

Awards & Accolades



Al-Rahawan



Byrd



Cook



Dissanaik



Esquibel



Gautam



Irons



Johnson



Lampe



Merrill



McMurry



Moore



Opton



Parker



Prien



Racz



Taylor



Thomas



Yoder-Wise

MOHAMAD AL-RAHAWAN, MD, associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics and medical director of the Pediatric Hematology Oncology division, received the UMC Health System Joon Park, MD, Endowed Chair in Medical Excellence.

THERESA BYRD, PHD, associate dean and chair of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Department of Public Health, was selected as the 2017 American Public Health Association and Health Promotion Distinguished Career Award recipient.

RONALD COOK, DO, associate professor in the School of Medicine Department of Medical Education, was re-elected to the Texas Medical Association Council on Medical Education.

SHARMILA DISSANAIKE, MD, (Resident '06) Peter C. Canizaro Chair of the School of Medicine Department of Surgery, was appointed to the National Committee on Trauma by the Regents of the American College of Surgeons.

BRIAN IRONS, PHARM D, professor in the

School of Pharmacy and director of the Ambulatory Care division, received the American College of Clinical Pharmacy 2017 Ambulatory Care Practice and Research Network Achievement Award.

RICHARD LAMPE, MD, professor and chairman of the School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, received the Sidney Kaliski Award of Merit from the Texas Pediatric Society.

SAMUEL D. PRIEN, PHD, professor in the School of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and director of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology Laboratories, received the American Society for Reproductive Medicine 2017 Star Award.

GABOR B. RACZ, MD, chairman emeritus of the School of Medicine Department of Anesthesiology and Grover E. Murray Professor, is recognized for his national and international distinguished achievement in the treatment of pain by the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians with the introduction of the Racz Excellence Award for Outstanding Contribution and Performance.

Six faculty members from the School of Nursing were honored by the South Plains Great 25 Nurses: **KAREN ESQUIBEL, PHD, RN**, (Nursing '02, '97); **BIBHA GAUTAM, PHD, RN**; **EMILY MERRILL, PHD, FNP**, (Nursing '94); **AMY MOORE, DNP, RN**; **AHNNA PARKER, MSN, RN-BC**, (Nursing '07); and **LINDA MCMURRY, DNP, RN** (Nursing '10, '04).

LESLEE J. TAYLOR, PHD, LAT, program director and associate professor for the School of Health Professions Master of Athletic Training Program, was elected president of the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education.

Three faculty members from the School of Nursing were elected to the Texas League for Nursing Board of Directors: director for communications, **KYLE JOHNSON, MSN, RN**; director for membership, **LAURA OPTON, DHSC, RN**, (Nursing '95); director for education, **LAURA THOMAS, PHD, RN**, (Nursing '04).

PATRICIA YODER-WISE, EDD, RN, dean emerita and professor for the School of Nursing, was elected president of the National League for Nursing Board of Directors.

Pharmacy Professor Helps Define New Blood Pressure Guidelines



The new diagnostic blood pressure guidelines, released recently by the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and American Heart Association, represented several years of work and research by an interdisciplinary writing committee whose members represented 11 different organizations. One of those committee members, Eric MacLaughlin, PharmD, is a professor and chair for the School of Pharmacy Department of Pharmacy Practice at Amarillo.

“As a member of the Guidelines Writing Committee, my role was to lead the literature review and writing of the various sections to which I was assigned,” MacLaughlin explained. “All of the authors also served to review, edit and revise the guidelines and their accompanying documents, including the data supplement tables and results of the meta-analyses that were undertaken by the Evidence Review Committee specifically for these guidelines.”

MacLaughlin said the new guidelines’ goal is to ultimately improve public health and decrease the morbidity and mortality associated with elevated blood pressure.

“Hypertension remains the leading cause of death in the United States and worldwide,” he added.

