



50-year milestone: UTSW PA Studies Program

When UT Southwestern's Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program started in 1972, it launched with just seven students. Today, the program ranks among the best in the nation. PAs perform nearly all aspects of primary medical care, short of surgery: ordering tests, prescribing medicine, providing patient education, and more – all under the supervision of a physician.

Phillip Eugene Jones, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, played an integral role in that transformation. He shared his wisdom in the keynote speech at this year's White Coat Ceremony for students in the Master of Physician Assistant Studies Program, which marks its 50th year as an accredited program.

Like many students in the early days of the field, Dr. Jones had served as a Hospital Corpsman in the U.S. Navy. There was just one woman in his class of 55 students. Today, the newest UTSW class is 73% women. You can read about how the PA field has evolved demographically and academically over the years in a story on *Center Times Plus*.

[Educating for half a century](#)

Celebrating our veterans: UTSW alumnus, Marine recounts Vietnam experience

Norman Thagard, M.D., led an extraordinary life that stretched from the jungles of Vietnam to the expanse of outer space. Best known for his extraterrestrial exploits, the 80-year-old former astronaut was shaped as a physician and a scientist by his experiences in the Marines and at UT Southwestern.

From the cockpit of an F-4 Phantom fighter jet, the future M.D. navigated the skies over Vietnam, narrowly escaping death twice. Back in the U.S., he attended medical school at UTSW, graduating as one of the oldest students in the Class of 1977. When NASA called, he went on to a storied career among the stars, logging more than 140 days aboard the space shuttle Challenger and Russia's Mir space station.

As UTSW honors our veterans this month, we celebrate Dr. Thagard and the brave men and women working at this institution who have selflessly answered our nation's call.

[Read more](#)

OCHRE Grand Rounds presents tree project proposal

A 10-acre green park is one of many improvements envisioned for the future of the Southwestern Medical District (SWMD) to be highlighted when the Office of Community Health and Research Engagement (OCHRE) presents "The Intersection of Community Health and the Environment: A Qualitative Pilot Study to Aid the Transformation of Public Spaces in the Medical District."*

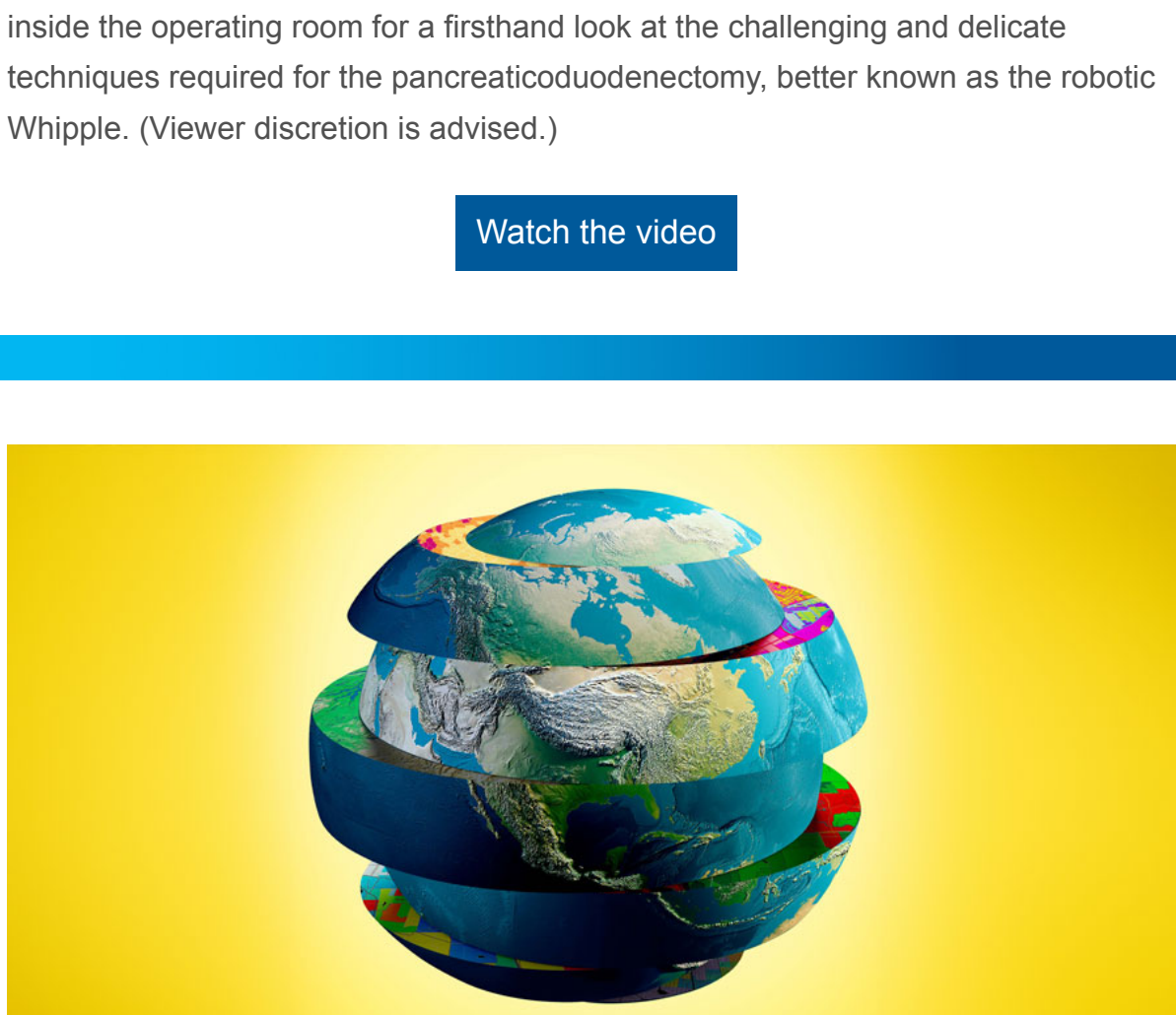
Built over the archaic cloverleaf intersection of Harry Hines Boulevard and Inwood Road, the park, as seen in artist renderings, would create an iconic hub that connects and serves the entire SWMD.

