

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

11/24-11/30- 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 2025 semester classes begin

Mon., 2/3- Last day to withdraw from courses without a W; last day to add/drop courses w/o permission

Fri., 2/14- Deadline to apply for graduation & submit Final Plan of Study (Master's/Certif. students only) for Spring '25

Fri., 3/1- Deadline to apply for Summer 2025 graduation & be included in the 2025 Commencement Book

3/16-3/22- Spring Recess

Mon., 3/24- Fall 2025 Registration opens in Student Admin

Fri., 4/11- Last day for doctoral students to defend dissertation for Spring 2025 conferral; public defense must be announced 2 weeks prior to defending

Mon., 4/14- Last day to withdraw from courses

Fri., 4/25- Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudit@uconn.edu for Spring 2025 degree conferral

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.

Registration Reminder

Spring 2025 registration is now open.

Register NOW and avoid these common errors:

>>> Check [Student Admin](#) for *registration holds*—if you have one, be sure to address it right away; some holds do not clear immediately.

>>> Keep in mind that professors may cancel classes that do not meet the minimum enrollment—register asap so you aren't left scrambling to meet credit requirements!

>>> Students who are unenrolled or underenrolled for Spring will be *automatically discontinued from their program* on the 10th day of classes. If this happens, you must apply for reinstatement AND pay a **\$65 reinstatement fee** that is the student's responsibility (not your program or the Grad School).

Graduate assistants (GAs)

>> must enroll in *at least 6 credits* to be considered full-time

>> students supported on federal fellowship awards (individual or institutional) must enroll in *at least 9 credits* to be considered full-time.

Additionally, *the tuition waiver will not post to a GA's fee bill until the GA is registered for at least 6 credits*. Not registering in a timely fashion can result in a Bursar Hold on the account, blocking enrollment and other services, *as well as incurring late fees*.

UConn's [Knowledge Base](#) provides step-by-step instructions on how to manage your enrollment through the Student Administration system. If you have difficulty registering, please reach out to registrar@uchc.edu for assistance.

**Please be sure to register
for your Spring courses asap!**

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. The Spring series will be published soon.

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

- >>> *Racial Microaggressions and the Cumulative and Deleterious Effects on Historically Excluded and Racially Oppressed Faculty, Staff, and Students*
- >>> *"How Are You Doing?"...And Other Scary Questions, Continued*
- >>> *Using Pronouns: Actualizing Inclusivity*
- >>> *How to Have Effective Conversations About Difficult Things in Graduate School and Beyond*
- >>> *Making Change: Your Finances, Your Future*
- >>> *Time Management: Getting the Most Out of a Limited Resource*
- >>> *Accommodations: What Graduate Students and Instructors Need to Know*

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.

Fall/Winter

Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

November

National American Indian and Native Alaskan Month

2nd [Dia de Los Muertos](#)

13th [World Kindness Day](#)

December

1st [World AIDS Day](#)

10th [International Human Rights Day](#)

25th [Christmas](#)

[Hanukkah](#) (12/25-1/2)

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

January

16th [National Religious Freedom Day](#)

20th [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)

29th [Lunar New Year](#)

February

Black History Month

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

-Diversity Corner-



Getting Crafty

This year's Grad School DEI Committee entry into UConn Health's annual Pumpkinpalooza! was titled "*It's no Trick...Diversity's a Treat!*" The interactive display included a wide variety of seasonal pumpkins and gourds celebrating the diversity of the season, including two expertly carved pumpkins created by Biomedical Science Ph.D. student **Kristina Delgado** and several smaller pumpkins creatively painted with whimsical expressions by Research Associate 2, **Dr. Debolina Ghosh**. Visitors were invited to grab a Halloween treat and guess whose 'guts' matched the three central pumpkins, noting that "Diversity's not scary, inside, we're basically all the same."

Student Kudos!

Student Awards and Achievements



Pictured above, left to right: Kai Clarke, Patricia Hare, and Justin King.

