



The first panel discussion addressed “AI Across the UT Health System.” From left: Eric Peterson, M.D., M.P.H., Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research at UT Southwestern; The Honorable Tan Parker, Texas Senate District 12; Nigam Shah, M.B.B.S., Ph.D., Chief Data Scientist at Stanford Health Care; Claudia Lucchinetti, M.D., Dean of Dell Medical School and Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs at UT Austin; Jonathan Efron, M.D., Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs at UT Southwestern; Jiajie Zhang, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Biomedical Informatics at UTHealth Houston; and Dan Shoenthal, M.S., Chief Innovation Officer and Vice President of Innovation at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

## Revolutionizing Health Care With AI-Powered Solutions

The Inaugural [UT System AI Symposium in Health Care](#), hosted at UT Southwestern last Thursday and Friday (May 30-31), challenged attendees to imagine how the transformative capabilities of artificial intelligence could serve as a catalyst for positive change across education, biomedical research, and medical care.

[John M. Zerwas, M.D.](#), The University of Texas System Executive Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, opened the Symposium assuring participants that the UT System’s “long-standing tradition of academic excellence and innovation has positioned us as a powerhouse of intellectual capital and ingenuity.”

Keynote speaker [Nigam Shah, M.B.B.S., Ph.D.](#), Chief Data Scientist at Stanford Health Care, emphasized responsible adoption of AI in health care. He explained the process of building fair, useful, and reliable AI models, while pointing out that models are not the goal – they are a vehicle to improve advanced care planning. AI models have value if they can be implemented and sustained.

[Peter Stone, Ph.D.](#), Truchard Foundation Chair in Computer Science and University Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Texas at Austin, addressed emerging technologies during his keynote. He said the goal of robotics in health care spaces was not necessarily to replace health care professionals, but to elevate what is known and delivered by areas such as nursing on a daily basis. In his view, AI-based applications could improve health care outcomes for millions of people but only if we have the trust of doctors, nurses, and patients.

The eight UT System health-related institutions that participated in the symposium are involved with AI initiatives that have potential health care benefits. By bringing together experts from each, the event offered a collaborative backdrop to further AI innovation, discovery, and impact.

## Faculty Announcements

### Dr. Pfeiffer Appointed Chair of Microbiology

[Julie Pfeiffer, Ph.D.](#), is the new Chair of the Department of Microbiology. She had served as Vice Chair since 2022 and, most recently, as Interim Chair.

A highly respected scientist and leader, Dr. Pfeiffer joined UT Southwestern in 2006. Upon establishing her laboratory, she studied whether bacteria in the gut could influence viral infection. This focus was a departure from traditional lines of study on bacteria or viruses as separate entities. Dr. Pfeiffer brought together virologists, immunologists, and bacteriologists, laying the foundation for a new discipline within the umbrella of microbiology now known as trans-kingdom interaction. This effort led to her discovery that bacteria in the gut promote viral infection and opened new possibilities to utilize available drugs for bacterial infections to limit viral infections.



Her contributions have been recognized with honors that include UT Southwestern's Excellence in Postdoctoral Mentoring Award (2022) and the O'Donnell Award in Science (2019) from the Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Technology (TAMEST).

Dr. Pfeiffer's scientific expertise, multidisciplinary approach, and leadership record will continue the Department of Microbiology's tradition of excellence, while championing meaningful collaborations and fostering scientific breakthroughs. [Read more.](#)

### Dr. Rajji Appointed Chair of Psychiatry

[Tarek K. Rajji, M.D., F.R.C.P.C.](#), has been appointed Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, with a secondary appointment in the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, effective on or before Oct. 1.

Dr. Rajji joins us from the University of Toronto where he is Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Division, and Executive Director of the Toronto Dementia Research Alliance. He also serves as Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Affiliated with the University of Toronto, CAMH is Canada's largest mental health teaching hospital and one of the world's leading research centers in the field.



For the last 15 years, Dr. Rajji's research has focused on neuroplasticity and restoring brain function in older patients with mental illness and Alzheimer's disease. He has led multiple clinical trials with older patients with depression, neurocognitive disorders, and schizophrenia.

Dr. Rajji's leadership experience will continue to build on the Department of Psychiatry's success and advance the momentum in psychiatric research, education, and clinical care at our institution, as we prepare for the opening of the Texas Behavioral Health Center at UT Southwestern in late 2025.

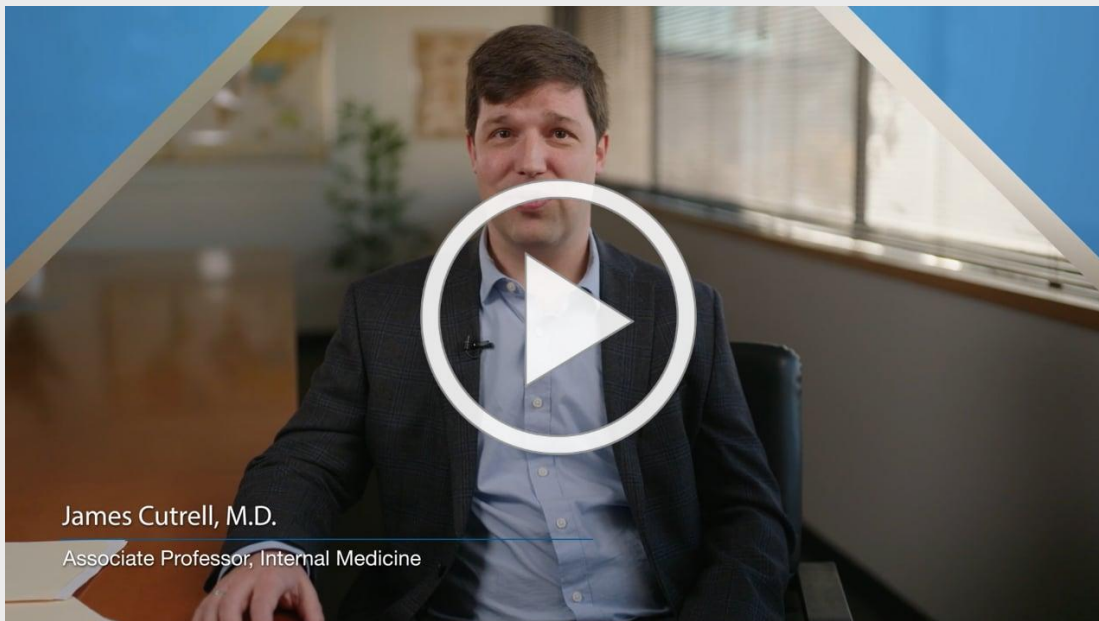
## Professional Development for Educators



