

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

Fall 2026

8/24-8/28—Orientation Week (check w/ individual programs for details)

Mon., 8/31—Fall 2026 semester classes begin

Mon., 9/14—Tenth day of classes. Courses dropped after this date will have a “W” for withdrawal recorded on the academic record. Last day to add or drop courses without additional signatures.

Fri., 9/25—Deadline to apply for graduation and to submit Final Plan of Study (Master’s/Certif. students *only*) for Fall 2026 degree conferral

Tues., 9/29—Dean’s signature required to add courses

Mon., 10/26—Spring 2027 registration opens in Student Admin

Mon., 11/16—Last day to withdraw from courses

Fri., 11/20—Last day for doctoral students to defend dissertation for Fall 2026 conferral; *public defense must be announced 2 weeks prior to defending*

11/23-11/27—Thanksgiving Break

Fri., 12/4—Last day for Master’s/Doctoral degree candidates to upload final thesis/dissertation to the university-supported repository and submit related paperwork to degreeaudit@uconn.edu for Fall 2026 degree conferral

Mon., 12/14—Finals week begins

Sun., 12/20—Conferral date for Fall 2026 degrees

Wed., 12/23—Grades due for Fall semester

Spring 2027

Tues., 1/19—Spring 2027 semester classes begin

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE UCONN HEALTH REGISTRAR

Please note that UConn Health campus students should go to <https://health.uconn.edu/registrar/forms/> to find the following forms *specific to our campus*:

- >laboratory rotation registration (for YIIP, certificate & combined degree students *only*)
- >independent study registration
- >Schedule revision
- >Course Audits

These forms can also be found on the [Students webpage](#) under *For All Graduate Students >> Forms for Graduate Students*.

Questions? Contact the UConn Health Registrar’s Office at registrar@uchc.edu.

International Office Walk-In Hours

The UConn Health International Office holds weekly walk-in advising for intl. students/scholars in the main bldg. on **Thursdays from 2-3 pm in Walker Conf. Rm. (AG-070)**. Walk-in advising is 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.



Incoming Public Health students (above)

Welcome to our 2026-2027 Incoming Classes!

Over 80 new students joined UConn Health Graduate School’s various degree programs, including:

Biomedical Science: PhD: 19, MS: 1, YIIP/Certificate: 6; **MD/PhD:** 6; **Clinical & Translational Research:** Masters: 2, dual degree Masters: 1, Certificate: 1; **Master of Dental Science:** 11; and **Public Health:** PhD: 4, MPH: 19, Fast Track: 11, Certificate: 5



Current and incoming Biomedical Science students (right and above)

Did you know?

UConn Health Student Behavioral Health Service

provides free evaluation and treatment to medical, dental and graduate students at UConn Health. There’s no co-pay and you don’t need to use your insurance. While stress management is often a focus of treatment, students are seen for a variety of other concerns. If you’re having a problem, we would like to help you solve or more effectively manage it.

To find out more, visit SBHS [here](#).

U Belong @ UConn!

In August, the UConn Health Grad School DEI Committee hosted its second annual "U Belong at UConn" event in conjunction with the UConn Health Graduate School. Born from student committee members' vision for an inclusive event supporting our richly diverse community, the event was open to all members of the Grad School.

The drop in social event featured stations like arts & crafts, temporary tattoos, board game, and lawn games. New this year was *Mingle Bingo*, where grad students and postdocs interacted to find people matching items on their bingo board, with a chance at some fun summer themed raffle items.

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Timely Topics for Faculty & Students

UConn Grad School's Timely Topics series offers seminars to engage with subject matter experts on topics relevant to graduate students and those supporting/advising them. Visit the [Timely Topics webpage](#) to register for these free virtual seminars. You'll also find Archived seminars of past semester's topics from both learning tracks.

