

with Highest Honors



In 2016, TTUHSC recognized its first-ever Presidential Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. This will be the highest honor bestowed to an alumna/alumnus by the university, recognizing and honoring alumni who have made significant contributions to the health care profession. To be eligible for this award, an individual will have earned a degree or completed a residency at TTUHSC and demonstrated service to the community, profession and this institution. The awardee will be a person that faculty, staff, students and alumni take pride in and are inspired by his/her accomplishments and endeavors.

PRESIDENTIAL DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

CAROLYN CRUZ



Richard C. Johnston, MD, FACP, '75
CEO, President and Chief Physician Officer
USMD Health System, Irving, Texas

Richard C. Johnston, MD, FACP, began his practice in Dallas in 1978 and has been in private practice in the Dallas-Fort Worth area since. He has an internal medicine practice in Las Colinas, where he was the first chief of staff at Las Colinas Medical Center.

In 2004, Johnston's physician group joined Medical Clinic of North Texas (MCNT), which was a predominantly primary care health care group comprised of 135 providers. In 2006, he became president of MCNT and served in that capacity until the 2012 merger that created USMD Health System.

USMD is a physician-led, integrated health system committed to providing value to patients through high-quality and cost-effective care. Headquartered in Irving, Texas, USMD serves the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area with more than 250 physicians and associate practitioners and provides health care services to patients in nearly 20 different specialties at its two hospitals, cancer treatment center and nearly 60 physician clinics. In 2016, USMD became a part of OptumCare, one of the nation's largest health and wellness organizations, which aims to give patients the care they need at the right time and in the right place.

Johnston is board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Austin Breckenridge Hospital in 1978. Johnston is a member of the American College of Physicians, Texas Medical Association, Dallas County Medical Society and American Medical Group Association, where he serves on the CEO Council. His other interests include travel and tropical medicine.

SCHOOL OF NURSING Community Advocacy Award

**Melanie Ann Richburg,
DNP, '13**

Family Nurse Practitioner

**Lynn County Hospital District
Tahoka, Texas**



Love what you do, and do what you love. That's what drives Melanie Ann Richburg, DNP. She loves rural America and feels blessed every day she is able to give and share with her rural community. Since 2005, Richburg has served residents of Lynn County through the hospital district's Family Wellness Clinic as well as its emergency and inpatient departments. She is a member of the Lynn County Hospital District's medical staff and a corporate compliance officer. In 2012, Richburg led a team that converted the Family Wellness Clinic to a Rural Health Clinic.

Richburg also served the Tahoka community as president of the Tahoka Rotary board of directors in 2015, following membership from 2012- 2014. She has been recognized as a Medicare Rural Health Clinic Surveyor through the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities. The South Plains Nurse Practitioner Association also named her Nurse Practitioner of the Year in 2013. This year, Richburg completes a two-year service to the Texas Nurse Practitioners board as a regional representative from the South Plains. She also served a one-year term on the Region Medicaid Advisory Council for Texas and was a part-time instructor for TTUHSC School of Nursing from 2008-2010.

Before serving Lynn County residents, Richburg worked at the Community Health Center of Lubbock North Clinic, where she was the clinic supervisor. There, she was instrumental in establishing a clinic at Mathews Alternative High School and a primary care clinic at Women's Protective Services.

Richburg earned a bachelor's in nursing from Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, Texas. After graduation she worked as a staff registered nurse for Hendrick Medical Center in Women and Children's Services. She earned her master's in nursing and certification as a family nurse practitioner from Abilene Christian University. Afterward, Richburg worked for Hendrick Medical Center, now Hendrick Health System, as a family nurse practitioner in Albany Texas.

SCHOOL OF NURSING Leadership in Health Care Award

**Sylvain Trepanier,
DNP, RN, CENP, '11**

Chief Clinical Executive

**Providence St. Joseph Health
Torrance, California**



**Assistant Professor, TTUHSC School
of Nursing, Master of Nursing Administration**

Sylvain Trepanier, DNP, RN, CENP, is a seasoned nurse executive with health care system experience in executive leadership, nursing management, quality improvement study, and organizational transformation and system standardization.

