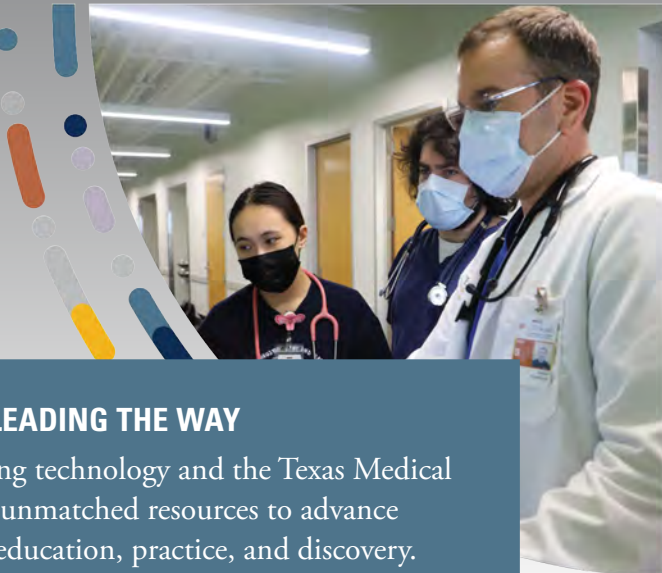


Cizik Nursing

CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING AT UTHealth HOUSTON



2023 | LEADING THE WAY

Leveraging technology and the Texas Medical Center's unmatched resources to advance nursing education, practice, and discovery.

 UTHealth[®] Houston
Cizik School of Nursing

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Greetings from



Dean Diane Santa Maria

We often speak of the “nursing journey.” The vast and varied options within the profession mean no two nursing journeys are exactly alike. At Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston, we pride ourselves on opening new paths and leading the way. In this issue of *Cizik Nursing*, you will read many examples of groundbreaking innovations in nursing education, practice, and research.

On the undergraduate level, our Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program was ranked No. 1 in Texas and tied for 16th nationally in the 2024 U.S. News & World Report ranking of more than 650 nursing schools. Our students not only learn from our exceptional faculty, they gain unmatched clinical experiences and opportunities for interprofessional collaboration.

On the graduate level, our psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner students benefit from unparalleled clinical opportunities at the new John S. Dunn Behavioral Sciences Center at UTHealth Houston, part of the largest academic mental health hospital in the nation. Also, our highly respected nurse anesthesia program just moved into a new state-of-the-art simulation lab where students can learn concepts in the classroom and then practice them in a simulated operating room with the latest high-tech manikin.

We are also pioneering ways to support practicing nurses as preceptors and by offering specialized continuing education opportunities. The new self-paced cardiovascular advanced practice series prepares nurse practitioners and physician assistants to take the new Certified Cardiovascular Knowledge Examination, which the American College of Cardiology® will begin offering in November.

Regardless of where our students are in their nursing journey, they must master evolving technology in every aspect of their work. That’s why, beginning in the Fall 2023 semester, we began integrating the Epic electronic health record system throughout our curriculum and into our simulation center. Meanwhile, faculty members Mahrokh “Mitzy” Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C, and Martina Gallagher, PhD, PMHNP-C, are leading national initiatives to establish guidelines for telehealth.

Technology is also interwoven into the school’s growing areas of research. For example, Seema Aggarwal, PhD, AGCNP-C, is testing use of a virtual reality gaming system to deliver outpatient stroke rehabilitation; Carina Katigbak, PhD, ANP-BC, is leading two technology-related studies in our Smart Apartment; and Emily Barr, PhD, CPNP-PC, is using her second Texas Development Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) grant to study providing home testing kits for sexually transmitted infections to youth living with HIV and exploring ways to facilitate participation in telehealth visits.

As with technology, public policy cannot be separated from health care. As health care professionals, we can and should influence policy — from health care systems to the U.S. Congress. UTHealth Houston’s current Quality Enhancement Project educates students at all six schools about health care policy and emphasizes the importance of engaging in the policymaking process. We are weaving health policy issues throughout our curriculum and challenging our students in thought-provoking interprofessional simulations that teach them what it’s like to be a struggling single parent, or a lawmaker working to improve health care access and equity.

These are just a few examples of how our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters are paving the way for the future of nursing and health care. It is my great privilege to work with this group of outstanding leaders as we educate and inspire the next generation of nurses and nurse scientists.



DIANE SANTA MARIA DrPH, MSN, RN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FSAHM, FAAN

DEAN

THE JANE AND ROBERT CIZIK DISTINGUISHED CHAIR
HUFFINGTON FOUNDATION ENDOWED CHAIR IN
NURSING EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Our Successful Students

Fall 2021 – Summer 2022

Enrollment

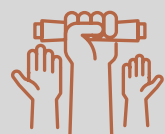


1,258

Degrees conferred

396 BSN **67** DNP

199 MSN **4** PhD



First-time pass rates 2022

BSN **91.55%** NCLEX

DNP **100%** ANCC, AACN, AANPCB

CRNA **100%** NBCRNA

MSN **94%-100%** VARIOUS
LICENSURE EXAMS



**BEST
COLLEGES**

U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

**NURSING (BSN) PROGRAMS
2024**

Top BSN Program in Texas

U.S. News ranks Cizik School of Nursing's program No. 1 in the state

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston topped all other undergraduate nursing programs in Texas in the 2024 U.S. News Best Colleges publication. Nationally, our BSN program tied for 16th place in the U.S. News & World Report ranking of more than 650 nursing schools. The program's position rose from 22nd last year.



"We are delighted that our undergraduate program has received national acclaim for excellence in educating the next generation of nurses," said Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN. "Our clinical partners recognize the value of a BSN degree from Cizik School of Nursing. So do our students, who benefit from rigorous academics and unmatched clinicals alongside low cost and plentiful scholarship opportunities that make a high-quality nursing education attainable."

"Part of what makes Cizik School of Nursing a top-20 school nationally is our continuous innovation to meet the needs of the nursing workforce and health care employers," said Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies Erica Yu, PhD, RN. "For example, we are incorporating use of the Epic educational system throughout our curriculum so that students graduate ready to work with electronic health records. We also recently created an elective in rehabilitation nursing and are piloting a program with local high schools to give students from underserved areas a head start on careers in health care."

U.S. News & World Report's BSN programs rankings for 2024 are based on surveys of top leaders at schools and departments of nursing. All ranked schools have bachelor's-level accreditation from either the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.



Two pathways to a BSN

New to nursing

The accelerated Pacesetter BSN track is an entry-to-practice option for students who want to become nurses. It is designed for students who have completed their first two years of prerequisite work at other accredited institutions, and for second-career students with academic degrees in other fields. During the 15-month program, students complete clinicals, skills labs, and nursing theory courses, and spend their final 16 weeks doing immersive clinical rotations. Students get to know faculty face to face in this full-time, four-semester program in which most work is in person with some online didactic content.



go.uth.edu/Pacesetter-BSN

Advancing education

The flexible RN-BSN track is designed for working registered nurses who have earned an associate's degree or diploma in nursing. Cizik School of Nursing's flexible program enables RNs to complete their BSN in two, three, or five semesters. Lectures are entirely online with in-person clinical hours in community health nursing.



go.uth.edu/RNtoBSN

LIGHT THE WAY FORWARD

At UTHealth Houston, our people work toward a better future — one where advances in research, education, and patient care save and improve lives. When our supporters bring their vision and generosity to this goal, they illuminate the path that leads to dreams becoming reality.

"I've always thought there are a lot of people who only need someone to help them just a little bit, just to say, 'I believe in you. I think you can do this.' That's my passion, to help someone."

—Betty Moreno



To help light the way forward,
please contact

**UTHealth Houston Office of Development
Estate and Gift Planning**

713-500-3200 | UTHealthLegacyGift.org

Link to story on website
go.uth.edu/MorenoGift



Epic Education

Students learn to use electronic health record system



If knowledge is power, then patient information gives health professionals the power to improve quality, efficiency, and outcomes. Cizik School of Nursing students at all levels are learning how to harness this power through hands-on practice with one of the most widely used electronic health record (EHR) systems.

The school began incorporating the Epic Playground into its undergraduate and graduate courses during the Fall 2023 semester. This training environment uses fictional patient data to familiarize students with the Epic EHR, which is used by many hospitals and clinics in the Houston area and across the nation. McGovern Medical School and other UTHealth Houston schools also use the Epic Playground, enabling robust interprofessional simulations.

Assistant Professors Sheryl Malone-Thomas, DNP, FNP-BC, and Mahrokh “Mitzy” Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C, spent several days this summer in the Simulation and Clinical Performance Laboratory conducting “train-the-trainer” courses for faculty. Undergraduate students then received training early in the fall semester. Going forward, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students will get their first taste of using the EHR in their second semester.

Malone-Thomas became an Epic superuser when she served as chief nurse of the HIV, STD, and viral hepatitis prevention unit of the Houston Health Department. In addition to using existing fictional patients when teaching nursing students, she can create new ones in the system.

“I love electronic health records because they give me everything at my fingertips,” said Malone-Thomas, who continues to practice in health department clinics.

“It’s a real-world experience. When our students learn it in school, they have to spend less time learning it on the job, which makes them more marketable.”

