



## CNHS Newsletter Spring 2025

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### Dean Greenwood's Note

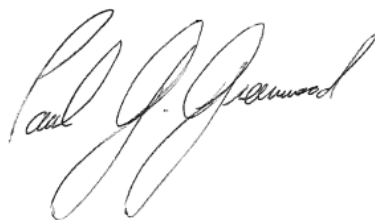


The Spring Semester is underway, and we especially want to congratulate the faculty who have recently learned of their successful tenure or promotion decisions. Congratulations to each of these talented faculty members!

This newsletter contains news of a wide variety of student and faculty activities, which represent just a subset of all the activity going on in the College of Natural and Health Sciences. I especially want to recognize our two PA students who joined the National Health Service Corps, the many exceptional nursing student research projects presented during Nursing Research Day, and the wide variety of national and international conference presentations by both students and faculty of CNHS. Congratulations to all for the exceptional work they have done in the past semester.

I wish you all an invigorating and productive semester. Thank you to all of the exceptional members of CNHS.

Cordially,



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## CNHS Happenings

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**The following professors have been granted tenure and/or promotion. Please join us in congratulating them!**

***Granted Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor***

Ashley Longstreet, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Michelle Osovitz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Biology

***Granted Promotion to Clinical Associate Professor***

Kimberly Mularoni, M.D., Clinical Assistant Professor, Physician Assistant Medicine

***Granted Promotion to Clinical Professor***

Johnna Yealy, Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor, Physician Assistant Medicine

***Granted Promotion to Associate Teaching Professor***

Amber Brace, Ph.D., Assistant Teaching Professor, Biology

***The T&P reception will be on Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. in Fletcher Lounge of Plant Hall to honor these CNHS faculty members as well as faculty from the other UTampa colleges.***

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## Fall 2025 Commencement



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## University of Tampa PA Students Join the National Health Service Corps (NHSC)



The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program plays a vital role in addressing the healthcare needs of under-served communities across the United States. By providing financial assistance to aspiring health professionals, including PA students, the NHSC promotes a workforce dedicated to service in areas where providers are scarce. In exchange for a 2-4 year service commitment to work in a health professional shortage area (HPSA), students can reduce the cost of PA education and begin a career rooted in compassion, equity, and dedication to health for all.

Vanessa M. Tomoah and Desire Namata from the University of Tampa PA program's class of 2025 have answered the call to serve in the NHSC. Here they share what inspired them to join.



**Vanessa M. Tomoah**

*Throughout my life, I've come to value having a healthcare provider who is knowledgeable about conditions and treatments and dedicated to educating patients and their families about their care plans. That, along with my Jamaican and Ghanaian heritage, plays a significant role in my motivation, as access to care in these regions has not always been seamless. Over time, I became inspired to be a provider who advocates for change within the health care system and contributes to access to care. My driving force is to be a resource for those in need in various specialties, which led me to pursue the PA profession.*

*I've always been passionate about bridging the gap between healthcare and health equity, which motivated me to apply for the NHSC scholarship. The NHSC scholarship allows me to do just that and so much more. The financial support from this scholarship relieves the burden of educational expenses, allowing me to focus entirely on my training and future service. By accepting this scholarship, I've committed to supporting underserved communities across our nation, those same communities that have shaped me culturally and require my help. I couldn't be more grateful.*



**Desire Namata**

*My motivation to become a PA is driven by a profound passion for joining a collaborative health care team prioritizing patient-centered care. I believe that the best healthcare outcomes emerge from diverse professionals' synergy, each offering unique*



*skills and perspectives. As a PA, I will have the opportunity to build trust and foster understanding, combining my medical knowledge with a compassionate approach to ensure that my patients receive personalized care tailored to their needs. This position will also allow me to work alongside dedicated colleagues united in our shared mission to positively impact the lives of those we serve.*

*I applied for the National Health Service Corps scholarship because its mission aligns with my lifelong commitment, shaped by my firsthand experiences with inadequate healthcare in my home country of Uganda. Growing up in a community with limited access to healthcare, I developed a strong sense of responsibility to bridge that gap and make a meaningful impact in healthcare. The NHSC scholarship allows me to gain the education and training needed to serve underserved communities, becoming a source of healing and support. It is my way of giving back and honoring the communities that shaped me, ensuring that others receive the care they deserve.*

### **Continuing the Legacy of NHSC**

Without programs like the NHSC, dedicated PA students like Vanessa Tomoah and Desire Namata may be unable to fulfill their goal of caring for the nation's most vulnerable populations due to financial limitations. Losing PA students like these comes at a cost not just to the profession but to the nation's healthcare system as a whole.

