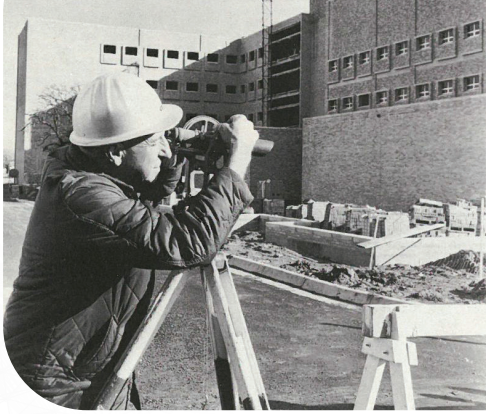


6 Decades of Pushing Science Forward

From humble beginnings to record-setting research, the College of Science looks back on 60 years of scientific impact.

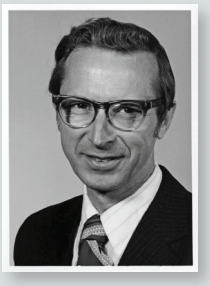
1965

The state legislature transfers Arlington State College (renamed UTA in 1967) from the Texas A&M System to the **University of Texas System**, and an organizational restructuring splits the School of Arts and Sciences into schools of Science, Business Administration, and Liberal Arts. Allen Herndon serves as interim dean of the schools of Science and Liberal Arts for the 1965-66 academic year. The schools are renamed colleges in 1973.

1966

Maxwell Scarlett becomes the first African American graduate of ASC, earning a BS in biology. He would go on to a long and distinguished career as a Fort Worth physician specializing in emergency medicine. He was a tireless supporter of the college and of UTA, and he received the UTA Distinguished Alumni Award in 2005.

The School of Science names **Peter Girardot** its first dean. He was a nationally recognized researcher in inorganic chemistry who was a group leader in the physics division of the Manhattan Project at the University of Chicago in 1944-45. He serves as dean until 1973, then returns full-time to research and teaching until retiring in 2000.



1966-70

The college establishes **master's programs** and begins expanding its research portfolio, with faculty applying for grants and creating laboratories to conduct research. Doctoral programs are added beginning in the early 1970s.

The **Business Administration and Life Sciences Building** opens (business moved into its own new building a few years later). It has classroom and lab spaces for biology and psychology and is home to the dean's office and the Science Learning Center.



With the start of the fall 2025 semester came a significant milestone for the UTA College of Science: 60 years of learning, innovation, and discovery. In six decades, the college has advanced the boundaries of scientific knowledge while producing generations of scientists who have gone on to be leaders and innovators in their fields.

When UTA, then named Arlington State College, left the Texas A&M System and joined the University of Texas System in summer 1965, the University's academic structure was reorganized and the School of Arts and Sciences was divided into schools of Science, Liberal Arts, and Business Administration.

In fall 1965, the brand-new School of Science had 2,143 students, 92 faculty members, and no graduate-level programs. By fall 2025, the College of Science had 4,334 students, 212 faculty members, and a robust array of graduate degree offerings in every department.

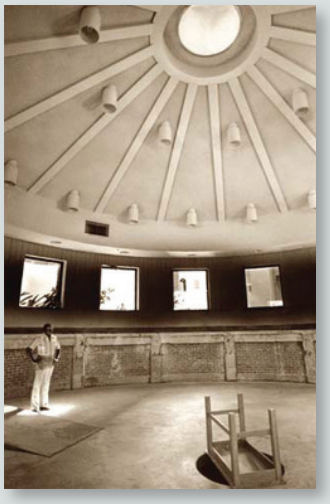
Through the hard work and dedication of its faculty, staff, students, and alumni, the College of Science stands today as a key part of a dynamic Carnegie R-1 research university. The college is known for academic excellence, rigorous research, and record of discovering answers to some of the most challenging issues facing society.