He has sustained national and international impact in two key areas. The first is pioneering population health management strategies with a focus on improving quality and reducing costs of care. Trepanier's trailblazing contributions in population health began in Canada more than 20 years ago when population health initiatives were rare.

His second area of impact is in the development of innovative onboarding initiatives and cost justification of nurse residency programs. Trepanier's work on the cost benefit analysis of residency programs for new graduate nurses has enabled the spread and sustainability of these efforts nationally.

Trepanier has received prestigious national and state recognitions for outstanding leadership and outcomes, including the Richard Hader Visionary Leader Award selected by Nursing Management's editorial board. The Texas Organization of Nurse Executives also named Trepanier as a Nurse Leader to Watch and recipient of the Excellence in Leadership Award.

He is a member of the American Organization of Nursing Executives and serves on several advisory boards: Nurse Leader, Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing, Western Governors University, National Nursing Program and Versant LLC's, a national provider of nursing residency for new graduate nurses. Additionally, Trepanier serves on the audit committee for CGFNS International. He was the first registered nurse appointed board chair of Fidelity Healthcare, Southwest Ohio's largest home health agency, and Premier Health Community.

Trepanier earned his bachelor and master's degrees in nursing from the University of Montreal Canada. Before Trepanier's appointment at Providence St. Joseph's in May, he served as the first system vice-president and chief nursing officer for Premier Health.

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Clinic Counseling
and Mental Health Award



**Matt Berend, MRC, LBSW,
CRC, '15**

Unit Program Specialist

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Texas Workforce Solutions,
Abilene, Texas

Matt Berend, MRC, LBSW, CRC, was working two jobs and studying to become a veterinarian before a bull-riding accident in 2007 left him a quadriplegic and gave him a new career goal: to help fellow Texans with disabilities find and obtain careers through vocational rehabilitation.

Berend, through vocational rehabilitation services, was able to access financial assistance for living and college expenses as well as a power wheelchair and assistive technologies that would help him regain his independence. He completed a bachelor's degree in social work from Tarleton State University and then accepted his first job working at two nursing homes. He also decided to pursue a graduate degree and shortly thereafter landed a job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. In 2016, Berend was promoted to his current position, in which he assists with unit operations and quality and compliance issues. In addition, he has mentoring responsibilities and still manages a few cases to help fellow Texans receive vocational rehabilitation services.

In 2015, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Berend to a three-year term on the Rehabilitation Council of Texas. The council partners with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services to advocate for people with disabilities in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Berend also is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Texas Rehab Action Network. He served as a member and risk management officer of the Tarleton State University Student Social Work Organization.

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Healthcare
Management and
Leadership Award



**Jeffery Barnhart, MSCPM,
FACHE, '13**

CEO and Hospital Administrator

Deaf Smith County Hospital District
Hereford, Texas

Adjunct Professor, TTUHSC Master of Science in Healthcare Administration

For more than 30 years, Jeffery Barnhart, MSCPM, FACHE, has been making an impact in rural health care. His experiences in leading hospital districts in rural areas of South and West Texas and the Panhandle Plains also has led Barnhart to advocate for rural health care at the state and federal level.

In 2016, Gov. Greg Abbott appointed Barnhart to a four-year term on the Governors EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. The council makes recommendations regarding the EMS/trauma system to ensure communities receive comprehensive efficient emergency care.

Barnhart also serves on the foundation board of Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals and is a member of the Coalition of Health Services. He has dedicated several years to the Texas Hospital Association, presently serving on the HealthShare board. Barnhart also served on the association's magazine editorial board and Council on Policy Development Committee. He has been a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives since 2009 and obtained fellow status in 2017. Barnhart is also past vice president of the Northwest Texas Hospital Association.

