

## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS



### Closing the Knowledge Gap in Women's Health

The [Women's Health Research Initiative](#) (WHRI) is a new interdisciplinary effort designed to connect basic, translational, and clinical researchers around common themes in women's health. By fostering collaboration, supporting external grant applications, and engaging the public, the UT Southwestern initiative aims to advance the understanding of women's health to improve their lives.

Under the leadership of W. Lee Kraus, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences and Assistant Dean of Research Development, the WHRI goes beyond issues related directly to reproductive health. A core focus is investigating how the risks and manifestations of common diseases differ between women and men. By uncovering the mechanisms behind these differences, researchers can develop more effective strategies for prevention and treatment of disease.

The WHRI capitalizes on UT Southwestern's excellence in research related to epigenetics, developmental biology, nutrition, and metabolism. Over 65 faculty members from 20 departments and centers, and from the Peter O'Donnell Jr. School of Public Health, are already participating of this initiative. For more information or to get involved contact [Katherine Guhin](#).



### Generative AI Tool Available Through the Library

The [UTSW Health Sciences Digital Library and Learning Center](#) has acquired Scopus AI, a new generative artificial intelligence (AI) tool that specifically searches Scopus' peer-reviewed and vetted content.

The Scopus database covers more than 27,800 peer-reviewed journals and 330,000 books from over 7,000 scholarly publishers, as well as 50,000 open access (OA) publishers and OA repositories, and records from MEDLINE and EMBASE. Scopus AI explains how it searched the database, includes references, indicates its confidence level in the relevancy of the response, and suggests "go deeper" questions.

**On Jan. 30**, the library will host a class to discuss how the product works and how to utilize it to begin the research process and find seminal articles from the Scopus corpus. [Register to attend](#).

### Faculty Announcements

#### Dr. Siegwart Joins National Academy of Inventors

[Daniel Siegwart, Ph.D.](#), Professor in the Departments of Biomedical Engineering and Biochemistry and in the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, has been elected as a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) in recognition of his efforts in materials chemistry to enable targeted nanoparticle delivery of genomic medicines. [Read more](#) and view the [full list](#) of 2024 Fellows.

Dr. Siegwart is the fifth UT Southwestern faculty member to be honored as an NAI fellow. He is an inventor on more than 300 patents and pending patent applications worldwide in fields including chemical compound compositions, drug and gene delivery systems, methods of targeting nanoparticles to organs and cells, and engineered nucleic acid sequences.

One of Dr. Siegwart's most significant inventions is a technology called Selective Organ Targeting (SORT), which uses modifications on lipid nanoparticle carriers to direct delivery of genetic medicines to locations in the body including the liver, lungs, spleen, bone marrow, muscle, lymph nodes, and tumors. This discovery was named in *Nature* as one of "Seven Technologies to Watch in 2022."



## ARPA-H Award Supports Whole Eye Transplant Efforts

UT Southwestern is part of a major undertaking that will bring together more than 40 scientists, doctors, and industry experts selected from around the country to make vision-restoring whole eye transplants a reality.

The project will receive an award of up to \$56 million from the [Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health](#) (ARPA-H), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Transplantation of Human Eye Allografts (THEA) program.

[Kevin \(Kyung\) Park, Ph.D.](#), Professor of Ophthalmology and Neuroscience, is leading the UT Southwestern site. Dr. Park is also an Investigator with the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute.

[Read more](#) about the VISION for Whole Eye Transplant project and visit ARPA-H's [Open Funding Opportunities](#) to explore ways to engage with the programs it supports.



## Department Chair / Center Director / Division Chief Surveys



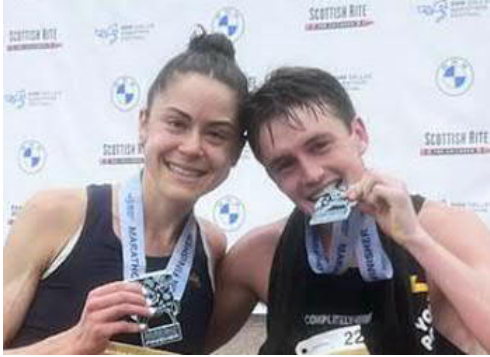
The annual surveys on Medical School department chairs, center directors, and division chiefs **open on Jan. 8**. Faculty in the Medical School will receive surveys to be completed by **Feb. 21**.

Your feedback is valuable to help us track progress on leadership, priorities, operations, and areas of challenge. To ensure confidentiality, the responses are filtered through the REDCap software. Comments at the end of each survey should be general in nature, avoiding information that may reveal the respondent's identity. Contact [leadership evaluations](#) for any questions or technical difficulties.