—Sheryl Malone-Thomas, DNP, FNP-BC
Assistant Professor

Information and health care technologies represent one of the competency domains set out in the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials, and integration of Epic throughout the curriculum will help the school meet those requirements and prepare students to succeed after graduation, Kobeissi said. The Epic Playground will be phased into the graduate-level nurse practitioner tracks, beginning with an introduction in the physical exam and differential diagnosis course, she added.

EHRs enable health professionals to get a comprehensive view of a patient’s medical history and status, from vaccination records to test results. They can also prompt users to complete compliance steps, suggest relevant medical literature, and facilitate sharing of secured messages among providers or with patients and pharmacies. Patients can access their own health information securely online through portals like MyUTHealthHouston, an Epic implementation developed for the university’s clinics and hospitals.



Secure video conferencing features within Epic proved invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic, Malone-Thomas said.

"It helped me a great deal to have an EHR, because it provided more security," she noted. "I felt a level of comfort being able to see my patients."

Each clinic, hospital, or health system can customize Epic to meet its specific needs, so students will undoubtedly have a different experience when they begin work than they did in the classroom.

However, even if their employer uses a different system altogether, familiarity with an EHR will significantly shorten their learning curve.

"The vast majority of hospitals in the Texas Medical Center use Epic, and they are thrilled that our students will graduate with extensive exposure to the EHR before hitting their doors," said Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN.

"Ultimately, when you get to leverage real-world technology in the education setting, it really helps to support our students."

—Mitzy Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C
Assistant Professor





mission operates 23 state-owned facilities that are part of the state hospital system. The state hospital system includes a youth residential treatment center, with campus in Wichita Falls and two campuses in Dallas. The system provides a variety of inpatient psychiatric services.

Idalia Viard (right) with her preceptor, Cizik School of Nursing alumna Annie Benjamin, MSN, PMHNP, at the John S. Dunn Behavioral Sciences Center at UTHealth Houston.

Rare Opportunities in Mental Health

PMHNP students learn in new, state-of-the-art hospital

The chance to learn in the nation's largest academic psychiatric hospital made Cizik School of Nursing the top choice for Idalia Viard, BSN, RN.

Viard started her studies to become a psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) in her hometown, at New York University. When she and her fiancé began thinking about a future family, she researched programs in less crowded locales.

"I heard really good things about the program at Cizik School of Nursing, and it's affordable," said Viard, who transferred to the school when she moved to Houston in January 2021.

Her timing turned out to be perfect. She and classmate Nneoma "Cindy" Pustejovsky will both graduate in December 2023 with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN)* on the PMHNP track, and they were among the first cohort to have clinical rotations in the new John S. Dunn Behavioral Sciences Center at UTHealth Houston.

The state-of-the-art psychiatric hospital and the nearby UTHealth Houston Harris County Psychiatric Center make up the UTHealth Houston Behavioral Sciences Campus with a combined total of 538 beds. The new facility is owned by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and operated by UTHealth Houston. It is also supported, in part, by a \$25 million commitment to the university from the John S. Dunn Foundation.

The center offers a continuum of comprehensive services, and Pustejovsky got a close look at how the process starts. Her clinical rotation in the Spring 2023 semester built on her professional experience as an intake nurse at a behavioral health hospital.

"The great thing about the Dunn Center is it's a teaching hospital," said Pustejovsky, who previously earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) through the RN-BSN track at Cizik School of Nursing. "I got great feedback from the attending physician, and he was very welcoming of questions."

Viard's rotation came during the Summer 2023 semester, and she benefited from the rare opportunity to work in a competency restoration unit. There, patients who have been accused of crimes but deemed incompetent to stand trial are admitted for three to six months for intensive treatment.

"I don't think I would get to see this in any other setting," Viard said. "Unfortunately, when you get involved with the legal system, there aren't that many resources for you. The patients are really sick when they first come in, and there's an urgency to get them better."

Viard hopes to work in a small practice after graduation as she continues to seek a variety of experiences in mental health care — something she advises other nurses to do if they are considering stepping up to a PMHNP.



"I heard really good things about the program at Cizik School of Nursing, and it's affordable."

—Idalia Viard, BSN, RN

Pustejovsky works at the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and hopes to advance her career there after completing her degree.

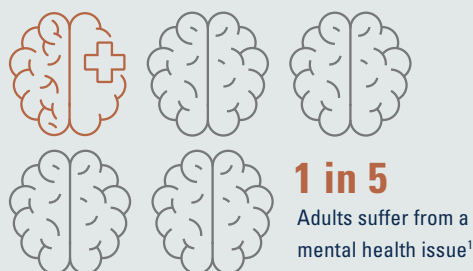
"We have a huge population of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, and a large subset of female veterans, many of whom haven't received any type of medication or the support they need," Pustejovsky said. She hopes to work with and advocate for women, who must often wait longer for admission since the patient population is overwhelmingly male and the hospital has no private rooms.

She agrees that anyone contemplating becoming a PMHNP should first seek out opportunities to work in psychiatric nursing and build strong coping skills and a good support system.

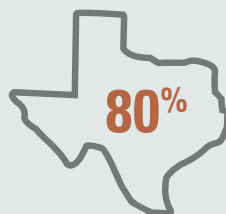
"If you are passionate about mental health, that passion will help push you through to be successful in this program," she said.

*Because the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties and other professional nursing organizations are committed to moving all entry-level nurse practitioner education to the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree by 2025, Cizik School of Nursing's PMHNP program now admits students to the DNP level only.

Unmet needs



¹National Institutes on Mental Health and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Texas counties with fewer than one mental health clinician for every 30,000 residents²

²Texas Department of State Health Services, 2022

Learn more about the PMHNP program at Cizik School of Nursing.



go.uth.edu/PMHNP



New Nurse Practitioner Traineeships

\$2.6 million, 4-year federal grant funds 25 annually

More than half of Texas counties are designated as medically underserved areas, and a new federal grant will enable Cizik School of Nursing to prepare more nurse practitioners to provide primary and mental health care in communities where it is needed most.

The four-year, \$2.6 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will provide financial support to 25 nurse practitioner students annually. The award also will enable the school to expand curriculum, strengthen academic-clinical partnerships in underserved rural and urban areas, and provide professional development for preceptors and faculty.

"Many health departments and clinics in underserved areas were not able to host our students during the pandemic," said project director and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Susan Ruppert, PhD, FNP-C, ANP-BC, FAAN.

"Under normal circumstances, a large proportion of our students would go to work in such settings, but fewer have done so since 2021. This grant will give us the resources to support our students, clinical partners, and faculty to expand access to health care for these underserved populations."

The goal of the project, "Augmenting Teaching and Learning for APRN Student Primary Care Training (AT LAST)," is to increase the number of nurse practitioners prepared to provide primary, mental health, and substance use disorder care in medically underserved areas. Efforts will focus primarily on the nine counties within the Houston metropolitan area and secondarily on rural areas throughout Texas.

“Houston is the fourth largest city in the nation, and there are many underserved and under-resourced communities within Harris County. Furthermore, as soon as you step over the county line and lose access to the Harris Health System, resources drop considerably.”

—Susan Ruppert, PhD, FNP-C, ANP-BC, FAAN
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies

Faculty and staff worked long hours to develop a compelling grant proposal during a short response window. Contributors included project co-directors Kathleen L. Siders, DNP, RN, FNP-C, and Latarsha S. Cheatham, DNP, RN, FNP-BC, co-directors of the DNP program; family nurse practitioner (FNP) track coordinator Kala A. Christopherson, DNP, RN, FNP-C; psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) track coordinator Kelly D. Kearney, DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC; and adult/gerontology primary care nurse practitioner (AGPCNP) track coordinator LaDawna Goering, DNP, RN, ANP-BC, ADM.

“The HRSA award is a wonderful opportunity for the school and our nurse practitioner students,” said Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN. “All the credit and congratulations go to the amazing team who pulled out all the stops to secure this grant.”

