

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 Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP).

Academic Calendar

11/20-24	<i>Thanksgiving Break (no classes)</i>
Fri. 12/1	<i>Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudity@uconn.edu for conferral of Fall '24 degree</i>
Fri. 12/8	<i>Last day of Fall classes</i>
12/11-15	<i>Final Exams</i>
Sun. 12/17	<i>Conferral date: SP'23 degrees; final exams for Plan B Masters & 6th-year Certif. Stu. must be completed</i>
Wed. 12/20	<i>Semester grades due by 4 PM</i>
Tues., 1/16	<i>First Day Spring semester</i>
Mon. 1/29	<i>Last day to withdraw w/o a "W"; last day to +/-courses w/o permission</i>
Fri. 2/9	<i>Deadline to apply for Spring '24 graduation</i>
Fri. 3/1	<i>Deadline to apply for Summer '24 graduation & be listed in 2024 Commencement Book</i>
3/11-3/15	<i>Spring Recess (no classes)</i>

International Office Walk-In Hours

The International Office at UConn Health holds weekly walk-in advising for international students & scholars in the main building on **Thursdays from 2-3 p.m. in Walker Conference Room (AG-070)**. Walk-in advising is meant for **quick questions** (5-10 minutes) such as travel advice, I-20/DS-2019 signatures, document drop-off, etc. If you have an issue requiring a more in-depth discussion, please contact Kaitlin Dornenburg to make an appointment (dornenburg@uchc.edu; 860-679-4472).

Student Behavioral Health Service

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

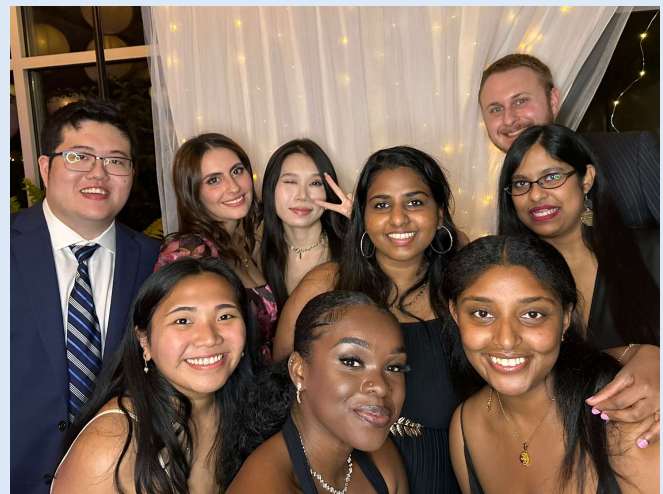
COVID Call Center Reminder

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



Say Cheese!

The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) held its first ever Semiformal at Farmington Gardens in November. Students from across our graduate programs enjoyed a fun evening together...and they have the pics to prove it!



-Diversity Corner-

GS DEI Launched Seminar Series with guest speaker Dr. Renata Schiavo



The UConn Health Graduate School Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee launched its new seminar series with an inaugural presentation by guest speaker Dr. Renata Schiavo, senior lecturer at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. Her talk on September 21 entitled "*The Science of Trust: Implications in Educational Settings*" provided a background for the importance of trust in laying the foundation for the work of a university, or any organization, towards creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment benefiting all members of the community. Read more about the day here: <https://today.uconn.edu/2023/10/uconn-health-graduate-school-dei-committee-launches-new-seminar-series/>



Pumpkin Palooza, DEI style!



Blossoming Together: Cultivating Diversity in Our Community was the GS DEI entry for UConn Health's Pumpkin Palooza in October. *Left:* Committee member Dr. Debolina Ghosh painted the lettering on our pumpkin.

UConn Grad School Timely Topics for Faculty:

Visit the Timely Topics resource page [here](#) for upcoming workshops and archived seminars including topics such as:

- 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?

