

Greetings from the UConn Health Graduate School!

We hope to regularly share information and news across our many and varied programs, which include the Biomedical Science PhD and Certificate; combined MD/PhD and DMD/PhD; Clinical and Translational Research Masters and Certificate; Dental Science Masters; Public Health PhD, Masters, and Certificate; and the Young Innovator Investigator Program (YIIP).

International Office Walk-In Hours

As a reminder, the International Office at UConn Health holds weekly walk-in advising for international students and scholars in the main building on **Thursdays from 2 - 3:30 p.m. in Walker Conference Room** (room AG-070).

Walk-in advising is meant for **quick questions** (5-10 minutes). Examples of walk-in services include: travel advice, I-20/DS-2019 signatures, document drop-off, etc. If you have an issue requiring a more in-depth discussion, please contact the HR – International Office to make an appointment (Kaitlin Dornenburg, dornenburg@uchc.edu; phone: 860-679-4472).

Student Behavioral Health Service

For info. & confidential assistance, visit SBHS [here](#).

COVID Call Center Reminder

COVID questions, symptoms, or positive test? Call **860-679-3199** for guidance.

Academic Calendar

5/1-5/6	<i>Final Exams</i>
Sun. 5/7	<i>Conferral date: SP'23 degrees; final exams for Plan B Masters & 6th-year Certif. students, must be completed</i>
Mon. 5/8	<i>UConn Health Commencement</i>
Tues. 5/9	<i>Semester grades due by 4 PM</i>
W-Th 5/17-18	<i>Biomed. Sci. Rotation Talks (virtual)</i>
Thurs. 8/10	<i>Last day for Summer 2023 degree candidates to submit thesis and dissertation final copies to Submittable & related paperwork to Degree Audit in the Office of the Registrar</i>
Thurs. 8/24	<i>Conferral date for Summer 2023 degrees</i>
Mon. 8/21	<i>Biomed. Sci. Orientation Begins</i>
Mon. 8/28	<i>FALL 2023 semester begins</i>

2023 Graduate School Commencement Speaker:

Emily Fabrizio-Stover



This year's UConn Health commencement speaker for the Graduate School is Emily Fabrizio-Stover from Greenwich, Connecticut. She is a graduating Ph.D. student in Biomedical Science, Neuroscience Area of Concentration, in the lab of Dr. Douglas Oliver. Learn more about Emily in her profile [here](#).

UConn Health Commencement took place on **Monday, May 8, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 pm** in the **Jorgenson Auditorium at Storrs**.

9-8-8 Badge Stickers:

CT HB 5001, Sec. 29-30, is a new state law enacted this year requiring higher-ed/universities to include the 9-8-8 suicide & crisis hotline on student ID cards on or before July 15, 2023.

For current students who already have ID badges, 9-8-8 decal stickers sized to fit the rectangular box on the back of the ID card are available.

Students **at the Cell and Genome Sciences Building**, can pick theirs up in Isolde Bates' office. **Public Health** students can get theirs in the program office at 195 Farm Ave. Grad students **in all other locations** should come to The Graduate Office suite (room AG-049/AG-050).

-Diversity Corner-

Pending SCOTUS decision on use of race in admissions:

We asked UConn Health's Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Jeffrey F. Hines, what it's all about and how it could impact graduate education:

Diversity in the learning environment is a bonus and benefit to all students and educators. Moreover, there are consequential benefits to society that are a direct result of the diversity experienced in the learning environment. The U.S. Supreme Court is set to rule by the end of the current judicial session (June 30, 2023) on the use of race in admissions decisions among both public and private institutions of higher education. Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) claims that the admissions processes for Harvard College (Harvard) and University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill (UNC) violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits institutions that receive federal funding from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Additionally, SFFA claims that UNC violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, which prohibits states from denying equal protection.

Lower District Courts, in both cases, ruled in favor of Harvard and UNC for following established U.S. Supreme Court precedent. Currently, Supreme Court precedent has established that universities may use race as a factor in the admissions process if the use passes the "strict scrutiny" standard. If the Supreme Court were to now overturn the use of affirmative action in the admissions process, it would most likely mean that institutions would not be allowed to consider race *at all* as part of its holistic review of applicants.

This will likely have devastating consequences to the compositional diversity of learners in undergraduate, graduate, and professional classrooms. Narrowly speaking and at their core, these are "selection" or "admissions" cases. However, there could be significant near and far-reaching adverse ripple effects and a casted shadow beyond admissions. The casted shadow could adversely affect identity-based financial aid and scholarship programs, identity-based recruitment and outreach efforts, and identity-based student support and academic programs, to name a few.

This is what keeps me awake at night...