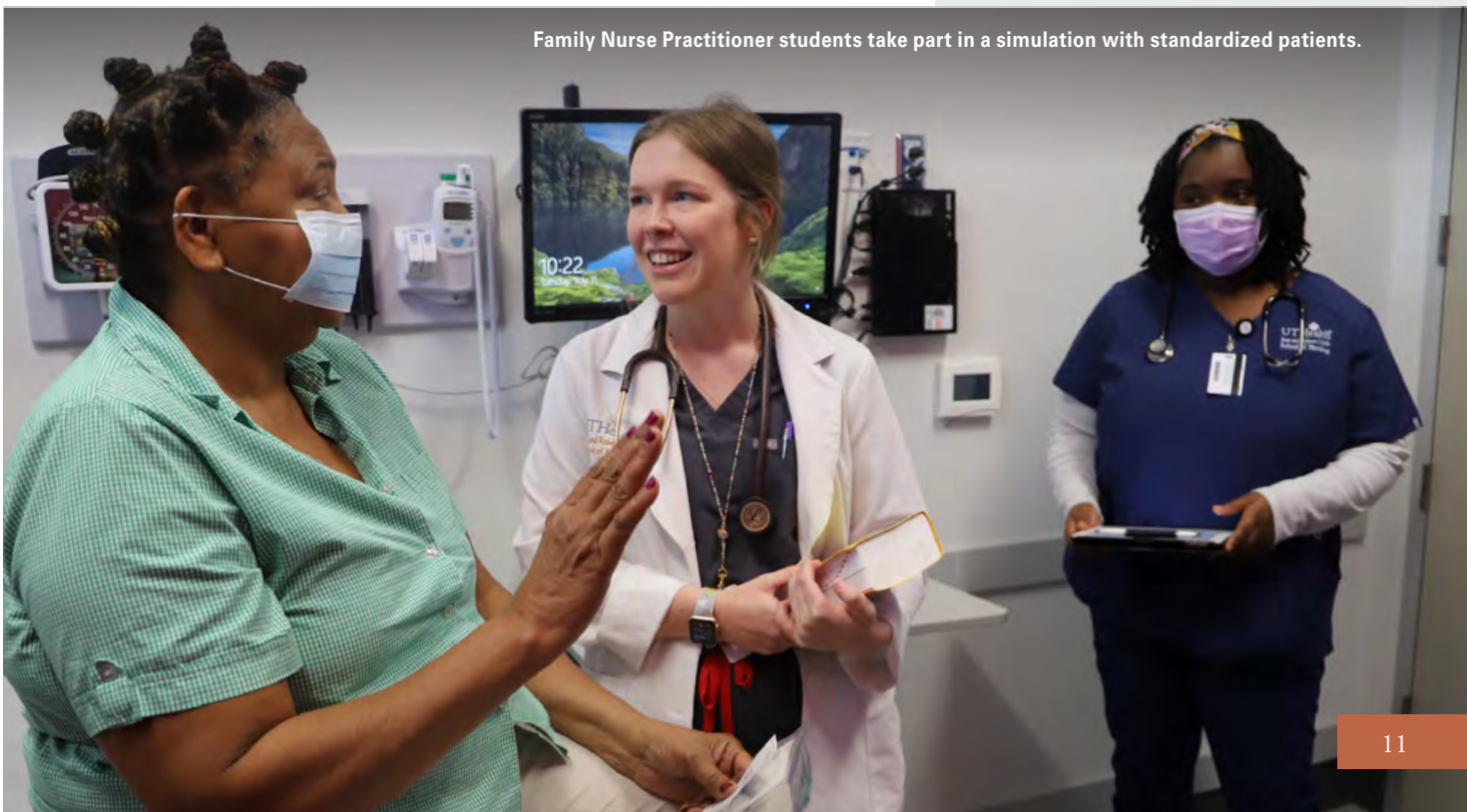
The award will fund traineeships and stipends for eight full-time and 17 part-time student trainees annually in the FNP, PMHNP, and AGPCNP tracks of the DNP program who are interested in working in rural/urban underserved areas. Full-time students may apply during their first or subsequent semesters, with awards granted the following semester.

Continued on page 10

Features of the AT LAST project

- **Incorporating** the newly developed “Vulnerable Populations” course into the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) curriculum.
- **Providing** clinical immersion experiences in underserved primary care settings for 360 of the 1,020 clinical hours required for the DNP program.
- **Developing** faculty workshops and online continuing professional development activities, including courses that can prepare faculty, preceptors, and other advanced practice nurses to take exams to become a Certified Rural Health Clinic Professional (CRHCP) or a Certified Addictions Registered Nurse-Advanced Practice.
- **Establishing** an advisory council comprising faculty leadership and academic-clinical partners.

Family Nurse Practitioner students take part in a simulation with standardized patients.





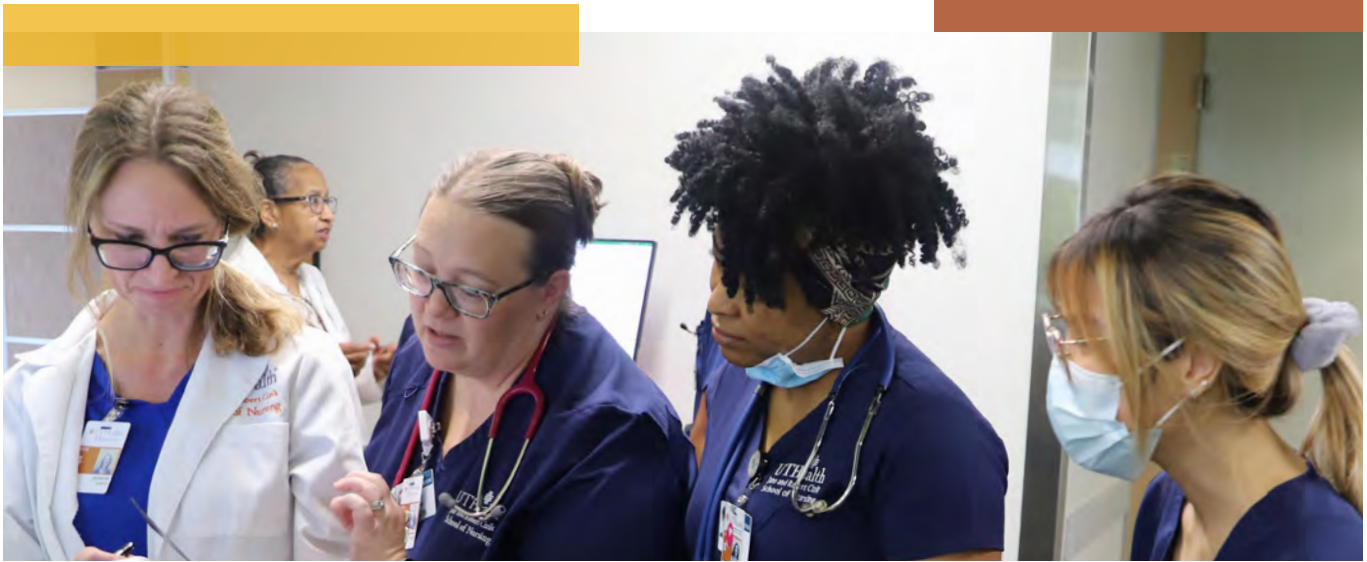
Part-time students may apply prior to the last 12 months of the program to receive financial support as they complete their clinical requirements. The first round was awarded for the Fall 2023 semester.

"We live in the most diverse city in the nation and work in the Texas Medical Center, which is home to some of the most advanced and innovative health care resources in the world. However, a fifth of Harris County residents do not have health insurance, and language and cultural barriers can also limit access to care," Santa Maria said. "This HRSA award will prepare our DNP students to help fill growing health care gaps in Southeast Texas and across the state."

Learn about educational grants aimed at preparing students from underserved high schools for health care careers, supporting nursing preceptors, developing a simulation of a busy NICU, and more.



go.uth.edu/EdGrants



The need by the numbers

Sources: Texas Department of State Health Services and HRSA



254
COUNTIES IN TEXAS



130
TEXAS COUNTIES DESIGNATED
AS MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED



172
TEXAS COUNTIES
DESIGNATED AS RURAL



211
TEXAS COUNTIES WITHOUT AN
ADVANCED PRACTICE PSYCHIATRIC/
MENTAL HEALTH NURSE



New Nurse Anesthesia Simulation Center

High-tech and hands-on

A new home means more space for students and the latest in simulation technology for the nurse anesthesia program at Cizik School of Nursing.

A few hundred students apply for available seats each year in the highly competitive program. Registered nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing or graduate degree can earn a Doctor of Nursing Practice in Nurse Anesthesia in 36 months. The renovated, larger space was designed specifically for nurse anesthesia education and supports increased enrollment to 30 students for the class of 2026 cohort, who began their studies in May.

"I'm very excited that students have a new, state-of-the-art simulation lab to practice the education they have received in the classroom," said Nurse Anesthesia Program Director Haley DeLaGarza, DNP, CRNA. "They will be exceptionally well prepared to continue honing their acumen during clinical rotations."

The new 2,527-square-foot nurse anesthesia space includes a hybrid classroom and a debriefing area in addition to an operating room equipped with the latest high-fidelity manikin. Clustering the spaces together means students can immediately move from

didactic learning in the classroom to hands-on experiences in the simulation lab, said DeLaGarza.

The lifelike simulation manikin is connected to Wi-Fi, enabling faculty to monitor and manipulate simulations allowing for real-world practice of an infinite number of complex cases.

"We practice basic anesthesia principles in simulation, but we also spend time with high-risk, low-frequency anesthetic events. Some of the scenarios we simulate don't happen frequently, but when they occur, you have to react quickly to assure a good patient outcome," DeLaGarza said.

Technology is an important tool in nurse anesthesia education, but the dedication and expertise of faculty are the driving forces to the sustained student success at Cizik School of Nursing, she added. In the past 12 years, 100% of students have passed the National Certification Examination (NCE). These results far exceed the national

pass rate in 2022 of 83.4%, according to the National Board of Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists.

"We admit students we feel can be successful, and we spend a great deal of time supporting and nurturing them along the way," DeLaGarza said. "These students could be taking care of our children, our parents, or one of us someday."

Nurse Anesthesia by the numbers



100%
of recent graduates
employed within
six months
of completion



100%
three-year
NCE first-time
pass rate

Policy in Practice

New program prepares students for advocacy

Nurses, doctors, dentists, public health researchers, and other health professionals choose their fields because they care about patients, not necessarily politics. However, politics — and health care policy — are facts of life and work.

UTHealth Houston's current Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) aims to prepare students to understand and navigate politics and policies so they can advocate not only for patients at the bedside but for improvements to health care systems.

