

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

Fri., 8/9- Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudity@uconn.edu for Summer 2024 degree conferral

Fri., 8/23- Conferral date: Summer 2024 degrees

Mon., 8/26- Fall semester classes begin

Mon., 9/9- Last day to withdraw from courses without a W; last day to add/drop courses w/o permission

Fri., 9/20- Deadline to apply for graduation and to submit Final Plan of Study (Master's/Certif. students only) for Fall 2024

Mon., 10/21- Spring 2025 registration opens in Stu. Admin

Mon., 11/11- Last day to withdraw from courses

Fri., 11/15- Last day for doctoral students to defend dissertation for Fall 2024 conferral; public defense must be announced 2 weeks prior to defending

11/24-11/30- Thanksgiving Break

Fri., 11/29- Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudity@uconn.edu for Fall 2024 degree conferral

Fri., 12/6- Last day of Fall classes

12/9-12/13- Final Exams for Fall semester

Wed., 12/18- Semester grades due by 4 PM

2024 Graduate School Commencement Speaker: Nuratu Quarshie



The 2024 UConn Health Graduate School Commencement speaker was Nuratu Quarshie. Originally from Ghana, Nuratu earned her Master of Public Health degree from UConn Health this Spring. Read more about Nuratu and her journey to UConn Health and beyond [here](#).

ICYMI, you can watch her speech in the virtual ceremony recording [here](#) (beginning at 38:18).

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., temporarily located in classroom C4/C6**. 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.

Public Health Spring Cleaning Donation Drive

Spring is in full swing and so is our commitment to giving back! The Department of Public Health Sciences is collecting gently used clothing, blankets, and towels, as well as non-perishable food items, personal hygiene items, skin care products (sunscreen, lip balm with sunscreen), umbrellas, hats, etc. Donated items will be delivered to Officer Barret of the Hartford PD, who distributes them to local shelters.

Donations can be dropped off through the end of May at the Department of Public Health Sciences office, 195 Farmington Ave., Suite 2100.

Questions? Contact Denise Parris at parris@uchc.edu

-Diversity Corner-

Meet Cinnamon Adams, UConn Assistant Ombuds

What prompted you to make the change from your previous UConn position as Director of Graduate Student & Postdoctoral Support to the Ombuds Office? How does your new role differ from your previous position?

Working in The Graduate School at Storrs, I collaborated closely with the Ombuds Office, particularly with Jim Wohl, in providing support for graduate students & faculty members. A significant aspect of my role involved facilitating difficult conversations between graduate faculty & students, primarily within the advisor-advisee dynamic. As part of this collaboration, I participated in various professional development opportunities to enhance my mediation and communication skills and I grew more curious about the Ombuds field. Ultimately, I concluded that the Ombuds field would afford me the chance to concentrate on assisting individuals in navigating and resolving conflicts and challenges within their work environment, while also fostering opportunities for learning & skill development in effectively managing such situations.

The primary differences in my new role are that in the Ombuds Office, my assistance is confidential, and I don't have formal administrative responsibilities because our office is independent of other units on campus, so I work specifically with goals of my visitors. I'm also available to work with staff & faculty now, in addition to graduate students & postdocs.

What role do you think the Ombuds plays in supporting a diverse population of students, postdocs, faculty, and staff?

One role of the Ombuds is that of an impartial confidential resource, which is important for a diverse community where individuals with various backgrounds have different levels of trust in the system. The Ombuds provides a safe space for people, regardless of their background or position, to voice their concerns, seek guidance, and resolve conflicts without fear of judgement or reprisal. We understand and respect that there are unique cultural norms, values, communication styles, and experiences and can tailor the support and assistance we provide based on the needs of individuals.

As an Ombuds, I believe it is also important to continue to do personal work to understand my own cultural norms, biases/privileges, positionality, and how I move through the world. This helps me understand how I present myself and show up for the Ombuds role.

Having a diverse population can often bring different perspectives & viewpoints that sometimes lead to conflict & misunderstandings. Ombuds can help people within the community to navigate and resolve conflict through various avenues, including facilitated conversations and helping to find mutually acceptable solutions, thus encouraging a culture of respect and understanding within the community. Additionally, insights gained from interactions with visitors from diverse backgrounds, including challenges and obstacles experienced at the university, can reveal patterns & trends that can be shared with university leadership to promote the university's values around a diverse population.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

There is no problem, conflict, issue, too big or small to reach out to the Ombuds Office for assistance. Jim and I can serve as a resource to help clarify the issues, think through desired outcomes & goals, and consider various options to move toward your goals. Sometimes it can be helpful to talk with someone outside of your department, office, or colleague group for an impartial perspective.