His home community of Canyon, Texas, also benefits from Barnhart's volunteerism. He is a member of the Golden Spread Council of the Boy Scouts of America board of directors and a Lions Club member. In other communities where Barnhart has worked and lived, he served on the board of directors for the Perryton Chamber of Commerce and Perryton Country Club as well as the Waka Christian Center and the Hereford YMCA. Barnhart also was on the community advisory boards for 4-H in Ochiltree and Lynn counties.



**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Speech, Language
and Hearing Sciences

Karen Copple, PhD, '11

Assistant Professor

Communication Disorder,
Speech Language Pathologist

Eastern New Mexico University
Main Campus, Portales, New Mexico

Throughout her professional life, Karen Copple, PhD, has been "paying-it-forward" whenever possible. Born in Michigan, her early college education included degrees in theater and music education from Hasting College, Hastings, Nebraska. However, after teaching music for several years, and being a singer herself, children who could not match pitches or sing on pitch frustrated her.

Nevertheless, Copple began her master's studies in music but changed to speech, language pathology after becoming intrigued by what she learned regarding the mechanics of the voice. She graduated from the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Nebraska, with her master's degree in speech pathology.

Copple and her family moved to Lubbock, Texas, in 1986 where she and her husband, Tom, were both employed by Lubbock ISD. She began additional graduate studies at TTUHSC as one of the first

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Laboratory
Sciences and Primary Care Award

**Sissy Ann Hinojos,
MPAS, PA-C, '12**

Physician Assistant

**Texas Tech Physicians
of the Permian Basin**

Family Medicine Clinic, Midland, Texas



Born and raised in Odessa, Sissy Ann Hinojos, MPAS, PA-C, earned a Bachelor of Secondary Education from Texas Tech in 1986. She taught science and coached in Midland before moving to the Austin area. She earned a master's in science education from the University of Texas at Austin while teaching and coaching in Round Rock and Pflugerville.

After six years of teaching and coaching, Hinojos hung up her whistle and became a pharmaceutical representative for Pfizer Inc. Through this exposure to doctors, physician assistants and other medical professionals, Hinojos gained a desire to practice medicine. After 17 years and a companywide layoff, where she and 8,000 employees lost their jobs, Hinojos had the opportunity to pursue a third career.

Being a physician assistant incorporates her first two careers of teaching and sales. Hinojos teaches every patient about their medical conditions, and she has to sell them on the plan to improve their health. She considers it a true honor to have the opportunity to serve others and have a third career as a physician assistant.

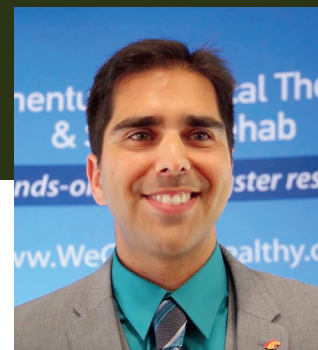
Hinojos also serves her profession and community. She is president and founder of the Permian Basin Physician Assistant Society and serves on the board of the Permian Basin Hispanic Medical Society. She plans to use involvement in these organizations as an avenue to increase awareness about the role of physician assistants in health care for those living in the Permian Basin.

**SCHOOL OF HEALTH
PROFESSIONS**
Department of Rehabilitation
Sciences Award

Steve Alaniz, MPT, '07

CEO

**Momentum Physical Therapy and
Sports Rehab, San Antonio, Texas**



Following graduation, Steve Alaniz, MPT, began working as a staff physical therapist at Momentum Physical Therapy & Sports Rehab. Within three months, he had promoted to clinic director and helped expand services by adding three new therapists. In March 2009, Alaniz was named CEO of the company, which was comprised of two clinics and 25 employees. Since then, Momentum has grown by more than 425 percent and expanded to 15 clinics across four states.

In 2015, Alaniz became an ownership partner at Momentum, which continues to grow at an amazing pace, more than 35 percent from 2015 to 2016, and has received numerous awards. Momentum was recognized in 2013, 2014 and 2015 by Inc5000 as one of the 5,000 fastest growing companies in the U.S. and named a Top Workplace by the San Antonio Express-News. In 2014, the company also garnered honors from San Antonio Business Journal as a Best Places to Work and named Practice of the Year by Advance Rehab Magazine; the latter award recognizes the top private physical therapy practice in the U.S.