According to an online ACC news story published Nov. 13, the new guidelines eliminate the prehypertension category and will now classify patients as either Elevated (120-129 and less than 80) or Stage I hypertension (130-139 or 80-89). The former guidelines classified 140/90 mm Hg as Stage 1 hypertension, a level classified as Stage 2 hypertension by the new guidelines.

In addition, the ACC news story said the new guidelines stress the importance of using proper technique to measure blood pressure; recommend the practice of home blood pressure monitoring using validated devices; and highlight the value of appropriate training of health care providers.

Other guideline changes include a recommendation that clinicians only prescribe medication for Stage I hypertension patients who have already had a cardiovascular event such as a heart attack or stroke and those who are deemed to be at high risk based on their age, the presence of diabetes mellitus, chronic kidney disease or calculation of atherosclerotic risk using the same risk calculator used in evaluating high cholesterol.

“The guidelines will undergo a periodic review and will be updated as newer literature becomes available,” MacLaughlin said.

TTUHSC at Abilene’s Department of Public Health Renamed

The Texas Tech University System Board of Regents approved the naming in August of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Department of Public Health at Abilene as the Julia Jones Matthews Department of Public Health.

“On behalf of everyone at TTUHSC, I want to express my sincerest thanks to Mrs. Matthews for providing us with this foundational and transformational gift,” said Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, TTUHSC president. “Her willingness to so boldly place her faith in TTUHSC and our ability, through our faculty, our students and the learning and research that takes place in the Abilene campus to positively impact West Texas, means the world to us. We are proud to have her legacy live on through the department and in the future School of Public Health.”

Matthews died in November 2016 and was a long-time supporter of the Abilene community, Hendrick Medical Center and TTUHSC through the Dodge Jones Foundation. She was a key supporter of bringing TTUHSC to Abilene, and her philanthropic efforts resulted in an impact of more than \$23 million for TTUHSC’s programs in Abilene. In 2014, the Dodge Jones Foundation, along with other Abilene community partners, contributed to the establishment of an accredited School of Public Health, which included the construction of a building for the school.



Julia Jones Matthews (center) enjoys the spotlight as Abilene’s Outstanding Citizen of the Year in 2000 with Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (left) and former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.



Researcher Receives Highest Faculty Honor

The Texas Tech University System in December approved Vadivel Ganapathy, PhD, professor and chair of the School of Medicine Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry, as a Grover E. Murray Professor.

The Grover E. Murray Professorship is intended for a faculty member who attains national and international distinction for outstanding research and scholarly and creative achievement.

“Murray professors represent the very best among our faculty,” said Steven L. Berk, MD, TTUHSC executive vice president and provost and dean of the School of Medicine. “We value Dr. Ganapathy for his research and his many contributions to our university, and we are proud to commend him with this honor.”

Ganapathy has 35 years of academic experience as a researcher, educator and administrator. In his career, he has received more than \$19.5 million in grant funding for his primary interest in cancer biology from sources including the National Institutes of Health, Medical College of Georgia Research Institute, Department of Defense, and Health Resources and Services Administration.

Ganapathy has cloned more than 40 transporters that carry nutrients such as amino acids and vitamins in the human body. This transporter biology is the primary focus of his research, and modulation of selective transporters provides

potential novel treatments for hemochromatosis and certain cancers, such as colon, pancreatic and cervical cancer. Ganapathy received the prestigious Rank Prize in 2003 for his work on the identification, molecular characterization and control of cellular nutrient transporters. He has served on numerous editorial boards and as a reviewer for many of the country’s top science journals. To his credit, Ganapathy has more than 460 research publications and 29 book chapters.

Current faculty members previously named Grover E. Murray Professors include: Sharon Decker, PhD, Gabor Racz, MD, Afzal Siddiqui, PhD, Quentin Smith, PhD, and Surendra Varma, MD. Former faculty Grover E. Murray Professors include: Neil Kurtzman, MD, John Orem, PhD, Cynthia Raehl, PharmD, Doug Stocco, PhD, and Abraham Verghese, MD.



Women Outnumber Men in TTUHSC School of Medicine Class of 2021

Enrollment of female students in the School of Medicine has never reached more than 50 percent—until this year.