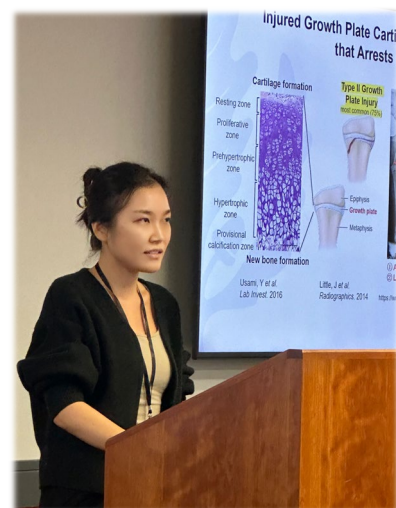
>>>D.M.D./Ph.D. student **Patricia Hare** (Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC; PI: Wendy Mok) was named 2024 Women of Innovation winner in STEM in the category of *Collegian Innovation and Leadership* at the 19th Annual Women of Innovation Awards, hosted by the Connecticut Technology Council on Tuesday, October 22.

Patricia was also the recipient of the William B. Upholt Achievement Award presented at the 2024 Skeletal, Craniofacial, and Oral Biology Training Program Symposium in November. The William B. Upholt Achievement Award 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 award was presented by Upholt's wife, Mary Lee.

>>>At the same symposium, **Kai Clarke** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Skeletal Biology and Regeneration AoC; PI: Marja Hurley) was awarded the Eric N. James Scholar Award. This award honors James' scientific achievements and reflects his deep commitment to helping others through teaching and mentorship. James' family was also in attendance for the award ceremony. Read more about the Symposium [here](#).

>>>In October, **Justin King** (M.D./Ph.D. student, Skeletal Biology and Regeneration AoC; PI: Archana Sanjay) received a "Top Scoring Abstract Award" in Montreal at the ISFR-ORS/OTA meeting, where he gave an oral presentation. Additionally, at the UConn Pepper Center on Aging Symposium he received the 'Best Basic Science Poster' award.

>>>**Emilie Korchak** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry AoC, ;PI: Irina Bezsonova) won one of three best poster awards at the 2024 NESS (North East Structure Symposium) in October at UConn Health for her work on "The effect of Hao-Fountain syndrome-causing mutation on USP7 function."



Pictured above: Hui Sun

Pictured top right: Sanjuncta Adak

Pictured bottom right:
Beaudoin lab students Sanjuncta Adak, Sarah Alshawi, & Anna Struba, with Dr. Jean-Denis Beaudoin & Dr. Amit Gupta.

Student Conferences and Presentations

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

Hui Sun (Skeletal Biology and Regeneration AoC; PI: Liisa Kuhn) gave an oral presentation at the Society For Biomaterials 2024 Regional Symposia in Boston in September.

The Beaudoin lab attended the RNA Canada 2024 meeting "The Future of RNA Technology" in Ottawa, Ontario September 30 – October 4, where lab member **Sanjuncta Adak** presented a poster and gave a 1.5 minute flash talk.



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 Molecular Biology & Biophysics Department's *MBB Bees Knees* were a Halloween treat!



The Department of Public Health Sciences recently attended the American Public Health Association (APHA) conference and handed out wildflower seeds to attendees to help promote environmental health. The conference was held at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minnesota on Oct 27-30.



In October, the GSO held a spirited competition with friends, food, and fun during their pumpkin decorating event in the Student Lounge.



HOLIDAY DONATION DRIVE!

The UConn Department of Public Health Sciences donation drive in support of the Prudence Crandall Center (PCC) is underway! Donations will directly assist individuals and families who are survivors of domestic violence. By contributing, you'll help provide individuals and families with the essentials they need to rebuild with dignity and security. For more info, contact publichealth@uconn.edu. Items needed include:

- **Gift Cards:** For groceries, clothing, gas, and household items (Visa, Walmart, Target, grocery stores).
- **Household Essentials:** New bedding (sheets, blankets, comforters), towels, and small kitchen appliances.
- **Personal Care Products:** Hygiene items, including shampoo, soap, deodorant, and other daily essentials.
- **Children's Items:** Diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6), baby wipes, and new toys for various age groups.
- **Cleaning Supplies:** Laundry detergent, disinfectants, and other household cleaning products.

Collection runs through December 17th.

Donation boxes can be found at:

UConn Health Academic Entrance AND 195 Farmington Ave, Suite 2100

New Roles...



Dr. Stacey Brown has been appointment Co-Director of the Department of Public Health Sciences alongside Dr. David Gregorio. With over 20 years of dedicated experience, Dr. Brown has been instrumental in developing curriculum that deepens students' understanding of the complex social, economic, and political factors influencing health. Her work in cultural competency, patient advocacy, and behavioral health has enriched our community partnerships and enhanced the quality of education for our students. Dr. Brown's research on structural inequality and health disparities is widely recognized, and she is an invaluable advocate on local and regional advisory boards.

