



## CNHS Newsletter

Fall 2024

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### Dean Greenwood's Note



Last year, in the opening CNHS Newsletter, I commented about Hurricane Idalia, and the previous year it was Hurricane Ian. This year, even this newsletter was delayed because of our two hurricanes. Welcome back to the campus that fared very well through two hurricanes this semester. While there are still some challenges in a couple of residences, and a leaky classroom here and there, facilities, campus safety and many other colleagues did an amazing job at getting the campus ready for classes to resume. Despite the UTampa campus faring reasonably well, many in our college were impacted by one or more hurricanes, including those who are forced completely out of their homes for months while repairs are completed. My thoughts are with anyone who has suffered through these storms; the physical damage and mental stress are considerable I know.

In the spirit of returning to some semblance of routine, we welcome many new faculty and staff to the college, and this newsletter celebrates many accomplishments of our faculty and students during the summer and so far in the fall semester. I am proud of all the work our faculty and students do, but I am particularly proud of the many ways CNHS students and faculty reach out into the community to forge connections between the University and others. Of particular note was the Youth

Environmental Summit and the Hope in Action event, which was co-sponsored by CNHS. The event concluded with a talk by noted conservationist Dr. Jane Goodall at Tropicana Field.

I wish all the students, faculty, and staff of CNHS a much calmer and relaxing semester going forward. We learn from everything we encounter, and we are stronger, more resilient, and closer than ever because of facing these challenges together.

Most sincerely,



## Welcome all New and Returning Faculty!

### 2024 New CNHS Faculty and Staff



**Professor Nancy Amundson**  
Biology



**Professor Zachary Beldon**  
Sport Management



**Professor Nyote Calixte**  
Chemistry & Biochemistry



**Professor Thi Nga Do**  
Physics & Astronomy



**Professor Sean Dwyer**  
Health Sciences and Human  
Performance



**Professor Robin Glenn**  
Environmental Studies



**Professor Sara Gramata**  
Sport Management



**Professor Yan Guo**  
Health Sciences and Human  
Performance



**Professor Rose Hilmo**  
Biology



**Professor Laureen Jacobe**  
Nursing



**Professor Bakarr Kanu**  
Chemistry & Biochemistry



**Professor Bill Irwin**  
Biology





**Professor Maxine Jeffery**  
Nursing



**Professor Zak Kossiver**  
PA Medicine



**Professor Stephen Lee**  
PA Medicine

**Professor Kalpana Makhijani**  
Biology



**Professor Jason Rabe**  
Health Sciences and Human Performance



**Professor Saida Riddell**  
Health Sciences & Human Performance



**Professor Sima Saeidi**  
Physics & Astronomy



**Professor Mindy Siyufy**  
PA Medicine



**Professor Bethany Tucker**  
Nursing



**Professor Dene Williamson**  
Sport Management

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## CNHS Happenings

### Convocation 2024!

Convocation was held in the Falk Theater on Saturday August 24 and was attended by approximately 800 new students along with our platform party of faculty and student

organization officers. Our honored speakers were Dr. Edna Fernandez-Figueroa, Assistant Professor - Environmental Studies and Victoria Urso (Allied Health & Human Performance, Class of '25).

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## **The UT2UT Accelerated Pathway for PA admission**

The UT PA Program is excited to announce that the UT2UT Accelerated Pathway for PA admission has successfully increased the number of alumni in the PA program. To date, 15 UT undergraduates have applied through this pathway, with 13 selected for admission. Five students began their studies this fall, and eight more will matriculate next fall. We were highly impressed by these applicants' academic achievements, healthcare experience, and other activities that prepared them for the demands of graduate medical education.

### **Admissions**

The Physician Assistant Medicine Program is highly selective. Applicants are considered for the UT PA program if they meet the minimum GPA requirements. Each year, UT's physician assistant medicine program receives a large number of



applications, and 48 students are selected to matriculate and enroll in August.  
[www.ut.edu](http://www.ut.edu)

The accelerated pathway opens each May, with interviews conducted in June. UT undergraduates or alumni who do not meet the UT2UT pathway requirements are still encouraged to apply through the traditional pathway, which also opens in May and has rolling interviews from September to December. If you have questions about the accelerated admission application process, please visit our website: (<https://www.ut.edu/graduate-degrees/physician-assistant-medicine-program/admissions>).