Upcoming Faculty/Staff Sessions:

Strategies for Providing Timely, Effective Feedback to Graduate Advisees, Thurs., Oct. 15, 11 AM

Whose Responsibility Is It? Graduate Students and Career Readiness, Thurs., Nov. 12, 1 PM

Upcoming Student Sessions:

Researcher Privacy for Graduate Students, Wed., October 7, 11 AM

Being Strategic: Career Readiness Milestones, Wed., October 28, 11 AM

Making Connections That Count: Professional Communication & In-Person Networking, Wed., Nov. 18, 11 AM

The UConn Health Graduate School DEI Committee serves students, postdocs, faculty and staff in graduate degree programs on the UConn Health campus. For more info, contact committee Chair, Dr. Jenna Bartley, jbartley@uchc.edu.

Upcoming Heritage Celebrations, Observances & Holidays

September

Suicide Prevention Month

Sept. 15th-Oct. 15th: National Hispanic-Latino Heritage Month

4th [Krishna Janmashtami](#)

11th [Rosh Hashanah](#)

16th [Trail of Tears](#) Remembrance Day

20th [Yom Kippur](#)

October

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Global Diversity Awareness Month

Filipino American Heritage Month

LGBTQIA+ History Month

10th: [World Mental Health Day](#)

12th: [Dia de la Raza](#)

12th: [Indigenous Peoples' Day](#)

November

National American Indian and Alaska Native Month

13th: [World Kindness Day](#)

Student Kudos!

Student Fellowship and Grant Awards

The University of Connecticut Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine and Canaan Partners offer venture capital and entrepreneurship fellowship opportunities for Ph.D., M.D., M.D./Ph.D., D.M.D., or D.M.D./Ph.D. students. Fellows receive hands-on training, working in multidisciplinary teams that provide scientific review, due diligence, and when relevant, business strategy, and market analysis around new ventures and potential investment opportunities. The 2026 UConn-Canaan Fellows included Biomedical Science Ph.D. students **Cara Bartlett** (Immunology AoC; PI: Guangfu Li), **Patrick Fleming** (Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC; PI: Paul Robson), and **Sakthi Rajendran** (Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC; PI: Eric Wang), as well as M.D./Ph.D. students **Omar Moustafa** (Cell Biology AoC; PI: Patrick Murphy) and **Madeline Eller**. Read more about this year's awardees and the UConn-Canaan Fellowship Program [here](#).

Several M.D./Ph.D. students have recently received fellowship and training grant awards:

>**Jacob Brady** (Neuroscience AoC; PI: Ephraim Trakhtenberg) was awarded an NIH F30 training grant from the National Eye Institute (NEI) for his project "Transcriptional regulation of axon regeneration by Klf9 inhibition."

> The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) awarded an F30 training grant to **Joshua Lee** (Cell Biology AoC; PI: Paul Robson) for his project "Dissecting the Role of Epithelial-Fibroblast Crosstalk in Endometriosis-Associated Infertility."

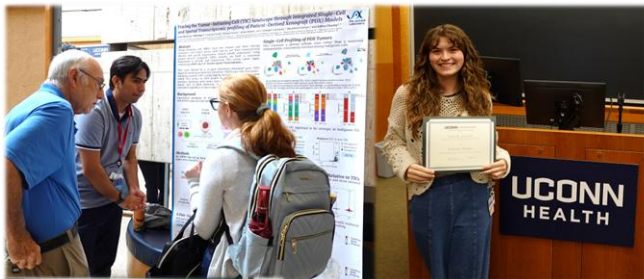
>**Rei Bufi** (Neuroscience AoC; PI: Frederick Varn) received a JAX Cancer Center Travel Award for her talk at the JAX Cancer Center Symposium titled "Microglia lipid metabolism as a bridge between brain aging and glioblastoma progression."

>An F30 training grant from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS) was awarded to **Marta Stetsiv** (Skeletal Biology and Regeneration AoC, PIs: Rosa Guzzo and Archana Sanjay) for her project "Uncovering the unique role of DOT1L histone methyltransferase activity in osteogenic differentiation and bone injury."

