

2023

Presidential

AWARDS

UT Health

San Antonio



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Presidential Awards

April 17, 2023

Welcome
President Henrich

Presentation of Awards
Employee Excellence in Service
Team Excellence
Teaching Excellence
Clinical Excellence

Distinguished Research Scholar Award

Closing



A Message from the President

Today I am especially proud to recognize you for making our university one of the nation's finest academic health science centers and for doing everything it takes to make lives better.

Sincerely,

William L. Henrich, MD, MACP
President and Professor of Medicine



The Presidential Employee Excellence in Service Award honors UT Health San Antonio employees who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to the university. They have made noteworthy and distinctive contributions to UT Health San Antonio by modeling our core values and serving our missions of education, research, patient care and community engagement. In developing new processes or improving existing ones, these individuals have significantly improved productivity and cost savings for the university.



Jack Frost, MBA, PMP

IT Change Management Analyst-Senior, Project Portfolio Management, Delivery Transition Solutions

As travel restrictions relaxed after the COVID pandemic, Jack Frost was the primary change management analyst for an expense project to fold multiple paper processes into a user-friendly online automated format to increase efficiency. Jack coordinated efforts of fellow team members to develop, test and deliver resources for training and self-guided support. The project encountered technical and external environmental challenges as well as internal resistance to change, but Jack emerged as a skilled collaborator. He exhibited incredible agility in a fluid environment as expectations constantly shifted.

–Barry Bridges, PMP, CCMP, Manager, Organizational Change Management



Deanne Hargita, MPA, CCRP

Manager of Research Compliance, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Division of Behavioral Medicine and the South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma and Resilience (STRONG STAR)

Every week, Ms. Hargita initiates, tracks, monitors and communicates more than 60 regulatory actions for 10 organizations. In 2022, she was superlative in her regulatory management of a \$13.6 million multi-site randomized controlled clinical treatment trial to recruit and treat active-duty service members and veterans with chronic post-traumatic headache through novel cognitive behavioral therapy. The research could not have been completed successfully without her commitment to excellence and exceptional service on behalf of her department, UT Health San Antonio and most importantly, our service men and women.

–Alan L. Peterson, PhD, ABPP, Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; Director, STRONG STAR Multidisciplinary PTSD Research Consortium



Laura Paprotta, MLA

Assistant Director, International Services, Office of International Services

In her role of managing the institution’s request for assistance with visa sponsorship for visitors from all over the world, Laura Paprotta acts quickly on each request, diligently researching how all visa sponsorship requests can be managed timely and efficiently. She is passionate about fulfilling the immigration needs of our international community of clinicians, visiting scholars, researchers and students. When the director of the office resigned, Laura superbly managed 500 international visitors and managed program demands for seven months with the resiliency and competency of a true professional.

–Sylvia Medel, EdD, Director, International Services



Cesar Ramirez, Jr., RN

Nurse Supervisor, Radiation Oncology, Mays Cancer Center

Cesar Ramirez, a former active-duty U.S. Marine, serves as a stellar example to our nurses and medical assistants and helps them meet their highest potential and is a true team player. He cares deeply about caring for our cancer patients, particularly as a radiation oncology nurse. Consulting with chemotherapy and infusion nurses, physicians, residents, radiation therapists and dosimetrists, he designed and implemented a process and team to start concurrent chemotherapy and radiation for patients who need both, resulting in a 96% success rate.

–Eva Galvan, MD, Assistant Professor/Clinical, Department of Radiation Oncology, Mays Cancer Center



Beth Wueste, PhD, MAEd, C-TAGME, LSSBB

Director, Academic Assessment and Compliance, Office of Academic Affairs, School of Nursing

Beth Wueste has been with UT Health San Antonio for 20 years, but when she joined the Campus Health and Wellness Committee several years ago, she immediately began to lead her peers in the creation of novel and impactful programming for the entire campus. As chair of the committee, she wrote a proposal to reorganize and bring a unified focus to wellness activities. From start to finish the process took almost six years, two edits and survived a global pandemic, but Dr. Wueste never stopped moving forward.

–Jennifer Cerecero, Executive Director, Office of Environmental Health and Safety



Within the Employee Excellence in Service category, the Presidential Team Excellence Award provides an opportunity to recognize an entire team of faculty, staff and students for exemplary contributions and outstanding collaboration that have resulted in accomplishments that fully honor the mission, core values and vision of UT Health San Antonio.



UT Health San Antonio Police Mental Health Unit

Team Leader:

Timothy Gutierrez, Lieutenant

Team Members:

Divine Peoples, Officer II
Jaime Saenz, Sergeant
Douglas Schramm, Sergeant
Georgina Scribner, Officer IV
Peggy Wells, Officer I

In 2021, the UT Health San Antonio Police Department identified a critical need for a dynamic and progressive approach to law enforcement interactions with those in a mental health crisis. The team created a program that provides a superior response and a higher level of service for encounters ranging from suicidal behavior to stress or anxiety to those experiencing homelessness. The result was the creation of the innovative Mental Health Unit, whose members are highly skilled and trained to de-escalate violent situations and provide life-saving care to prevent further harm.

