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 UTHealth[®] Houston

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Welcoming UTHealth Houston's New Behavioral Sciences School!

In today's world focusing on one's mental health is one of the most important things.

UTHealth Houston, the only school with six campuses spread across Texas, proposed the creation of a new school on its campus. This school will focus to address critical mental health issues of children and adults and will be called the School of Behavioral Health Sciences.

This school will provide services for Texans by increasing the number of healthcare providers working in the field of mental health. Being the first of its kind, the school will combine graduate education with the largest academic behavioral

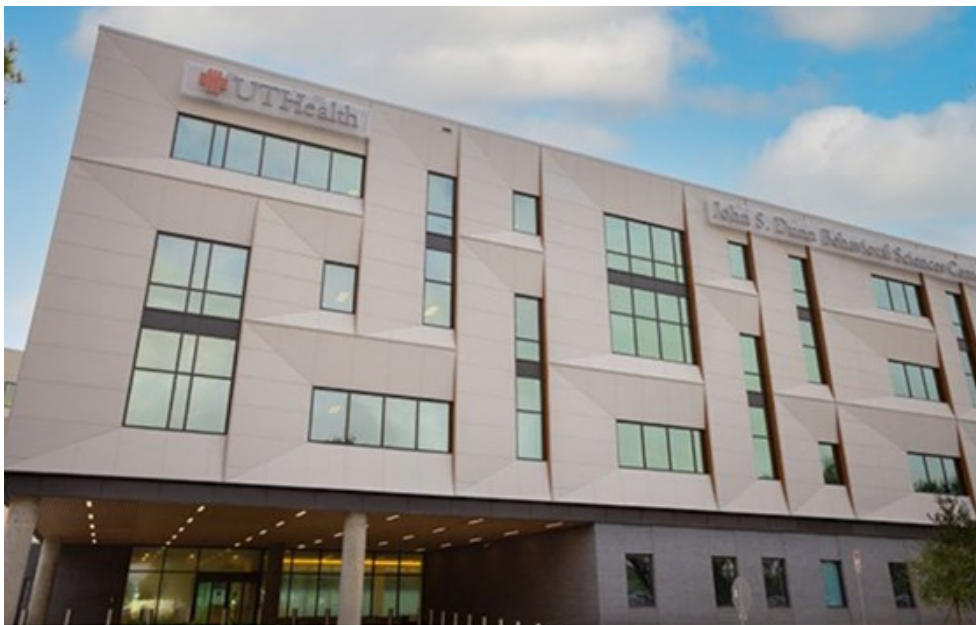
health clinical enterprise in the country.

The school will provide different levels of degree programs, and dual degree programs along with certifications, fellowships, and internships. The school will collaborate with the Cizik School of Nursing and enhance training and increase the workforce of mental health nurse practitioners. UTHealth Houston provides clinical training through John S. Dunn Behavioral Sciences Center and Harris County Psychiatric Center (HCPC) as well as 37 community clinics. Both of these hospitals together make up the largest academic behav-

ioral health complex in the country.

UTHealth Houston is highly involved in mental healthcare by having the largest number of academic psychiatric faculty members in the state and it also has major participants in the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (TCMHCC). The new school will have access to a diverse patient population and would offer learning opportunities for research on different fields of mental health. UTHealth Houston is seeking funding from the Texas Legislature in order to establish the new school.

Devanshi Majeethia,
School of Public Health



HIC Celebrates Its 5th Year!

The Healthcare Innovation Collaborative (HIC) celebrated its fifth year of hosting its annual Spring case competition on February 11, 2023. Students from the six UTHealth Houston schools were placed into interdisciplinary teams and began crafting their solutions 4 weeks prior to the event. This year, the theme was focused on healthcare disparities with a relevance to the Houston/Gulf Coast area. "We wanted to pick a topic that would allow teams to take multiple approaches to their solutions," said Trishna Parikh, President of the 2023 HIC Executive Team.

Teams first presented in front of faculty judges representing the six different UTHealth Houston schools and the Office of Technology Management.



