

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

Dr. Cohen Elected to the National Academy of Sciences



Pictured above: Dr. Jonathan Cohen addresses colleagues during a surprise celebration at UT Southwestern's South Campus in honor of his election to the National Academy of Sciences on May 3, 2022.

[Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D., has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences \(NAS\)](#) in recognition of distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. Election by peers to the NAS is one of the highest honors for American scientists.

Since arriving at UT Southwestern as a postdoctoral fellow in 1989, Dr. Cohen has focused on the genetic components of chronic conditions such as heart disease and liver disease. Together with his scientific partner, Dr. Helen Hobbs, he pioneered a new way of looking at the genetic basis of complex chronic diseases, focusing on rare mutations rather than common alleles.

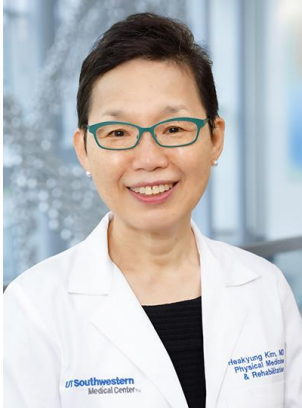
Among its most notable discoveries, the Hobbs-Cohen laboratory found that mutations inactivating a gene called *PCSK9* confer protection from heart disease. They also identified other genes that alter plasma levels of cholesterol and triglycerides. These findings formed the basis for the rapid development of new cholesterol-lowering therapies.

In addition, the Hobbs-Cohen lab revealed the first genetic risk factor for fatty liver disease – both nonalcoholic and alcoholic. They also found a gene that plays a key role in the metabolic transition from fasting to feeding, and affects the levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood. These discoveries are being used in new therapies currently in clinical trials.

With Dr. Cohen's election, UT Southwestern now has 26 NAS members – the most in Texas, and in our institution's history.

Faculty Announcements

Welcome, Dr. Kim



[Heakyung Kim, M.D.](#), is the new Chair of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). She joins us from Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) and NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center, where she served as Vice Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation and Regenerative Medicine and Director of Pediatric Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

As a clinician, Dr. Kim is an expert in children with spasticity disorders including treatment with single event multi-level chemoneurolysis (SEMLC) with botulinum toxin and phenol. Her research – funded by the National Institutes of Health, pharmaceutical industry, academia, and private organizations – focuses on spasticity management, robotic therapy, and exercise for weak muscles in children with cerebral palsy.

Dr. Kim has led multidisciplinary teams in various institutions in incorporating physical medicine and rehabilitation to decrease orthopedic surgery for children with cerebral palsy, prevent repeat pediatric intensive care unit admissions, and build a life span-care model for individuals with cerebral palsy.

Her clinical expertise, patient-centered research, and proven leadership record of integrating PM&R in key areas of health care will further elevate our PM&R Department.

Update on Special Grant Incentive Program

Now in its third year, the Special Grant Incentive (SGI) Program continues to encourage faculty to further pursue federal research awards to advance scientific discoveries and benefit our patients. Federal grants validate the quality of our science, allow us to expand early investigation research projects, bring indirect cost recovery, and enhance our entire research enterprise.

In the first six months of FY22, 51 awards have been granted through the SGI program, a 96% increase compared to the first half of FY20, when it was launched.

Under the SGI program, faculty members who are awarded a second or third federally funded research grant receive an incentive of \$10,000 either as personal compensation or as discretionary academic or laboratory development funds. Eligible grants are two or more years in duration, provide at least \$100,000 of direct cost per year, and convey full indirect costs.

Remarkably, 90% of the federal grants that have been awarded SGIs in the first half of FY22 were new grants, while the remainder were competitive renewals. So far, the Departments of Molecular Biology, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Psychiatry, and the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center For Reproductive Biology Sciences have received the highest numbers of SGIs.

The success of this program is evidence of the skill and dedication of our Investigators, the mentorship and supportive venues provided by our department chairs and center directors, and their commitment to the high-quality research standards at UT Southwestern.



Did you know?

UT Southwestern moved up into the top 25 Schools of Medicine with the most National Institutes of Health (NIH) Awards in 2021, according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research ranking tables.

With \$255,283,122 in NIH funding, our institution stands at No. 24, up five positions from 2020.

Incorporating Telemedicine To Medical Education

In the spring of 2020, a COVID-19 telemedicine elective allowed UT Southwestern medical students to continue developing their skills in patient interviewing and outpatient care management while unable to complete in-person clinical



rotations.

Students assisted hospital staff in tracking the progress of COVID-19-infected outpatients and overseeing the safe transition of their care from the hospital to primary care providers. Over 60% of patients who were advised to return to ED by the students required hospital admission.

Telemedicine has not traditionally been included in medical school's curriculum, but as it becomes common practice, UT Southwestern faculty and students have recognized the importance of learning how to use it successfully. [Read the full paper in BMJ Open Quality.](#)

Important Dates and Upcoming Events

Digital Learning Survey

The Division of Digital Learning (DDL) at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is seeking faculty input on digital resources and learning support. This information will help enhance the DDL's portfolio of digital resources, services, and programs

- [Take the survey](#) by Monday, May 9.

Simulation (SIM) Center Forum

This forum brings together individuals from a broad array of backgrounds, all with a common interest in health care simulation, quality improvement, and research.

- Wednesday, May 11, at 8 a.m. [Register](#) to attend.

Medical School Commencement

[UT Southwestern Medical School](#) will honor over 200 graduates in this year's commencement ceremony.

- Thursday, May 12, at 11 a.m. in the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center.

Wellness Week: From Surviving To Thriving

A combination of workshops and webinars hosted by the Office of Faculty Wellness.

- May 16-19. [More information.](#)

Graduate School Commencement

[UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences](#) will honor graduates from 11 academic programs.

- Thursday, May 19, at 7 p.m. in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium.

Applications Open: UT Southwestern Fund to Retain Clinical Scientists (UT-FOCUS)

The [UT-FOCUS program](#) supports early career physician-scientists with a clear need for additional assistance due to caregiving responsibilities exacerbated by COVID-19.

- [Apply by June 15.](#)



Women Faculty Wellness



Join the Office of Women's Careers on Tuesday, May 17, for a full day of women-centered wellness events. The [schedule includes](#) faculty-led lectures, optional health screenings, a yoga session, an art tour on the Plaza, and networking opportunities.

There will be free child care offered to faculty members for this event – [when enrolling](#), select "Other Provider/Clinic" and then choose UT Southwestern.

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