Lannie McClellan, SWMD Program Manager at [Texas Trees Foundation](#), will provide an overview of the redesign project. Sanjna Bhatia, UT Southwestern Medical School Class of 2026 and an intern at the Foundation, will present her work on a pilot study to collect qualitative data about people's experiences commuting to and within the SWMD.

[This is a virtual event requiring registration](#), and designers are seeking input on amenities, uses, and improvements for the park. Your insights will help the project team understand how to best design the space for all users, so please take the survey below.

**Presentation sponsored by the UT Southwestern Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) Program.*

[Take the survey](#)



Inside the OR: Robotic pancreas surgery

The [robotic-assisted Whipple surgery](#) for pancreatic cancer is among the most complex procedures performed by surgical oncologists. UT Southwestern is a global leader in this field. In recent years, surgical oncologists at UTSW have provided training and mentorship to numerous visiting and international surgeons, helping them establish their first robotic pancreas and liver surgery programs in various countries across Europe, Central America, and the Middle East.

In this new video, **Herbert Zeh, M.D.**, Chair of UTSW's Department of Surgery, and **Patricio Polanco, M.D.**, Director of the Robotic Surgery Training Program, take you inside the operating room for a firsthand look at the challenging and delicate techniques required for the pancreaticoduodenectomy, better known as the robotic Whipple. (Viewer discretion is advised.)

[Watch the video](#)

International GIS Day open house is Wednesday

The O'Donnell School of Public Health faculty will be marking international GIS Day on Wednesday, Nov. 15, with an open house to share information about how we are integrating geographic information systems into public health and medicine. GIS software tools are used for collecting, analyzing, combining, and displaying geospatial data. At UTSW, students, faculty, and staff are using GIS to map diseases, plan optimal distributions of health care resources, analyze health disparities, uncover hazardous environmental exposures, and much more.

The open house, from 1–3 p.m. in the OSPH classrooms (E2.502, next to the library), will include short presentations, interactive demos, food, games, and prizes. It is open to all students and faculty.