The winning team developed a program called "Being Mobile for Moms" to address healthcare disparities related to maternal mortality. Similarly, the third place team created an app called "B.O.R.N." to help improve outcomes for minority



mothers and infants. The second place team created an app to help the elderly especially in disaster situations. The winning team of the People's Choice Awards with a 60 second video pitch developed the Period Pantry to address period poverty.

"Our group enjoyed HIC because it pushed us to consider not only how we wanted to change the healthcare system and address the healthcare disparities we were seeing, but also how we could realistically make this impact within real world constraints such as, limited time and budget," said Amaryllyis Fernandes, a member of the People's Choice Awards winning team.

Dr. Jeffery Woods, one of the co-founders of the organization, noted the limitless potential of the organization. "This event has

shown how powerful diverse thinking can be in healthcare innovation. Our goal is to continue expanding reach and building pathways to implementation so that students' robust solutions can become tomorrow's healthcare realities."

Congratulations to all of our winners!

Trishna Parikh,
McGovern Medical School



UTHealthCares Annual Teddy Bear Health Fair

UTHealthCares is a student-driven interprofessional collaborative designed to uniquely address the health concerns of Houston's underserved populations through substantive community engagement. Membership consists of students from each of the six UTHealth Houston schools. On February 18, 2023, the student organization held its annual health fair at the UT Physicians – Jensen Clinic. This was the first time the organization has had its fair in the past three years due to COVID concerns, and it was a smashing success!



The health fair consisted of different stations that promoted ownership of one's health. Patients checked in at the front desk before being invited to experience the different stations. The stations included collection of vitals, calculation of BMI, vision care, blood sugar monitoring, and dental care. If children were present, they were able to attend the Teddy Bear Clinic. At this station, kids learned about the importance of a healthy diet and regular physi-

cal activity. They got their vitals taken and even got a teddy bear at the end! COVID vaccines were available to all patients, along with information surrounding diet, exercise, and lifestyle modifications. A total of 111 patients were seen during the health fair and 25 of those patients got their COVID vaccine. UT Physicians intends to follow-up with all attendees to help establish a primary care provider.

The planning and organization that it took to ensure a successful fair should not go unnoticed. Alexandria Lawrence and Esther Soyebo are this year's co-directors of UTHealthCares. Along with eight other executive board members, this team worked tirelessly to plan and execute a high-quality health fair. Dr. LaTanya Love, Xochitl Olguin, and Marlon Stewart were some of the faculty and staff mentors who were crucial in guiding the executive board. They educated students on past fairs and helped engage the community through various forms of advertising. Funding for the fair was pro-



vided through UTHealth Houston and the Student InterCouncil (SIC). This fair would not be possible without their support.

UTHealthCares will hold its next community health fair in the Spring of 2024. After learning from the successes and obstacles of this year's fair, UTHealthCares hopes to continue providing excellent care to the Houston community.

Will Lavercombe and
Alexandria Lawrence,
McGovern Medical School



SIC's Volunteer Event: Houston Botanical Gardens

The SIC held a volunteer event at Houston Botanical Garden on Saturday, February 25th. There were sixteen volunteers from UTHHealth Houston SIC and the six schools, who participated in the event. The assignment was to weed the lawn at the entrance to the garden and prepare it for new plants to welcome in the spring. It was the first time most of the volunteers weeded, so the garden staff patiently offered hands-on weeding instructions.



According to the garden staff, although weeds are not harmful or invasive, they may cause succession and adversely affect oth-

er plants' ability to self-maintain. Staff instructed us to keep the public plantings on the lawn free from weeds in order to make the garden more accessible and inviting to the public.

During the weeding, volunteers had a great time. We passionately shared the experience of school majors and minors; discussed ways to improve student engagement for school events; and learned from each other on how to use tools for weeding correctly. After three hours of hard work, we magically transformed the weeded lawn into a vibrant one, leaving only the rose plantings. It was a big accomplishment!

