

Banking on Research

College of Science professors are earning major grants and awards for their work.



UTA PHYSICISTS were among the researchers worldwide recognized with the 2025 Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics, one of science's most prestigious honors, for their contributions to the ATLAS Experiment. The **\$1 million** award honors the team's groundbreaking work at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, which led to the discovery of the Higgs boson, often called the "God particle" for its key role in explaining the existence of mass in the universe.



SAIFUL CHOWDHURY, associate professor of chemistry and biochemistry, received a **\$1.8 million** grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences to study how the body's natural defense system can sometimes go wrong, and how that knowledge could lead to better treatments for disease.



PING LIU, professor of physics, was awarded a **\$1.3 million** grant from the Department of Energy's Critical Materials Collaborative to develop a more efficient process for sourcing rare earth elements needed to produce high-performance magnets.



ALICIA ROGERS, assistant professor of biology, received a **\$1.8 million** grant from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences to study the molecular processes that affect gene regulation to better understand how small RNA pathways impact human health, with the long-term goal of developing synthetic gene therapies to treat or prevent diseases such as cancer.



Physics Professors **YUE DENG**, **RAMON LOPEZ**, and **ALEX WEISS** received a **\$1.5 million** grant from the National Science Foundation for a program to train the next generation of scientists in space weather. The grant will also help UTA create a space physics specialization for students pursuing a BS in physics.



SHERRY WANG, professor of statistics and data science, received a **\$1.28 million** National Institutes of Health grant to develop AI models that can analyze massive complex biological datasets.



LOGAN WATTS, assistant professor of psychology, received a **\$500,000** National Science Foundation grant to cultivate first-generation students' STEM creativity through mentorship and problem-solving training.

IN MEMORIAM

Verne Cox, 87, professor emeritus in psychology and interim College of Science dean (1996-98). Dr. Cox did influential research in brain systems involved in pain and food intake, as well as in prison overcrowding. He passed away Sept. 21, 2025.

Larry Heath, 87, professor emeritus in mathematics and associate department chair (1987-2000). Dr. Heath was instrumental in many curricular and instructional improvements in the Department of Mathematics. He passed away Aug. 26, 2025.

Roger Mellgren, 80, professor emeritus in psychology and department chair (1988-99). He did extensive research in animal learning and behavior, evolutionary psychology, foraging theory, and feeding behavior. Dr. Mellgren passed away March 13, 2025.

Michael Roner, 65, associate professor of biology. He was a beloved teacher and respected researcher in virology and immunology. Dr. Roner passed away Feb. 21, 2024.

Edwin Thomas Strom, 88, adjunct professor in chemistry. His research interests included polymer chemistry and physical organic chemistry. Over decades, he served in many roles in the American Chemical Society. Dr. Strom passed away Oct. 26, 2024.