Fortunately, the NHSC has been able to significantly increase the number of students accepted to the program in recent years due to funding increases. However, mandatory funding for the NHSC is set to expire on December 31 in the absence of congressional action.

That is why PAEA is asking for your help to ensure that Congress does not return to the practice of rejecting a vast majority of students and graduates seeking to participate in the NHSC. [Please contact your representatives today](#) to urge them to preserve the current NHSC pipeline and field strength through a strong mandatory funding level.

Congratulations to Vanessa Tomoah, Desire Namata, and all the PA students who received awards from the NHSC this year! PAEA looks forward to celebrating more PA student awardees in the years to come. Members and students with questions about the NHSC are invited to contact Tyler Smith at [tsmith@PAEAonline.org](mailto:tsmith@PAEAonline.org).

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## **All-Access Hoops!**



Thank you to Campus Recreation, the Men's UTampa Basketball Team, and most

importantly the Tampa Strong Dogs for collaborating on the All-Access Hoops event on November 19th. Carlos (Strong Dog Team Captain) and **Dr. Jason Rabe** (HSHP) have envisioned this event on campus for many years. Pat Williamson shared this vision and played a major role in bringing it to fruition.

During three years of collaborating with the Strong Dogs, Dr. Rabe has observed how life-changing the experience of playing wheelchair basketball is for UTampa students. Dr. Rabe offers the students in the ESC-400 course (Physical Education and Fitness for Special Populations) the opportunity to reflect on their experience meeting and participating in wheelchair basketball.

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## UTampa PA Students



On Nov 20th, the UTampa PA students visited the James Haley VAMC polytrauma unit to learn about military medicine and traumatic brain injury care. The Tampa VA houses the world's premier therapy program for active-duty special forces and other veterans who have suffered trauma and head injuries. The students toured multiple therapy and medical units to learn about interprofessional practice.

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## Nursing Research Day



Nursing Research Day was on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The theme was “Extraordinary Nursing



Student Shaping Research and Practice” with speaker of the evening Dr. Kim Curry organized by **Dr. Maxine Jeffery** (Nursing) in collaboration with many of the faculty and staff of the Department of Nursing (**Dr. Pedroff, Dr. White, Dr. Berg, Dr. Ernewein & Mrs. Jackie Sanchez**). Thank you to the many faculty members who volunteered to be judges of the poster presentations and aid in the selection of winners. There were 21 poster presentations from our undergraduate senior nursing students enrolled in the nursing research course and three podium presentations from the DNP graduate students. Some of the faculty also presented their posters. Thank you to Sigma Theta Tau Delta – Beta Chapter and their contributions to the event.

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**Dr. June Llerena, Dr. Melissa Culp, Mrs. Bethany Tucker** (Nursing) and **Dr. Marisa Belote** (PA), attended the 25th Annual International Meeting on Simulation in Healthcare (IMSH) for the Society of Simulation in Healthcare (SSH) in January 2025. Drs. Llerena, Belote, and Culp conducted a workshop entitled, "Building Community Outreach- How Simulation Programs Can Support Healthcare Professions Exploration". This workshop assisted simulation faculty interested in developing community outreach programs to identify local organizations for partnerships, explore various type of simulation activities, and identify special considerations and target audiences.

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**Dr. Simon Schuler** (Astronomy & Physics) has been appointed Program Director for the Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences Division of Astronomical Sciences Astronomy and Astrophysics Research Grants at the U.S. National Science Foundation. The program responsibilities include launching early-career academic pathways in the mathematical and physical sciences. Congratulations Dr. Schuler!



**Dr. Susan Berg, Dr. June Bryant, and Dr. Julie Umberger** (Nursing) recently attended the conference “The Clinician Program Advancing Autonomic Medicine” in Clearwater Beach, FL. Dr. Bryant’s presentation was entitled “The Role of the APP in Dysautonomia Care”.





University of Tampa students visited and toured Gannon University in Ruskin, Florida this fall to learn about the Doctor of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy Doctorate, and Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology programs. Students met with program directors, admission representatives, and former students who are enrolled in the graduate programs. The University of Tampa partnered with Gannon University last year to offer graduates a direct pathway to graduate-level health programs. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.ut.edu/academics/college-of-natural-and-health-sciences/health-sciences-and-human-performance/allied-health/ut-gannon-programs>



Dr. Mark McRae and his Winter-Term Field Ornithology class at Chito Branch Reserve, Lithia, FL.