Universities are required to implement QEPs to maintain accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Projects must enhance students' learning and be impactful, explained Francine Snow, DrPH, MSN, RN, an assistant professor in the Department of Graduate Studies and Cizik School of Nursing's representative on the Campus-Wide Humanities & Ethics Program. A proposal developed over several years by the program, "Health Care Policy for Health Professionals (HP²)," was chosen from among several topics as the QEP to be implemented 2021-2026.

"Public policy is not necessarily in the DNA of every nursing student or medical student," Snow said. "We are focused on healing and probably didn't take an elective in political science."

Health care policy is a timely but unusual topic for a QEP, said Sandra McKay, MD, an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston. HP² follows the university's previous QEP on ethics education, a proposal also developed by the program. Addressing policy issues also helps satisfy competency requirements of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing Essentials, Snow noted.

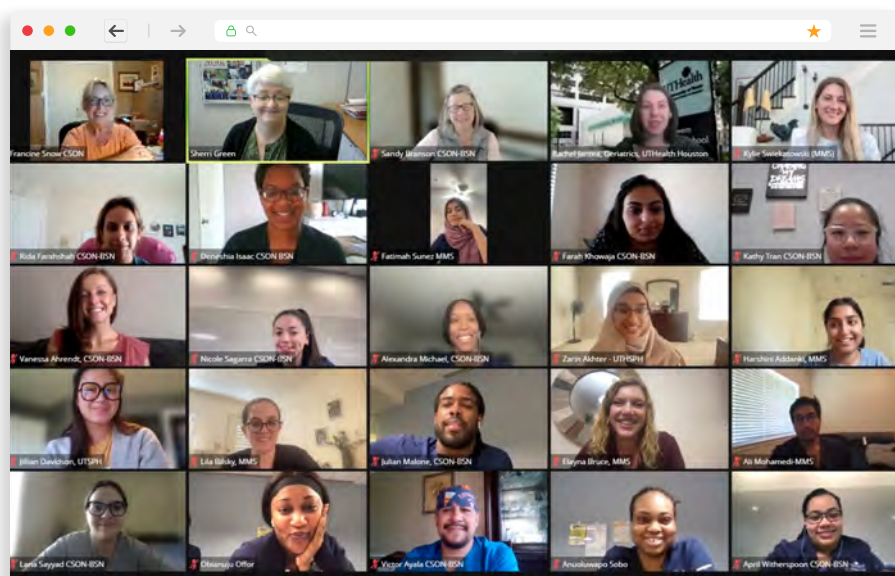
McKay and Angela Gomez, EdD, MBA, MS, became co-directors of HP² after the original lead, Rebecca Lunstroth, JD, MA, retired as the medical school's director of administration and ethics education.

The QEP incorporates several specific learning opportunities, and Cizik School of Nursing has been at the forefront of rolling them out. For example, Assistant Professor Riza Mauricio, PhD, RN, took the lead on restarting Community Action Poverty Simulations after the pandemic. The simulations are now offered each semester for students in all six schools. The nursing school also piloted Civics 101 with incoming undergraduate and master's level students, and the asynchronous course is now part of the orientation process for all Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students.

Nursing students have made up more than a third of the participants in the university's Virtual Interprofessional Policy Simulations, a collaboration between the QEP and the UTHealth Houston Center for Interprofessional Collaboration, Snow noted. More than 1,500 students from all six schools have completed the simulations since March 2022. Students are assigned to various roles in the policy process, portraying representatives of government, industry, health care, and community organizations with differing viewpoints and priorities.

Health Policy Forums, another element of the QEP, have addressed issues such as lobbying and the outcomes of recent Texas legislation. One focused specifically on legislative issues that affect nursing.

Students from all UTHealth Houston schools participate in a virtual simulation in which they are charged with developing Medicare policy proposals.



“We get them to try to basically fix Medicare. It gets them to think at a higher level with a collaborative approach.”

–Sandra McKay, MD
Associate Professor,
McGovern Medical School
at UTHealth Houston

This fall, McKay is piloting the asynchronous Advocacy 101 module for graduate students. “Most health care professionals are very familiar with advocating for their patients. We teach that in nursing, medicine, and dentistry,” she said. “We don’t think about the higher level of advocacy in education, public awareness, the legislature, or community engagement.” McKay will require her students in the medical school to complete the module, then she will employ a flipped classroom approach to explore the topics presented.

In addition to specific activities such as these, the QEP encourages faculty to incorporate public policy concepts and questions throughout the curriculum.

“I bring up policy in every course. I figure out some way of bringing that in so that students realize that policy is something they need to be involved in,” said Robert Coghlan, PhD, MSN, FNP, an assistant professor in the Department of Graduate Studies at Cizik School of Nursing.

Coghlan earned his doctoral degree in political science and participates in many of the QEP activities. He encourages students to read the text of laws and court rulings instead of relying on media interpretations. He also notes that health professionals can often have the greatest influence on policy between legislative sessions when committees conduct hearings and administrative agencies write the rules that implement laws.

“By the time the legislature is in session, the work is probably already done,” he said.

As Coghlan indicated, educating students about public policy has long been a priority at Cizik School of Nursing, especially within the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) curriculum. For example, Jennifer Thorpe, DNP, RN, spent part of her last semester in Spring 2023 helping advocate for requiring disability education for all health professions students. Her mentor, Allison Edwards, DrPH, MS, RN, is vice president of the Texas Board of Nursing. Another recent alumna, Aastha Krebs, DNP, PMHNP, was one of the school’s Graduate Archer Fellows and developed a federal policy proposal for eliminating the 190-day limit on inpatient psychiatric services.

With the COVID-19 pandemic laying bare many of the inequities in health care systems, Snow believes there’s no time like the present to get involved in public policy.

“We want every graduate to leave better equipped with knowledge about health policy and how it’s made and changed in the United States, and poised to engage at whatever level they feel comfortable,” Snow said.



UTHealth Houston students take on the roles of financially struggling families in a poverty simulation.

“We don’t want someone else speaking for us in Austin. We want to speak for ourselves.”

–Robert Coghlan, PhD, MSN, FNP
Assistant Professor

The Sky's the Limit

**Men weigh in on diverse
opportunities in nursing**

"I am so privileged to be able to work with some of the most capable, intelligent, and driven people in the world every day, and we're working together on a mission that I personally think is humankind's most noble undertaking."

—Colin Hills, BSN, RN (Class of 2020)
Health Maintenance Systems Operations Specialist
KBR contractor at NASA



The ratio of men to women in the nursing profession has remained stubbornly low for decades, but male faculty and alumni of Cizik School of Nursing see that changing.

"To solve the nursing shortage, we need to attract people of all genders to the field," said Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN. "We must break down any lingering perceptions or barriers that discourage anyone from considering a nursing career."

Long gone are the days when nurses' uniforms included stiff white hats, and men interviewed for this article perceive no disadvantages based on their gender. Yet waning stereotypes still exist and can cut both ways.

"Male nurse" characters have tended to provide bumbling comic relief on TV and in film, noted Lance Edwards, BSN, RN, a 2021 graduate. He sees retiring such inaccurate caricatures as one step toward eliminating any lingering stigma. "The way the media portrays the roles of both women and men has a significant influence on how people perceive gender roles and expectations in society," he said.

A London native, Edwards was a psychologist before immigrating to Houston with his Texan wife. He counseled teens and their families at the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department before becoming a nurse and now works in the emergency department (ED) of a local hospital.

The ratio of male nurses to female nurses is more evenly split in EDs, noted 2020 graduate Colin Hills, BSN, RN. He worked in a hospital ED before a colleague suggested he apply for a job as a KBR, Inc., contractor at NASA. As a health maintenance systems operations specialist, Hills develops health-related processes and procedures for the International Space Station and will soon provide support for the Artemis moon missions as well.

When he worked in the ED, Hills observed some of his colleagues experiencing challenges common to women in almost any line of work. "I used to get mistaken for a physician all the time, and I never saw one of my female colleagues get mistaken for a physician," Hills said.

Conversely, Edwards notes that very occasionally a patient will ask for a female nurse. "I have been told by both patients and patient families that they had been skeptical of men in nursing and their ability to demonstrate caring and compassion, but I have had the privilege of changing these perceptions," he said.

Nurse anesthesia is another specialty in which men are more likely to pursue careers. Assistant Professor Peter Slivinski, DNP, CRNA, earned his BSN at Cizik School of Nursing and worked in local hospitals for several years before returning for his graduate studies and then teaching in the school's highly regarded nurse anesthesia program.

"I imagine with the ever-changing economy, more and more men will go into nursing as they see it as a stable profession."

—Peter Slivinski, DNP, CRNA
Assistant Professor

Stability is one factor that drew Hills to nursing, along with the ability to grow throughout a health care career. Previously, he had worked in prehospital roles as an emergency medical technician and with wilderness search and rescue teams but found opportunities for advancement limited in that field.

"Being a nurse doesn't necessarily mean pulling five shifts a week on a med/surg floor your entire life if that's not what you want. You can make nursing whatever you need it to be," Hills said. "Nursing is a hugely rewarding career that will allow you to build a meaningful life, whatever that means to you."