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## **The 2nd Annual ICK: Invasive and Cichlid Kids Fishing Tournament!**

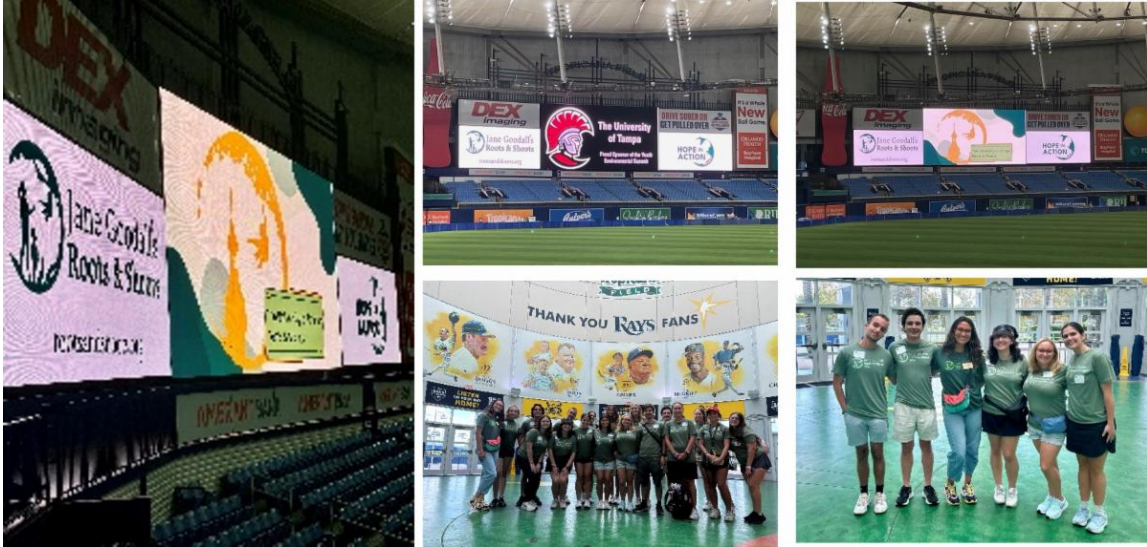
**Dr. Bridgette Froeschke's** Lab (Environmental Studies) is excited to announce the second annual ICK: Invasive and Cichlid Kids Fishing Tournament, taking place at Plant Park on Sunday, October 27, 2024. Building on last year's success, where 50 children participated, this event offers a fun and educational experience for youth ages 4 to 16. If you're interested in volunteering or signing up your child, please contact Dr. Bridgette Froeschke at [bfroeschke@ut.edu](mailto:bfroeschke@ut.edu).



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## **Roots and Shoots *Hope in Action* Event with Dr. Jane Goodall**





On September 14, a small army of UTampa students (mostly CNHS) spent the entire day volunteering at the Roots and Shoots *Hope in Action* event. This event featured an all-day Youth Environmental Summit in which UTampa students helped Bay-area elementary, middle, and high school students learn about environmental education and advocacy. The Summit was followed that evening by a presentation from none other than Dr. Jane Goodall, world renowned conservationist and founder of Roots and Shoots. On Sunday, the UTampa Roots and Shoots chapter led a beach cleanup at Honeymoon Island as a part of the Roots and Shoots “Day of Service”.



Students in SPM 491 Seminar in Sport Management had the opportunity to work and attend the Tampa Bay Sun match on Saturday September 14. The Sun are playing in the new USL Super League and are Tampa Bay’s first professional women’s sports franchise. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, the Sun were giving away “Vamos Tampa” towels to all fans and our students were in charge of staffing this promotion. The Sun and UTAMPA sport management have developed a strong partnership. Sun staff have been guest speakers, are hosting interns and game day staff, as well as hiring 2023 graduate Paul Wales as a full-time member of their ticket operations department.