## Faculty and Student Scholarship



**Beta Beta Beta**  
BIOLOGICAL HONOR SOCIETY



CNHS double major student Braelynn Bolger (Biology BS, Chemistry BA; Class of '25) and her research mentor **Dr. Kalpana Makhijani** (Biology) were awarded a research grant from the TriBeta - Biological Honor Society. TriBeta is an honor society for students, particularly undergraduates, dedicated to improving the understanding



and appreciation of biological study and extending boundaries of human knowledge through scientific research.

Since its founding in 1922, more than 300,000 persons have been accepted into lifetime membership, and more than 650 chapters have been established throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.

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**Dr. Simon Schuler's** (Physics & Astronomy) undergraduate research student Alexis Miller (Allied Health BS, Physics & Astronomy BS, Mathematics minor) presented her work on the disruption of the stellar association OCSN-49, at the Meeting of the American Astronomical Society in National Harbor, MD.

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**Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology) was highlighted in a recent *People Behind the Science* podcast entitled, "Dr. Michael Middlebrooks: Studying Photosynthetic Sea Slugs and Other Underwater Invertebrates".

A link to the podcast can be found here:  
<https://www.peoplebehindthescience.com/dr-michael-middlebrooks/>



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**Dr. Carlos Santamaria** (Biology) recently attended ConGen2025 at Cheetah Conservation Fund in Otjiwarongo, Namibia. Dr. Santamaria also recently published a paper on the development of an eDNA assay to detect a threatened snake species. Students in BIO355 are acknowledged as they helped



with testing the method on other snake species. The citation is below.

Santamaria, Carlos A., Emily Galbraith, and Alison M. Gainsbury. "Development of an assay for the detection of the federally threatened Florida eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*) using soil eDNA." *Conservation Science and Practice* (2024): e13237.



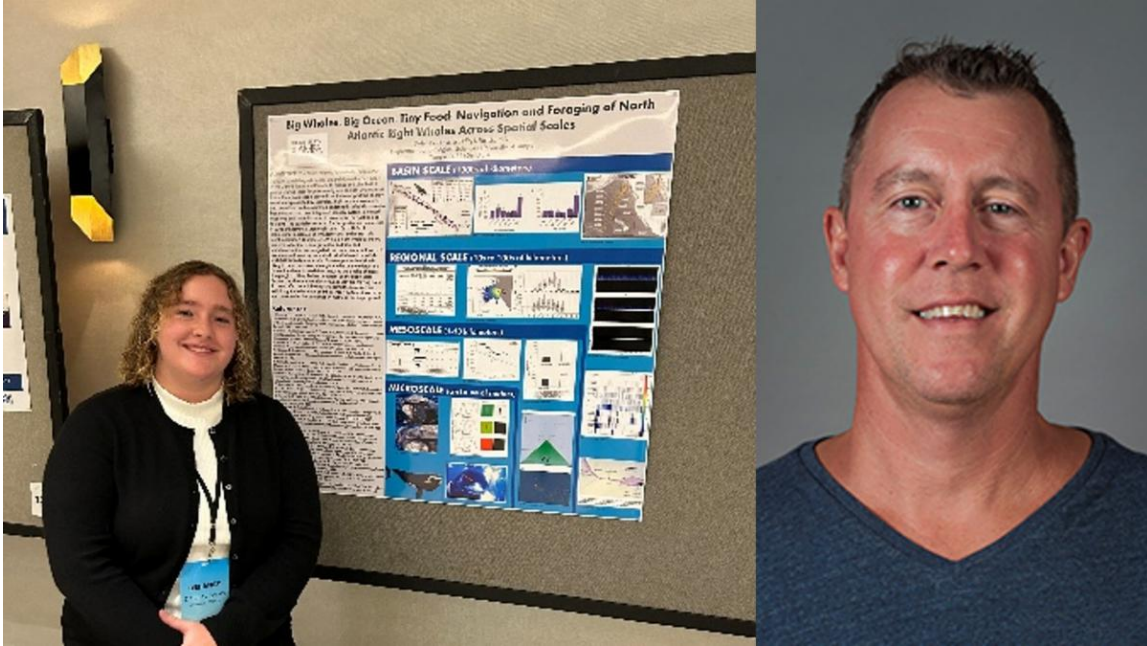
**Dr. Eduardo De Souza** (HSHP) led a paper published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* titled "Training volume increases or maintenance based on previous volume: the effects on muscular adaptations in trained males"

<https://doi.org/10.1152/jappphysiol.00476.2024>

4. This collaborative effort included contributions from HSHP faculty members **Dr. Joseph Walters** and **Dr. J.C. Andersen**, as well as graduate and undergraduate students from the department.

Additionally, Dr. De Souza coauthored a paper titled "Does increasing the resistance-training volume lead to greater gains? The effects of weekly set progressions on muscular adaptations in females," which has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Sports Science*.





