

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

Sun., 8/10- Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudit@uconn.edu for Summer 2025 degree conferral

Sun., 8/24- Conferral date: Summer 2025 degrees

FALL 2025

8/18-8/22- Orientation Week (check w/ individual programs for details)

Mon., 8/25- Fall 2025 semester classes begin

Mon., 9/8- Last day to withdraw from courses without a W; last day to add/drop courses without permission

Fri., 9/19- Deadline to apply for graduation and to submit Final Plan of Study (Master's/Certif. students only) for Fall 2025 degree conferral

Mon., 10/20- Spring 2026 registration opens in Stu. Admin.

Mon., 11/10- Last day to withdraw from courses

Fri., 11/14- Last day for doctoral students to defend dissertation for Fall 2025 conferral; public defense must be announced 2 weeks prior to defending

11/24-11/28- Thanksgiving Break

Fri., 11/28- Last day for Master's/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to Submittable & submit related paperwork to degreeaudit@uconn.edu for Fall 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.

2025 Graduate School Commencement Speaker:

Kristina Delgado



The 2025 UConn Health Graduate School Commencement speaker was Biomedical Science Ph.D. graduate **Kristina Delgado**.

Born in Mexico City, Mexico and raised in Cuenca, Ecuador, Kristina moved to the U.S. at 18 and served in the U.S. Navy on the USS Abraham Lincoln before earning a B.S. in Biological Sciences from Georgia State University. She joined the UConn Health Biomedical Science Ph.D. program in 2021.

“We chose these paths—medicine, dentistry, public health, and biomedical research—because we care,” Kristina said in her commencement speech. “We are driven by a desire to help, to heal, to discover, and to improve lives. That shared purpose is what unites us. And now, with our degrees in hand, it’s time to turn the passion that brought us here into action. It is our time! Keep growing. Keep showing up. Keep making a difference because the world needs what we bring. From this moment on, it is our turn.”

ICYMI, you can watch her full remarks in the ceremony recording [here](#) (beginning with Student Remarks at 38:07). Read more about Kristina [here](#).

-Diversity Corner-

Learn more about the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) Bi-weekly Coffee Breaks

ODI has been hosting bi-weekly Coffee Breaks at UCH. These informal gatherings provide space for conversation and building community on general current topics. Community members are invited to stop by as their schedule permits; coffee and snacks are provided.

Thursday, May 29th: Take a Coffee Break for Change! Noon, Onyiuke Dining Room and on Teams

Meeting ID: 242 307 541 221 Meeting PW: see email/Lifeline

Many of us are wanting to get involved in discussions, programs, and actions that help make a difference on the issues we care about, but we want a space to know more about our options and things to consider.

Join us for an open, supportive discussion, where **we will explore the various forms of community organizing and political advocacy, how to get involved, and what are some things to think about as we choose how to engage.** As we embody our values of diversity and inclusion, it's important to recognize that we all come to our advocacy with different experiences and identities that influence how, if, and when we engage.

This will be a space to share practical strategies and make plans for future opportunities for learning and resource sharing. All are welcome to participate and learn from one another in this collaborative space.

Upcoming 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](#)
16th [Krishna Janmashtami](#)

September

Suicide Prevention Month
Sept. 15th-Oct. 15th: National Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month
16th [Trail of Tears](#) Remembrance Day
22nd [Rosh Hashanah](#)



High School Science Summit

Every year UConn Health & AHEC host the CT Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, which invites h.s. students around the state to present their own research & learn about the research of their peers. This incredibly successful event cultivates science and research experiences for younger students. For the past two years, the UConn Health Graduate School DEI Committee, in collaboration with The Cato T. Laurencin Institute for Regenerative Engineering and the Young Explorers in Science (YES) Program, has expanded access to this event by inviting and providing transportation for students from schools that primarily serve underrepresented & disadvantaged students. These students attend a post fair career symposium called *High School Science Summit: Cultivating Future Biomedical Innovators* to learn about diverse paths and journeys, and different biomedical career opportunities. This year, students were fortunate to hear from Dr. Jeffrey Hines (UConn Health Chief Diversity Officer) and Dr. Jenna Bartley (Graduate School DEI Committee Chair), as well as graduate students Kristina Delgado, Angela Power, Alex Mitchell, and Allison Aviles. Students also toured UConn Health laboratories to gain a more hands-on understanding of research and lab work. They were able to ask thoughtful questions and engage with our researchers to gain a better understanding of biomedical careers opportunities available both at UConn Health and beyond.