Fall/Winter Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

November

National American Indian and Native Alaskan Month

2nd-[Día de Los Muertos](#)

12th-[Diwali](#)

December

1st-[World AIDS Day](#)

10th-[International Human Rights Day](#)

[Hanukkah](#) (12/7-12/15)

25th-[Christmas](#)

[Kwanza](#) (12/26/-1/1)

January

16th: [National Religious Freedom Day](#)

3rd Monday: [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)

February

Black History Month

10th- [Lunar New Year](#)

20th: [World Day of Social Justice](#)

March

National Women's History Month

March 10-April 8: [Ramadan](#)

March 13-April 13: National Deaf History Month

8th: [International Women's Day](#)

31st: [Cesar Chavez Day](#)

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. Our Diversity website, <https://health.uconn.edu/graduate-school/graduate-school-diversity/>, contains info on DEI news, resources, funding, research, & education.

Interested in joining the GS DEI Committee?

We welcome participants from all UConn Health graduate programs. For more info & to learn how you can participate, contact Committee Chair Dr. Leslie Caromile: Caromile@uchc.edu

Student Kudos!

Student Conferences/Presentations



>In early November, **Annie Yao** (M.D./Ph.D. student, Neuroscience AoC, PI: Riqiang Yan (*pictured right*)) attended the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) Southwest regional conference in Houston, TX as a representative of the Executive Board. Annie is the National Advocacy VP of APAMSA.



>Members from the Cotney Lab (Genetics & Developmental Biology AoC) attended the American Society for Human Genetics (ASHG) annual conference in November in Washington, D.C. Attendees included Biomedical Science Ph.D students **Pooja Sonawane** & **Rachel Gilmore** and postdocs **Dr. Sungryong Oh** & **Dr. Kevin Child**.

Student Awards/Achievements

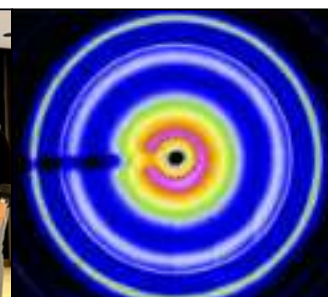
>M.P.H. student **Nuratu Quarshie** has started a health foundation in Ghana to provide pop-up clinics offering free primary care services to underserved communities. The project aims to promote early detection, raise awareness about preventive care, and empower individuals to take control of their health. Nuratu hopes to improve the community's overall well-being and contribute to reducing the burden of preventable diseases through accessible and comprehensive healthcare services.

>**Charles Lwanga Moandiyem Tabase** (Public Health Ph.D. student) traveled to Ghana during summer break, where he got his NGO to embark on a project to donate sanitary pads to girls of menstrual age and education them on menstrual hygiene in order to reduce infection. Read more about the project on the Ghana News Agency's website: <https://gna.org.gh/2023/08/charity-based-group-advocates-free-sanitary-pads-for-special-schools/>

>At the Skeletal Biology & Regeneration (SBR) Student Poster Presentation and Awards in September, recent Biomedical Science Ph.D. program graduate **Dr. Adam Tanguay** (PI: Tannin Schmidt) received the William B. Upholt Achievement Award, which was established to honor former SBR director Dr. William Upholt's impact on research and graduate education, as well as his lifelong personal commitment to human rights, civic activism, and to the environment.

The Eric N. James Scholar Award, which emphasizes service to underrepresented groups, as well as scholarly and research achievement, especially by members of underrepresented groups, was awarded to **Justin King** (M.D./Ph.D. student, PI: Archana Sanjay). Read more about SBR's annual event in UConn Today: <https://today.uconn.edu/2023/10/skeletal-biology-regeneration-students-showcase-research-at-second-annual-symposium/>

>In October, **Stephanie Wong's** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC, PI: Alix Deymier) photo of an apatite diffraction pattern under hydrostatic load (*far right below*) was selected as a finalist for the Artistic Odyssey Traversing Science Competition. The primary aim of the competition was to commemorate the fruitful collaboration between France and the United States in the field of science and to actively contribute to the goal of making science more approachable to a broader audience. Learn more and see all the finalists here: <https://france-science.com/en/photo-competition-2023/>



Student Grant and Fellowship Awards

>**Patricia Hare** (D.M.D./Ph.D. student, Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC, PI: Wendy Mok) was awarded an NIH F30 fellowship through the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research for her grant entitled "Molecular Mechanisms of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Antibiotic Persistence in Monocultures and Microbial Communities."