All agree with alumnus Brandon McNulty, MSN, AGACNP-BC, RNFA, that they are observing more men in nursing scrubs. McNulty is chair of Cizik School of Nursing's inaugural "Men in Nursing" group.

"I know a lot of men who are going into nursing, and I feel it is exponentially increasing every year," McNulty said.





Colin Hills

"If you have the heart, the knowledge, and the drive to work in health care, being a nurse is one of the most rewarding career paths you can choose."

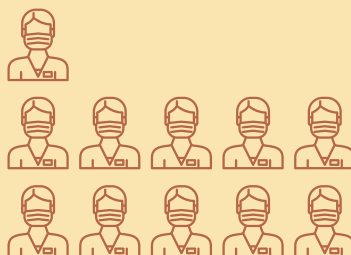
—Brandon McNulty, MSN,
AGACNP-BC, RNFA

His career path illustrates one of the factors attracting people of all types to nursing — the many and varied avenues and opportunities available to nurses. McNulty has worked in a neurotrauma intensive care unit, earned his Master of Science in Nursing to become an adult/gerontology acute care nurse practitioner, switched to cardiothoracic surgery, and is now a surgical nurse practitioner in a head and neck surgery unit at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.



**Male nurses
in the U.S.**

11.9%



Daniel Arellano, PhD, ACNP-BC, FNP-BC, works at MD Anderson full time as a nurse practitioner in the ICU, and he teaches part time as an assistant professor at Cizik School of Nursing. He is also occasionally deployed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as part of a Disaster Medical Assistance Team.

"The nursing profession is so broad with so many different options for people to pursue," Arellano said. "It's a great opportunity to make a difference in someone else's life and to provide care that truly can't be provided by any other profession."

These professionals agree that anyone considering a career in nursing — regardless of their gender identity — should wholeheartedly assess the many opportunities nursing offers.

For more information about
Cizik School of Nursing's alumni-led
"Men in Nursing" group,
contact Senior Development Coordinator
Whitney Lundberg at

Whitney.N.Lundberg@uth.tmc.edu.

**Cizik School of Nursing
male students**

15.7%



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and UTHealth Houston Fact Book, 2023

Starck Honored at UN

**Dean emerita, alumna named
Nurses With Global Impact**

Dean Emerita Patricia L. Starck, Dean Diane Santa Maria, and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Cathy Rozmus at the United Nations.

Cizik School of Nursing leaders past and present converged on the United Nations in New York City on Friday, May 12, 2023, to celebrate Dean Emerita Patricia Starck, PhD, RN, FAAN. She and alumna Margaret Moss, PhD, JD, RN, FAAN, were among 13 people honored by Nurses With Global Impact, Inc. (NWGI) during the International Nurses Day event at the United Nations.

Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Cathy Rozmus, PhD, RN, FAAN, nominated Starck for her work in developing the documentary film "Caring Corrupted: The Killing Nurses of the Third Reich." Rozmus accompanied Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN, and former dean Lorraine Frazier, PhD, RN, FAAN, to the ceremony. Frazier, a Cizik School of Nursing alumna, is now the dean of the Columbia University School of Nursing in New York City.

"Dr. Patricia Starck is a nursing treasure," said NWGI Executive Director Patricia Sayers, DNP, RN. "We want the world to know about the film. This documentary should be seen in every school of nursing worldwide. The bioethical messages of this work are timeless and essential."

Production of the 56-minute film grew out of Starck's interest in rehabilitation and lifelong research focus on the alleviation of physical and psychological pain. Her mentor, Viktor Frankl, MD, PhD, was a Jewish psychiatrist and neurologist who developed logotherapy as a rehabilitation method after surviving the Auschwitz death camp. Logotherapy is a future-focused approach that helps people find meaning in life.

Her work with Frankl inspired her to lead a team of scholars to produce "Caring Corrupted." This cautionary tale depicts the corruption of nursing ethics during the Nazi era. It is widely used as a teaching tool and is viewed by all Cizik School of Nursing students as a part of orientation.

Starck shared the celebration with Moss, one of her former students, who is an expert in global indigenous health. Moss worked with other Native American nurses to author the text "American Indian: Health and Nursing." She is now director of the First Nations House of Learning and an associate professor at the University of British Columbia, which nominated her.

"In her 30 years as dean, Cizik School of Nursing arguably benefited the most from Dean Starck's 'global impact,'" Santa Maria said. "Our dean emerita has helped an incalculable number of patients, and her influence inspired Margaret Moss and thousands of other students to make a positive difference in the world."

NWGI sponsors the International Nurses Day event at the United Nations annually to commemorate the birth of Florence Nightingale, a founder of modern nursing. The organization recognizes and honors nurses who demonstrate exemplary practice by impacting the global delivery of health care, celebrating their work and supporting their programs.



Three deans and two Nurses With Global Impact. Pictured (L-R): Lorraine Frazier, dean of the Columbia University School of Nursing and former dean of Cizik School of Nursing; Dean Emerita Patricia Starck; alumna Margaret P. Moss; and Dean Diane Santa Maria.

Houston's Top Students and Nurses

Two students, three faculty honored

For the second year in a row, two of the three scholarships awarded citywide through the Houston Chronicle's Salute to Nurses program went to Cizik School of Nursing students.

Congratulations to three faculty members at Cizik School of Nursing who were honored as among the city's Top 200 nurses by the Houston Chronicle.



Pacesetter BSN students Jessica Carillo and Constanza Veronica-Moreno



Juane K. Alexander, MSN, RN; Meagan Whisenant, PhD, RN; and Higinio Fernández-Sánchez, PhD, RN



Read more at
go.uth.edu/Salute-to-nurses2023



Abbey Kaler



John Byrne, PhD, and Fiona Smith

PhD Scholars

Two students take home prestigious awards

Abbey Kaler, MSN, APRN, FNP-C, was named the 2023 Extraordinary Healer by CURE® magazine, and Fiona Smith, MS, BSN, RN, became the second Cizik School of Nursing student to receive the Graduate Student Brain Awareness Award from the Neurosciences Research Center at McGovern Medical School at UTHouston.



Read more at
go.uth.edu/Kaler-Smith-Awards

Diaz-Lewis Lecture

Intimate partner violence and Latino immigrants

Acculturative stress weighs heavy among the many factors that contribute to intimate partner violence experienced by Latino immigrants, said Rosa Gonzalez-Guarda, PhD, MPH, CPH, FAAN. Nurses can help by working to break down barriers of inequity, she added.



Rosa Gonzalez-Guarda with Carla Diaz-Lewis



Read more at
go.uth.edu/Diaz-Lewis2022



Shannon N. Zenk with Dean Diane Santa Maria

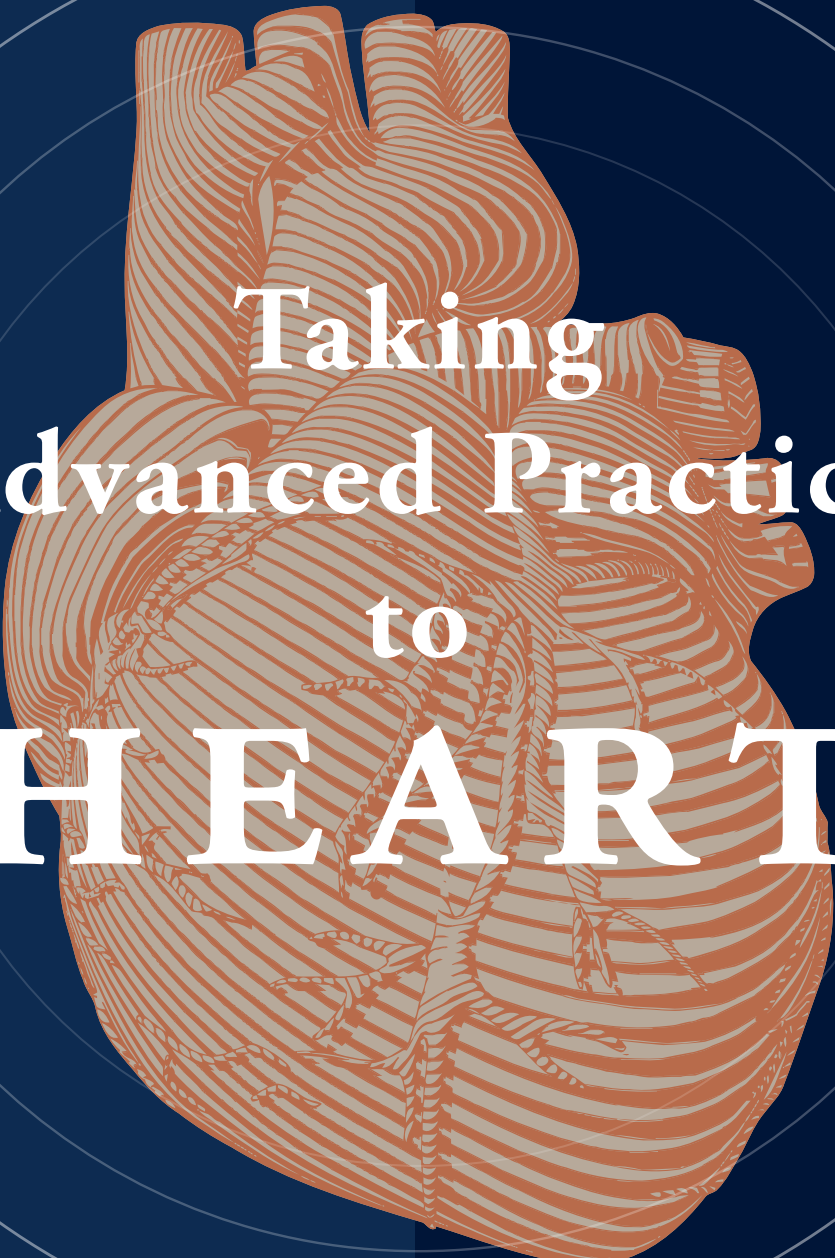
Jane and Robert Cizik Lecture

A Nurse Researcher's Perspective

Nurses' daily interactions with patients inside and outside of clinical settings make them uniquely positioned to address the most pressing and persistent health care challenges of our time, said National Institute of Nursing Research Director Shannon N. Zenk, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN, during her keynote speech at the 2023 Jane and Robert Cizik Lecture and Reception.



