

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

- 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 Student 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 degreeaudit@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
- Tues., 1/21-** Spring semester classes begin
- Mon., 2/3-** Last day to withdraw from courses without a W; last day to add/drop courses w/o permission

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 pm 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.



Welcome to the 2024-25 Incoming Class!

The Graduate School once again welcomed over 100 new students into our various degree programs this August!

By the Numbers:

Biomedical Science: PhD: 31, Certificate: 3
MD/PhD: 8
Clinical & Translational Research: Masters: 4, Certificate: 5
Master of Dental Science: 12
Public Health: PhD: 2, MPH: 34, Fast Track: 13, Certificate: 5
YIIP: 6

(Pictured: scenes from Public Health orientation (above) and Biomedical Science orientation (below))



-Diversity Corner-

Ask Cinnamon...

With a new academic year upon us, we turned to UConn Assistant Ombuds Cinnamon Adams for some advice on communicating at work and beyond.

What are some skills/practices we could implement in our everyday interactions that would help improve communication and conflict resolution?

This is a great question as we all have room to improve our communication skills and how we navigate conflict.

Many conversations we have with visitors to our office stem from unmet expectations between individuals and the impacts of these unfulfilled expectations. This can arise due to various factors, including unspoken expectations that still influence individuals and lead to disappointment when not met. It's important to proactively discuss expectations and regularly revisit them to foster stronger working relationships and set them up for success.

During conflicts, or in any interaction, prioritize understanding the other person's perspective before seeking to express your own. This involves asking curious questions and actively listening. When someone feels genuinely listened to, they often are more willing to be open to listening to what you want to say.

Commit to doing the work. Like any skill, effective communication skills take practice, further learning, and more practice. Read an article or a book, attend a training, talk to the Ombuds, ask for feedback from people you work with, understand how your emotions impact communication...pick something to work on and lean in.

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

Fall/Winter

Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

September

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

October

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Global Diversity Month
Filipino American Heritage Month
LGBTQ+ History Month
[Rosh Hashanah](#) (10/2-10/4)
10th [World Mental Health Day](#)
[Yom Kippur](#) (10/11-10/12)
12th [Dia de la Raza](#)
14th [Indigenous People's Day](#)
31st [Diwali](#)

November

National American Indian and Native Alaskan Month
2nd [Dia de Los Muertos](#)

December

1st [World AIDS Day](#)
10th [International Human Rights Day](#)
25th [Christmas](#)
[Hanukkah](#) (12/25-1/2)
[Kwanza](#) (12/26/-1/1)

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. Jenna Bartley, jbartley@uchc.edu.

Timely Topics Seminars

UConn Grad School's *Timely Topics* series offers learning opportunities for students, faculty & staff to engage with subject matter experts on topics relevant to graduate education. While anyone can join any session, three tracks are offered to help registrants find sessions that may be most relevant to them.

All sessions are held via Webex. Seminars are free but you must register to join.

Upcoming **faculty/staff track** topics ([register here](#)):

September 19th *Racial Microaggressions and the Cumulative and Deleterious Effects on Historically Excluded and Racially Oppressed Faculty, Staff, and Students*

October 10th *"How Are You Doing?" ...And Other Scary Questions, Continued*

November 14th *Using Pronouns: Actualizing Inclusivity*

Upcoming **student** track topics: ([register here](#)):

September 18th *How to Have Effective Conversations About Difficult Things in Graduate School and Beyond*

October 9th *Making Change: Your Finances, Your Future*

October 30th *Time Management: Getting the Most Out of a Limited Resource*

November 13th *Accommodations: What Graduate Students and Instructors Need to Know*

Additionally, visit their resource page [here](#) to find **Archived seminars** on previous topics.

Student Kudos!

Student Awards and Achievements

>>**Jinhong Dong** (M.D./Ph.D. student, Systems Biology AoC; PI: Michael Guertin, *pictured right with Jinhong*) was awarded the 2024 Ann Cowan Outstanding Student Award in Systems Biology, which recognizes a student with exceptional academic and scholarly achievements in the previous academic year. Read more about her award [here](#).