>**Travis LaGree** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC, PI: Wendy Mok) was awarded an NIH F31 fellowship through the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for his grant entitled "Investigating metabolism and DNA damage repair in uropathogenic *Escherichia coli* fluoroquinolone persisters."

>**Justin King** (M.D./Ph.D., Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC, PI: Archana Sanjay) was selected as UConn-NIDCR T90 Ph.D. Student trainee (2023-2026) supporting his thesis work on understanding how "Aging affects bone regeneration and fracture repair, focusing on the periosteum."

CORRECTION: The initial version of the Sept. 2023 newsletter erroneously identified Isha Walawalker's PI as Julia Oh. Isha's correct PI is Olga Anczuków.



**Department of Immunology
Retreat:
Mark Twain House, Sept.**

Come Together

Our AoCs and programs were out and about this Autumn attending retreats and conferences and performing community service!



**MD/PhD Retreat:
NBMA, August**



**SBR Student Poster
Session & Awards, Sept.**



International Conference on Systems Biology: Hartford, Oct.

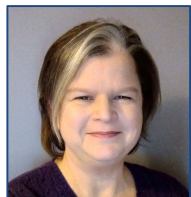
**2023 Annual
Connecticut
Public Health
Association
Conference:
Aqua Turf
Club, Oct.**



**MPH Fall
Service
Event:
Keney
Park
Cleanup,
Hartford**



New roles...



In October, **Ms. Stephanie Rauch** officially transitioned into her new role as UConn Health Graduate School Student Affairs Officer. Stephanie began as a temp for the Biomedical Science program in Fall 2001, as the program was transitioning to an umbrella program. She became a permanent employee in Spring 2004 and has worked for the Graduate School in Farmington her entire career at UConn Health.

New faces...



Ms. Jini Davis recently joined the Public Health Sciences program as their new Web and Marketing Associate. Jini has an associates degree in graphic design, specializing in print, and is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree from UConn. She is new to this role, but has been with UConn Health since the summer of 2022.

Recent Faculty & Program honors

Judy Lewis, M.Phil., is the recipient of the American Public Health Association (APHA) 2023 Gordon-Wyon Award for Community-Oriented Public Health, Epidemiology and Practice. The award is given for important contributions to international health and recognizes outstanding achievement in community-oriented public health epidemiology and practice.

In September, **Dr. Alix Deymier** received the UConn Tanaka Award for student mentoring. The award is given annually to only two UConn faculty across all campuses. Find out more about Dr. Deymier's award here: <https://honors.uconn.edu/tanka-award-description/>

Dr. Sandra Weller was recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Read more about this honor here: <https://today.uconn.edu/2022/05/uconn-professors-elected-to-american-academy-of-arts-and-sciences/>

The Commission on Dental Accreditation recently completed its UConn School of Dental Medicine (SODM) site visit, which happens every 7 years. The SODM passed review and the school's predoctoral program, along with all the residency/specialty programs (including joint Graduate School **Master of Dental Science** program) were evaluated and accredited with no recommendations, a high honor.



Postdoc Research Day

The seventh annual UConn Health/Jackson Labs Postdoc Research Day was held on September 20th. This celebration of the exciting work our postdocs are doing at UConn Health and the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine (JAX) featured our ever-popular *Speak4Science* event. *S4S* is a series of 4-minute, rapid-fire talks from a variety of postdocs across the Farmington campuses. *S4S* is also a competition and this year we are pleased to announce the three winners:

3rd Place-Sathya Ravichandran from Dr. Duygu Ucar's laboratory at JAX: *CD16+ NKs impact Plevnar responses in elderly*

2nd Place-Elise Bragard from Dr. Howard Tennen's laboratory at UCH: *Friendship stress and drinking to cope*

1st Place-Everton Bettin from Dr. Melissa Caimano's laboratory at UCH: *OmpA chimeras displaying T. pallidum ECLs*

Congratulations to our winners and thank you to everyone who came out to support our outstanding postdocs!



