

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences  
2020 Commencement Ceremony



# Administration

## Board of Regents

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**Vice President/Chief People Officer**

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**Vice President/Chief Information Officer, Informational Technology**

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Tedd L. Mitchell, M.D.

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Steven Berk, M.D.

Michael Evans, Ph.D., RN, FAAN

Brandt Schneider, Ph.D.

Quentin Smith, Ph.D.

Steven Sawyer, Ph.D., PT

Billy U Philips, Jr., Ph.D., MPH

Min Kang, PharmD

Penny Harkey

Steven Sosland

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Vince Fell

Ashley Hamm

Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH

Afzal Siddiqui, Ph.D.

Sonya Castro-Quirino, MBA, MS

# Graduate School Administration

**Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Brandt Schneider, Ph.D.

**Senior Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Michael Blanton, Ph.D.

**Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Sanjay Srivastava, Ph.D.

**Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Susan Bergeson, Ph.D.

**Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Thomas Abbruscato, Ph.D.

**Associate Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Theresa Byrd, Dr.PH.

**Assistant Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Pamela Johnson, M.B.A.

**Assistant Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

Julie St-John, Dr.PH



## Oath of the Biomedical Scientist

I acknowledge that the mission of scientific research is a true and noble calling to discover truths that are hidden and to reveal wisdom yet unknown, always for the greater good.

I welcome the privilege and opportunity to join in this mission and to dedicate the talents that I have and the education that I have gained to this higher purpose. Moreover, I pledge to use this knowledge and wisdom I have achieved only for the improvements of life.

In this journey of discovery, I promise to always be honest, accurate and fair in all things and in all matter, and to always conduct my affairs with excellence and ambition.

# *Awards and Honors*

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences presents a Dean's Recognition Award, Outstanding Public Health Student Award and K. Wyatt McMahon Outstanding Graduate Student Award to the graduating students who best exemplify the many aspects of a scientist. A selection committee comprised of faculty and students review nominations based on educational merit, contributions to the institution, research funding and community service.

## **2020 Dean's Recognition Award—RACHEL WAGSTAFF & RACHAEL AKWII**

### *Past Recipients of the Dean's Recognition Award*

2019 Manuel Ramos

2018 James Bunch, M.S.

2017 Brandon Bradley, M.S.

2016 Joseph Martinez, M.S.

2015 Lillian Ene, M.S.

2014 William Hutton Jones, M.S.

2013 Kyle Miller, M.S.

2012 Joel Francis Aldrich, Ph.D.

2011 Sarah Renne Willis, M.S.

2010 Jennifer Hirsch, M.S.

2009 Sarjo Putrevu, M.S.

## **2020 Outstanding Public Health Student—BRITTANY DUHART**

### *Past Recipients of the Outstanding Public Health Student Award*

2018 Christine Lucio, M.P.H.

2016 Taylor Lenzmeier, M.P.H.

2017 Sarah Mende, M.P.H.

## **2020 K. Wyatt McMahon Outstanding Graduate Student Award—ALI SIFAT**

### *Past Recipients of the Outstanding Graduate Student Award*

2019 Dylan Meyer, Ph.D.

2018 Jeremy Thompson, M.D, Ph.D.

2017 Alok Ranjan, Ph.D.

2017 Monish Makena, Ph.D.

2016 Swapneeta Date, Ph.D.

2015 Nilesh Gupta, Ph.D.

2014 Shahriar Absar, Ph.D.

2013 Gurvinder Kaur, Ph.D.

2012 Prabodh Kumar Kandala, Ph.D.

2011 Vivek Gupta, Ph.D.

2010 Devin Blake Lowe, Ph.D.

2009 Chandan Mathew Thomas, Ph.D.

2008 Jennifer Rebecca Paulson, Ph.D.

2007 Ayman Hamouda, Ph.D.

# Doctoral Graduates

## *Biomedical Sciences*

**Timothy Brown**.....Biochemistry, Cellular & Molecular Biology  
Dissertation Title: Novel Mechanisms for Tumor-Cell Metabolite Lactic Acid in Promotion of Tumor Growth: Facilitation of Immune Evasion and Nutrition  
Mentor: Vadivel Ganapathy, Ph.D.

**Karl Mueller**.....Biochemistry, Cellular & Molecular Biology  
Dissertation Title: Using Genetically Engineered Immune Privileged Sertoli Cells Secreted C-Peptide to Treat Endothelial Cell Metabolic Imbalances in Hyperglycemic Environments  
Mentor: Jannette Dufour, Ph.D.

**Riccay Elizondo**.....Immunology & Infectious Diseases  
Dissertation Title: Tumor-Self Antigen D52 Vaccine Elicited CD8 T Cells with Regulatory Potential  
Mentor: Robert Bright, Ph.D.

**Antonia Stuebler** .....Translational Neuroscience & Pharmacology  
Dissertation Title: Structure, Assembly, Function, and Pharmacology of 5-Ht3 Receptors  
Mentor: Michaela Jansen, PharmD, Ph.D.

**Elham Pirayesh**.....Molecular Biophysics  
Dissertation Title: Assembly and Protein-Protein Interactions of the Intracellular Domain of 5-Ht3a Receptors  
Mentor: Michaela Jansen, PharmD, Ph.D.