43rd Annual Biomedical Science Graduate Student Research Day

Current Biomedical Science program students showed off the wide variety of research projects they are pursuing at the annual GSRD on Wednesday, August 26. The celebration of their hard work throughout the year included student poster and oral presentations and a keynote address by UConn Health M.D./Ph.D. program alumna and current faculty Dr. Margaret Callahan (Immunology AoC). A number of annual student awards were presented, as well as the student-selected Osborn Award for excellence in Biomedical Science graduate teaching and mentoring. Read more about the event and all the awardees [here](#).

Scenes from the 43rd Annual Biomedical Science Graduate Student Research Day pictured below and to the left.





The Graduate Student Organization capped off the 2025-26 academic year with a fun social outing to Lake Compounce in Bristol. While the weather was not completely cooperative, students were able to get a few rides in before the park closed early and they were provided with rain tickets allowing them to return to the park on a sunnier day later in the summer!



What's (Been) Goin' On?

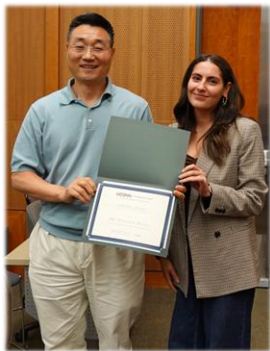
Students have been out and about over the past few months! Here's a peek at some of the things they've been up to!



Post Fall orientation, MPH students in the Applied Public Health Sciences program volunteered at Metropolitan AME Zion Church in Hartford. In collaboration with SAVE (Saving African American Village), they organized donations for the community store, ensuring that essential items were accessible at no cost (*see photos above from this event*).

Earlier this summer, the department conducted a Summer Donation Drive which primarily focused on collecting essential items, including non-perishable food items, personal care and hygiene products, baby supplies, clothing, gift cards to fast-food restaurants, and bus passes. Donated items were shared with Hands on Hartford, the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CIRI), and Hartford's Center Church. Thanks to all in the UConn Health community who supported the drive, over 1,700 items were donated to support community members in need!

~Recent Faculty Honors~

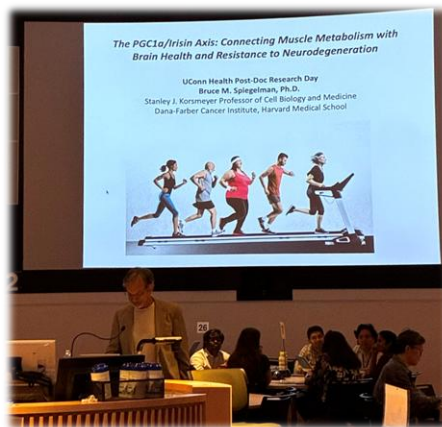


Immunology Area of Concentration professor **Dr. Penghua Wang** (pictured left, with outgoing GSO president *Perla El Ahmad*) was selected by the Biomedical Science student body as the 2026 Osborn Award winner for excellence in graduate teaching and mentorship at the 43rd Annual Biomedical Science Graduate Student Research Day. The award is named for long-time UConn Health professor Dr. Mary J. Osborn, former Chair of the Department of Microbiology and member of the National Academy of Sciences, in honor of her many contributions to graduate education.



~MILESTONE MOMENTS~

10th Annual UConn Health/Jackson Laboratory Postdoc Research Day~



On Thursday, September 17th, the annual UConn Health/Jackson Laboratory Postdoc Research Day celebrated its milestone 10th year with an event featuring short talks presented by postdocs, a poster session, and a reception, bringing together members of the research community, local legislators, and representatives from UConn's Office of the Vice President for Research (OVP). The keynote address was delivered by Bruce Spiegelman, Ph.D., Stanley J. Korsmeyer Professor of Cell Biology and Medicine at Harvard Medical School and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, who presented "The PGC1α/Irisin Axis: Connecting Muscle Metabolism with Brain Health and Resistance to Neurodegeneration."