Spring/Summer Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

May

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Haitian Heritage Month

Jewish American Heritage Month

Mental Health Awareness Month

Military Appreciation Month

Older American Month

5th- [Cinco de Mayo](#)

26th- [Buddha Day](#)

June

LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Caribbean American Heritage Month

12th- [Loving Day](#)

19th- [Juneteenth](#)

20th- [World Refugee Day](#)

August

Diversity Awareness Month

9th- [International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples](#)

Grad School DEI Committee

The UConn Health Graduate School DEI Committee was formed in 2021 from a group of like-minded students, postdocs, faculty, & staff. In 2022, we launched our Diversity website, <https://health.uconn.edu/graduate-school/graduate-school-diversity/>, which contains pages on DEI news, resources, funding, research, & education.

Interested in joining the GSDEI Committee? We have several subcommittees exploring a variety of topics & activities. For more info & to learn how you can contribute, contact Committee Chair Dr. Leslie Caromile: Caromile@uchc.edu

Upcoming Trainings/Seminars/Workshops:

UConn Grad School Timely Topics for Faculty:

Timely Topics has wrapped up for the academic year, but you can find archived sessions of this year's series (as well as those from previous years) on the Timely Topics resource page [here](#), including seminars on:

- Advising and Mentoring Historically Excluded or Racially Oppressed Graduate Students
- Neurodiversity and the Advisor/Advisee Relationship
- What Does Talking About Career in the Classroom Have to do with Equity?

For Students:

The Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling (CCAM) is organizing annual Computational Cell Biology workshops, with an in-person workshop coming this June. These workshops are useful for students interested in the mathematical modeling of biological systems using two of the modeling software frameworks developed & maintained here in CCAM: Virtual Cell (<http://vcell.org>) & COPASI (<http://copasi.org>). For more info, contact Dr. Leslie Loew (les@uchc.edu).

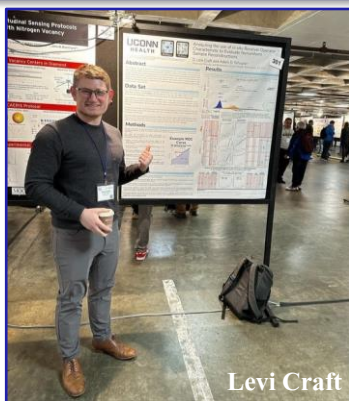
Student Kudos!

Student Presentations:

>>**Jonathan Batchelder** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC, PI: Wendy Mok) presented his work at the Pioneer Valley Microbiology Symposium at UMass-Amherst in March 2023.

>>**Levi Craft** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC, PI: Adam Schuyler) presented his work at the Experimental NMR Conference in Asilomat, CA in April 2023.

>>Also in April of this year, **Caroline Guild** and **Elizabeth Szabo** (M.D./Ph.D students, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC, PI: Chris Heinen) both presented posters at the American Association for Cancer Research annual meeting.



Student Awards:

>>Master of Public Health student **Keely Greiner** was the recent recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship.

>>**Andrew Harrison** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC, PI: Penghua Wang) is to receive the American Association of Immunologists (AAI)-Thermo Fisher Trainee Achievement Award at the AAI annual meeting in May.



Grad Student Appreciation Week!

National Grad Student Appreciation Week began April 3rd with several activities throughout the week including yoga, headshots, sweet treats, coloring, & even a visit from Officer Carson (and his human, Officer J.B. O'Reilly).



New Digs...

On April 5, 2023, as part of the 12th Week program in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences, APHS held an open house and ribbon cutting ceremony for their new student lounge at their home office in 195 Farmington Ave.



Out and About!

The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) revved up its social gatherings this semester under the organization of current Social Chair, Stephanie Wong. Grad students had a great time at Lessard Lanes in Plainville in February and Dave & Buster's in Manchester in March...



**Lessard Lanes
February 2023**

**Dave &
Buster's
March 2023**



New roles...

In Fall 2023, **Dr. Stephen Crocker** will serve as course director for the new *First Year Graduate Experience in Biomedical Science* course (MEDS 6503), which represents a restructuring of the program's lab rotations. The course will span the Fall and Spring semester and begin with a 7 week exploratory period where students will be able to learn more about each of the program's seven Areas of Concentration (AoCs), including the scope of research in that AoC and potential laboratories in which students can complete their rotations. The rotation length itself has been shortened to allow students to complete all three of their rotations by the end of the first year. More information on this course will be shared with faculty and incoming students this summer.



ICYMI, the new Biomedical Science program video featuring alumna and current faculty member **Dr. Vanessa Scanlon** dropped at the end of April. Watch to find out how Dr. Scanlon believes her studies here at UConn Health [set her up for success](#).

New faces

Recent Graduate School Faculty Appointments at UConn Health include: *Dr. Andres Grosmark*, Biomedical Science PhD program, Neuroscience AoC; *Dr. Xiangyou Hu*, Biomedical Science PhD program, Neuroscience AoC; and *Dr. Sebnem Tuncdemir*, Biomedical Science PhD program, Neuroscience AoC.