Alaniz has also gained attention for his successes. He was named as one of San Antonio Business Journal's top 40-under-40 in 2015, and was a runner-up the previous year. He is an alumnus of the Alex Briseno Leadership Development Program and Leadership San Antonio. He has remained active in Leadership San Antonio serving as chair of its alumni association since inception in 2016.

Alaniz is a member of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, serving on the Leadership Development, Government Affairs and Health and Bioscience committees. He was vice chair and chair of the board of directors, and remains a member, of Transplants for Children, a local charity benefiting children and families before, during and after pediatric transplant.

students in the doctoral program. Having been a nontraditional student throughout her studies in speech pathology, Copple and her husband began a joint endowed scholarship in the communications disorders department for those like her.

This fall will mark her sixth year as an assistant professor at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU). She teaches in the areas of voice disorders, craniofacial anomalies, and augmentative and alternative communication. Copple also supervises graduate and undergraduate students in clinical and school placements and has supervised research and independent study projects. Her students' research projects have won their division at the ENMU Student Research Conference. She is most proud, however, of her ability to work with other faculty, bringing in respected professionals

from whom graduate students can gain real-world knowledge in the field. Individuals such as her mentors, Rajinder Koul, PhD, former TTUHSC associate dean for research, and Sherry Sancibrian, (Health Professions '78, '77) professor and program director for Speech-Language Pathology,

Copple's experience as a speech, language pathologist has spanned early childhood, public schools, nursing homes, private companies and private practice. She has supervised numerous graduate students, provided in-service training and her research has been presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association National Schools Conference in 2011 and 2008. Copple was active on the Disabilities Committee for Palo Duro Presbytery and has donated time as a parent advocate for children with disabilities.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Community Outreach Award

Roger Wolcott, MD, '92
Private Practice Physician
Lubbock, Texas



Roger Wolcott, MD, is a Lubbock native. He graduated from Coronado High School and joined the Navy as a hospital corpsman assigned to a Marine Corps hospital unit. Wolcott received his Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from Texas Tech University and his Doctor of Medicine from TTUHSC. He became a diplomat of the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation after completing a residency at the University of Utah.

Since completing his residency, Wolcott has been in private practice in Lubbock, Texas. His outpatient practice encompasses both children and adults, treating catastrophic injury such as brain and spinal cord injury as well as cerebral palsy. He began TrustPoint, an acute inpatient rehabilitation hospital, in 2007, and that same year established a Lubbock campus for the Transitional Learning Center, a post-acute brain injury rehabilitation program. He is the medical director for both facilities.

Wolcott is an advocate for the Americans with Disabilities Act and champions causes that remove obstacles and promote accessibility for everyone. He has built an accessible boat, which can accommodate up to eight wheelchairs at a time, and has had several excursions with patients, including a fishing trip. Wolcott also established an accessible aquatic center that includes a therapy pool. This facility can accommodate SCUBA training for patients with disabilities. Wolcott's future goals include establishing an accessible ranch for riding, hunting and fishing. His greatest enjoyment is spending time with his wife and three children.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Distinguished Alumni Award

**Craig D. Rhyne, MD FACS,
Resident '86**
Regional Chief Medical Officer
Covenant Health, Lubbock, Texas



Lubbock native Craig D. Rhyne, MD, FACS, has served for the past six years as the regional chief medical officer for Covenant Health. He trained as a general and trauma surgeon and has served the Lubbock community as a resident physician and a faculty surgeon at TTUHSC and has been on the medical staff at Covenant since 1991.

Following his residency at TTUHSC, he completed a research fellowship at Cornell University Medical College in New York City and then returned to Lubbock, joining the clinical faculty in the School of Medicine Department of Surgery. While on the faculty, Rhyne received the Clinical Teaching Award from the Class 1990. He also wrote the first chapter on the lymphocyte and monocyte response in *Principles and Management of Surgical Infections*, published in 1991.