Read more at
go.uth.edu/Cizik-Lecture-2023



Taking Advanced Practice to HEART

**Professional development series prepares APPs
for cardiovascular certification**

A new cardiovascular certification exam will debut this fall for advanced practice providers (APPs), and Cizik School of Nursing is offering an innovative self-paced series of courses to prepare test takers for success.

Nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) can earn professional development contact hours while getting ready to take the Certified Cardiovascular Knowledge Examination (CCKE) offered by the American College of Cardiology®. The test will be offered for the first time in November 2023 and again in Spring 2024.

“The cardiologists in the Houston area are really driving this. They want to have advanced practice registered nurses who can hit the tarmac running,” said Cizik School of Nursing Professor Jessica Coviello, DNP, ANP-BC, associate dean of faculty development. Coviello is the Patricia L. Starck/PARTNERS Endowed Professor in Nursing and is widely published in the field of cardio-oncology.

Tonya Page, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC, is director of advanced practice providers at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center. She began planning for a cardiovascular program in January 2020. She was then an assistant professor at Cizik School of Nursing and was leading the adult/gerontology acute care nurse practitioner track in the Master of Science in Nursing program. Like so many other things, COVID-19 sidelined the project.

Page and Coviello see gaps when it comes to preparing NPs to work in cardiovascular units. New practitioners may complete clinical fellowships with little exposure to the needed didactic content, or they may require a long onboarding period to learn the specialty.

“Creating this robust cardiology training program will be helpful not only for institutions of higher education, but also for hospitals and health care organizations,” Page said.

The first series kicked off in February 2023 with a lecture by Mary-Ann Cyr, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC, a senior lecturer at Yale University School of Nursing and a surgical critical care advanced practice nurse at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut. The first 13 students got a general overview of cardiovascular care through 12 three-hour sessions. They participated virtually in real time or watched the recordings to earn 38 contact hours of nursing continuing professional development.* Recorded presentations will soon be available through Canvas Catalog for NPs and PAs to complete asynchronously at their own pace.

“We are planning to launch the second series of 10 two-hour courses this fall,” Coviello said. “These sessions will dig into specialty areas such as heart failure, congenital heart disease, and cardio-oncology.”

The new self-paced series can provide the didactic foundation for nurses new to the cardiology field or a refresher and best-practices update for experienced cardiovascular nurses. The cost for the first series is \$720, and the second is \$600. Advanced practice coursework isn’t required to take the CCKE, but it is advised, Coviello noted.

“As the field of cardiovascular medicine continues to rapidly evolve, there is an important need for highly skilled nurses and nurse practitioners with focused training in all aspects of cardiovascular care,” said Professor Richard W. Smalling, MD, PhD, director of interventional cardiology medicine, the James D. Woods Distinguished Chair in Cardiovascular Medicine, and the Jay Brent Sterling Professor in Cardiovascular Medicine at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston. “We felt that it was very important to develop a CV advanced practice provider program at Cizik School of Nursing to focus on honing the skills necessary for providing advanced cardiovascular care for our patients.”

**Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston is accredited as a provider of continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.*



JESSICA COVIELLO, DNP, ANP-BC



TONYA PAGE, DNP, APRN, ACNP-BC

Heart disease in the U.S. (2021)



695,000
Deaths



805,000
Heart attacks

Leading cause of death for most demographic groups

Source: National Center for Health Statistics



2023 PARTNERS Spring Luncheon

Noted photographer focuses on women

Knowledge and understanding are nurses' greatest gifts to the world, said renowned photographer Annie Griffiths during her keynote address at the 2023 PARTNERS Spring Luncheon.

"If my pictures can help move the needle and make a difference, that's all I want to do."

—Annie Griffiths
Photographer



Griffiths, one of the first women to photograph for National Geographic, has worked in all 50 states and more than 150 countries. Time and again, she has witnessed nurses educating and empowering women about their own health.

Founded in 1994, PARTNERS (Providing Advancement Resources To Nursing Education, Research, and Students), raises vital funds for nursing scholarships and research at Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston. The Spring Luncheon is PARTNERS' largest annual event, this year raising more than \$214,000. Griffiths spoke to an audience of 250 people on April 25 at the River Oaks Country Club.

Griffiths shared spectacular photos and told stories about women she has met in some of the least developed areas of the world. Their strength and ability to survive and innovate, no matter how meager their resources, inspired Griffiths to found Ripple Effect Images. The nonprofit collective of photojournalists and filmmakers supports women's aid groups by providing images and videos to boost their fundraising efforts.



Nancy Willerson, Peggy Barnett, and Patricia L. Starck

Rather than lamenting the plight of women in what Americans would consider harsh circumstances, Griffiths instead showcases successes and solutions that can grow from micro-investments and other seemingly small projects. For example, she explained how one training program in India teaches women to build solar lanterns as a part of establishing financial independence. In another community where children work in salt mines, they use the solar lanterns to study in night school.

"These women are not to be pitied. They are not to be condescended to," Griffiths said. "The people who fix the problems and make lives better are women."



Luncheon co-chairs Susan Distefano and Trish Greaser with Dean Diane Santa Maria and Annie Griffiths.

The luncheon honored the John P. McGovern Foundation, which has funded two distinguished professorships at Cizik School of Nursing and established an endowed scholarship fund. Julia Mitchell, secretary of the foundation's board of directors, spoke on its behalf, and Dean Emerita Patricia L. Starck, PhD, RN, FAAN, attended as a special guest.

PARTNERS members Susan Distefano, MSN, RN, and Trish Greaser chaired this year's luncheon. Houston Public Media's Ernie Manouse continued his years-long tradition of serving as master of ceremonies, and Kim Mabry of Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston delivered the invocation.

Founding PARTNERS member Susan Cooley, PhD, RN, introduced Griffiths and recognized her with an honorary lifetime PARTNERS membership.

"PARTNERS has been part of our story for so long, it can be easy to forget just how rare it is for a nursing school to have this kind of support," said Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN, in her welcome to guests. "No matter how much we achieve or how far we go, we will never take for granted what PARTNERS has made possible for the school or how fortunate we are to have such amazing volunteers as part of our community."

Following the luncheon, Griffiths signed copies of her book, *"Life in Color: National Geographic Photos."*

Join PARTNERS!



Learn more at
go.uth.edu/Join-PARTNERS

PARTNERS support for Cizik School of Nursing adds up



\$15M+

in direct and indirect contributions to nursing education and research



200+

student scholarships



4

endowed nursing professorships



\$4M+

endowment provides ongoing scholarship and research support



Trailblazing Telehealth

PARTNERS Scholar creates policy framework



MITZY KOBEISSI, DNP, FNP-C

Mahrokh “Mitzy” Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C, almost withdrew from Cizik School of Nursing’s Doctor of Nursing Practice program during her first semester because of financial struggles. A PARTNERS Scholarship enabled her to complete her studies without debt, and today she is an assistant professor and the school’s resident telehealth expert.

“I didn’t know how much I would be impacted by the PARTNERS scholarship,” said Kobeissi, who has published more than a half dozen scholarly articles in the past year about telehealth and artificial intelligence.

Years before the COVID-19 pandemic made telehealth an imperative, Kobeissi established her own practice as a family nurse practitioner, incorporating house calls and telehealth. Her client base consisted predominantly of stay-at-home moms who couldn’t easily haul a family of children to the doctor when one got sick. With her experience and her technology in place, she was able to provide care remotely to people stranded by Hurricane Harvey’s floodwaters in 2017.

Yet despite its utility — especially in emergency situations — telehealth represented only 0.1% of provider visits with Medicare patients prior to the pandemic. That shot up to 43.5% in April 2020, according to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) report.

However, telehealth use wasn’t evenly distributed or equitable. Underserved populations faced many of the same barriers to accessing telehealth as in-person care, such as cost, lack of insurance, and language differences. Limited access to technology added another hurdle. The American Medical Association reported that in 2020, 69% of physicians who used telehealth employed audio only.

“Telehealth is part of our life now. It’s part of our infrastructure. Now that we are using it, we are looking at how we can use it most efficiently and sustainably.”

—Mitzy Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C
Assistant Professor

In the rush to provide patients the care they needed early in the pandemic, health systems had no time to develop policies based on scientific evidence, Kobeissi noted. Federal and state agencies issued waivers so more providers could conduct patient visits and prescribe medications via telehealth while being reimbursed at the same rates as in-office visits.