>>Biomedical Science Ph.D. student **Ziming Cao** (Immunology AoC; PI: Zhichao Fan) was named as a Presidential Scholar Merit Finalist by the Society for Leukocyte Biology. He will be giving an oral presentation focusing on how Sh3bp2 regulates neutrophil development at the annual meeting of the Society in Lansing, Michigan in October.

>>D.M.D./Ph.D. student **Patricia Hare** (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC; PI: Wendy Mok) and Biomedical Science Ph.D. student **Tvesha Parikh** (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC; PI: Rebecca Page), were two of 45 outstanding women across Connecticut to be selected as 2024 Women of Innovation Finalists in STEM in the category of *Collegian Innovation and Leadership* which had six finalists. The finalists were selected from nearly 100 nominees for demonstrating “exceptional leadership and innovation” and will be officially recognized at the 19th Annual Women of Innovation Awards, hosted by the Connecticut Technology Council on Tuesday, October 22, where winners in each category will be announced. See “Recent Faculty Honors” (page 5) for faculty and postdoc finalists.

>>Multiple students received awards at 41st Annual Graduate Student Research Day including Henderson Award winner **Timofey Karginov** (M.D./Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC; PI: Anthony Vella) and Lepow Award winner **William Theune** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC; PI: Kepeng Wang). Read more about the event and all student awardees [here](#).



Pictured above left to right: Angela Power, Travis LeGree, Patricia Hare, Martina Miranda, and Travis Wallace.

Student Conferences and Presentations

Biomedical Science Ph.D. students traveled across the country and around the world to attend a variety of meetings and conferences this summer. Here are just a few...

>*Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC; PI Wendy Mok:*

Angela Power presented her research at the EuroBiofilms 2024 meeting in Copenhagen in June. **Travis LaGree** traveled to Columbus, Ohio to present at the Clinical and Scientific Advances in Urinary Tract Infections (CSAUTI) meeting in July. **Patricia Hare** (D.M.D./Ph.D student) gave a talk at the Gordon Research Conference on Microbial Stress Response in Massachusetts in July and at the International Biennial *Pseudomonas* Conference in Copenhagen in September.

>*Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC:*

Martina Miranda (PI: James Li) presented a poster at the Santa Cruz Developmental Biology Meeting in Santa Cruz, CA in August.

>*Skeletal Biology and Regeneration AoC:*

Travis Wallace (PI: Liisa Kuhn) presented a talk at the 2024 World Biomaterials Congress in Daegu, South Korea in late May.

Student Grant and Fellowship Awards

Sarah Alshawi (Biomed Sci Ph.D. student, Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC, PI: Jean-Denis Beaudoin) was awarded an NIH F31 fellowship grant through the Eunice Kennedy Shiver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) entitled *Elucidating the Role of FBLL1 in Ribosome Function During Neuronal Differentiation*.

Andreia Cadar (Biomed Sci Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC, PI: Jenna Bartley) was selected for the 2024 Kalman/American Federation for Aging Research Scholarship for Research in the Biology of Aging. This highly competitive fellowship for graduate students in the aging field will support her thesis studies.

Keaven Caro (M.D./Ph.D. student, Neuroscience AoC, PI: David Martinelli) was awarded a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Fellowship F30 from the National Institute of Mental Health entitled *The Molecular Role of CIQL3 and its Binding Partners in Synaptic Regulation*.

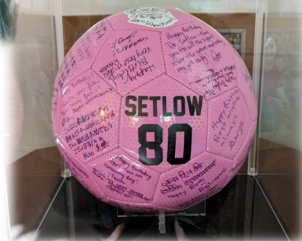
Vincent Graziano (Biomed Sci Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC, PI: Vijay Rathinam) was awarded an NIH F31 fellowship grant through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases entitled *Innate Immune Roles of glycoRNA*.

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!



The annual Molecular Biology & Biophysics Department retreat at Hill-Stead Museum in May included a celebration of Dr. Peter Setlow's 80th birthday.



The MD/PhD program retreat at the New Britain Museum of Art in August



In August, incoming students in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences partnered with AME Zion Church, Hartford to sort & prepare items donated by Amazon for the Community Store where they are distributed at no cost to the Greater Hartford community.



GSO July Trivia Nite in the Student Lounge



New Faces...