"Sixty years is a tremendous milestone and a chance for us to look back on how we started, reflect on where we are now, and also think about where we want the College of Science to go in the next 60 years," Dean Morteza Khaledi says. "The successes we have had and the strong reputation we enjoy today are due to the hard work and efforts of all those who helped build the college and those who continue to help it grow today."

Prior to 1965, teaching was the college's primary function, with a small number of faculty involved in

1975

The **Department of Psychology** moves from the College of Liberal Arts to the College of Science, making UTA one of the few universities at the time with psychology as a science discipline.



1981

After years of campaigning by physics professors **Ulrich Herrmann** and **Cecil Thompson**, the University converts the Roundhouse into a planetarium, the first on campus. The Roundhouse, built in 1928 next to what was then the Science Building (now Preston Hall), was originally used for livestock viewing and served in various other capacities over the years. It is still used for astronomy classes today.

1987

Congress approves initial funding to build the **Superconducting Super Collider**, a 54-mile-long particle collider near Waxahachie, Texas. Budget overruns eventually lead to Congress killing the project in 1993, but it helps spur the hiring of particle physics faculty, which leads to a growing international reputation for that research program. UTA physicists are among those involved in the discovery of the elusive Higgs boson particle in 2012.

1996

The **Chemistry Research Building** (CRB) opens, providing much-needed chemistry lab and office space and freeing up more room in Science Hall for physics lab space. The CRB is renamed the W.A. Baker Chemistry Research Building in April 2005 for William "Bill" Baker, a professor of chemistry and longtime administrator at UTA.

"We're very excited as we look ahead and try to imagine what the next 60 years will bring."

research. Once the School of Science was formed, it immediately began working to add master's programs and hire new faculty. The number of faculty who were involved in research grew steadily, and through grants from corporations and government agencies, the college's labs and scientific equipment did, too.

In 1966, mathematics and physics became the first college departments to offer master's degrees. Psychology, which was part of the College of Liberal Arts until 1975, also started a master's program in 1966. Biology and chemistry added master's degrees in 1968, and geology (renamed the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences in 2007) did so in 1970.

UTA wanted to add doctoral programs in the late 1960s but was rebuffed by the state's Coordinating Board for Higher Education Programs because it wanted to limit the availability of similar PhD programs at different schools in the same geographical area. However, through the dedicated efforts of administrators and faculty, UTA successfully argued that there was a need for additional doctoral programs.

In 1971, psychology started a PhD program, followed by mathematics in 1974. Doctor of Science (DSc) degrees were created in chemistry and physics in the early 1980s. These were changed to traditional Doctor of Philosophy degrees in the 1990s, when biology and geology also began offering them.

From those humble beginnings, the college has grown into a research powerhouse, with annual research expenditures totaling a record $31.9 million in 2024. In the past five years, the college has been awarded $141 million to fund research and continue pushing science forward.

Science thrives in the hands of those willing to do

2004

The Department of Biology moves its extensive collection of snake, lizard, and frog specimens to the new **Amphibian and Reptile Diversity Research Center**. William Pyburn started the collection in 1956, and Jonathan Campbell became curator in 1982. It's one of the world's largest collections, with more than 200,000 specimens from 90 countries, including some found nowhere else.

2006

The **Chemistry and Physics Building** opens, with lab space for chemistry and physics faculty, teaching labs, and the state-of-the-art UTA Planetarium, which features a 60-foot-tall dome and the latest in digital projection technology.

2009-10

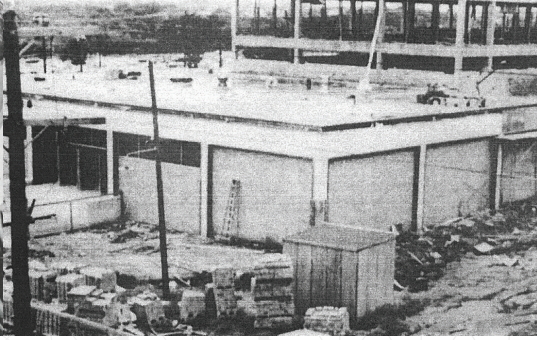
The college hires **Pamela Jansma**, a geoscience professor and expert in microplate tectonics and strain partitioning, as dean. She is the first woman to lead the college, serving as dean until 2014.