By April 2021, the percentage of survey respondents reporting use of telehealth services in the previous four weeks had stabilized in the 20-25% range, based on subsequent HHS Office of Health Policy (OHP) analysis.

Since the federally declared public health emergency expired on May 11, 2023, providers can no longer prescribe some classifications of controlled substances via telehealth. However, Congress extended many of the other telehealth waivers through December 2024. That gives health systems and providers a narrow window to develop policies backed by evidence-based research that demonstrates the quality and safety of telehealth. Solid data will be needed to advocate for making pandemic-era policies supporting telehealth permanent, Kobeissi said.

Cizik School of Nursing faculty are doing their part. Kobeissi's recent work includes a paper co-authored with Professor Emerita Joanne V. Hickey, PhD, ACNP, FAAN, and published in *The Joint Commissions Journal on Quality and Patient Safety* that describes a new "Organizational Telehealth Program Model" as a framework for health care systems to develop internal telehealth policies.

Similarly, Associate Professor Martina Gallagher, PhD, PMHNP-C, served on an American Psychiatric Nurses Association task force that developed a Telemental Health Toolkit. The 2023 OHP report on telehealth trends indicated that, by late 2021, a quarter of all telehealth claims were for psychotherapy.

Kobeissi encourages other advanced practice nurses to lead by staying informed and getting involved — attend conferences, join professional organizations, and keep up to date with policy developments on the state and national level.



"Even if the waivers expire, telehealth isn't going away. We have an obligation to continue to maintain quality care, equitable care, and safe care."

—Mitzy Kobeissi, DNP, FNP-C
Assistant Professor

Telehealth use

April 14, 2021 – Aug. 8, 2022



17.6%
Ages 18-24

22%
All adults

9.4%
Uninsured

26.8%
Medicare recipients

28.3%
Medicaid recipients

Source: Lee, E.C.; Grigorescu, V.; Enogieru, I.; Smith, S.R.; Samson, L.W.; Conmy, A.; De Lew, N. *Updated National Survey Trends in Telehealth Utilization and Modality: 2021-2022* (Issue Brief No. HP-2023-09). Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. April 2023.



MANY FACES. ONE MISSION.

Thank you to our many supporters!

In 2015, UTHealth Houston launched the *Many Faces. One Mission.* campaign — the university's most ambitious philanthropic effort yet — to support the people, research, and programs that advance the shared vision of a healthier future.

The campaign brought significant resources to Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston, supporting our students, faculty, research, and programs to help address some of the most critical challenges facing patients and the health care system.

More than 1,500 donors gave a total of \$55.2 million to advance nursing research, education, and patient care initiatives — from establishing scholarships that bring the brightest minds to our classrooms, to enabling research that improves patient outcomes, to funding lecture series that promote important discussions around issues in nursing. Our school even proudly bears a new name as a result of the campaign, thanks to a visionary commitment from Jane Cizik and her late husband, Robert.

The support of our donors during the campaign reminds us that there is no limit to what we can achieve when we work together.

Thank you to everyone whose support made them one of many faces of UTHealth Houston, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of families, friends, and neighbors.

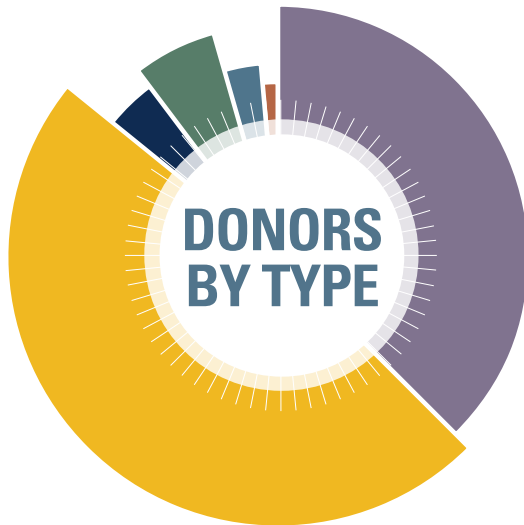
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to give



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BY THE NUMBERS

1,558 TOTAL DONORS



ENDOWMENT GROWTH

27 NEW ENDOWMENTS ESTABLISHED



7
Professorships/chairs



12
Scholarships/fellowships



3
Research funds



5
Program funds
(e.g., lecture series, awards,
community support)



\$55.2M RAISED

GIVING BY AREA OF INVESTMENT

ACADEMIC
\$23.8M



Investments that support faculty research and development to drive the recruitment and retention of leading experts.

STUDENT SUPPORT
\$14.5M



Endowed and current-use funds that enable Cizik School of Nursing to compete for the brightest minds while enhancing the student experience.

RESEARCH
\$11.9M



Funding to spark innovation that brings discoveries from bench to bedside.

OTHER/UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT
\$5M



Resources that foster collaboration across fields, recognize high-performing faculty, and provide flexible funds to meet emerging needs as they arise.

Congrats, Grads!



U.S. Treasurer delivers commencement address

U.S. Treasurer Marilyn Malerba, DNP, MPA, recalled the many hats she has worn — literally and figuratively — as a nurse, as the Chief of the Mohegan Tribe, and in government leadership as she congratulated graduates of Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston during the 2023 commencement on May 11.

Malerba, whose Mohegan name is Mutáwi Mutáhash (Many Hearts), is a nurse and previous director of cardiology at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, part of the Yale New Haven Health System in Connecticut. She is the first Native American and nurse to serve as U.S. Treasurer.

"The universe will be very grateful for all the hearts you touch in so many ways."

—Marilynn Malerba, DNP, MPA
U.S. Treasurer





The Class of 2022-2023



5
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)
IN NURSING GRADUATES



71
DOCTOR OF NURSING
PRACTICE (DNP) GRADUATES



188
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
NURSING (MSN) GRADUATES



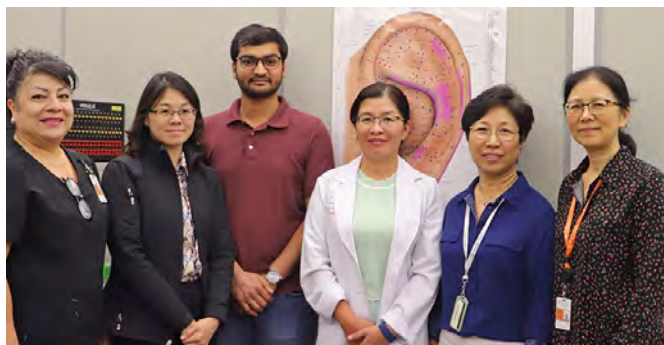
37
STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMS



372
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN
NURSING (BSN) GRADUATES

In Memoriam

Chao Hsing Yeh, 1967-2023



Cizik School of Nursing Professor Chao Hsing Yeh, PhD, RN, FAAN, tragically passed away as the result of a hiking accident in Taiwan in April 2023.

Yeh joined the school in November 2021 and was The Jane and Robert Cizik Distinguished Chair in the Department of Research. At UTHealth Houston, she grew her already robust and innovative program of research into auricular point acupressure for nonpharmaceutical pain management, studying how and why stimulating specific points on the ears relieves pain in various parts of the body and across different sources of pain including chronic low-back pain and chemotherapy-induced neuropathies.

"In her brief time at Cizik School of Nursing, Dr. Yeh had a huge impact on our Department of Research, made important contributions to nursing research and education, and improved the lives of so many suffering with pain," said Cizik School of Nursing Dean Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN. "She was a stellar nurse scientist who was dedicated to helping those most in need of care, and we are committed to continuing the important work she began."

Over the course of her career, Yeh received more than \$10 million in grants, published more than 110 papers, and presented locally, nationally, and internationally. In July 2023, she was posthumously inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing's International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame.

Yeh joined Cizik School of Nursing shortly after being appointed professor at Johns Hopkins School of Nursing in Baltimore. She had previously taught at the University of Pittsburgh, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Chang Gung University in Taiwan. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from China Medical College in Taichung, Taiwan; her Master of Science in Nursing from Syracuse University in New York; and her PhD in Nursing from the University of Massachusetts. Yeh was also a master of auricular medicine.

Educational Grant Highlights



(Left to right) D'Hania Miller and Maja Djukic

CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING AT UTHEALTH HOUSTON

Learn about more educational grants aimed at supporting nursing preceptors, developing a simulation of a busy NICU, and more.



go.uth.edu/EdGrants

Maja Djukic, PhD, RN, FAAN, and D'Hania Miller, MSN, RN, received a grant from the Hearst Foundation for Advancing Diversity and Visibility through the Accelerated Nursing Curricula with Collaboration and Engagement program.

In collaboration with Memorial Hermann – Texas Medical Center nurse leaders, Houston Community College, and Houston Independent School District, this grant aims to prepare high school students from diverse backgrounds to pursue nursing education.