Rhyne's influence in trauma care spans the region, having been involved in trauma system development in Texas and New Mexico. He served one term on the New Mexico State Trauma Advisory Council and two terms on the Texas Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council. Rhyne also has been a member of the board of directors of Texas EMS Trauma and Acute Care Foundation since 2010. He was president and chairman of the Lubbock Methodist Hospital board of directors from 1999 until 2003 and a charter member of the Covenant Health board of directors from 1998 to 2003.

Becker's Hospital Review has recognized him nationally as one of the "100 Hospital CMOs to Know" five times in the last six years. Rhyne has also served as medical director for EMS services in Texas and New Mexico, including the last 25 years for AeroCare, an air medical transport service. In 2002, he received the Timothy Fleming EMS Medical Director Award for the State of New Mexico.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Research Scientist Award

Sharmila Dissanaïke, MD,
Resident '06

Peter C. Canizaro Chair of Surgery

School of Medicine
Department of Surgery

TTUHSC, Lubbock, Texas



Sharmila Dissanaïke, MD has received numerous awards from national and international institutes honoring her work at TTUHSC in research, education, patient care, community service and academic performance. She is the author of more than 70 peer-reviewed publications has presented more than 150 competitive national and international presentations and invited lectureships on topics including breast cancer, physician burnout and novel innovations in abdominal surgery.

Her primary focus, however, is in the care of the injured patient; this includes the pre-hospital care of burn and trauma patients, emergency room management including timeliness of care, and specifically the intensive care of these critically ill patients. Dissanaïke has published important work on nutritional deficits and gender differences in outcomes after burns and is currently exploring novel techniques to combat severe infection, which is the leading source of death in both burn and trauma patients after the immediate post-injury period.

Additionally, Dissanaïke has collaborated with other clinicians as well as basic scientist researchers to develop a translational research program and establishment of the Burn Center of Research Excellence. It is the first clinical research program to be listed as a Center of Excellence at TTUHSC. In addition to her research efforts, she has also served as a mentor to more than 150 students, residents, nurses and fellows at TTUHSC, ensuring that this essential skill set continues to be transmitted to the next generation of clinical scientists.

In addition to her work at TTUHSC, Dissanaïke holds national roles in multiple surgical organizations. She serves on the Ethics Committee of the American College of Surgeons and is chair of the Ethics Committee and chair-elect of the Verification Committee of the American Burn Association. She also is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, the International College of Surgeons and the Academy of Critical Care Medicine.

Dissanaïke has pushed the bar academically from graduating valedictorian at Methodist College in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and second in her class at the University of Sydney, Australia, the oldest and most prestigious medical school in Australia, to becoming the youngest person in the country to lead a department of academic surgery. She started her surgical training in the United States at the Albert Einstein Medical College at Beth Israel in Manhattan and transferred to TTUHSC in her second year to live closer to her husband. The friendly environment of West Texas grew on her, and she chose to return to TTUHSC after completing a Trauma Critical Care Fellowship at the University of Washington.

**GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**
Doctorate of Philosophy Award

Kendra Rumbaugh, PhD, '01

Associate Professor

Department of Surgery
School of Medicine

TTUHSC, Lubbock, Texas



Kendra Rumbaugh, PhD, began her research career as a TTUHSC graduate student where her doctoral work focused on the role of quorum sensing in the pathogenesis of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Today, she is a tenured associate professor in the School of Medicine with joint appointments in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences departments of Cell Biology and Biochemistry and Immunology and Molecular Microbiology.

Specifically, her research focuses on understanding and treating wound infections. Rumbaugh is especially interested in how biofilms, polymicrobial interactions and cell-to-cell signaling contribute to infection. Her research has been consistently funded, receiving approximately \$2.5 million in extramural awards over the last 10 years. Additionally, Rumbaugh has been a co-author on 70 papers and book chapters, edited two books, and served on study sections for more than 15 different organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, Veterans Affairs, American Diabetes Association and several military agencies. She has also served as a reviewer for more than 35 different journals including Science, Nature and PNAS. She also has been invited to write editorials and commentaries for the latter two.