– Maritza Ramirez, Executive Assistant, UT Health San Antonio Police Department



The Presidential Teaching Excellence Award is presented to outstanding full-time faculty members who exhibit the finest principles in education. They possess extensive knowledge of their subject material, maintain an awareness of current developments and incorporate examples from recent literature or clinical experience in the classroom. These faculty members have distinguished themselves not only through teaching methods in the classroom, but also by serving as role models and mentors to students outside class. They have made a significant contribution to the education and development of future health care professionals.



Megan Freeman, MD

Associate Professor/Clinical, Division of Hospital Medicine, Long School of Medicine

Megan Freeman exemplifies educational creativity and adaptability, exhibits dedication and excels in collaboration and mentorship. These characteristics speak clearest through her long-term commitment to medical education across the continuum of learner experiences, including all levels of medical student coursework, graduate medical education and ongoing investment in faculty development. She proposed a change for Internal Medicine residents that has resulted in a remarkable and lasting innovation allowing residents to collaborate with postgraduates and faculty mentors to propose, investigate, implement and study issues in their clinical learning environments.

– Jack Badawy, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Hospital Medicine, Department of Medicine, Long School of Medicine



Kimberly Hughes, DNP, RNC-OB, CNS

Assistant Professor/Clinical, Office of Faculty Excellence, School of Nursing

Kimberly Hughes has worked at UT Health San Antonio's School of Nursing since 2015. As a perinatal clinical nurse specialist, she is an expert in maternal care nursing practices from conception through the early postpartum period. Dr. Hughes holds national certification in inpatient obstetric care and is actively involved in the national Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses, serving as its San Antonio chapter leader since 2000 and being selected for its Emerging Leaders Program. She is a role model for active and engaged learning in the classroom.

– Jacqueline McGrath, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN, Thelma and Joe Crow Endowed Professor Vice Dean for Faculty Excellence, UT Health San Antonio, School of Nursing



David Ojeda Diaz, DDS

Assistant Professor/Clinical, Department of Comprehensive Dentistry, School of Dentistry

David Ojeda Diaz's most significant contributions have been to our teaching mission. He is the course director for eight courses within the DDS degree curriculum and in the advanced education specialty programs. He also lectures in several other courses and is known to motivate his students to achieve their fullest potential. He balances his teaching responsibilities by serving on committees while maintaining other scholarly commitments and has proposed an Oralfacial Pain Center and Oral Medicine Fellowship program. He constantly wants to improve processes and grow the faculty practice.

– Peter M. Loomer, BSc, DDS, PhD, MRCD(C), FACD, Professor and Dean, School of Dentistry



Andrea Berndt, PhD

Associate Professor, Office of Faculty Excellence, School of Nursing

Andrea Berndt is a leader who teaches in both the PhD and BSN-DNP programs. As an industrial-organizational psychologist with an extensive history of instrument development, she has taught statistics and research method courses in undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs for almost 30 years. Her interactions with students are quite remarkable — she can explain extremely difficult concepts using multiple strategies, tailored to each student’s need. She challenges, yet encourages students, scaffolding assignments and expectations, and motivating students to achieve their best.

–*Jacqueline McGrath, PhD, RN, FNAP, FAAN, Thelma and Joe Crow Endowed Professor, Vice Dean for Faculty Excellence, UT Health San Antonio, School of Nursing*



Stephanie M. Levine, MD

Professor of Medicine and Vice Chair of Education, Division of Pulmonary Diseases and Critical Care Medicine, Long School of Medicine

Stephanie Levine is one of the brightest and most compassionate educators at UT Health San Antonio and across the nation. For 30 years, she has served as a mentor to the Pulmonary Critical Care faculty, fellows and more than 1,000 residents and students. Her primary interests are in lung transplantation, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary hypertension and methods of improving medical education. She has been selected as a Distinguished CHEST Educator multiple times. Dr. Levine is the standard that I try to attain and emulate.

–*Jay Peters, MD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Medicine Division of Pulmonary Diseases and Critical Care*



Bruce J. Nicholson, PhD

Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Structural Biology, Long School of Medicine

Bruce Nicholson has demonstrated excellence in research, education, teaching and mentoring throughout his accomplished 40-year career at SUNY Buffalo and UT Health San Antonio. With a focus on intercellular gap junctions, his expertise includes cell biology, molecular biology, biochemistry and neuroscience, as well as scientific writing and career development for medical students, graduate students, undergraduates and post-doctoral fellows. A rigorous mentor with high standards, Dr. Nicholson inspires students to strive for excellence while offering insightful suggestions for improvement. He attracts students from various disciplines to careers in the biomedical sciences.