In August, 180 medical students, which includes 92 women, donned their white coats, marking the first year in the school’s more than 40-year history that women outnumber men.

“The significance is now we’ve reached equality in the people entering medicine,” said Sharmila Dissanaiké, MD, (Resident ’06) Peter C. Canizaro Chair of the Department of Surgery. “It’s the first step, and that’s important. This is exciting.”

5 minutes with the faculty...

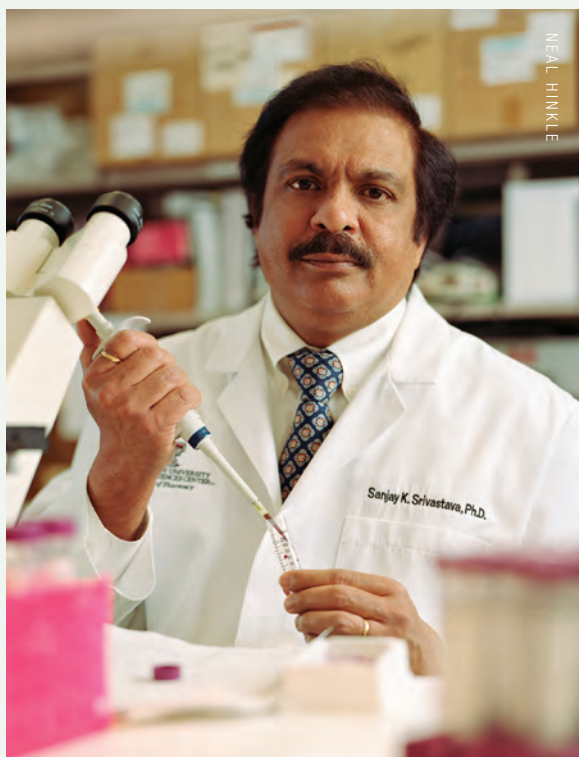
BATTLING THE SMART DISEASE

SANJAY SRIVASTAVA, PHD | Dedicated to Beating Cancer | By Jo Grant Langston

Sanjay K. Srivastava, PhD, chair of the School of Pharmacy at Abilene Department of Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology, has dedicated his research career to battling cancer, describing the challenge this way: “Cancer cells are the smartest things on Earth; they change and aren’t that easy to kill. They find a way to survive.”

Finding drugs to combat this “smart disease” lies at the heart of his more than 30-year career. About two decades ago, he and his research team began looking differently at current drug therapies used to fight cancer—and that change has proved promising.

“My early research was focused on natural products and chemicals present in fruits and vegetables as cancer-fighting agents, but it takes a long time for them to go through the development and testing phase to get to the clinic,” said Srivastava. “We began looking at existing drugs and determining if they could attack cancer cells.”



In particular, his team looked for drugs to fight breast cancer, which can metastasize to the brain, a major cause of cancer-related deaths. Most existing drugs used to stop the spread of the disease to the brain have limited success because they can’t cross the blood-brain barrier. Srivastava’s team began looking at antipsychotic drugs as possible treatments.


“To our surprise we found that some of the antipsychotic drugs had significant anticancer effects, so they were able to suppress the growth of metastatic breast cancer and glioblastomas,” Srivastava said. “Penfluridol, a drug used to treat schizophrenia, was the most successful in our research.”

The discovery, he said, could revolutionize cancer treatment and forge better outcomes for patients. His lab is now working aggressively toward repurposing existing drugs for cancer therapy.

An NIH R01 grant-funded researcher and internationally recognized expert, Srivastava has been a TTUHSC faculty member since 2007 in the Department of Biomedical Sciences. In 2014, he was named as the associate dean for research for the School of Pharmacy at Amarillo, and in March 2017 became the chair for the Department of Immunotherapeutics and Biotechnology in the School of Pharmacy at Abilene. He received the 2017 Outstanding Achievement in Cancer Research Award from the Society of American Asian Scientists in Cancer Research in Washington, D.C., and was named a TTUHSC Distinguished Professor in 2015. He has been a recipient of several other awards including the President’s Excellence in Research award.

