



## CNHS Newsletter

Summer 2025

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### Dean Greenwood's Note



While this is called the CNHS Summer Newsletter, it is a celebration of work that was completed by our students and faculty during the spring semester and leading into the summer. We will follow up very soon with another newsletter to celebrate our new colleagues in the college as well as the exciting work done by students and faculty over the summer.

The spring semester is always very active for professional conferences and this year was no exception, with numerous UTampa students presenting their work with their faculty mentors. Congratulations to all of these students for their exceptional work, but special mention goes to the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry for taking 18 research students to the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society in San Diego. I am grateful for the support of the University to help fund the travel to all of these conferences.

The University has grown in size to the point

where the College of Natural and Health Sciences had its own commencement celebration in May. Thanks to all the organizers of this event; it was a smooth operation, particularly noteworthy for an inaugural event of that size.

I wish you all an excellent start to this academic year! Stop by and I'll buy you a coffee sometime; Starbucks is so close now!

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul J. Greenwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Greenwood" clearly legible. The middle initial "J." is smaller and less distinct.

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## CNHS HIGHLIGHTS

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### 2024-2025 Academic Award Winners

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**Office of Access & Community Programs: The Agent of Change Award - Provost  
Dr. David Stern**

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**International Programs Office: Excellence in Study Abroad Award - Dr. Robin White (Nursing); Faculty International Service Award - Melissa Culp (Nursing)**



**Office of Sponsored Programs: Grant Award - Dr. Amy Lien (Physics & Astronomy)**





**Office of Undergraduate Research & Inquiry: Mentor of the Year - Dr. Kim Dobrinski (Biology)**

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**CNHS Innovation in Teaching Award - Dr. Anna Ragni (Biology)**



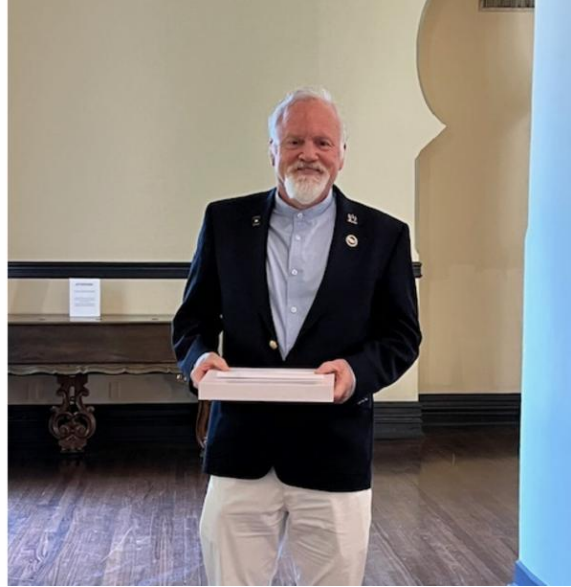
**CNHS Outstanding Student Research Supervision Award - Dr. Carlos Santamaria (Biology)**



**CNHS Outstanding Scholar Award - Dr. Mary Martinasek (HSHP)**



**CNHS Outstanding Service Award - Dr. Roman Sereda (PA-Medicine)**



**CNHS Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Award - Maria Russo (Nursing) & John Detro (PA-Medicine)**

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## **Health Professions Graduate Fair**



Pre-health advising and the Department of Health Sciences and Human Performance co-sponsored the Health Professions Graduate School Fair on January 31<sup>st</sup>. This event



was part of the Central to North Florida Heat Wave Tour and included stops at Rollins College, University of Florida, and the University of North Florida. The UTampa fair attracted 59 graduate schools representing different health profession graduate programs and students from a variety of majors including allied health, biology, human performance, and others. An overview of the fair can be found here:

<https://ut.video.yuja.com/V/Video?v=12383887&node=54049239&a=197848869>

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## Goalball !

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In April, the HSC 237-Health Disparities course participated in a game of Goalball. The students participated in the game as part of their course module discussing health disparities among people living with disabilities. The game of Goalball is a sport designed for people with visual impairment; however, it is a game that all individuals can play. This activity helped the students gain a better insight into the capabilities of people living with disabilities, to challenge stereotypes, and to understand the importance of inclusion in sports. **Dr. Willie Leung** (HSHP) supplied the materials for the game.

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## Student Success

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**Celebrating Leadership and Excellence in Public Health: ESG Induction 2025**



The Eta Sigma Gamma (ESG) Epsilon Sigma Chapter at the University of Tampa proudly held its 2025 Induction and Award Ceremony on April 11 in the Sword and Shield Room. This celebration of academic excellence and service in public health showcased the chapter's unwavering commitment to education, leadership, and community impact.