Current University of Tampa students visited and toured Gannon University in Ruskin, Florida earlier this month 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 current students 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>

## Student Success



# 2024 Summer Undergrad Research Fellows



Noelani Segree is working with Dr. Meredith Clements to study how young women communicate about their reproductive health, focusing specifically on fertility awareness and family planning.



Christian Farrell working with Dr. Willie Leung, is exploring the effectiveness of wearable devices like Apple Watches and Fitbits for individuals with intellectual disabilities.



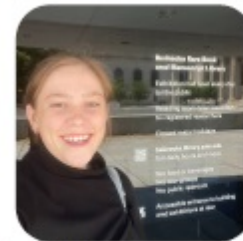
Aysel Khalil with Dr. Kimberly Dobrinski are looking at the effects of *Padina gymnospora* algae on two types of breast cancer cell lines: MDA & MCF-7.



Billy Hartman is collaborating with Dr. Mark Bender to study consumer response to controversial advertisements. This will be done by using eye-tracking technology.



Maia Ivette Santiago is collaborating with Prof. Jacob LaFond to investigate a bacteria (*P. Fragi*) potentially found in invasive Cane toads.



Lena Malpeli mentored by Dr. Iemanja Brown sought to interpret if sexuality and desire can be controlled and navigated through writing in the life of 1920s author Sackville-West.



Emma Werner with Dr. Michael French is studying the architecture of the protein ubiquitin.



Jessie Wahlers with Dr. Kristian Taylor is studying the effects of the Brazilian peppertree on mangrove crab cannibalism.

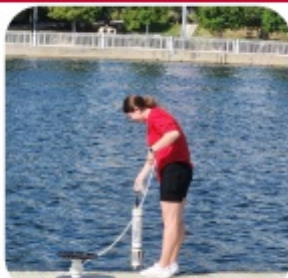


Brian Veit is working with Dr. John Struss to pursue their likeminded goal of developing a more efficient method of producing biodiesel from waste cooking oil.

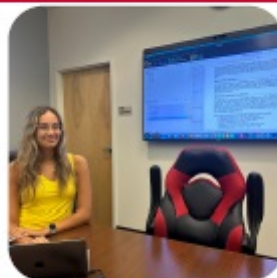


Heather Berwanger with Dr. Stephen Blessing along with the Glazer Children's Museum look to encourage purposeful play and playstyles via a smartphone app.

# 2024 Summer Undergrad Research Fellows



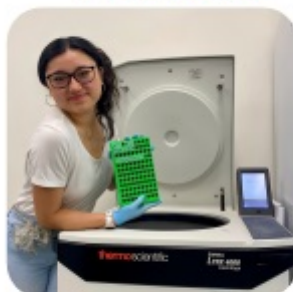
Madison Young is using DNA sequencing and cultivating the bacteria without oxygen. Working with Dr. Rubelmann, they aim to identify and characterize the microbial species present in Jewfish Sinkhole.



Emily Lazarz, mentored by Shanda Vereen, is researching hurricane evacuation plans from multiple different rural and metro counties in Florida and evaluating their specific plans and procedures regarding vulnerable populations.



Sara Hrniciar with Dr. Lori Jacques is developing a new minimally invasive software testing model for websites and applications used in recreational environments.



Lilliana Haight with Dr. Ann Williams is studying antibiotic resistance in the oral bacteria of sharks around Tampa Bay.



Robert Cooper with Dr. Suzanne Dieringer is studying how socioeconomic factors like entrance fees, gas prices, and income affect National Park visitation.



Chrysanthi Skaliotis, mentored by Dr. Diaz Vidal, is conducting an in-depth analysis of the percentage of women serving on executive boards within the Florida Companies on the Russell 3000 index.



Dana Gaudette is working with Dr. Ben Wilson to study interactions between enzymes and possible biological inhibitors by creating molecular dynamics simulations.



Bryton Montgomery, working with Dr. Pad Mahadevan, added new functionality to a web-based geonomics software, CoreGenes.