Srivastava has published almost 150 papers in high-impact journals including *Cancer Research*, *Oncogene*, *Clinical Cancer Research* and *JBC*, has several patents, and has presented at multiple national and international conferences.

Srivastava’s family history with science and education motivated his early pursuit of a science career. Academia is a family tradition and includes his father and sister, who are both professors and department chairs, as well as his sons, Sameer and Suyash, who are pursuing undergraduate degrees in chemistry and biology.

The fight to halt cancer fuels the Srivastava lab every day. “I have a passion for research,” he said. “I enjoy spending time in my lab with my graduate students and post-docs looking for a way to combat cancer.” 



TTUHSC Extends Reach to Austin College Graduates

TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, and Austin College Board of Trustees Chair David Corrigan signed the AC/TechConnect partnership July 26, guaranteeing qualified Austin College students the opportunity to interview for admission into competitive graduate professional health sciences programs at TTUHSC.

“As more students choose private colleges to begin their higher education, it is important we expand the opportunities available to them after their graduation,” Mitchell said. “Austin College is home to some of the brightest students in Texas. These students are setting themselves up for success, and we look forward to their continued success and development as health care professionals at TTUHSC.”

This agreement will benefit students seeking master’s level or higher degrees after receiving their undergraduate degrees from Austin College. Students will have the opportunity to interview with the TTUHSC Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the schools of Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy.

New TTUHSC Psychiatry Residency Program

TTUHSC at Amarillo is collaborating with the Amarillo VA Health Care System to start a psychiatry residency program, with the goal that those who complete their training in Amarillo will stay to serve the community.

Richard Jordan, MD, regional dean for the School of Medicine at Amarillo, said students who graduate from TTUHSC and are interested in psychiatry currently have to leave the Panhandle for their residencies or choose another specialty field.

That’s why TTUHSC is working to create the program; funding, however, has been a challenge.

“Most residents are paid largely through Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services,” he said. “But those spots are frozen. They have been since the mid-’90s.”

That’s where the collaboration of the Amarillo VA came in.

Director of the Amarillo VA Health Care System Michael Kiefer, said they see an extreme need for psychiatrists as well. The VA currently uses programs such as telehealth to get veterans the mental health services they need, and they’re now planning to help fund residency positions to increase services.

“They made a commitment through their sacrifice of service to be exposed to those traumas of war,” Kiefer said. “And now it’s our responsibility to make sure that we’re able to address the issues that they do bring home with them, and this will really help us address those issues.”

The plan is to combine the faculty from TTUHSC and the VA to provide training for residents. Jordan also added, “The VA will allow those residents totally funded by the VA to rotate to community non-VA mental health sites. The program will also have a special track for medical students that have a military obligation and want to train in psychiatry. This is a unique program that will greatly benefit the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, the U.S. armed forces and the civilian population.” The goal is to have the program operational by July 2020.

The Amarillo Hospital District has also made a commitment to fund the psychiatry residency with \$100,000 per year to help recruit psychiatry faculty for the residency program and to provide additional capacity to treat patients with mental health conditions.



New Regional Dean for Dallas School of Pharmacy Campus Appointed

Steven Pass, PharmD, was named regional dean for the School of Pharmacy at Dallas in September. Pass said his new appointment is an honor, and he looks forward to facing the challenges of his new position by working closely with campus faculty, staff, students and residents.

“I genuinely hope to provide strong leadership that will contribute to the growth and continued success of what I believe is a truly special place,” he said.

Pass, professor for the Department of Pharmacy Practice, has served since 2011 as the School of Pharmacy’s vice chair for residency programs. Under his leadership, the school’s residency program has become one of the nation’s strongest, with 36 residents currently working in the school’s 16 affiliated post-graduate programs. In addition, 41 of 48 (85 percent) residency applicants from the School of Pharmacy class of 2017 found residency slots, a success rate that is well above the 68.5 percent national average for such placement.