Ms. Jane Tran Sills has recently joined The Graduate School Office administrative staff. She most recently held an administrative role in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. With ten years of experience at UConn Health, Jane brings valuable expertise and a deep understanding of organizational policies to her new role.

Recent Graduate School Faculty Appointments at UCH include:

- Dr. Margaret Callahan**, Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, Immunology AoC
- Dr. Abhijit Deb Roy**, Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, Systems Biology and Cell Biology AoCs
- Dr. Guangfu Li**, Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, Immunology AoC
- Dr. Joana Paulino**, Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC
- Dr. Sarvenaz Sarabipour**, Biomedical Science Ph.D. program, Systems Biology and Cell Biology AoCs

Recent Faculty Honors

>>>Four UConn Health faculty were inducted as members of the Connecticut Academy of Science And Engineering (CASE), an organization of academic and industry professionals who advise the state government on matters of science and industry, at their 49th annual meeting and dinner in May. The inductees included **Dr. Caroline Dealy** (Skeletal, Craniofacial & Oral Biology; Genetics & Developmental Biology; and Cell Biology AoCs), **Dr. Liisa Kuhn** (Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC), **Dr. Rebecca Page** (Cell Biology AoC), and **Dr. Wolfgang Peti** (Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC).

>>>**Dr. Kuhn** was also recently elected to the International College of Fellows of Biomaterials Science and Engineering (ICF-BSE) Steering Committee and recognized as a fellow at the May World Biomaterials Congress in Daegu, South Korea in May.

>>>At the 41st Annual Biomedical Science Graduate Student Research Day, Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC's **Dr. Christopher Heinen** was awarded the Osborn Award for Excellence in Biomedical Science Graduate Teaching, a student selected award honoring excellence in teaching and mentoring Biomedical Science graduate students. Read more about the award and the day [here](#).

>>>In addition to two of our graduate students (see info on "Student Kudos" page), two faculty members, **Dr. Yanjiao Zhou** (Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC) and **Dr. Caroline Dealy** (Skeletal, Craniofacial & Oral Biology; Genetics & Developmental Biology; and Cell Biology AoCs), and one postdoc, **Dr. Sama Abdulmalik** (Orthopedic Surgery), have been selected as 2024 Women of Innovation STEM Finalists in the categories of *Research Innovation & Leadership* and *Academic Innovation & Leadership*, respectively. They will be officially recognized at the 19th Annual Women of Innovation Awards, hosted by the Connecticut Technology Council on Tuesday, October 22, where winners in each category will be announced.



Pictured above at the 49th Annual CASE Meeting:
Top (L to R) Dr. Wolfgang Peti, Dr. Linda Shapiro, Dr. Barbara Kream, Dr. Kimberly Dodge-Kafka, Dr. Helen Swede, and Dr. Rebecca Page.
Bottom: Dr. Caroline Dealy and Dr. Liisa Kuhn

~8th Annual Postdoc Research Day~

The 8th Annual UConn Health/Jackson Labs Postdoc Research Day will be held on **Thursday, September 19th** from 1:00-6:00 PM in the **Academic Rotunda**. The event will feature short talks from postdocs, a poster session and reception. Additionally, there will be a keynote address from Dr. Brian Coombes, Professor and Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences at McMaster University titled *Navigating the Microbial Frontier: My path to unraveling host-pathogen dynamics in the gut*. For more information, visit the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs website [here](#).

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...



All Work and No Play...

...is no way to start the semester! As part of their annual activities, the GSO recently hosted incoming and current students from UConn Health's Biomedical Science programs at a social event during Fall orientation. This year, attendees got their game on at Dave & Buster's in Manchester.



Special Deliveries in August!

Potential next-gen Huskies made their way into the world this summer with student and faculty special deliveries!

Faculty member **Dr. Alix Deymier** welcomed a new honorary member to the SBR AoC with the birth of her daughter, Beatrix Rene Isolde Ibarra (left) on the 11th.

Meanwhile, Biomedical Science Ph.D. student **Eishani Sokolowski** prepared for two big life events: the birth of her daughter on the 14th...and the public defense of her thesis two days later, which she gave remotely with special permission from her hospital bed in the maternity ward! Eishani is pictured right with her daughter and her husband, Mark.

Congrats to both families!



Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

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