–*P. Renee Yew, PhD, Chair, Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS), Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program; Director of the Cell Biology, Genetics, and Molecular Medicine Discipline of the IBMS; Director and COGS Chair of the Master of Science Graduate Program in Personalized Molecular Medicine, Department of Molecular Medicine*



Margarita Vasquez, MD

Professor of Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, Long School of Medicine

With her passion and unique vision as an educator and researcher, Margarita Vasquez is particularly respected for her role as program director of the Neonatology Fellowship. She has coordinated the Neonatal Resuscitation Program for pediatric, OBGYN and family medicine residents and fellows, neonatal nurses and respiratory therapists for more than a decade. She is a well-known mentor for junior fellows and neonatology program directors nationwide. During the COVID pandemic, she coordinated and implemented an online teaching series with national experts, demonstrating her adaptability to new learning environments.

–*Steven R. Seidner, MD, Miss Eloise Alexander Chair in Pediatric Pulmonary and Critical Care, Professor and Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Long School of Medicine*



The Presidential Clinical Excellence Award honors full-time faculty of UT Health San Antonio who provide clinical services as part of their appointments. These clinicians have distinguished themselves through exemplary and sustained expertise, and they represent the very finest in quality patient care. By building relationships with patients, family members, professional colleagues, residents, students and staff, these awardees demonstrate collaborative teamwork, independent leadership and compassionate care.



Shweta Bansal, MD, FASN

Professor/Clinical, Division of Nephrology, Department of Medicine, Long School of Medicine

Shweta Bansal, a national authority in peritoneal dialysis, has been on our faculty for 12 years and has served with distinction as a clinician, educator and scholar. Dr. Bansal epitomizes the ideals of clinical medicine, offering her patients compassionate, evidence-based and personalized care while also organizing multidisciplinary efforts needed to deliver outstanding, value-based care. Dr. Bansal has been a wonderful contributor to the Division of Nephrology and the Department of Medicine and has made a mark to increase recognition of UT Health San Antonio across the country.

– Kumar Sharma, MD, Chief of Nephrology, Vice Chair of Research, Department of Medicine, L. David Hillis Endowed Distinguished Chair in Medicine, Professor of Medicine



Karen Schwab, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC, PMHS

Associate Professor/Clinical and Director of Pediatric Services - Wellness 360, Office of Faculty Excellence, School of Nursing

Karen Schwab is a shining example of an outstanding practitioner whose skillful and compassionate care makes better the lives of her patients and their families. As full-time faculty, Dr. Schwab teaches graduate and undergraduate students while overseeing a busy pediatric campus practice, for which she was instrumental in obtaining designation as a Foster Care Center of Excellence. On a personal note, she delivers skillful and compassionate care to my two children, ages 11 and 15, who are patients at the Wellness 360 pediatric practice.

– Maria Danet Lapiz Bluhm, PhD, RN, MSCI, FAAN, ANEF, Professor, Director of International Programs, Distinguished Professorship in Nursing



The Presidential Distinguished Research Scholar Award represents the very best in academic achievement. This award honors an individual who exhibits superior scholarship and maintains the highest standards of professionalism. This award also recognizes significant contributions to theory, research and practice, a national or international reputation, a sustained record of extramural support, and major additions to scientific literature and health advancement.



Ratna K. Vadlamudi, PhD

*Professor and Vice Chair for Research, Division of Reproductive Research,
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Long School of Medicine*

During his 15-year tenure as a professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UT Health San Antonio, Dr. Vadlamudi has earned a reputation as a foremost cancer researcher as well as a highly respected mentor and educator. In his scientific program, Dr. Vadlamudi has made foundational contributions in elucidating the molecular biology of estrogen signaling in cancer. He has garnered considerable accolades and is universally recognized as a leading expert in this key area of cancer research. He was elected as an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow in 2015 for his outstanding contributions to the area of Molecular Biology of Cancer. In addition, he was a scientific founder of two biotech businesses and holds eight patents related to his work.

–Randal D. Robinson, MD, MBA, Professor and Chair, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Humana Foundation Distinguished Chair, Frank Harrison Chair in Reproductive Endocrinology

With appreciation

PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD COMMITTEE

Jacqueline Mok, PhD (non-voting chair)
Carlos Landaeta Quinones, DDS
Megan Lippe, PhD, MSN, RN
Selina Morgan, DPT
Temple Ratcliffe, MD
Patricia Renee Yew, PhD

**PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED RESEARCH SCHOLAR
AWARD COMMITTEE**

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Adelita Cantu, PhD, RN, FAAN
Charles France, PhD
Nathaniel Jeske, PhD
Timothy Reistetter, PhD, OTR, FAOTA
David Weiss, PhD

PRESIDENTIAL CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARD COMMITTEE

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Angela Kennedy, SLP-D, CCC-SLP
Gabriel Medrano Valle, MD
Angela Palaiologou-Gallis, DDS
Kathryn Parke, PNP
George Willis, MD

**PRESIDENTIAL EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE
IN SERVICE AWARD COMMITTEE**

Danielle McDavid, PHR
(non-voting chair)
Nychole Krause
(non-voting assistant)
Adriana Barron
Jessica Gutierrez-Rodriguez
Mabel Hernandez
Michelle Lopez

Lety Laurel Matos, MA
Samantha Montalvo
Michelle Montoya-Mendoza
Donna Navarro
Jeanie Paradise
Charles Phillips
Thomas Repino
Amber Sharp, MBA, CPA