great support from instructors and a great database

resource for my papers and research. It was a very inclusive environment that gave every student a chance for success."

AGNES DELEAWE ('12 MSN, Adult Nurse Practitioner)
Clinical Assistant Professor, CONHI



Back then:
"All lectures were in person in the classroom at Pickard Hall.

Students were highly dependent on the instructor's lecture notes and hard-copy textbooks. There were no ebooks; it was more passive learning than active learning."

CONNIE FLORES ('79 BSN)
Community Volunteer



Hands-on development:
"A favorite memory was when I took a summer elective in the trauma-level emergency department at JPS Hospital.

It was an invaluable nursing clinical education, as I learned from the most experienced practitioners and nurses in challenging and critical scenarios."

TYLER GARNER ('20 PhD, Kinesiology; '11 MS, Exercise Physiology; '09 BS, Exercise Science)
Clinical Assistant Professor, CONHI



Go Mavs:
"My favorite UTA memories revolve around being part of the Movin' Mavs wheelchair basketball team."

MAYRENA HERNANDEZ ('16 BS, Kinesiology)
Assistant Professor of Athletic Training, Sam Houston State University



Research foundation:
"I was able to participate for two years in the Kinesiology Department research symposium through our research methods class taught by Dr. Cacola (now Dr. Tamplain). These exposures to research were the foundation for my career as an athletic trainer, public health professional, and researcher."

JENNIFER A. LUNA ('22 DNP)
Professional Development Leader



Virtual connections:
"My favorite time as a student was the virtual friendships that I have gained all throughout the years with like-minded lifelong learners. I have met new friends from different regions of Texas and it was great to brainstorm and network. I also love how Dr. Hamby ensures that we get the best education and does so with a gentle heart."

KARLIE O'REILLY ('16 MS, Athletic Training)
Athletic Trainer, Princeton University



Favorite memories:
"Being involved in events outside of the classroom and building lifelong relationships with my preceptors-turned-mentors. I spent my last year of clinicals where I built friendships and professional mentorships that are still strong."

CYNTHIA PLONIEN ('84 MSN, '78 BSN)
Clinical Associate Professor, Program Director of Doctorate in Nursing Practice, CONHI



Lifelong lesson learned:
"I asked for two extensions on the first three chapters of my thesis because I found so much information. After completing the chapters, I received a call from my thesis chair, Mary Ellen Wyers, one evening while I was working in the ER. She said, 'If you don't get yourself back up here right now and take out two-thirds of what is in the first three chapters, you will not graduate. You need to know the difference between what is nice and what is necessary. Stick to your research questions.' I have used that phrase over and over, particularly in coaching and teaching new nurses to manage patient care in hospital settings."

CRYSTAL RAHMAN ('17 BSN)
Clinical Assistant Professor, CONHI



Fabulous faculty:
"The support and compassion from my professors are my most cherished memories! Thank you to Brian Moore, Marcia Monghate, and Sarah Washington!"

COURTNEY RENI ('81 MSN, Special Student FNP Program)
Assistant Professor, CONHI



All in the family:
"My favorite memories are of my time in clinical preceptorship with David Pillow, co-director of the Family Nurse Practitioner program. I loved learning and implementing the new responsibilities as an FNP."

JENNIFER ROYE ('03 MSN, '98 BSN)
Assistant Dean for Simulation and Technology, CONHI



Elective success:
"My favorite class was my emergency nursing elective. I learned so much in that 11 weeks. It made me want to focus on emergency nursing. I was an ER nurse for 20-plus years after I graduated."

UTA LIBRARIES A TRIBUTE TO NURSES EXHIBIT

UTA Libraries welcomed the community to celebrate the opening of *A Tribute to Nurses* in Special Collections this spring.

The exhibit focused on major themes such as developments in the nursing profession, the training of nurses, public service during wartime, and more, and is dedicated to all the nurses who have been serving on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The exhibit was curated by University and Labor Archivist Michael Barera and former nursing librarians Laura Haygood and Raeanna Jeffers.

“UTA Libraries has done something truly special with their exhibit *A Tribute to Nurses: UTA and Beyond*,” says Elizabeth Merwin, CONHI dean. “We are honored that they are commemorating our College’s rich history.”

Clinical faculty member Christine Roberts was a major contributor to the exhibit, loaning her collection of nursing artifacts including an Army-issued can of water from the 1950s and her student-era scrubs.

Roberts was blown away when she saw her possessions on display in Special Collections. “In your mind’s eye, you have a vision of what it will be, but this has just surpassed that for me,” she says.

“You don’t see a lot of ‘history of nursing’ exhibits, though hopefully that will change with COVID and the ‘years of the nurse,’” Roberts says. “I hope [with this exhibit] our students see how far we’ve come—not just at UTA but as a profession. They should be very proud.”

The *A Tribute to Nurses* exhibit will be available in the UTA Library until September 2022.



Christine Roberts loaned many of the items in the exhibit, which she has been collecting for years.

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SMART HOSPITAL PREPS FOR MOVE-IN

Smart Hospital faculty and staff are abuzz with excitement as they prepare to move into the nearly complete School of Social Work/ College of Nursing and Health Innovation Smart Hospital Building. As the building has progressed, so too have plans for the space inside the brand-new facility.

One room that has really captured the team's imagination is the new virtual reality suite. The new Smart Hospital will also have three large skills labs that can fit up to three clinical groups at a time, as well as smaller individual high-fidelity simulation rooms, each with their own control room.

A Home Health Suite is also being outfitted in the Smart Hospital, which will be used to train nursing students on how to provide at-home care, including one emerging concept called "Hospital at Home."

CONHI students will be at the forefront of the newest innovations in nursing thanks to the future vision of the Smart Hospital.