Rumbaugh has served on organizing committees or as a session chair for multiple national and international conferences and has given invited seminars worldwide. Her leadership roles include serving as president of the Texas Branch of American Society for Microbiology and the West Texas Chapter of the Association for Women in Science, as well as many TTUHSC committees. Rumbaugh also takes great pride in her role as a mentor. She has mentored more than 40 graduate, undergraduate and medical students and was recognized as an Outstanding Faculty Mentor by the Texas Tech University Center for Undergraduate Research. She has also been awarded an Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award from the TTUHSC Student Government Association and was the 2006 TTUHSC President's Young Investigator Award Recipient.

Her academic career began at the University of Texas at El Paso, where Rumbaugh received her undergraduate degree in microbiology in 1996. After receiving her PhD in medical microbiology in 2001, Rumbaugh completed postdoctoral training at the University of California at San Francisco and then returned to TTUHSC.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY Excellence in Practice Award

Steve Rodriguez, PharmD, '01

Owner

MedPro Pharmacy,
Melissa, Texas



Shortly after graduation, Steve Rodriguez, PharmD, opened MedPro Pharmacy. He recently marked his 11th year as owner of the full-service pharmacy. Rodriguez's work focuses on compounding to provide individualized medications for patients such as bio-identical hormone therapy, as well as for veterinary medicine. He also manages the pharmaceutical care for several Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) patients, and many providers seek his recommendations for their patients' BHRT needs.

Rodriguez and his staff of 10 also serve the assisted living communities throughout Texas by managing the pharmaceutical care and operations. As such, BHRT, assisted living and sexual wellness have become Rodriguez's practice specialties.

Through MedPro Pharmacy, Rodriguez also offers a range of in-house services including prevention and wellness programs, respiratory therapy and immunizations. Their customer-focused service also provides amenities such as prescription delivery and a full line of diabetic supplies and medical equipment.

Rodriguez is actively involved in advocating at the local, state and national levels for his profession and encourages his colleagues to do so as well. He also has been asked to speak on various national panels, including one where he advised an audience of more than 500 from the pharmaceutical industry about medication accessibility.

He also supports his profession through professional associations. Rodriguez is a board member of the Texas Pharmacy Association's (TPA) PharmPAC and holds memberships in the TPA, Pharmacists Association, American Pharmacies and Association of Independent Pharmacists.

Rodriguez studied biochemistry at Angelo State University before acceptance to the pharmacy program. He and his wife, Amy, (Nursing '98) are the parents of three children. Rodriguez volunteers in the Melissa community, located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, and is involved in family and community events. He also is a drummer, by hobby, and has played onstage in Las Vegas with Bret Michaels, lead singer for Poison.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY Pharmacy Leadership Award

Lyndsi White, PharmD, '06

Consultant Pharmacist

Manage Meds, LLC
Sulphur Springs, Texas



After working for about three years in hospital and retail pharmacy settings, Lyndsi White, PharmD, transitioned into long-term care in 2009. She then worked two years in operations before teaming up with Gina Cole, PharmD, (Pharmacy '07) to establish Intellicare Pharmacy Consultants Inc. Intellicare was modeled to be an independent pharmacy consultant company and grew quickly throughout Dallas and East Texas. In 2014, Intellicare merged with Medication Mangers, LLC, to form Manage Meds, LLC, and expanded services throughout Texas with a continued focus on quality consultant pharmacist services for the at-risk geriatric population.

White is also involved in the Texas chapter of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists and serves as president-elect. She speaks to health care professionals in longer-term care settings on behalf of various pharmaceutical companies.

Additionally, White is a preceptor for fourth-year students in TTUHSC School of Pharmacy's geriatric rotation.

White is married to Randy White, PharmD, (Pharmacy '06) who currently practices in an independent pharmacy setting at Scott's Pharmacy in Quitman, Texas. They have three boys: Luke, 10, Jude, 8 and Jake, 3, who keep them very busy. 