Pass earned his doctorate from the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy in 1996. In 1997, he completed a pharmacy practice residency at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, and in 1998, he completed a critical care residency at The University Hospital in Cincinnati. During his career, Pass has focused on providing quality pharmacotherapy in the critical care setting and advancing pharmacy resident education and training.

MATTERS

of the heart

“Day of Service” Propels Medical Student to Further Volunteer Service

Second-year medical student, Caleigh Cole, volunteered last year for “Day of Service,” and the experience she had at Buckner International was so rewarding, she continued volunteering as a mentor to foster children.

“Day of Service,” hosted by TTUHSC students, is a day where students give back by serving local charities in their community. By volunteering, students are compelled to think about the reason they entered into the health care profession. Many students also find relief from the pressures of their studies and are reminded why they chose TTUHSC.

“I liked volunteering at ‘Day of Service,’ and afterwards was looking for something long term,” Cole said. “Medical school is about balance. Focusing less on your knowledge and more on the person and their emotions keeps the human and relational aspect in what we do.”

Buckner International is a global ministry that works with at-risk children and senior adults by providing housing and guidance. They provide adoption services to families, temporary homes for foster children, and independent and assisted care for seniors.

Cole has worked as a mentor with Buckner International for more than a year now. Her adviser helps her foster relationships with the people she meets, which creates a stronger bond between Cole and her mentees and their families.

“When I met my first mentee, I fell in love with her and her family,” Cole said. “We both loved baking, so every time I came over, I would bring ingredients and we would bake together. She ended up moving in with her uncle, which was where she wanted to be. It was sad for me to see her go, but it was good for her.”

For Cole, volunteering not only made an impact on her mentees and their families, but has changed her life and will influence how she practices medicine.

“Mentoring someone with a different background than my own enabled me to gain a new perspective,” Cole said. “I have been able to gain the trust of my mentees; they opened up to me about their often-difficult situations. The most important aspect of my job as a volunteer is to be a constant in the kids’ lives to help them overcome some of these adverse events. Medical school can isolate you, so I find going out into the community to be an insightful and rewarding experience.”


More than 200 students from all schools volunteered at 18 local organizations throughout TTUHSC campus communities, helping charities with everything from mentoring children to cooking and cleaning.



Caleigh Cole, second-year medical student, volunteers at Buckner International.

“I went to the Ronald McDonald House to help with cooking and cleaning,” said Tim Dixon, Student Government Association president and a second-year medical student. “When we first created the public post for ‘Day of Service,’ we had 100 students signed up to help in the first 24 hours. We maxed out the slots by the end of the week. The people and organizations are so thankful to the students who come to help. It is so easy to get caught up with school and the stress of grades. I believe this creates a residual effect that drives students to continue volunteering for more than just one day a year.”

Students interested in volunteering, Dixon said, should look to their peers’ experience working in the community, such as Cole’s, and how it has added value to their lives. He said it can make a difference in how physicians see their patients.

“To be a good physician isn’t all about knowing facts,” Dixon said. “What differentiates a good physician from a great physician is a person who empathizes and relates with people. It builds that humanity. The better you know your patients, the more you can help them. Volunteering is key to reminding us of why we entered health care.” 

Abilene Student Earns Second Place in ASHP Competition

Congratulations to Hayley Brazeale, a fourth-year pharmacy student at Abilene, who earned a second-place finish in the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' (ASHP) Fall 2017 New Drug Update competition.

The New Drug Update competition is a national clinical writing competition hosted by ASHP's Community and eCommunications Advisory Group. Participants are asked to write a report regarding specified newly approved medication. The biannual competition was held for the first time in March, but this was Brazeale's first time to participate.

The New Drug Update competition is open to pharmacy students throughout the country, and Brazeale said all ASHP student members were invited to compete.

"Competitions like this provide extra practice to develop the clinical skills we learned as a student," Brazeale said. "I like competing in these contests because they challenge me to strengthen and perfect the skills studied during school in order to work on improvement."