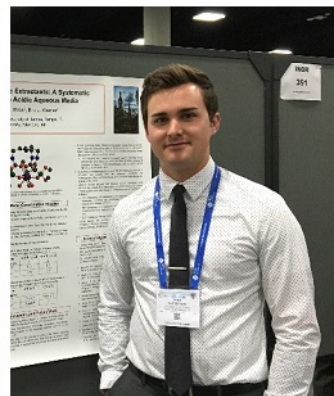
Bryan Padilla has been working alongside Dr. Denis Rey to evaluate the Cuban émigré newspaper, Patria!



Mackenzie Matthews is developing best practices for a drone based aquatic ecology study working with Dr. Fernandez-Figueroa.

## Faculty and Student Scholarship

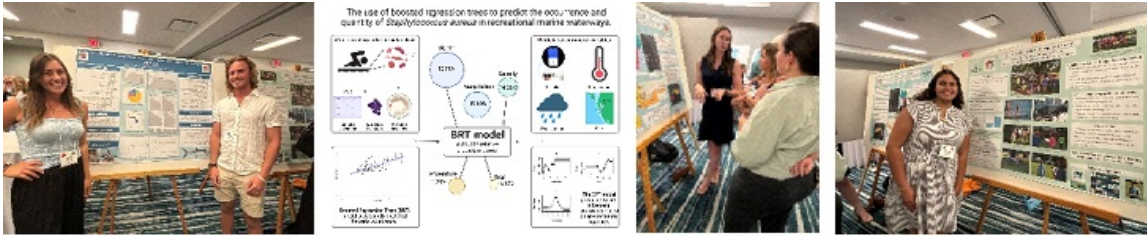




**Dr. Eric Werner** (Chemistry) recently published a paper in the journal *Inorganic Chemistry* titled “Selective Liquid–Liquid Extraction of Thorium(IV) from Rare-Earth Element Mixtures” (<https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.inorgchem.4c01240>). Past and present UT undergraduate students Wyatt Larrinaga (Chemistry and Biology ‘21), Bailey Lake (Chemistry ‘23), Victoria Pacanowski (Chemistry ‘25), and Michael Patterson (Chemistry ‘17) coauthored the paper which describes the development of a system for separation and extraction of the actinide metal, thorium, from complex lanthanide metal mixtures. Potential applications of the work include enhanced purification methods for rare-earth element minerals containing large amounts of thorium that complicate current processes.

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**Dr. Bridgette Froeschke** from the Environmental Studies Department and **Dr. Michelle Osovitz** from the Biology Department, along with their former students at The University of Tampa—Margaret Baker, Ella Hampson, Stella L. Nau, and Ashley Thomas—have developed an innovative model to predict the occurrence of *Staphylococcus aureus* in Tampa Bay. Their study, titled "The Use of Boosted Regression Trees to Predict the Occurrence and Quantity of *Staphylococcus aureus* in Recreational Marine Waterways," utilized a boosted regression trees (BRT) model to analyze the relationship between environmental factors and the abundance of this pathogen. By collecting and analyzing water samples from seven recreational sites over 18 months, the team identified key environmental variables like month, precipitation, salinity, and temperature that influence *S. aureus* presence. The study highlights the potential of the BRT model in microbial monitoring, setting a new standard for research that can inform public health strategies in marine environments. This groundbreaking research exemplifies the collaborative spirit and scientific innovation at UTampa.

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In July, **Dr. Melissa Culp** Director of the Nursing Skills and Simulation Lab, **Dr. June Llerena** Simulation Curriculum and Development Director and **Michael Layme** Simulation Technician traveled to Iasi, Romania to meet with the leadership, faculty and staff of Fundatia Ecologica Green Postscolia (FEG) School system and representatives from a SOSU Aarhaus a Vocation Education Training program in Denmark. The team presented topics on establishing a simulation program, simulation professional development, and the role of simulation in healthcare education. They also met with government officials and local healthcare leaders to learn about the healthcare needs of the region and country.