Student Conferences & Presentations

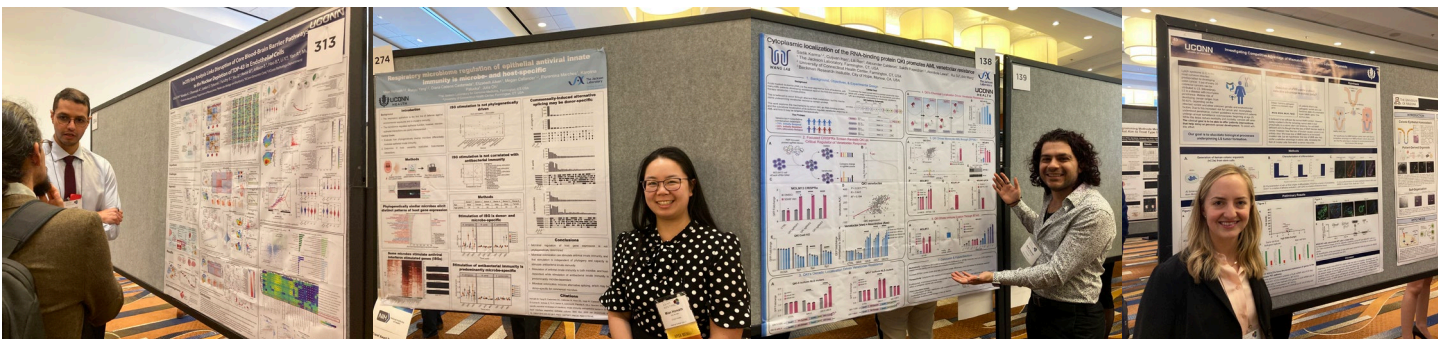
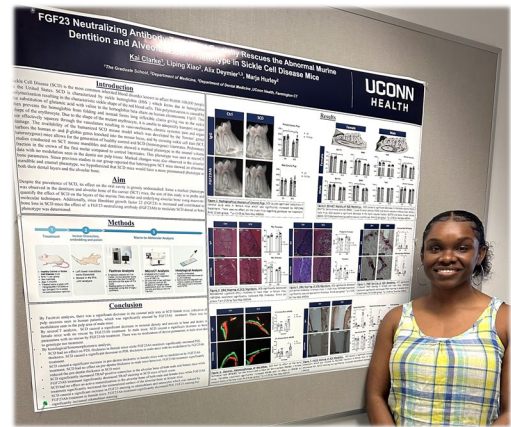


>Biomedical Science Ph.D. program Immunology AoC students, **Jason Cahoon** (PI: Penghua Wang), **Stabonia Maji** (PI: Pramod Srivastava), **Aadrita Hazra** (PI: Sivapriya Kailasan Vanaja), **Purva Pundeer** (PI: Pramod Srivastava), **Arshmeet Chawla** (PI: Pramod Srivastava), and **William and Eileen Theune** (PI: Kepeng Wang) attended the annual meeting of The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) held on May 3-7 at Honolulu, HI.

Jason, Aadrita, Eileen, and William received AAI Trainee Abstract Awards and presented their work at the Block Symposia. Stabonia, Purva, and Arshmeet presented posters.

>**Kai Clarke** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC; PI: Marja Hurley) attended the Sickle Cell Disease Symposium hosted by the New York Academy of Science on April 30th where she presented a poster (*pictured right*).

>**Arshmeet Chawla** (Biomedical Science Ph.D. student, Immunology AoC; PI: Pramod Srivastava) presented at the Gordon Research Conference for Neuroimmune Communication in Health and Disease in Tuscany, Italy May 11-15.



>M.D./Ph.D. program students **Omar Omar** (Cell Biology AoC, PI: Patrick Murphy), **Mian Horvath** (Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC, PI: Julia Oh), **Sadik Karma** (Genetics & Developmental Biology AoC; PI: Eric Wang), and **Caroline Guild McNaboe** (Molecular Biology & Biochemistry AoC, PI: Christopher Heinen) presented posters at the AAP/ASCI/PSA joint conference in Chicago, April 25-27. Mian received an APSA Travel Award, and Caroline (who also presented her work at AACR) won an AACR Women in Cancer Research Award. Students were able to attend due to the generosity of the Office of Physician-Scientist Career Development, working in close/continuing collaboration with the MD/PhD program.