Recent Faculty honors

In February, the University of Connecticut established The **Cato T. Laurencin** Institute for Regenerative Engineering. This new cross-campus Institute supports a core mission of UConn to foster new ways of thinking and new approaches to find answers in medicine, science, engineering, and technology. Read more about the institute [here](#).



Zita Lazzarini, J.D., M.P.H., a member of the UConn Health Graduate School faculty in the programs in Applied Public Health Sciences, was awarded the [2023 UConn Health Board of Directors Faculty Recognition Award](#).



MD/PhD Match Day!

Congratulations to our graduating MD/PhD students, who discovered where they will be continuing the next wave of their education in their residency programs on national medical school Match Day, March 17: *Jennifer Chen*: Nassau University Medical Center, NY (transitional year), University of Connecticut School of Medicine- Dermatology; *Katherine DiScipio*: Methodist Hospital, Houston, TX- Anatomic and Clinical Pathology; *Alexandra Goetjen*: New Hanover Regional Medical Center, NC- Family Medicine; *Feria Ladha*: Children's Hospital, Boston, MA- Pediatrics (Physician-Scientist Research Track); *Peter Larson*: University of Cincinnati Medical Center, OH- Otolaryngology; *Anthony Pettinato*: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, MA- Internal Medicine (Physician-Scientist Research Track); and *Victor Wang*: Johns Hopkins Hospital, MD- Pediatrics/Medical Genetics.

12th Week Program in the Program of Applied Public Health Sciences

12th week is intended to keep APHS students and the community at large informed about important public health issues. Dr. Jeffrey Hines and Professor Esther Yazzie-Lewis were the speakers for this spring's event. Professor Yazzie-Lewis's talk was titled, "The Health of the People," and it focused on uranium mining in the Navajo Nation. Dr. Hines's talk was titled, "Sustaining DEI and Health Equity Initiatives at Academic Health Programs: Headwinds," and it focused on DEI efforts taking place at UConn Health.



Dr. Kondaveeti

Dr. Shuhaibar

Postdoc Spotlight:

Postdocs here at UConn Health have gone on to continue their careers in a wide variety of places and positions, including postdocs who are graduates of our very own Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, like Dr. Yuvabharath Kondaveeti, Senior Scientist at Enzerna Biosciences, and Dr. Leila Shuhaibar, Medical Science Liaison at Ferring Pharmaceuticals. You can read more about them, as well as several other previous postdocs, on the [Featured Postdoc Alumni](#) page.



And now for something completely different...

What she said...

We had some fun freebies for our fantastic female scientists during National Women's Herstory Month in March. As part of the giveaway, we asked students to share their thoughts on what makes science & research an important part of *their* story. Here are just a few of their thoughts...

"I used to enjoy science in school because I liked finding answers, but now I love doing science because of the new questions I get to ask." --Patricia H.

"For me, interacting with and observing the strange laws of the universe and the many ways that life exists make me passionate about science." --Caitlyn M.

"Research and medical sciences are my passion. They give me the ability to replace fear of disease with curiosity." --Emma C.

"[Research] is exciting to me, because science has all the answers if you ask the right questions." --Deepa A.

"Research and science has given me the opportunity to explore so many fun career avenues and interact with so many wonderful people. It has also shown me that I am capable of doing a lot of amazing things!" --Mikayla M.

"Research for me is just as diverse as I am, coming from an underdeveloped country & being part of a variety of cultures & languages. I try to keep my science as multidisciplinary as I can, which helps me explore many different approaches & techniques." --Sharon Y.

"I have been fortunate to meet some amazing and trailblazing women in science. I hope that by continuing to work hard on my own research and pursuing higher education, I can be that person for someone [else] someday." --Andreia C.

"I think women supporting women makes the whole world better. I am so lucky that I get to spend my career doing this from a scientific perspective—helping answer the fundamental questions regarding women's reproductive health so that we can all live happier and healthier lives!" --Corie O.

"Science is an outlet for me to use logic and creativity to solve problems and answer questions no one has considered before." --Eden F.

"Research is the 'homework' behind clinical practice, the 'test'." --Cindy L.

"Studying science has allowed me to be a professionally curious puzzle-solver." --Olivia D.

"The process of asking and looking for the answers to all my questions and being part of a community that values doing the same thing is one of the best parts of being here." --Betty A.



UConn

OFF-CAMPUS AND
COMMUTER STUDENT
SERVICES

UConn Health Off-Campus Housing Website

The new off-campus housing resource for the UConn Health campus is fully live, courtesy of UConn Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services.

<<Use the QR code to the left/URL below to check it out!

At offcampushousing.uconn.edu, campus specific features include a map-based housing search, sublet options, and renter need-to-know resources. The Roommate Finder feature is password protected using your NetID and password.

Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

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