## "Supportive Culture Among Our Students" in Full Display

Last month, first-year UTSW medical student Travis Dowd (pictured right) won the 2024 BMW Dallas Marathon in his debut run. First-year medical student Lauren Abruzzo (pictured left) was the second to finish the women's marathon.

"It was absolutely surreal to stand at the finish line, hearing our students cheering everyone on and knowing that two of our own were within striking distance," said Kareem Abdelfattah, M.D., Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and Vice Chair of



“The positive and supportive culture among our students was evident in the volume of cheering as Travis crossed the finish line. Hearing ‘Southwestern’ repeatedly over the PA system at such a huge event was also amazing!”

Mimi Smith, D.P.T., a UTSW Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Physical Therapy residency graduate who is currently a physical therapist at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, took first place for the women’s half marathon. [Read more.](#)

## In Memoriam

### Dr. Thai Pham (1975-2024)

Thai Pham, M.D., Professor of Surgery, passed away Dec. 13.

Dr. Pham joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 2010 and served as the Section Chief of General Surgery at the VA North Texas Health Care System since 2015.

At the VA, Dr. Pham single-handedly developed a robust esophageal cancer program to care for veterans. He was an investigator in large studies focused on gastroesophageal reflux, functions of the intestine, and transfusions after cardiac operations supported by the VA and the National Institutes of Health.

His legacy as a dedicated surgeon, teacher, administrator, and colleague will last forever in the lives of all those he touched.



## Professional Development for Educators



The Office of Faculty Development, in partnership with the Southwestern Academy of Teachers (SWAT), is offering an [Educator Development at UTSW \(EDU\) course](#)

The EDU course provides faculty members at all levels with 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.

### Professionalism and Communication

Learn professional etiquette tips in this EDU module, featuring [Benjamin Lee, M.D.](#), Associate Professor of Pediatrics, where he discusses the unspoken expectations and behaviors considered appropriate for physicians and educators in the workplace.

Access the full module on [Taleo Learn](#) by searching for “EDU 2024.” EDU modules for the new year will be released in the spring.



## Campus Shuttle Route Extended through FY25

The shuttle route connecting East and North Campus, which was piloted during the fall, will remain in service through FY25. The shuttle stops at three locations along Forest Park Road:

- Texas Instruments Biomedical Engineering and Sciences Building (EA)
- T. Boone Pickens Biomedical Building (ND)
- W.A. Monty & Tex Moncrief Radiation Oncology Building (NF)



## Important Dates and Upcoming Events

### Facilitated Writing Groups

Attend weekly sessions facilitated by Vivian Siegel, Ph.D., cell biologist, geneticist, scientific communications expert, and Research Professor of Medicine at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Registration deadline is Jan. 10.

- [Faculty-Only Writing Group](#).
- [Faculty-Fellow Pair Writing Group](#).

### Demystifying the Promotion and Tenure Process

This session provides information to help faculty members understand the academic advancement timeline and criteria for each distinct academic rank and track.

- Jan. 13, at noon. [Register](#) to attend.

### Call for Abstracts and Emerging Ideas

The Charles Morris Ginsburg Simulation-Based Quality Improvement and Research Forum will be held on May 21, featuring simulation-based activities related to health care, health care science, health care education, and patient safety.

- The deadline to [submit abstracts and emerging ideas](#) is Jan. 26.

### Clinical Researcher Accelerator\*

This event will help you expand your network and contribute to our community of clinical researchers.

- Jan. 28. [Register](#) to attend.

### Clinician-Educator/Clinician Track Workshop

Join this interactive discussion of criteria evaluated for promotion in the Clinician-Educator and Clinician Tracks, including research independence, national reputation, and teaching excellence.

- Jan. 29, at noon. [Register](#) to attend.

### Writing Accountability Group (WAG)\*

A boot camp-style series designed to make scholarly writing a habit, WAG will help you develop your own scientific proposal with support and feedback from a cohort.

- [Applications are open](#) for two spring sessions.

### Research Mentor Training Program

Research mentors for graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty are invited to a series of in-person workshops. Sessions will cover "Aligning Expectations and Maintaining Effective Communications."

- [March 26](#), [April 8](#), and [May 21](#).

### Master of Science in Clinical Investigation Program

Aspiring investigators and researchers with a background in science or health are invited to pursue degree and certificate offerings from the O'Donnell School of Public Health.

- [Apply for Fall 2025](#) by April 30.



\*Sponsored by the UT Southwestern Clinical and Translational Science Award Program



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