Undergraduate research student Delaney Jones (Marine Science – Biology; History Minor; Honors Program) and **Dr. Jeffry Fasick** (Biology) attended the annual North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting in Providence, RI in October. Ms. Jones presented their poster presentation entitled, “*Big Whales, Big Ocean, Tiny Food: Navigation and Foraging of North Atlantic Right Whales Across Spatial Scales*”. Dr. Fasick presented a lightning talk entitled, “*The Sensory Systems of the North Atlantic Right Whale: Their Roles in Migration and Foraging Strategies, and Implications on Conservation Efforts*” (see link below for video). Ms. Jones and Dr. Fasick also attended the two-day Ropeless Fishing Consortium meeting that preceded the right whale consortium meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOXSPIL1E&list=PL0svaUddbYPDG15gVCWjdUsfJEjrjVuTK&index=17>



**Dr. Heather Mason** (Biology) was awarded the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) Conservation Champion Award in Endangered Species and Habitat Conservation in October 2024. Seahorse National Park was established in the Bahamas in Sept. 2023 based on the research conducted by Dr. Mason and Dr. Emily Rose (UT alum class of ‘07) in addition to other colleagues and students (see award & event here:



<https://bnt.bs/news/bnt-celebrates-65-years-of-conservation-recognizes-conservation-champions-at-2024-annual-general-meeting/et>)

Dr. Mason, Dr. Rose, and the NEW Dr. Coley Tosto (UT alum '20, PhD awarded September 2024 from the University of Canterbury in New Zealand) in addition to other colleagues published a paper in Molecular Ecology this past fall in the journal Molecular Ecology (link to paper:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/mec.17550>)

Dr. Mason was an invited participant at a meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Specialist Group for Seahorses and their relatives, sponsored by the government of Monaco to work on the further protection of seahorses and pipefishes globally, with experts from 23 countries

Dr. Mason, Dr. Rose and seven students (four UT alums – Megan Sims (UT alum '18), Georgia Ambrose (UT alum '22), Emma Robbins (UT alum '24), and Hannah Holland (UT alum '24) presented at the Society for the study of Integrative and Comparative Biology (SICB) in Atlanta Georgia in Jan 2025. They were also celebrating the graduation of Megan Sims with her MS in Biology from Valdosta State University.



## The RICHIE Model for Nursing Student Success

By MARYANN D'ALESSANDRO, DNP, MSN, RN, CNOR, NI-BC, CNE

The RICHIE Model for Nursing Student Success has gained recognition from the Florida Board of Nursing (FBON) for its innovative and student-centered approach to nursing education. This model, developed by **Dr. MaryAnn D'Alesandro** (Nursing) in 2018, provides comprehensive support for nursing students, addressing both academic and non-academic needs, including psychosocial and functional well-being. Dr. D'Alesandro presented the RICHIE Model at several notable events including the FBON full board meeting in April, the FBON Nursing Educator Workshop in Indian River in July, and the National Nurse Educator Summit in April 2023. The model's effectiveness was evaluated through a RISE grant awarded to Dr. D'Alesandro in 2021-2022. The study, titled "Evaluating the Impact and Effectiveness of Implementation of the Department of Nursing RICHIE ~ Student Success, Retention, and Enrichment Initiative," demonstrated positive outcomes. These results were subsequently shared with the FBON and presented at the National Nurse Educator Summit, further validating the model's impact on nursing student success. This work was recently published in the Florida Board of Nursing (full text found below)

<https://epubs.thinknurse.com/publication/?i=838420&p=16&view=issueViewer>



## Important Dates



[UT Master Calendar](#)

[UT Academic Calendar](#)

February 19 - Midterm progress reporting process begins for faculty of undergraduate students (ends March 9)

March 9–16 - Spring Break

March 20 - Tenure & Promotion Ceremony (Fletcher Lounge, 3 pm)

March 21 - Admitted Student Day

March 28 - Admitted Student Day

March 31- Last day to withdraw from 14-week classes.

April 4 - Admitted Student Day

April 7- Registration begins for Fall continuing students

April 17 - University Academic Awards (Fletcher Lounge, 3 pm)

April 18 - College Meeting (Vaughn Center Crescent Club, 3 pm)

April 23 - CNHS Academic Awards (Grand Salon, 3 pm)

April 25 - CNHS Research Symposium (Vaughn Center Crescent Club, 2-5 pm)

May 5 - Last day of Spring classes

May 6-9 - Spring Final Exams

May 10 - Spring Commencement

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**Please send future news items to [jdavila@ut.edu](mailto:jdavila@ut.edu) or [jfasick@ut.edu](mailto:jfasick@ut.edu)**

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