[Event details](#)

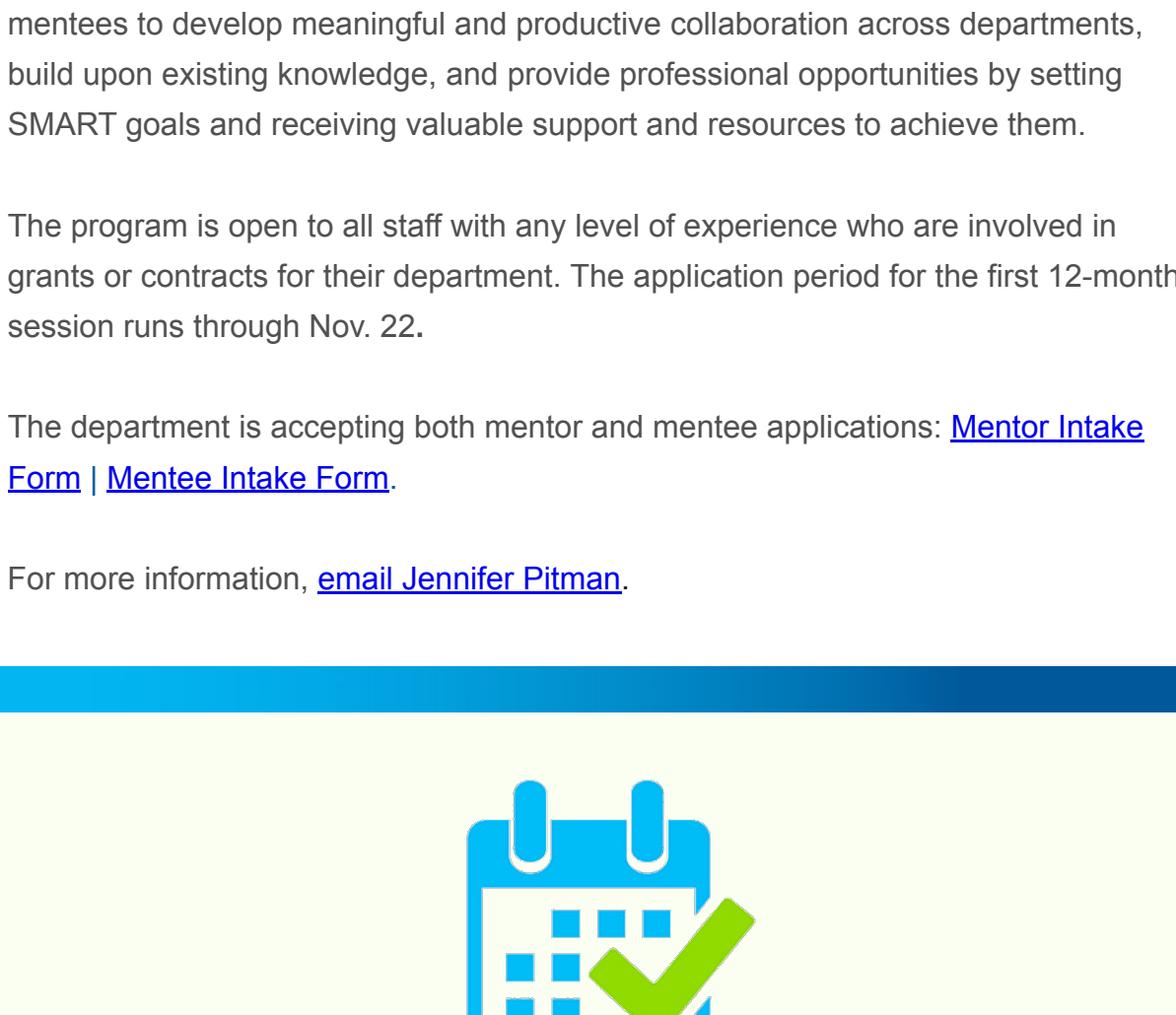
Research Highlights

Standing blood pressure test more accurate in detecting hypertension

Measurements are more reliable than those taken while patients are sitting, UTSW researchers find.

Study looks at ties between anxiety and gut bacteria

UTSW-led team investigates link between microbiome and symptoms among patients with depression.



New Grants & Contracts Mentorship Program accepting applicants through Nov. 22

The Department of Radiology is excited to announce a new, universitywide Grants & Contracts Mentorship Program. The 12-month initiative is designed for mentors and mentees to develop meaningful and productive collaboration across departments, build upon existing knowledge, and provide professional opportunities by setting SMART goals and receiving valuable support and resources to achieve them.

The program is open to all staff with any level of experience who are involved in grants or contracts through their department. The application period for the first 12-month session runs through Nov. 22.

The department is accepting both mentor and mentee applications: [Mentor Intake Form](#) | [Mentee Intake Form](#).

For more information, [email Jennifer Pitman](#).



UTSW Events Calendar

Looking for your daily dose of happenings?
The UTSW Events Calendar is updated every day.

[Click to view upcoming or trending events](#)

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