TTUHSC Receives St. Baldrick's Grant for Pediatric Cancer Research

TTUHSC will receive one of 39 infrastructure grants being awarded through the St. Baldrick's Foundation.

The 39 grants total \$2.2 million, and TTUHSC is receiving \$45,816.

C. Patrick Reynolds, MD, PHD, director of the School of Medicine Cancer Center and professor in the School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry and Department of Internal Medicine, is the principal investigator who will receive the funding.

"Childhood cancer is the No. 1 cause of death by disease of children in the United States, but receives only a tiny fraction of the funding devoted to adult cancers," Reynolds said. "St. Baldrick's provides grants to support childhood cancer research, and, in the case of the grant to TTUHSC, they support a clinical research associate (CRA) that is critical to our ability to enter patients into clinical trials.

"Our cancer center develops novel clinical trials for children with cancer, and the CRA, supported by St. Baldrick's, is part of a team that develops and makes those clinical trials available to children here and in many institutions across the country."

School of Nursing works with TTU to Create Course for Pre-Nursing Students

TTUHSC has collaborated with Texas Tech's College of Media & Communication to give nursing students the tools they need to communicate effectively in the health care industry.

In 2016, the School of Nursing faculty recognized that students coming into the traditional BSN program did not possess the necessary skills to communicate effectively with patients or other health care professionals. The concept, said Melanie Sarge, PhD, assistant professor for the College of Media & Communication, who helped create the course, is to show future nurses how to tailor messages so their patients can comprehend and adhere to treatments, becoming a partner in their health care.

Communications in Nursing was initially offered in fall 2017 as one section with 100 seats; however, the college expanded the course to 350 seats over three sections for spring 2018 because of high demand. An online option for pre-nursing students at other campuses is also available.

School of Nursing undergraduate advisor Sonia Moore, MEd, will be teaching one of the sections this spring.

"This course is designed to help them develop skills necessary to become quality nurses who will be empathetic toward their patients who are incapacitated and need assistance from others," Moore said. "I have included opportunities for students to hear directly from nurses who work in all areas of health care, including NICU, ER, OR and hospice."

El Paso Nursing Dean Novotny Celebrates Coming Retirement

Health care leaders from around El Paso came together in October to pay tribute to Jeanne M. Novotny, PhD, RN, as she retires from five years of service to the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing (GGHSON).

Novotny, who was recruited to the school by its namesake, Gayle Greve Hunt, is credited with improving a passing rate that was stuck in the mid-60s to the current rate of more than 90 percent.

“If I spent an hour describing what Dr. Novotny has done on campus, it still wouldn’t capture all that she has meant to us,” said TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA. “Jeanne brings gravitas; she brings experience; she brings wisdom. She has very good judgment with people, and she has surrounded herself with associate and assistant deans and faculty who are truly outstanding and have advanced the nursing school.”

After proposing a toast in recognition of her contributions to the nursing school, Lange gave Novotny a presidential plaque reserved for those who have served at the university for 20 years or more.

“You ask, ‘Why are we giving this to Jeanne?’” Lange said. “She’s taken 20 years of service and condensed it to five years. In this short period of time, she has put this nursing school on the map.”



Jeanne M. Novotny, PhD, RN, (middle) celebrates her upcoming retirement with Gayle Greve Hunt and TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA.

Novotny told the crowd she came to the GGHSON not knowing too much about the area, had never lived in the West and was looking forward to a “great adventure.”

“What I didn’t anticipate happening is meeting the wonderful people in the community,” Novotny said. “I didn’t anticipate falling in love with El Paso. I honestly can say I love this community.”

Though Novotny will remain at the school as the search for her replacement continues, she said she is looking forward to some long hiking treks in retirement.



First-place Texas Tech Fitness Challenge winner Rachel Lee races through a 250-meter row.