At the heart of ESG's success is the exceptional leadership of faculty advisor **Dr. Claudia Aguado Loi (HSHP)**, whose dedication has shaped the chapter into one of UTampa's most impactful student organizations. A respected public health scholar, Dr. Aguado Loi leads by example—guiding students with vision, professionalism, and a deep passion for health equity. Her support was instrumental in this year's successful induction ceremony and the seamless officer transition.

Also central to ESG's accomplishments is **President Jovanna Patino-Murillo**, a graduating senior who has served with distinction. Jovanna delivered the ESG Year in Review at the ceremony, reflecting on a year of successful events, advocacy, and student engagement. Her work extends far beyond campus—recognized by the Sarasota NAACP for community service and known for her leadership with Girls Inc. and Wise Women, Jovanna is a model of what it means to be a public health leader.

The event welcomed remarks from university leadership, including **Dr. Jeffry Fasick**, CNHS Associate Dean, and **Dr. Abraham Miller**, Chair of Health Sciences and Human Performance, with keynote inspiration from UT alumna Elizabeth Khoury, MPH.

Twenty-one outstanding new initiates were honored, alongside graduating seniors and 2024–2025 ESG officers. Among the graduating members were **Jovanna Patino-Murillo**, **Aliyah Bureau**, **Anthony Comparato**, and **Madeline Donahue**, who have left a lasting legacy of leadership and commitment.





Caroline "CC" Graham (ACS certified Chemistry B.S., Fall 2024), was selected for an internship for this coming summer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory through the Department of Energy's Science Undergraduate Laboratory Internships (SULI) program. CC will be working in the lab of another UT alumnus and Oak Ridge R&D Associate scientist, Dr. Katherine Johnson (ACS certified Chemistry B.S., Spring 2015), on an extension of a lithium metal extraction project initiated by CC during her time at UTampa in the lab of **Dr. Eric Werner** (Chemistry & Biochemistry). She will also have the opportunity to venture into some new areas of nuclear chemistry,



utilizing the unique facilities and training in radioactive material handling available at Oak Ridge.

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## Florida Undergraduate Research Conference 2025



On February 14-15, 55 UTampa students traveled to the University of South Florida to attend the Florida Undergraduate Research Conference (FURC). This was the largest FURC so far, with 804 posters being presented. The College of Natural and Health Sciences was particularly well represented at the conference, with 30 students presenting posters on topics including zebrafish, breast cancer, invasive fish in the Florida Everglades, and the effectiveness of wearable devices on physical activity to name a few. Those in attendance were able to discuss undergraduate research with more than 800 registered attendees from across the state of Florida.

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## National Conference on Undergraduate Research



21 University of Tampa students, including 13 from the College of Natural and Health



Sciences, presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Pittsburgh on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Students gave both poster presentations and oral talks about their research at the event, including a panel of three Environmental Studies students (Isabel Knuteson, Grace Magnacca, and Maria Kershner-Leon) discussing their research on the feeding biomechanics of invasive fish.



NUR 422 Community Health in Nursing students recently volunteered at a health clinic in Tampa where they partnered with Pioneer Medical Foundation and GRACE Medical clinic to provide information on community resources and influenza immunizations to hundreds of people. Students also have been assisting in Hillsborough County Schools with health screenings required for K, 1st ,3rd and 6th grades. Partnering with our Medical Magnet School Dunbar Elementary in “Wellness Wednesdays” students preparing classroom activities and present to elementary students on first aid, hand washing and many other health promotion topics.





Two students from the research lab of **Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology) presented at the Florida Academy of Sciences meeting on March 21, 2025. Grace Ferguson (Marine Science-Biology) presented a talk on seagrass and algae macrofauna study. Abigail Wilson (Marine Science-Biology) presented a talk on the seasonal distribution of the nudibranch *Polycera hummi*. Grace won an Honorable Mention Oral Presentation Award, while Abigail won the Outstanding Undergraduate Oral Presentation Award.

## Faculty and Student Scholarship

### Advocacy in Action – A Transformative Experience at FNA Advocacy Days



This February, an incredible journey unfolded as faculty members from the **Department of Nursing**, including **Dr. Bryant, Dr. Ernewein, Dr. Parsons, and Dr. Pedroff**, partnered with the executive board of the **Student Nurses Association (SNA)**—**Ellie Bouchard, Taylor Lake, Jordyn DeChiaro, Ciara Maguire**—to participate in the **Florida Nurses Association's 2025 Advocacy Days** at the Florida State Capitol in Tallahassee, Florida.