Visit www.ombuds.uconn.edu to learn more about the Ombuds Office & for contact info to schedule an in person, phone, or virtual appointment.

Spring/Summer Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

May

Asian Pacific Heritage Month
Jewish American Heritage Month
Haitian Heritage Month
Older Americans Month
Mental Health Awareness Month
5th [Cinco de Mayo](#)

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 the World's Indigenous Peoples](#)

September

Suicide Prevention Month
Sept. 15-Oct. 15: National Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month
16th [Trail of Tears](#) Remembrance Day

Timely Topics for Faculty & Staff

UConn Grad School's *Timely Topics* series offers opportunities to engage with subject matter experts on topics relevant to those supporting & advising graduate students & programs. All sessions are held via Webex. The Fall 2024 seminar schedule will be released soon!

In the meantime, visit their resource page [here](#) to find **Archived seminars**, including previous topics such as:

- >>Advising & Mentoring Historically Excluded or Racially Oppressed Graduate Students
- >>Neurodiversity & the Advisor/Advisee Relationship
- >>Graduate Student Mental Health
- >>Supporting Graduate Students with Disabilities

Grad School DEI Committee

Visit the Graduate School DEI website, <https://health.uconn.edu/graduate-school/graduate-school-diversity/>, for info on DEI news, resources, funding, research, & education. For more info on our committee, contact Committee Chair Dr. Leslie Caromile at Caromile@uchc.edu

Student Kudos!

Student Awards and Achievements

>At the May graduation celebration for graduate students in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences, four graduating students, **Joel Villalba**, **Narayani Ballambat**, **Nuratu Quarshie**, and **Mary Looney** (pictured left to right with Delta Omega president, Christopher Seery (*center*)), were inducted into UConn Health's Beta Rho Chapter of Delta Omega, America's most prestigious public health honorary society. The mission of the Delta Omega Society & the Beta Rho Chapter at UConn is to recognize scholarship & research among students undertaking graduate study and to acknowledge alumni, faculty, and public health professionals that have truly distinguished themselves through academic achievement, advancement of public health research, excellence in public health practice, and leadership in the field.



Stabonia Maji and **Arshmeet Chawla** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. students, Immunology AoC, PI: Pramod Srivastava) were both recipients of the American Association of Immunologists (AAI) trainee abstract award and were selected to give oral presentations in a block symposium at the AAI Immunology 2024 conference in Chicago this May.



>Biomedical Science Ph.D. program Neuroscience students **Deepa Anjan Kumar** (PI: Eric Levine) and **Matthew Frost** (PI: Feliks Trakhtenberg), along with postdoctoral fellow Sanjeev Yadav (PI: Rajkumar Verma) were the winners of the 2024 Best Poster Presentation at the May 2024 Neuroscience Department Retreat.

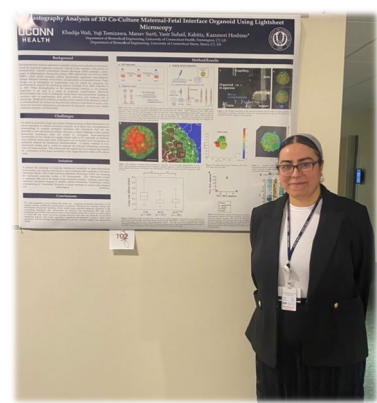
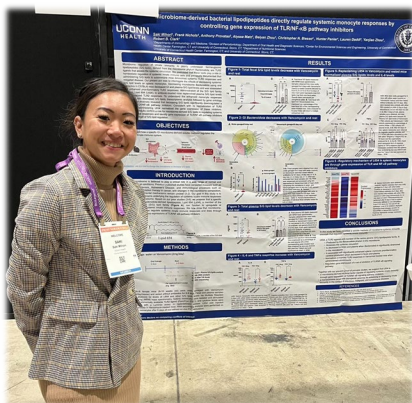


>Spring 2024 M.D./Ph.D. program graduate **Nathan Leclair** (Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC; PIs: Brenton Graveley and Olga Anczukow) was one of three student recipients of this year's [Dr. Richard Simon Excellent in Clinical Neuroscience Award](#).

Student Conferences and Presentations

>**Saki Mihori-Arremony** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC; PI: Robert Clark) presented a poster at the AAI Immunology 2024 conference this May (*pictured left*).

>In March, first year Biomedical Science Ph.D. student **Khadija Wali** present a poster at the Group on Women in Medicine and Science (GWIMS) Symposium (*pictured right*).



What's (Been) Goin' On?

Students, faculty and staff have been out and about over the past few months! Here's a peek at some of the things they've been up to!