Research Highlights

Advancing nursing science

Nurse scientists at Cizik School of Nursing recently received three R01 grants from the National Institutes of Health totaling nearly \$8.5 million:

Assessing the Use of MY-RIDE, a Just-in-Time Adaptive Intervention, to Improve HIV Prevention and Substance Use in Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Principal Investigator: Diane Santa Maria, DrPH, MSN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FAAN

Funded by four-year, \$2,858,139 grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research

Implementing the NYU Electronic Patient Visit Assessment (ePVA) for Head and Neck Cancer in Rural and Urban Populations

Principal investigator: Janet Van Cleave, PhD, RN, FAAN

Funded by five-year, \$3,336,210 grant from the National Cancer Institute

Health Outcomes Post-Eviction Moratoria (HOPE-M)

Principal investigator: Daphne Hernandez, PhD, MEd, FAAHB

Funded by three-year, \$2,360,082 grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research



Diane Santa Maria, Daphne Hernandez, Janet Van Cleave

Read more about new and continuing grants by Cizik School of Nursing faculty related to aging, HIV care and prevention, stroke, oncology nursing, and more.



go.uth.edu/Research-Highlights-2023

Cizik nursing research by the numbers (calendar year 2022)

NIH FUNDING



38th

among nursing schools



RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

\$3,839,196



CONTRACTS AND GRANTS

\$3,721,486



148

PRESENTATIONS

127

PUBLICATIONS

7

BOOK CHAPTERS

Welcome to Our New Faculty

Supporting Caregiving Families

Pickering focuses on elder abuse and neglect



Carolyn Pickering, PhD, RN, a noted expert in abuse and neglect of older adults and dementia family caregiving, joined Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston's Department of Research as a professor effective on Aug. 15, 2023.

Pickering's program of research includes four current studies with more than \$13 million in funding from the National Institute on Aging. The studies explore how family caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and dementia provide care, the management of behavioral symptoms of dementia, and the detection of elder mistreatment by emergency care technicians. She is widely published on related topics, serves as a reviewer on several journals, and is a member of the editorial board for Journal of Gerontological Nursing.

"From management of the Harris County Long-term Care Ombudsman program to the creation of our Smart Apartment to test aging-in-place technology, Cizik School of Nursing has a long history of innovation with regard to caring for our aging population," said Associate Dean for Research Constance Johnson, PhD, MS, RN, FAAN. "We are delighted for Dr. Pickering to leverage these resources and excited about the synergistic opportunities that lie ahead."

Before moving to Houston, Pickering had served as an associate professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing since 2020. She also spent several years at UT Health San Antonio as an assistant professor and co-director of the Caring for the Caregiver Program, and as a nurse scientist with the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. She previously taught at Michigan State University.

Pickering earned a PhD and Master of Science in Nursing from the University of California, Los Angeles and a certificate in forensic nursing from the University of California's Riverside extension. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Delaware.

Her husband, Andrew Pickering, PhD, a molecular biologist studying neurodegenerative diseases and the role of proteostasis in aging, is an associate professor in the Department of Integrative Biology and Pharmacology at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston.

Department of Research

Janet Van Cleave, PhD, RN, FAAN
Associate Professor

Department of Graduate Studies

Ololade T. Bello, DNP, RN, PMHNP-BC
Assistant Professor

Rashmi Momin, DNP, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC
Assistant Professor

Achante Sellars, DNP, RN, CRNA
Assistant Professor

Javier Ruiz, DNP, RN, CRNA
Instructor

Department of Undergraduate Studies

Darlene Acorda, PhD, APRN, CNE, CPNP-PC
Assistant Professor

Here's to Our Newest Fellows!

Barr, Coviello, and Edwards inducted as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing

Congratulations to three Cizik School of Nursing faculty members who were inducted as Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing (FAANs) on Oct. 7, 2023, during the annual Health Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.



Assistant Professor **Emily A. Barr, PhD, CPNP-PC, CNM**, focuses her research on children, young adults, and breastfeeding people living with HIV.



Associate Dean for Faculty Development **Jessica S. Coviello, DNP, ANP-BC**, worked with interprofessional teams to develop an innovative advanced cardiovascular nursing continuing education series.



Assistant Professor **Allison P. Edwards, MS, RN, CNE, CDDN**, established the Joan and Stanford Alexander Fellowship in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Learn more about our faculty fellows.

go.uth.edu/Faculty-Honors-2023



Faculty Highlights

Honors and awards

Cathy L. Rozmus, PhD, RN, FAAN, and **Sandra K. Hanneman, PhD, RN, FAAN**, have been named Distinguished Teaching Professors at The University of Texas System.



**Cathy L. Rozmus,
PhD, RN, FAAN**



**Sandra K. Hanneman,
PhD, RN, FAAN**

Find out more about faculty members who have received awards, honors, promotions, and appointments for professional service in 2023.



go.uth.edu/Faculty-Highlights-2023

Endowed Faculty Positions

As of September 2023

Distinguished Chairs

Diane M. Santa Maria

DtPH, MSN, RN, PHNA-BC, ACRN, FSAHM, FAAN

The Jane and Robert Cizik Distinguished Chair
Huffington Foundation Endowed
Chair in Nursing Education Leadership

Constance M. Johnson

PhD, MS, RN, FAAN

Maria C. and Christopher J. Pappas Family
Distinguished Chair in Nursing
Lee and Joseph Jamail Distinguished Professor
in the School of Nursing

Carolyn Pickering

PhD, RN

Isla Carroll Turner Chair
in Gerontological Nursing

Seeking candidates

The Jane and Robert Cizik
Distinguished Chair

Distinguished Professorships

Sandra K. Hanneman

PhD, RN, FAAN

Jerold B. Katz Distinguished
Professor for Nursing Research

Elda Ramirez

PhD, RN, FAAN

Dorothy T. Nicholson Distinguished Professor

Jennifer Beauchamp

PhD, RN, FAAN

Nancy B. Willerson Distinguished
Professor in Nursing

Maja Djukic

PhD, RN, FAAN

John P. McGovern Distinguished
Professor in the School of Nursing

Daphne Hernandez

PhD, MSEd, FAAHB

Lee and Joseph Jamail Distinguished
Professor in the School of Nursing

Seeking candidates for

Bette P. Thomas Distinguished Professorship
in Innovative Health Care Delivery

John P. McGovern Distinguished Professorship
in Nursing

John S. Dunn Distinguished Professorship
in Oncology Nursing

Lee and Joseph Jamail Distinguished
Professorship in the School of Nursing

Professorships

Cathy L. Rozmus

PhD, RN, FAAN

PARTNERS Professor

Jessica S. Coviello

DNP, RN, ANP-BC

Patricia L. Starck/PARTNERS
Endowed Professor in Nursing

Leissa Roberts

DNP, CNM, FACNM

Judy Fred Professor in Nursing

Susan D. Ruppert

PhD, RN, FNP-C, ANP-BC, FCCM,
FNAP, FAAN, FAANP

PARTNERS Endowed Professor in Nursing

Teng-Yuan "Erica" Yu

PhD, RN

Margaret A. Barnett/PARTNERS
Professor in Nursing

Seeking candidates for:

Joan and Stanford Alexander Professorship
in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities

Theodore J. and Mary E. Trumble
Professorship in Aging Research

2022-2023 School of Nursing Advisory Council

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Deborah G. Adams, BSN, RN

Leslie Bowlin

Robert W. Bramlette

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George R. Farris

J. Philip Ferguson

Gloria J. Hill

Arthur J. Hurt, III

Bethsheba Johnson, DNP, RN

Kenneth J. Lewis

Judy E. Margolis

Adrian S. Melissinos, PhD, RN

Maria C. Pappas

John R. Pitts

Christopher A. Rowland

Melissa Salmeron, CTP

Thomas R. Standish

Bette Thomas

Robert D. Thomas, Sr.

Cizik Nursing is the annual publication of Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston, celebrating achievements in nursing education, research, and practice.

This edition and additional online content are available throughout the year at nursing.uth.edu/cizik-nursing. For additional copies, please e-mail soncommunications@uth.tmc.edu or call 713-500-2111.

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Contributing Writers

SHERRI DEATHERAGE GREEN

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING AT UTHEALTH HOUSTON

MERVE ERTEN

COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

CIZIK SCHOOL OF NURSING AT UTHEALTH HOUSTON

MARIKA STEPANKIW

SENIOR DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS

UTHEALTH HOUSTON

Editors

LEISA MCCORD

SENIOR UNIVERSITY EDITOR, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UTHEALTH HOUSTON

MEREDITH RAINE

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UTHEALTH HOUSTON

Design and Art Direction

ANDREA RODRIGUEZ

UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGNER, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UTHEALTH HOUSTON

JONATHAN LOPEZ

MANAGER, CREATIVE SERVICES, PUBLIC AFFAIRS

UTHEALTH HOUSTON

Photography

NATHAN JETER, ROGELIO CASTRO, DAVID SOTELO, DWIGHT C. ANDREWS, SHERRI DEATHERAGE GREEN, MERVE ERTEN, TODD TAYLOR, MARK JOHNSON, SELF-PROVIDED PHOTOS FROM STUDENTS AND SUBJECTS

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FACULTY OPPORTUNITIES

Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth Houston offers unique opportunities for faculty to grow their careers with outstanding interprofessional collaborations in the Texas Medical Center. Several endowments are available to help qualified candidates advance their scholarship in our Department of Research.

DISTINGUISHED CHAIRS

- The Jane and Robert Cizik Distinguished Chair

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORSHIPS

- Bette P. Thomas Distinguished Professorship in Innovative Health Care Delivery
- John P. McGovern Distinguished Professorship in Nursing
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