Applied Public Health Sciences Programs 12th Week

12th week is an enriching, eye-opening event designed to engage students and the wider community in the fascinating world of Applied Public Health Sciences. The Fall 12th Week event included three outstanding speakers, each addressing critical topics resonating with today's global challenges. Dr. Brooke Bennett spoke on "*Public Health Advocacy for Eating Disorders: Current Efforts and Future Directions*," Dr. Nancy McHugh spoke on "*Transformative and Response Community Engagement*," and Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, M.P.H. spoke on "*Racism is a Public Health Crisis, and the State is Aiming to Address it*."

UConn Health Off-Campus Housing Website

Did you know the new off-campus housing resource for the UConn Health campus launched this year? This site can be used by any UConn Health community member, including students, postdocs, staff, and faculty, to search for housing, post rentals and available apartments, or look for roommates.

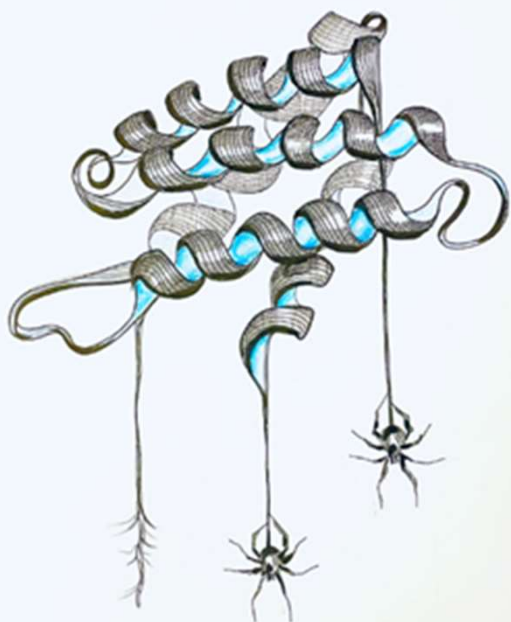
<<Use the QR code to the left or the URL to check it out! At <https://offcampushousing.uconn.edu/>, campus specific features include a map-based housing search, sublet options, and renter need-to-know resources. The Roommate Finder feature is **password protected** using your NetID and password.

IMPT: This housing site is supported by Off-Campus & Commuter Student Services.

Please **do not use** the old Google Group for housing, as *this is not a secure resource!*



UConn
OFF-CAMPUS AND
COMMUTER STUDENT
SERVICES



Dr. Irina Bezonova recently completed PDBe's InkTober art challenge! Learn more and visit Irina's virtual art gallery [here](#). ABOVE: "Spider dragline silk protein Spidroin1. Some dragline spider silk can be as strong or even stronger than steel." PDBe #inktober2023 Prompt: SPIDERS

And now for something completely different...



Noah J.R. Krysztofiak was born on September 10, 2023, exactly 47 days after mom, 3rd year Biomed. Sci. Ph.D. student Sharon Yaquob-Krysztofiak cleared her qualifying exam. She is pictured here with Noah and husband Dr. Adam Krysztofiak. Sharon shares: "Life events such as getting married and starting a family are in concert with running the marathon of the Ph.D. In addition to the blessing of a strengthening family, the support of my PI (Dr. Andrew Arnold) and the Graduate School has empowered me to juggle being a new mom and working towards my PhD."

Trick... or treat?



Students (& faculty) got in the holiday *spirit* this Halloween! Neuroscience's Crocker & Martinelli showed off their *tricked out* costumes (left), while the GSO shared mini bundt *treats* at their social gathering on the 31st (below). And this October got a little *sketchy* for Dr. Bezonova (blue box , far left).



Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

Email Stephanie Rauch, UConn Health Grad School Newsletter Editor at PhdBiomed@uchc.edu