Cross-school Paint Nite hosted by the M.D./Ph.D. Student Government & coordinated by vice president Sadik Karma



Neuroscience Dept. retreat at the Mark Twain House in May



Program in Applied Public Health Sciences students & staff planting wildflowers at local schools for Earth Day



Students & faculty in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences at the Black Family Wellness Expo at Weaver High School in Hartford, where they were sponsors of the event dedicated to empowerment, education, & holistic wellness.



Students in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences sorting & organizing Amazon donated supplies for the Community Store at Metropolitan AME Zion Church, Hartford



GSO April Pizza and Trivia Nite in the Student Lounge

Grad Student Appreciation Week

During the 1st week of April, UConn Health celebrated national Graduate Student Appreciation week! The week included several activities, including Chocolate Science Café treats (complete with "Chocolate Moose" raffle prize, won by MPH student Julia Prescott), chair massages by Nurturing Hands, and an alumni panel organized by Beyond the PhD.



Recent Faculty Honors



>>The UConn Provost Awards for Excellence in Community-Engaged Scholarship (PAECES) celebrate the significant efforts of faculty, staff, students, teams, and community partners working to address critical community issues through collaborative, mutually beneficial, and creative exchange of knowledge and resources. In April, Associate Professor in Public Health Sciences **Dr. Angela Bermúdez-Millán**, who has dedicated her career to direct engagement with communities vulnerable to food insecurity and related health issues, was awarded [the Distinguished Faculty Community Impact Award](#).

>>**Dr. Brenton Graveley** (Health Net, Inc. Chair in Genetics & Developmental Biology, chair of the Department of Genetics & Genome Sciences, and Associate Director of the Institute for Systems Genomic) and **Dr. George Kuchel** (Director of the UConn Center on Aging & The Travelers Chair in Geriatrics & Gerontology) have been elected by the [American Association for the Advancement of Science \(AAAS\) to its newest class of fellows](#). The AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the Science family of journals.

>>Associate Dean of the Graduate School at UConn Health **Dr. Barbara Kream** was highlighted as one of the former women Presidents of the [American Association for Bone and Mineral Research](#) as part of their Women's History month celebration.

>>Master of Science in Clinical & Translational Research Advisory Committee member **Dr. Ian Michelow** was recently selected as UConn School of Medicine Coach of the Year for 2023-24. The award recognizes someone within the school's coaching program who helps students reach their goals, improve performance, contribute to their development, and build trust within their coaching group. Student nominations are evaluated by an Office of Assessment & Evaluation committee, who selects the awardee based on student feedback.

>>**Dr. Mayte Restrepo**, Assistant Professor in Public Health Sciences, was awarded the [NIH ORWH Science Policy Scholar Travel Award](#) to attend the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences (OSSD) Annual Meeting in May in Bergen, Norway. The annual award supports the development of a junior investigator who is focused on women's health or sex & gender differences and is also interested in research policy.

>>**Dr. Yanlin Wang**, professor and chief of nephrology, recently received the prestigious [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Senior Clinician Scientist Investigator \(SCSI\) Award](#). The SCSI award recognizes Dr. Wang as an outstanding clinician scientist engaged in ongoing VA research for kidney disorders while continuously providing high quality & timely clinical care to Veterans.

Postdoc Alumni Spotlight



[Sherli Kohsy-Chenthittayil](#) currently works as a Data Analyst with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Touro University, Nevada. Her job responsibilities include advising faculty and students on analytical approaches to optimize research study quality. She also provides descriptive and inferential data analysis for a diversity of biomedical, institutional, and educational projects. As a postdoctoral scholar at UConn Health, she served as President of the UConn Health/Jackson Labs Postdoc Association and worked with microbiologists on mathematical modeling of bacterial communities. Her leadership and research experience at UConn Health has helped Sherli secure her position at the largest medical school in Nevada and provided the foundation for her career as a data analyst.

UConn Health Off-Campus Housing Website

Did you know the new off-campus housing resource for the UConn Health campus launched last 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. The Roommate Finder feature is **password protected** using your NetID and password.

<<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.

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

And now for something completely different...



Congrats, Grads!!

UConn Health's Graduate School programs Class of 2024 included over 75 scientists and public health students receiving a variety of degrees, including the Doctor of Philosophy in biomedical science; Doctor of Philosophy in public health; Master of dental science; Master of public health; Master of science in biomedical science; and Master of science in clinical and translational research. Congrats to you all; we can't wait to see what you do next!

(photos courtesy of Thomas Hurlbut Photography, UConn Health Communications, and Grad School program faculty, staff, & students)

Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

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