Volunteers play a crucial role in maintaining and improving the health of the Houston Botanical Garden. Garden lovers can partici-

pate in a variety of gardening and maintenance activities at Houston Botanical Garden, including neighborhood beautification, wildflower seeding, and bed maintenance. The SIC recommends the Houston Botanical Garden as a place for volunteers to make a positive impact on our community.

Xiao (Lilac) Li,
School of Public Health



UTHealth Houston's First disABILITY Networking Event

On March 28, 2023, the Student InterCouncil collaborated with the UTHealth Houston's Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion in an unprecedented event with hopes to foster an inclusive environment for all students. Throughout the academic year, the SIC has collaborated with students and administration to develop a robust accommodations process to help students in need of assistance. These efforts culminated in an integrated panel and networking event moderated by SIC Member-at-Large, Chijindu Diokpa.



The dynamic session began with an interactive trivia game for attendees. Questions about pop culture, UTHealth Houston, and public health aspects of disability were fielded in order to assess the audience's perceptions. Between the audience questions, a panel of 504 coordinators and representatives from each of the six UTHealth Houston schools were present to answer questions about how they navigate disability. These questions were

submitted anonymously prior to the event and answered by panelists to demystify the often nebulous accommodations process. For students in the crowd who were in need of accommodations (or knew someone who could benefit from accommodations), instructions and advice were provided. At the end of the panel, one student exclaimed, "How do we get this information out to everyone? This was so helpful!"

Immediately after the panel, a joint vendor fair/networking session was held, with free food and refreshments provided. Attendees were encouraged to network and learn about different groups working to improve accessibility at the institution. Participants were given the opportunity to view ways in which disability could impact one's life and were offered resources for support.



Responses from a pre- and post-survey showed a very positive reception to the event, with an average rating of 9.55/10. Respondents enjoyed the interactive nature of the panel and the diverse perspectives present at the vendor fair. Furthermore, respondents showed a significant increase in administrative trust after attending the session.

This event was created to reassure students that help is available to them, if needed. Through increasing transparency of the accommodations process by giving students direct access to administration, SIC hopes that the event was a positive step toward ensuring the dignity and inclusion of all students.

Chijindu Diokpa,
McGovern Medical School

SIC's 12th Annual Spring Crawfish Boil!

The Student Intercouncil (SIC) and UTHealth Houston Auxiliary Enterprises hosted its 12th Annual Spring Crawfish Boil on April 5th, 2023, and the event was nothing short of a success. Despite the rain, over 890 people attended the event, held at the Cooley Center; which was more attendees compared to last year! Around 3,000 pounds of crawfish were cooked to perfection and served with potatoes, corn, and hotdogs.

ston schools, and the Spring Crawfish Boil is just one of the many events they organize throughout the year. The event gave students from different schools an opportunity to interact, network, and get to know each other outside of their classrooms. Students enjoyed their crawfish with an assortment of beverages, and lively music from a DJ. Students also



The event's success would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Auxiliary Services staff, SIC members, volunteers, and advisors. The SIC looks forward to organizing more events in the future that bring the UTHealth Houston community together and we hope to see everyone next year at the 13th annual crawfish boil.

Ruchira Gundlapally,
School of Dentistry



The SIC is committed to fostering a sense of community among students from all six UTHealth Hou-

got reusable straws, sunglasses, and/or koozies as a welcome gift for coming to the event.



Deans' Dinner Celebrates SIC & Scholarship Recipients

This year, the 2022-2023 SIC Deans' Dinner was held on the evening of April 19, 2023. Deans of all six UTHealth Houston Schools were invited to attend the evening celebration, highlighting the SIC and its accomplishments this past year, while also recognizing faculty and administrative support, graduating students, and scholarship recipients selected by the SIC Scholarship Committee.

During the dinner, SIC representatives reviewed accomplishments in the past year, such as the SIC 25th Annual Salutation, the 12th Annual Crawfish Boil, the Inaugural disABILITY Networking Event, Wellness Week and the return of in-person Sports Day, and the many SIC-funded events including UTHealthCares Teddy Bear Health Fair, the 5th Annual Healthcare Innovation Challenge, and the Healthcare Innovation Collaborative's 2nd annual, first in-person "So You Think You Can Innovate?" events.