## Alumnae news

# RESPIRATORY CARE

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Meeting Report | Pulmonary Disease – Part 2

## A Systematic Review of the Respiratory Effects of Red Tide

Mckenzie Dahlin, Tara O'Connor and Mary Martinasek  
Respiratory Care October 2024, 69 (Suppl 10) 4120829;

Two HSHP graduates, McKenzie Dahlin (current PA student) and Tara O'Connor (public health) published an article from their 2023 summer research on a SURF grant.

[A Systematic Review of the Respiratory Effects of Red Tide | Respiratory Care \(rcjournal.com\)](https://rcjournal.com)

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**Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology) attended the American Malacological Society Conference in Pasadena CA in August. He gave a talk (citation below) on some recent sea slug research. **Professor John Ambrosio** (Biology) and Dr. Middlebrooks' research student Samantha Schlegel were also authors on the talk.



Michael L. Middlebrooks, Nicholas E. Curtis, Samantha Schlegel, and Louis J. Ambrosio. Discovery of a population of the temperate sacoglossan sea slug *Elysia chlorotica* in a subtropical habitat. American Malacological Society Annual Meeting (2024), Pasadena, CA.



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**Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology) and **Dr. Sarah Wilson** (Biology) along with UT Alum Kourtney Barber were co-authors on a poster presented at the American Malacological Society Conference in Pasadena CA in August. The title of the poster along with the co-authors is found below. Prior to the meeting Dr. Middlebrooks attended the International Heterobranch Workshop on Kleptobiology and Photosymbiosis which is put on as part of the American Malacological Society meeting. Dr. Middlebrooks gave a talk at this workshop as well entitled, "Plant-Herbivore Interactions of Specialist Herbivores".

*Nicholas E. Curtis, Michael L. Middlebrooks, Sarah E. Wilson, Kourtney S. Barber, and Monica Mullally. DNA barcoding reveals that a coral reef population of the sea slug Elysia crispata feeds mostly on cryptic epilithic algal species. American Malacological Society Annual Meeting (2024), Pasadena, CA.*

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In the May Term **Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology) took a class of students to Roatan, Honduras for the MAR344 Coral Reefs course. They spent two weeks at the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences learning to identify organisms underwater, participating in coral restoration efforts, and conducting student-led research projects.

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**Drs. Tressa Pedroff** (Nursing) and **Robin White** (Nursing) presented a poster entitled “Transforming Undergraduate Nursing Student Comfort with Palliative Care Using Innovative Modalities” in July 2024 at the End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) Conference through the AACN in Portland Oregon.




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**Dr. Eduardo D Souza** (HSHP) co-authored the paper "Changes in muscle cross-sectional area during two menstrual cycles may not be exclusively

attributed to resistance training," which was published in the journal Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism. <https://doi.org/10.1139/apnm-2024-0004>



**Dr. Kristian Taylor** (Biology) recently published the following article in the Journal of College Science Teaching:  
Sandquist, E. J., Schofield, B. J., Taylor, K. H., Engel, A. C., Liu, J., Putzke, A. P., ... Wolyniak, M. J. (2024). A Community of Practice for CURE Development: The MIRIC (Mentoring the Integration of Research into the Classroom) Network. Journal of College Science Teaching, 53(5), 454–461.



<https://doi.org/10.1080/0047231X.2024.2373026>.

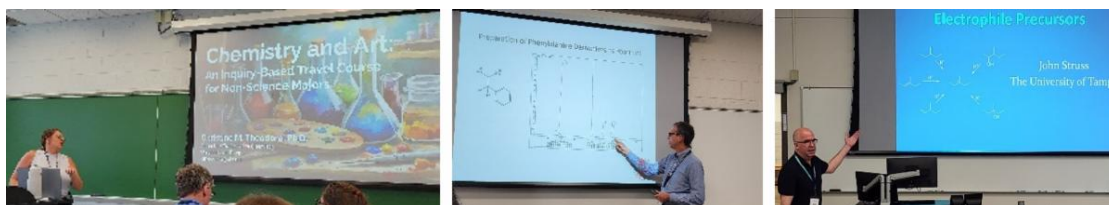
On the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, **PA Faculty Zak Kossiver** provided combat life-saving training for the ROTC faculty. This is crucial in preparing them to support their cadets in training environments and potential real-world scenarios. This specialized training equips the cadre with the skills and knowledge to effectively respond to medical emergencies on the battlefield, where immediate care can be the difference between life and death. By empowering ROTC faculty with these critical life-saving techniques, they can confidently lead and support their cadets, ensuring they are prepared to handle military service's physical and medical challenges. Additionally, this training strengthens the bond between medical and military personnel, fostering a deeper understanding of the roles each plays in ensuring mission success.