Read more about this special day: <https://today.uconn.edu/2026/09/postdocs-speak-for-science-at-the-10th-annual-research-day/>

Special thanks to the PDRD's organizing committee, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, Chris Heinen, Nisha Mahey (UConn Health), Zeynep Altunay (UConn Health), Marianna Marino (UConn Health), Katarina Milicevic (UConn Health), Luke Trinity (JAX), Ying Tang (UConn Health), as well as Jane Tran Sills (UConn Health) and Sarah Wojiski and Rowena Grainger (JAX), whose hard work resulted in a wonderfully successful event.

Postdoc News

Recent Public Health Ph.D. program graduate **Dr. Adekemi Suleiman** has been appointed as a Postdoctoral Associate with Dr. Kammarache Aneni in the ACCESS Lab at the Yale Child Study Center at the Yale School of Medicine starting October 1st. Dr. Suleiman is joining a multidisciplinary research program on adolescent behavioral health, digital media, and family-based prevention interventions.

UConn Health Off-Campus Housing Website

Did you know the new off-campus housing resource for the UConn Health campus? 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!*



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Get into the groove...



OUCH! (*The Orchestra of University of Connecticut Health*), is comprised of faculty, staff, and student musicians who perform throughout the year. Their upcoming **Halloween concert** is **October 29th at 6PM** in Keller Auditorium.

Interested in joining? Complete [the online info form](#). Questions? Contact Dr. Howard Gutstein (gutstein@uchc.edu) or Dr. Francesco Celi (celi@uchc.edu).

A Day in the Life

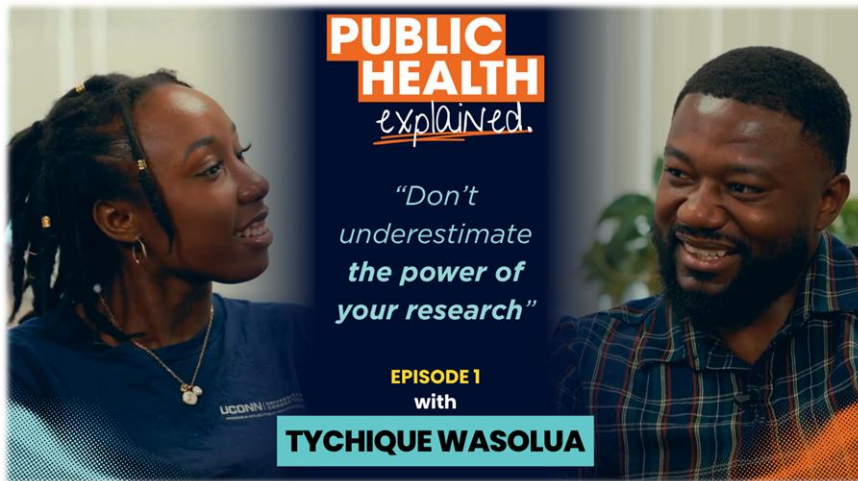
Megan Callender (4th year Biomedical Science PhD student; Genetics and Developmental Biology AoC; PI: Frederick Varn) was highlighted over the summer in a "Day in the Life" video produced by the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, where Megan's thesis lab is located. She is pursuing research involving genomics approaches to investigate the impact of aging on brain cancer progression.

The Jackson Laboratory's Cooperative Ph.D. Program provides training in mammalian genetics, neuroscience and genomic medicine through partnerships with degree-granting academic institutions, including Tufts University School of Medicine, UConn Health and The University of Maine. You can watch Megan's video [here](#).



And now for something completely different...

Did you ever wonder...?



Public Health explained, is a new video series where they've handed the microphone to a total outsider — their own marketing team — to ask the questions everyone wonders about public health but never gets to ask. Check out their inaugural episode [here](#)!

Thoughts? Comments? Contributions for consideration in future newsletters?

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