The Office of Faculty Development, in partnership with the Southwestern Academy of Teachers (SWAT), has launched a new [Educator Development at UTSW \(EDU\) course](#).

The EDU course provides faculty members at all levels helpful tips to become better educators, scholars, and academic medicine professionals. The course contains 10 modules, with a total duration of less than 2.5 hours. Those who complete all 10 modules will receive a certificate of completion and recognition during the November SWAT meeting.

### Module Spotlight: Letters of Recommendation



James Cutrell, M.D.

Associate Professor, Internal Medicine

As we approach a busy season of recommendation letter requests, this EDU module led by [James Cutrell, M.D.](#), Associate Professor of Internal Medicine, dives into how to write impactful letters of recommendation. Access the full module on [Taleo Learn](#) by searching for “EDU 2024.”

## Faculty Wellness Retreat

UT SOUTHWESTERN



Register by June 5

The second annual [Faculty Wellness Retreat](#) will take place **June 7** from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Pegasus Park. The in-person CME certified event will focus on maximizing professional efficiency and feature workshops, facilitated discussions, and networking opportunities to advance a culture of wellness at UT Southwestern.

Keynote speaker Jody Hoffer Gittel, Ph.D., Professor of Management at Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, will present a talk on “Transforming Relationships for High Performance: The Relational Model of Organizational Change.”

## Faculty Information Sessions on Your Time Away

Human Resources will host two virtual faculty information sessions to discuss details and answer common questions about UTSW's new comprehensive leave program, [Your Time Away](#), which begins Sept. 1.

- June 10, 5-6 p.m. [Register to attend.](#)
- June 13, 7-8 a.m. [Register to attend.](#)

If these dates and times don't work for your schedule, you can find additional sessions on the [UTSW Events Calendar](#). The HR Services Center is also available to answer your specific questions [via email](#), phone (214-648-9810), or an in-person appointment.



Your Time Away has four key components:

### **Paid time off (PTO)**

- Accrue PTO hours based on years of service.
- Unused sick and vacation accrual balances will be converted to a Prior Sick Leave Bank and a

Prior Vacation Leave Bank, available for future use, no expiration.

### Nine fixed holidays and three floating holidays

- Annual set holidays allow for better planning of recurring paid time off.
- Floating holiday hours will be available for use at the beginning of each fiscal year.

### Paid Parental Benefit

- Eligible employees will receive 50% of their pay for up to six weeks based on a qualifying event related to the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.

### Medical Hardship Leave Pool

- This benefit will assist employees who are experiencing or have an immediate family member experiencing a medical crisis and have exhausted other paid leave.

Visit the [Your Time Away webpage](#) for more information about the new plan and to find [FAQs](#).

## Leaders in Clinical Excellence Nomination Period

Nominations for the 2024 Leaders in Clinical Excellence Awards will be accepted from **June 11 through July 23**.

There are seven award categories designed to honor clinical faculty who embody the very best in patient care and institutional excellence. Anyone can nominate an eligible clinical faculty member for any of the awards, including the Patricia and William L. Watson Jr., M.D. Award for Excellence in Clinical Medicine, our institution's highest clinical honor.



More information about the awards, eligibility requirements, and the nomination process will be available on the [Clinical Faculty Awards website](#) on June 11.

## In Photos: Spring Commencements



Relive the joy of the [UT Southwestern Medical School](#) commencement (left). Pictures from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences commencement (right) will be published soon on [Center Times Plus](#).

## Important Dates and Upcoming Events

### TeamMAPPS: Adaptation & Correction\*

Team Methods to Advance Processes and Performance in Science (TeamMAPPS) is a behavioral skills training program specifically developed to increase collaboration and effectiveness of scientific teams.

- June 5. [Register](#) to attend.

### Introduction to Epic Cosmos\*

Learn about Cosmos, a data analytic and modeling tool that effectively combines data from all participating Epic organizations, which includes over 240 million patient records from more than 1,400 hospitals.

- June 25 at 11 a.m. [Register to attend](#).



### Library AI and ChatGPT Guide

Learn about resources and policies around using ChatGPT and other AI products for working, teaching, and learning during this virtual event.

- June 27 from 2:30-3 p.m. [Register to attend.](#)

### UTSW-Parkland Health Equity Scholars Program

This two-year initiative funds 20% of a faculty member's salary and is designed to provide practical tools and experience to advance community health clinical practice research.

- [Apply](#) by June 28. (Program starts in October.)

### Master of Science in Clinical Investigation\*

Gain the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to succeed in careers in clinical and translational research.

- [Apply](#) by June 30.

*\*Sponsored by the UT Southwestern CTSA Program*



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