**Drs. Romuald Delacroix** (Nursing) and **Robin White** (Nursing) took seven undergraduate nursing and three graduate nursing students to the Dominican Republic in August 2024 on a study abroad trip with Solid Rock International. They hosted four mobile medical clinics over four days and treated over 500 patients, including patients in two migrant Haitian camps.



Five members of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry attended the Biannual Conference on Chemical Education (BCCE) held from July 28-August 1 in Lexington, KY at the University of Kentucky. **Associate Professors Eric Ballard** and **Christine Theodore**, **Assistant Professor John Struss**, **Associate Teaching Professor Matt Wilson** and **Chemistry Instructor Dee Dee Brumfield** traveled to participate in workshops and sessions focused on four broad themes related to chemical education: Classroom Practice and Learning Environments, Curriculum and Cognition, Assessment and Research Methods, and Professional Development. Drs. Ballard, Struss, and Theodore also gave presentations related to the development of experiments and courses implemented here at The University of Tampa. All presentations were well received and resulted in engaging discussions and new academic networking opportunities. All five attendees returned with fresh ideas and new methods to share with their colleagues and implement in the department's courses.

**Presentations by Department faculty (\*indicates undergraduate co-authors):**

Shelby Lash\*, Bella Ruozzi\*, Catherine Boino\*, Eric Ballard, Benjamin Wilson, **Scott Witherow**. "Linking Organic Chemistry II, Physical Chemistry, and Biochemistry Laboratories in the Study of the Inhibition of Alkaline Phosphatase by Phenylalanine Derivatives".

John Struss. "Alkylation of Anisole Using Alkenes and Alcohols as Electrophile Precursors"  
Christine Theodore. "Enhancing Spectroscopy Learning in the Undergraduate Classroom."  
Christine Theodore. "Integrating an Inquiry-Based Chemistry and Art Travel Course for  
Non-Science Majors into the Liberal Arts Curriculum."

**Workshops Attended:**

Dee Dee Brumfield: "Forensic Science Workshop and Roundtable Discussion."

Christine Theodore: "Art and Archaeology-Inspired Chemistry Labs and Activities."

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On October 8, 2024, **PA Department Chair Johnna Yealy** and **Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Thomas Witherspoon** delivered an on-demand webinar titled "Developing a DEI Action Plan: Lights, Camera, Action!" at the National Physician Assistant Education Conference. This peer-reviewed CME event was designed to assist PA educators in creating actionable Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategies within their programs.

PA programs must integrate DEI initiatives to address health disparities and promote an inclusive learning environment for future healthcare providers. The webinar aimed to foster environments where students and patients from diverse backgrounds can thrive by equipping educators with the tools to build effective DEI action plans. The session provided practical steps for educators to implement DEI strategies, emphasizing the critical role that diversity and inclusion play in improving healthcare outcomes and creating more culturally competent healthcare professionals.

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## Important Dates





## [UT Academic Calendar](#)

October 21- First 7-week classes end

October 23- Second 7-week classes begin

October 26 - Deadline for graduate candidate names to appear in the December Commencement Program

November 1 - College Meeting

November 4- Registration begins for Spring and Winter

November 4 - Last day to withdraw from 14-week class

November 12- Last day to withdraw from second 7-week class

November 27- December 1 - Thanksgiving Break

December 7- Last Day of Fall Classes

December 9-12 - Fall final exams

December 12- Fall Semester ends

December 13- Fall Commencement

December 16- Fall Grades Due

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

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