What's (Been) Goin' On?

Students have been out and about over the past few months!

Here's a peek at some of the things they've been up to!



GSO April Bowling & Mini-Golf Nite



In April, Program in Applied Public Health Sciences MPH class of 2025 graduates **Julia Prescott** and **Mahima Mehta** (pictured above with CLAS '23 alumna Margot Drummey (*right*)) completed the Eugene Marathon, the largest marathon in the Pacific Northwest, finishing on the iconic Hayward Field in Oregon.



Students in the Program in Applied Public Health Sciences gathered during 12th Week this April for an in person Stop-the-Bleed and Hands-Only CPR Training led by David Burich and volunteers from the North Branford Fire Department Ambulance Company.

Grad Student Appreciation Week

During the 1st week of April, UConn Health celebrated national Graduate Student Appreciation Week with several activities, including grab & go treats, professional headshots, and chair massages.

New this year was the *Your Guess Is As Good As Mine* candy jar contest. Biomed. Sci. Ph.D. student **Shreya Savla** had the closest guess OVER the correct amount of 252, earning her a pair of UConn chocolate bars and a \$15 gift card, while Biomed. Sci. Ph.D. student **Stabonia Maji** had the closest guess UNDER the correct amount, winning her a \$25 gift card AND the candy jar. Stabonia shared a pic just hours after collecting her winnings of the (significantly depleted) jar, which she generously shared with her Srivastava lab mates in Immunology, likely proving her to be the most popular person in the lab that day! 😊



Recent Faculty Honors

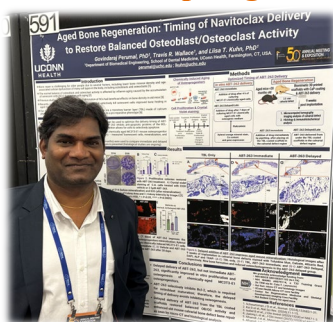


Dr. Cato T. Laurencin (Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC, *pictured left*) can add “Sir” to his impressive list of honors & accolades, as he was recently appointed Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Lucia, an Order Established by Queen Elizabeth II. Laurencin received Knighthood on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and the Government of St. Lucia. Read more about his Knighthood and connection to St. Lucia [here](#).

>>**Dr. Vanessa Scanlon** (Skeletal Biology & Regeneration AoC; *pictured right*) was selected by her colleagues from the International Society for Experimental Hematology (ISEH) to receive the 2025 Leadership in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award, which will be presented to her at their annual meeting in Kumamoto, Japan in September 2025.



Postdoc Spotlight



Dr. Govindaraj Perumal (postdoc, PI: Liisa Kuhn) presented his work at the annual meeting of the Society for Biomaterials (SFB) in Chicago, Illinois on April 9-12, 2025.

Alumni Spotlight



2017 M.D./Ph.D. program alumna **Dr. Sonali Bracken** (*pictured, left, with Dr. Michael Hershfield, right*) will be joining the Duke University faculty as part of a newly endowed faculty position in the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology with significant support from Duke professor Dr. Michael Hershfield. Dr. Bracken, a rheumatologist & translational immunologist, specializes in B-cell signaling in lung fibrosis caused by rheumatic conditions. Read more about her endowed position [here](#).

Timely Topics for Faculty & Students

UConn Grad School's *Timely Topics* series offers educational tracks to engage with subject matter experts on topics relevant to graduate students and those supporting/advising them. All sessions are held via Webex. The Fall 2025 schedule will be out soon!

In the meantime, visit their resource page [here](#) to find **Archived seminars**, including previous topics such as: *Having That Difficult Conversation with Your Graduate Advisee; Strength-based Advising for Neurodiverse Graduate Students; Inclusive Career Conversations: Reducing Implicit Bias in our Formal and Informal Conversations; AI is Here to Stay...Now What?; Promoting Mental Health; Building Financial Credit and Dealing with Debt*, and more...

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 2025 included over 90 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