Recent Faculty/Staff News & Honors



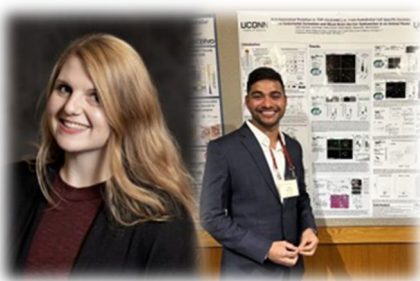
Pictured above LEFT: Drs. Judy Lewis & Shayna Cunningham (center) with Women & Health Together for the Future members. CENTER: Drs. Lakshmi Nair & Yusuf Khan (center) hold grant prize award for their startup company, Soleia Biosciences. RIGHT: Dr. Andrew Arnold (left) accepting the 2024 William F. Neuman Award from ASBMR president Dr. Laura Calvi.

>>**Dr. Judy Lewis and Dr. Shayna Cunningham** recently attended a conference in Cape Town, South Africa, where they connected with colleagues from Women and Health Together for the Future, a global network co-founded by Dr. Lewis. One of the highlights of the event was the 'Conference on the Move,' where participants engaged with the local community through site visits.

>>In October Soleia Biosciences, **Dr. Lakshmi Nair and Dr. Yusuf Khan's** (Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC) startup company, won the first-place, \$30,000 grand prize at the Wolff New Venture Competition, the UConn School of Business' pinnacle entrepreneurship challenge. In addition to the grand prize, Soleia Biosciences also received the Legal Services Award valued at \$10,000 and presented by Wiggin and Dana's emerging companies division. The startup is on the cusp of a breakthrough pain-reduction treatment that can extend the duration of local anesthetics, enabling patients to be nearly pain-free and mobile. Learn more about the award and their company [here](#).

>>**Dr. Andrew Arnold** (Genetics & Developmental Biology; Skeletal Biology & Regeneration; and Cell Biology AoCs) was the recipient of The American Society for Bone and Mineral Research's 2024 William F. Neuman Award, the oldest and most prestigious honor conferred by the organization, recognizing outstanding and major contributions in the area of bone and mineral research and for contributions to associates and trainees in teaching, research, and administration. Read more about the award [here](#).

Postdoc Spotlight



Jessica Florida (Zajac Lab) recently received an NIH Clinical Research Loan Repayment Program for Individuals from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (L32) from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. The program offers repayment of educational loan debt to qualified health professionals from disadvantaged backgrounds who agree to conduct NIH mission-relevant research.

Ashok Cheemala (Murphy Lab) received the Best Poster Award for his research on endothelial TDP-43 dysfunction and its role in blood-brain barrier defects in ALS/FTD models. His work received prominent recognition at two leading conferences: Barriers of the CNS Gordon Research Conference at Colby-Sawyer College in New London, NH, and the Cold Spring Harbor Brain Barriers Conference in Long Island, NY.

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...

Faculty Talent on Display at UCH Employee Art Show

UConn Health's 1st Employee Art Show included the works of two Biomedical Science Ph.D. program faculty members: **Dr. Irina Bezsonova** (Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC) and **Dr. Rachael Norris** (Cell Biology AoC). Their works were featured Sept. 5-Nov. 7 in the display hallway connecting the CT & University Towers.



Pictured TOP: Drs. Irina Bezsonova & Rachael Norris in front of their displayed works.
Below, Left: Dr. Norris' pencil drawings, "Zooming in on Pollination" and "Relaxing in the Sun"
Below, Right: Dr. Bezsonova's pen & ink drawings, "Wander" and "Celestial"



World Kindness Day

On Wednesday, November 13th the UCH Graduate School sponsored Kindness Stations in the E building, CGSB, and in the Rotunda during Public Health's 12th Week Fall event in celebration of World Kindness Day. Students, faculty & staff were invited to choose from hundreds of motivational kindness card to share with others or as reminders to themselves. Blank heart-shaped post-it notes were also available for creating individualized messages.

In addition, graduate students **Patricia Hare** & **Kristina Delgado**, along with Student Affairs Officer **Stephanie Rauch**, created over 50 kindness stones which were left all around campus for the taking to encourage spreading kindness within our community and beyond.



Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

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