UTeach Arlington, which allows students to earn a science and mathematics secondary teacher certification along with a science degree, launches with financial support from ExxonMobil, Texas Instruments, the Texas Education Agency, National Math and Science Initiative, and the UTeach Institute. More than 360 students have graduated from the program to date.

2012

The college opens the **Shimadzu Center for Advanced Analytical Chemistry** with a donation of nearly $3 million in equipment from Shimadzu Scientific Instruments. The company goes on to donate an additional $7.5 million—the largest philanthropic gift in UTA history at the time—to create the Shimadzu Institute for Research Technologies.



the research, and UTA is at the forefront of making sure that undergraduate students get their chance to be a part of scientific advancement. Faculty members across each department have undergraduates in their labs, providing students with hands-on experience that prepares them to be leaders in their fields. In the College of Science, we empower students to believe in themselves. Given the tools to explore and opportunities to grow, they don't just learn—they flourish. That is what it means to be a Maverick Scientist.

While science classes were taught at UTA from its earliest days as Arlington College in 1895, it wasn't until 1928—when the school's name had been changed to North Texas Agricultural College—that a building dedicated to science was constructed on campus. Today, UTA has seven buildings devoted entirely or partially to the College of Science.

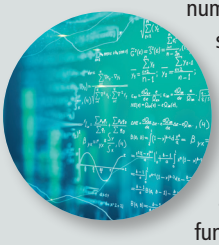
In 60 years, 10 people have held the title of College of Science dean, interim dean, or acting dean. Peter Girardot was the first, serving from 1967-73. He was followed by William Meacham (1973-74), Howard Arnott (1974-90), Peter Rosen (1990-96), Verne Cox (1996-98), Neal Smatresk (1998-2004), Paul Paulus (2004-09), Pamela Jansma (2009-14), James Grover (2014-15), and Dr. Khaledi, who has served since 2015. The steady leadership of this group and their staffs have guided the college to ever-greater heights.

"When I look at the college, I feel a great sense of pride and tremendous gratitude to all those who came before and contributed to the achievements and successes the college has had," Khaledi says. "We're very excited as we look ahead and try to imagine what the next 60 years will bring."

This milestone is not just a celebration of time, but of the people whose passion and persistence made every discovery possible. As we look ahead, this legacy becomes our launchpad—one that propels us toward new discoveries, new partnerships, and the collective vision to push science forward every chance we get. Here's to 60 more years!

2013

The **Department of Mathematics** receives the American Mathematical Society Award for an exemplary program or achievement in a mathematics department. The department is recognized for doubling its number of graduate students over five years, increasing the number of minority and female students, and securing two funded fellowships, the GK-12 program and the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need.



2018

The **Science & Engineering Innovation & Research Building** opens, providing a dynamic, state-of-the-art space for collaborative, interdisciplinary research. Twelve research neighborhoods bring together teams from a wide range of disciplines to work in close proximity, allowing for a freer exchange of ideas.

The college begins offering **courses in data science**, which is followed by the creation of a bachelor's degree program in 2021 and a master's in applied science and data science in 2023.

2023

A major expansion and **renovation project of the Life Sciences Building** begins. Scheduled to be completed in fall 2027, the building will feature 87,000 square feet of new space for a total of 142,000 square feet, with state-of-the-art classrooms, research and teaching labs, and ample spaces for student engagement.

2024

The college launches the **Division of Data Science** as an umbrella to organize, provide infrastructure support, and facilitate growth in instructional and research programs involving data science. The main mission of DDS is to promote, foster, and advance education and research programs in different disciplines in the college through data-driven approaches.