2,000 Attend West Health Fest at Texas Tech Physicians El Paso at Transmountain

The newest Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso clinic, Texas Tech Physicians El Paso at Transmountain, opened its doors to the public Sept. 9 for the West Health Fest. The free event, jointly hosted by Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso and TTUHSC El Paso, featured a fitness challenge, health screenings, cooking demos, Zumba and yoga classes, an inflatable obstacle course, and prizes.

The event highlight was the Texas Tech Fitness Challenge. Participants in the CrossFit-inspired workout were challenged to complete a 250-meter row, followed by six to eight tire flips, a sled pull (95 pounds for males, 65 pounds for females) and a set of burpees (15 reps for males, 10 reps for females). First- second- and third-place winners were selected based on the fastest times for each event.



To see more photos from the West Health Fest, visit TTUHSC El Paso’s Facebook page @TTUHSCPEP.

\$420,000 Grant Funds Study on What Makes Humans Susceptible to Zika

Haoquan Wu, PhD, associate professor in the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine, has received a two-year, \$420,000 grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) to study the mosquito-borne Zika virus.

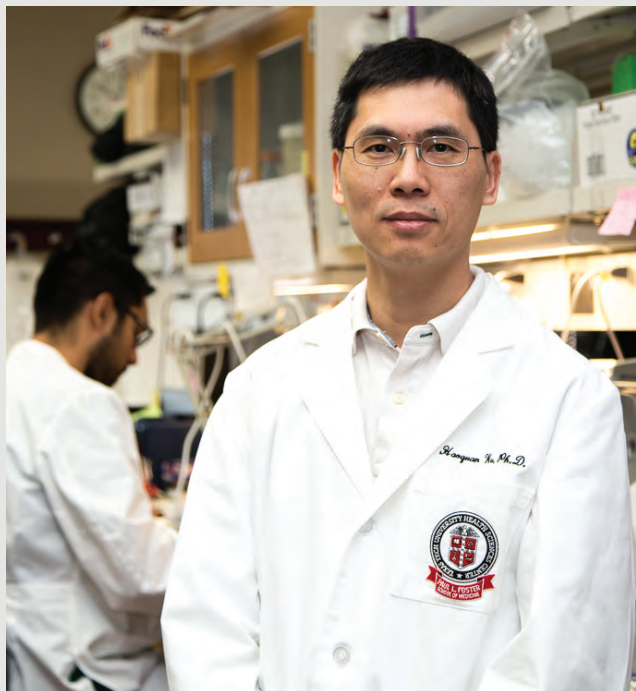
“Zika virus outbreaks pose a serious health challenge worldwide,” Wu said. “However, very little is known about this virus, including how it replicates and kills host cells.”

With the NIAID grant, Wu and his colleagues at TTUHSC El Paso will try to determine which human genes enable the virus to attack and kill human cells. To do this, Wu will conduct a genome-wide knockout screening—a process of elimination that specifically deactivates each gene in the human genome to identify the genes involved.

As each gene is deactivated, cells will be put to the test and infected with Zika. The cells that are able to resist and survive the virus’ attack will help identify the genes Zika is harnessing to survive in the human body.

“By deactivating one gene at a time, we hope to understand how the virus takes advantage of certain properties of human cells to aid the virus in multiplying and ultimately destroying our cells,” Wu said. “With this information, we then could develop specific and effective treatments to stop Zika.”

Wu and his team plan to use CRISPR-Cas9, a technology that allows scientists to deactivate genes, to conduct their work.



TTUHSC El Paso Launches Health Care Q&A Sessions

TTUHSC El Paso has launched a new initiative on social media called “The Exam Room.” The program leverages Facebook’s video feature, Facebook Live, to integrate health care professionals directly into the El Paso community through an online platform.

Each month, staff members in the Office of Institutional Advancement select a health care topic—such as cancer, prenatal care or the flu. A TTUHSC El Paso health care expert who specializes in the field is then invited to talk about the subject. The public can tune in at any time during the hour-long livestream and pose questions directly to the featured physician via Facebook Live’s comment box.

“The Exam Room” was created to build awareness about the expert health care specialists at TTUHSC El Paso. The sessions have been a hit with the community thus far, attracting an average of more than 600 views each.

