J. Thomas Cunningham
Associate Dean for Research, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences
Regents Professor, Department of Physiology and Anatomy
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Tom is originally from East St. Louis, IL and received his undergraduate training at Eastern Illinois University (BA in Psychology, 1982).He developed an interest in neuroscience and started graduate school at the University of Iowa right after graduation. After completing an MA and PhD in Biological Psychology, Tom went to McGill University for postdoctoral training to learn neurophysiology From Leo Renaud MD. PhD. He helped Leo move his lab from McGill to the University of Ottawa when Leo accepted an administrative position as an Institute Director.

After returning to the University of Iowa, Tom began his first faculty position in the Department of Physiology at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine in 1995. While at Mizzou, Tom worked as part of a multidisciplinary group that studied the neurohumoral influences in cardiovascular disease at the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Institute. He also was Block Director for the neuroscience course for first year medical students. In 2003, Tom was recruited to the Department of Pharmacology and Neuroscience at UT Health San Antonio and became part of another multidisciplinary team that was awarded a Program Project Grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. He chaired the Committee for Graduate Studies for his Department and helped the Department transition from a department -based graduate program to an umbrella program.

In 2009, Tom joined the Department of Integrative Physiology at the University of North Texas in Fort Worth as Professor and Director of the Cardiovascular Research Institute. His responsibilities as Institute Director included administering seed grant program to foster collaborative research and community outreach. In 2016, Tom was named a Regents Professor based partly on his post tenure review evaluation. In 2017, Tom became Interim Associate Dean for Research and served on the President’s Council for Research which included working on task forces that worked on faculty compensation and space utilization. He has also served as Interim Dean and Interim Chair of the Department of Physiology and Anatomy before transitioning back into his current position.

Tom’s laboratory studies the role of the central nervous system in body fluid homeostasis and blood pressure regulation. They have conducted this type of research with continuous funding from NIH since 1995. Our long-term goal is to determine how changes in CNS network function contribute to chronic pathophysiological states such as hypertension. He collaborates with investigators from UT Health San Antonio, Boston University, and McGill University. Tom has been active in reviewing grants for the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health and served as chair of a standing NIH study section (Neuroendocrinology, Neuroimmunology, Rhythms, and Sleep).He belongs to the American Physiological Society, the Society for Neuroscience, the American Heart Association, the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics, and the Pan-American Neuroendocrine Society.

His wife Rebecca is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in UNT System College of Pharmacy. Rebecca is an NIH funded neuroendocrinologist who studies sex differences in neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s Disease. She and Tom work together on an NIH funded project. They share three adult children. Their daughter Kate lives in Denton with her husband Andrew. She works full time in a bank and makes and sells jewelry. Their sons, Sean and Shayne, live in Fort Worth. Sean is currently working as a contractor for a healthcare related call center and Shayne is a part-time research technician in laboratory that studies stem cells.