*We had the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions with Rep. Hart, Rep. Alvarez (also former UTampa Faculty!) aides for Rep. Pittman & Senator Collins. Their willingness to listen and ask thoughtful questions about critical nursing issues truly made an impact!*

#### What We Advocated For:

- ❑ **Abolishing surgical smoke in operating rooms** – Protecting **surgeons, nurses, staff, and patients** from inhaling harmful byproducts that increase **respiratory issues, cancer risks, and viral transmission**.
- ❑ **Ensuring strong oversight of nursing education** – The **Board of Nursing** should regulate programs to **prevent another Operation Nightingale** and maintain high educational standards.
- ❑ **Patient-Directed Medical Orders (PDMOs)** – Expanding beyond a **DNR**, these orders ensure **end-of-life care aligns with patients' wishes** through legally binding provider-issued directives.
- ❑ **Supporting APRN full practice authority** – Expanding access to **quality healthcare** by allowing APRNs to practice at their full scope.

FNA's **Advocacy Days** is a flagship event designed to empower **nurses and student nurses**, giving them a voice in the legislative process on issues that impact their profession and the patients they serve. **Faculty and students alike had the unique opportunity to engage with policymakers and gain firsthand experience in advocacy and healthcare legislation.**

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from our students underscores the **transformative** impact of Advocacy Days. **Dr. Botwinski, Director of Nursing, has recognized the value of this initiative and pledged continued support for our annual participation.**

This experience has not only reinforced the importance of **nurse-led advocacy** but has also sparked **new possibilities**—perhaps even a **future in policymaking** for some of our UTampa Nursing students!

We remain committed to **empowering our nurses, amplifying their voices, and advancing the profession** for the betterment of healthcare in **Florida and beyond.**



Faculty and students from the University of Tampa participated in the Association for Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) 2025 Aquatic Sciences Meeting in Charlotte, NC. **Dr. Rebecca Waggett** (Biology) and **Dr. Edna Fernandez-Figueroa** (Environmental Studies) attended with research students Alyssa Meyers (Marine Science-Biology and Marine Chemistry majors), Josie Hoffman (Environmental Studies major), and Caitlyn Walley (Environmental Studies major).

Dr. Fernandez-Figueroa delivered an oral presentation titled “*Fish Kill Lessons and Data Needs: A Spatiotemporal Analysis of Citizen Fish Kill Reports in Coastal SW Florida.*” Alyssa Meyers presented her poster, “*Impact of a Trichodesmium Bloom on Zooplankton Distribution and Available Nitrogen in Tampa Bay,*” coauthored by Dr. Waggett and **Dr. Rob Masserini** (Chemistry Department). Josie Hoffman gave an oral presentation, “*Automatic Detection of Various Stingray Species in Tampa Bay,*” coauthored by Caitlyn Walley and Dr. Fernandez-Figueroa. Caitlyn Walley also presented a poster, “*Using UAVs to Monitor Algal Blooms,*” coauthored by Dr. Fernandez-Figueroa and Josie Hoffman.

Additionally, UTampa alumni Will Love and Maggie Baker were in attendance,





**Jackie Mikulski**, Coordinator of Pre-Professional Programs, recently published an article entitled, “The Importance of Additional Support Practices for Underrepresented Pre-health Students: A Perspective Article”, in *The Advisor*, the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) journal. The article can be found here: [TheAdvisorMar2025\\_45-1-05.pdf](#)

She will also be presenting two sessions at the NAAHP conference in Atlanta in May:

- Strategies for Planning a Regional Health Professions School Tour. Co-presenting with the Director of Pre-Health Advising at Rollins College
- Utilizing Alumni and Experienced Students as Advising Co-Pilots. Co-presenting with two others in Pre-Health Advising at Georgia Tech



A group of eight faculty and 18 students from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry attended the Spring 2025 National Meeting of the American Chemical



Society in San Diego, CA during the week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>. This impressive showing at the conference was a record in participation from UTampa at a national ACS meeting, and our students represented us well throughout the week as they presented to and networked with leading scientists from around the world. A list of student and faculty presentations delivered at the meeting is given here (presenting author in bold):

***Student oral presentation:***

**Pacanowski, V. D.**; Biros, S. M.; Werner, E. J. “Extraction of f-Elements from Metal Mixtures Utilizing a Tripodal CMPO-Based Ligand System”