Several students were also formally awarded SIC scholarships for their vast achievements, dedication, service, and leadership. Cem Dede (Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences) and

Jayanta Mondal (Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences) were awarded the SIC Academic Achievement Award in the amount of \$1,000 each for strong accomplishments. Olivia Morris (School of Public Health) and Seena Ounsinegad (McGovern Medical

School) were awarded the Toshi Nikaidoh Service Awards in the amount of \$1,000 each for their service and dedication. Sreepradha Sridharan (Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences) and John Biebighauser (McGovern Medical School) were awarded the Shohrae Hajibashi Memorial Leadership Awards in the amount of \$1,000 each for their leadership in their respective schools. The Thomas F. Burks Outstanding Leadership and Service Award was awarded to an SIC member who went above and beyond during the school year to contribute to SIC and UTHealth Houston as a whole. This honor was awarded to Ruchira Gundlapally (School of Dentistry) for her commitment and dedication to the Student Activities Council during her time in SIC, contributing greatly to the leadership and organization of Crawfish Boils and Wellness Weeks.

Lastly, the annual Dean's Dinner concluded with the current SIC Officers, congratulating the newly elected SIC Officers for the 2023-2024 academic year. Congratulations to our newest SIC President Chijindu Diokpa, Vice President Jordan Swan, Treasurer Jabria Pittman, Secretary Gloria Contreras, and Historian Akhila Parthasarathy. We know you all are bright and inspiring individuals and we cannot wait to see what the next year brings us!

Amber Chen,
McGovern Medical School



Apply for SIC Funding!

- Are you interested in receiving funding from SIC? Each year SIC helps make student-driven ideas come to life.
- SIC provides up to \$500 of funding available for inter-professional ideas at UTHealth Houston.
- Selected projects must benefit the student body and should be educational in nature. Projects should aim to enhance students' knowledge, educational experience and/or promote cultural exchange.



Link to the application here:



2022-2023 SIC Officers



President:
Kate Wall,
School of Public Health



Secretary:
Melissa Liu,
School of Dentistry



Treasurer:
Cem Dede,
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences



Vice President:
Jayanta Mondal,
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences



Historian:
Amber Chen,
McGovern Medical School

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What is the Student InterCouncil?

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) is the official UTHealth Houston student governance organization. It is a recognized forum of student opinion and the primary vehicle for student participation in the governance of UTHealth Houston.

The organization is comprised of three representatives from each of the six UTHealth Houston schools, three representatives from underrepresented student groups, and three representatives from international student constituencies.

The SIC contributes to student life at UTHealth Houston by participating in developing and implementing policies and procedures affecting students. SIC also provides funds to support other UTHealth Houston registered student organizations' special projects and represent student interests on external and internal committees. The SIC promotes communication and collaboration among the UTHealth Houston schools by the publication of the official SIC newsletter- *Student Pulse*, facilitating planning, and implementing activities that encompass all students across UTHealth Houston.

We are here to be your voice, so feel free to contact us anytime at sicgov@uth.tmc.edu.

2022-2023 SIC Representatives

2022-2023 Officers:

Katherine Wall (President)
Jayanta Mondal (Vice President)
Melissa Liu (Secretary)
Cem Dede (Treasurer)
Amber Chen (Historian)

McGovern Medical School:

Gloria Contreras
Clayton Culp
Jordan Swan

School of Dentistry:

Logan Bliss
Ruchira Gundlapally
Melissa Liu

Members at Large Representatives:

Chijindu Diokpa
Amber Chen
Katherine Wall

Graduate School of Biomedical Science:

Mary Fuentes
Joan Jacob
Pragya Sinha

International Student Representatives:

Cem Dede
Jayanta Mondal
Akhila Parthasarathy

School of Public Health:

Xiao (Lilac) Li
Ruchika Mahala
Devanshi Majeethia

School of Biomedical Informatics:

Halimat Ajose-Adeogun
Sharmeen Hamid
Jabria Pittman

School of Nursing:

Elnora Awatt
Jaren Salazar
Naomi Mata