# Doctoral Graduates

## *Pharmaceutical Sciences*

**Faisal Alamri**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Targeting Serotonergic and Adrenergic Systems for Motor Recovery After Ischemic Stroke in Mice

Mentor: Vardan T. Karamyan, Pharm. D., Ph.D.

**Thamer Albekairi**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Ischemic Brain transport and cerebrovascular protective properties of a potent opioid receptor agonist, biphalin

Mentor: Thomas Abbruscato, Ph.D.

**Yousuf Ali**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Cytokine-Stimulated iNOS Expression Requires Long-Chain Fatty Acyl-Coa Synthetase (Acsl) Activity

Mentor: Margaret T. Weis, Ph.D.

**Ahmed Alobaida**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Nitric Oxide Donors (NOD) and an Antimalarial Drug as a Combination Therapy for the Treatment of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

Mentor: Fakhrol Ahsan, Ph.D.

**Ekram Chowdhury**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: The Brain Uptake Kinetics of Small Molecule Markers with Low Passive Permeability

Mentor: Ulrich Bickel, M.D.

**Md. Anwar Hossain**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Design, synthesis, and in-vitro evaluation of molecular probes to inhibit quorum sensing of *P. aeruginosa* and Discovery of small-molecule ligands for kappa-opioid receptor

Mentor: Nadezhda German, Ph.D.

**Ali Keshavarz**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Microfluidic Chip-Based Models and Devices for the Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, Therapeutic Response in Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

Mentor: Thomas J. Abbruscato, Ph.D., Fakhrol Ahsan, Ph.D.

**Ali Sifat**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Effects of nicotine and electronic cigarette exposure on brain glucose utilization and injury outcome in adult and neonatal cerebral ischemia

Mentor: Thomas Abbruscato, Ph.D.

**Sreedhar Suthe**.....Pharmaceutical Sciences

Dissertation Title: Antibody-Drug-Conjugate Targeting RON Receptor Tyrosine Kinase as a Novel Therapeutic Approach for Eradication of Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Cells and Associated Cancer Stem-like Cells

Mentor: Ming-Hai Wang, Ph.D.

# *Master of Science Graduates*

## *Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences*

<b>Joey Almaguer</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Boone Coleman</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Roald Credo</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Alec Fulton</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Megh Gore</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Daemar Jones</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Parker McCabe</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Tijani Mohammed</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Ozman Ochoa</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Kenna Provost</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Jake Sellers</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Bridget Vories</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences
<b>Rachel Wagstaff</b> .....	Graduate Medical Sciences

## *Master of Science in Biotechnology*

<b>Megan Butler</b> .....	Biotechnology
<b>Benjamin Jackson</b> .....	Biotechnology
<b>Brian Johnson</b> .....	Biotechnology
<b>Hanvin (Tim) Kang</b> .....	Biotechnology
<b>Hannah Seah</b> .....	Biotechnology
<b>Colton Sniegowski</b> .....	Biotechnology

## *Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences*

<b>Racheal Akwii</b> .....	Pharmaceutical Sciences
<b>Nausheen Syeara</b> .....	Pharmaceutical Sciences
<b>Juan Valdez</b> .....	Pharmaceutical Sciences

# *Master of Public Health*

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<b>Kishor Bhende</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Jnev Biros</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Chelsea Castanuela</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Noah De La Cruz</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Brittany Duhart</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Rachel Farias</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Savannah Forsyth</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Kali Gentry</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Danielle Goss</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Samantha Guerra</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Julie Hamsa</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Bridget Haney</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Dena Helo</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Cirenio (CJ) Hurtado</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Nicole Keirse (Rios)</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Shanice Latham</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Sally Lutes</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Andres Martinez-Marin</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Joan Mathew</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Tyler Maylone</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Sidonie Ngangmi</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Domitien Nibizi</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Ashley Roest</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Kelsey Rosenberger (Sinor)</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Dixon Santana-Aponte, MD</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Brittane Schaake</b> .....	Public Health



# *Master of Public Health*

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<b>Obadeh Shabaneh</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Abbey Sitton</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Kelsey Sprinkles</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Justin Alexander Sudduth</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Aksha Upadhyay</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Nathan Villalpando</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Benjamin Willingham</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Robyn Wood (Devora)</b> .....	Public Health
<b>Amber Zickefoose</b> .....	Public Health

# *Master of Public Health*

## *Public Health Oath*

Health is a human right. The public health community exists to safeguard that right. I believe it is a defining element of a civil society. Public health represents the collective actions necessary to protect the health of all people. Through prevention science and practice we can accomplish this goal. As a public health professional, guided by these principles, I declare the following:

**I will** work to ensure that people have the chance to live full and productive lives, free from avoidable disease and disability and supported in their pursuit of physical, mental, and social well-being.

**I will** hold myself to the highest ethics, standards, values, and responsibilities as I move forward the science and practice of public health.

**I will** respect the rights, values, beliefs, and cultures of those individuals and communities with whom I work.

**I will** rely on evidence to support my decisions and actions, and translate that evidence into policies and programs that improve health for all.

**I will** add to the body of research and knowledge and share my discoveries freely.

**I will** continuously seek new information and be open to ideas that can better protect and promote the health of populations.

**I will** advance health literacy for all and seek equity and justice for vulnerable populations.

With this oath, I commit to the ideals and mission of public health.