***Faculty oral presentation:***

Baldassarre, S. M.; Sato, H. S.; Louise, A. P.; Summer, L. L.; Wilson, B. P.; **Hemric, B. N.** “Three-Component 1,2-Dioxygenation of 1,3-Dienes Using Carboxylic Acids and TEMPO”

***Student poster presentations:***

**Baer, D.**; Crosby, M. “Introducing Headspace Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry to Undergraduate Chemistry Students from a Forensic Toxicology Perspective”

**Barni, A. E.**; George, M. A.; Pangborn, J. R.; Hemric, B. N. “1,2-Diazidation and 1,2-Azidoxygenation of 1,3-Dienes”

**Bolger, B.**; Theodore, C.M. “Identification of Secondary Metabolites in Co-Cultures of Oral Pathogens and Probiotics”

**El-Chayeb, R.**; **Nair, A.**; Longstreet, A. R. “An Investigation into Electron Donor-Acceptor Pairs Between *N*-Acyloxy Pyridinium Salts and Carbazole Derivatives”

**Gaudette, D.**; Wilson, B. P. "Molecular Dynamics Simulations of the Inhibition of Alkaline Phosphatase by Derivatives of L-Phenylalanine"

**Griffin, J.**; Deister, K. "Monitoring PFAS Contamination in Rivers of Tampa Bay, Florida"

**Gurevitch, A. D.**; Garcia Pena, M.; Bielfelt, B. T.; Ballard, C. E. "Preparation of 2-Substituted Indoles by Reduction of (2-Nitrophenyl)acetylenes Followed by Cyclization of the Intermediate"

**Manous, L.**; Deister, K. "Corrosion Chemistry: A Closer Look at Trace Metal Concentrations in Tampa Bay, FL"

**Meyers, A.**; Masserini, R.; Waggett, R. “Nutrient Flux and Zooplankton Dynamics Resulting from a *Trichodesmium* Bloom in Tampa Bay”

**Mussin Phillips, N.**; Crosby, M. “LC-MS/MS Analysis of Caffeine in Synthetic Blood: An Introduction to Instrumentation for Undergraduate Chemistry Students”

**Pangborn, J. R.**; Hemric, B. N. “Difunctionalization of Olefins Using Iodine(III) Reagents”

**Veit, B.**; Struss, J. “French Fries to Fuel Tank Faster Than Ever: The Remarkable Kinetic Activity of Ethyl Acetate Interesterification for Biodiesel Production”

**Vomund, T.;** Lake, B. J.; Werner, E. J. “Optimizing Conditions for Liquid-Liquid Extraction of Thorium(IV) with a Tripodal Ligand”

**Williamson, J. M.;** Chupela, M. A.; Hemric, B. N. “Alpha-Oxygenation of Ketones Using TEMPO”

**Williamson, R. H.;** Masserini, R. T. Jr. “Eliminating Analytical Challenges: Improving the Accuracy of Silica Quantification”

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**Drs. Scott Witherow and Michael French** (Chemistry & Biochemistry) along with seven students from the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry attended the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Annual Meeting in

Chicago, from April 11 to 15. Six of the students presented their research:

Sebastian Reisch: Polyphenon E significantly effects gene expression in DU145 cells

Emma Werner: Characterization of New Molecular Tools to Detect Branched Ubiquitin Chains

Alison Stanfa: Cloning, Expression, Purification, and Analysis of the FusionRed Fluorescent Protein in a Biochemistry Laboratory Course

Hailey Brzustewicz: Effects of Polyphenon E on CCSER2 gene expression in DU145 prostate cancer cells

Conor Deneault: Analysis of Potential Fungal and Mycoplasma Contamination After Construction Around the University of Tampa's Biochemistry Laboratory

Aidan Barich: Chain Branching by the NEDD4 Family Ubiquitin Ligases Stimulates Protein Degradation



Congratulations to **Drs. Zachary Beldon** and **Coral Bender** (Sport Management), whose grant submission focusing on the qualitative component of their runDisney study has been selected as the winner of the Doctoral Student/Early Career Grant Award presented at the Global Sport Business Association conference.

## Important Dates



[UT Master Calendar](#)

[UT Academic Calendar](#)

August 18- College Meeting 9:30 am Fletcher Lounge & Fall Faculty Reception 4:30-6:30  
9th Floor Vaughn



August 23- CNHS Convocation 9 am in Falk Theater

August 25- Classes begin for Fall Semester

September 1 - Labor Day No Classes

September 24-October 12 - Midterm progress reporting process for faculty of undergraduate students

October 13 - Spring and summer incomplete "I" grades not resolved become "F" grades

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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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