“Not only does ‘The Exam Room’ get our physicians out there, but it also helps fulfill a genuine need for our community,” said Veronique Masterson, associate managing director for the Office of Institutional Advancement. “If we can help address even one individual’s worries or inquiries about illness, then ‘The Exam Room’ has done its job.”

Ogechika Alozie, MD, MPH, TTUHSC El Paso’s chief health informatics officer, right, answers questions about health IT in the December session of “The Exam Room.”

Texans Gather to Honor Officer Floyd East Jr.

On Oct. 17, hundreds of El Pasoans and other Texans from across the state gathered at El Paso's Abraham Chavez Theatre to honor fallen Texas Tech police officer Floyd East Jr.

Two days earlier in Lubbock, TTU and TTUHSC faculty, staff and students gathered to honor East with a memorial for his service and dedication to the university.

"We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family," said TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD. "We are thankful every day for our Texas Tech Police Department and all law enforcement personnel who keep our community safe."

East, a native of El Paso, died Oct. 9 in the line of duty. He served on the TTUHSC El Paso campus from December 2014 to April 2017 before transferring to the TTU campus in May to complete field training. He had plans to return to his hometown when a position became available at TTUHSC El Paso.

East was recognized as a hero who sacrificed his life while working to protect the TTU community.

"Every day our police officers walk out in the world knowingly risking their lives to ensure that our lives are protected," said TTUHSC El Paso President Richard Lange, MD, MBA. "There is really no greater act of selflessness than that."

During the memorial service, East was remembered as a loving father, husband and colleague. Family member Angie Escarciga described him as a witty and warm friend who excelled at carpentry, seafood boils and barbecuing, and enjoyed exhilarating activities like horror movies, skydiving and deep-sea diving.

She said East's favorite quote—popularly attributed to legendary author and thrill-seeker Hunter S. Thompson—was: "Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn-out and loudly proclaiming, 'Wow! What a Ride!'"

People paid their respects to East, with an overwhelming show of support from law enforcement agencies. Police officers traveled from as far as Chicago and New York, and from numerous cities across the state, including Austin, Corpus Christi, Galveston, Laredo, Lubbock, Marfa, Midland, Odessa and San Antonio.

Many of East's local comrades in uniform also attended, as well as representatives from the El Paso Border Patrol, County Sheriff's Office, Fire Department, Police Department and others who assembled to salute the East family as they entered the theater for the service.

"Thank you for all the resources you have provided to ease the stress of bringing Floyd home and laying him to rest," Escarciga told TTU System officials during the ceremony. "Raider community in Lubbock and El Paso, we love you. You have restored our faith in the goodness of humanity by your outpouring of love and support."

The service ended with a release of 1,000 blue and black balloons as a symbolic farewell to East. As directed by Gov. Greg Abbott, state entities across Texas lowered their flags to half-staff in his honor.



One thousand blue and black balloons are released in a symbolic farewell to fallen Texas Tech Police Officer Floyd East Jr. Below, TTU and TTUHSC students, faculty and staff gathered in Lubbock to honor East for his brave service.



JUST *The facts*



175 **TTUHSC** students from the schools of Nursing and Health Professions were published in the book, "Toy Guide for Therapeutic Play," showcased at the Interprofessional Toy Fair and Expo last fall. The book helps parents with their children's skill development.

19,000 service hours are provided by **TTUHSC El Paso** students to the community every year.



130 faculty, students and student families attended the **TTUHSC** 2017 Biomedical Sciences' Graduate Student and Faculty Retreat in Lubbock.

200,000

patients are served in **TTUHSC El Paso's** ambulatory clinics each year.



1,446 students were enrolled in School of Health Professions' programs offered on four **TTUHSC** campuses in fall 2017, making it one of the largest and most diverse health professions schools in Texas.

394,354 total pounds of recyclables are kept out of landfills, thanks to **TTUHSC El Paso's** Alan Nasits Go Green Recycling Program. For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/2Alhawc>.

