



OPENING NEW DOORS

2022-2023



OPENING NEW DOORS

The past ten years of the UCR School of Medicine was all about opening new doors — by working towards better access to healthcare in Inland Southern California, by granting mission awards to nearly 200 medical students, by making breakthrough discoveries in research, and by establishing five clinics with UCR Health.

This year, on our 10th anniversary, we celebrate our history of mission-driven milestones while looking to the future as we open the doors to our Education Building II, which will drive us forward in our mission to train a culturally diverse physician workforce and create clinical and research programs to serve the population of Inland Southern California.

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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR AND DEAN



The past year saw new growth, achievements, and recognition for the UC Riverside School of Medicine as we approached our 10th anniversary.

I'm proud to share that the School of Medicine ranked No. 5 for diversity in U.S. News & World Report's 2023-2024 Best Grad School rankings, and No. 4 for diversity among public schools. This achievement highlights the success of our mission to train a diverse workforce of physicians to serve the Inland Empire.

The School of Medicine also received the 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. The award recognizes our Medical Leaders of Tomorrow program for its achievements in preparing underrepresented students in their pursuit of STEM fields. Besides improving diversity in STEM, Medical Leaders of Tomorrow and our school's other Pathway Programs help local students work toward medical careers, another successful area contributing to our goal of developing a robust group of physicians committed to our region.

In fact, this year 64 students graduated from the School of Medicine, with 73% planning to serve Inland Southern California during their residency. Of the class of 2023, 85% will focus on primary care and other much-needed healthcare areas for the Inland Empire. Our residency and fellowship programs also saw 50 students complete their training in a variety of needed specialties.

Our faculty and students have directly impacted community health throughout the year with community clinics, health outreach programs, and innovative research. On the clinical side, UCR Health continues to grow while focusing on the specific health needs of Inland Southern California residents.

The School of Medicine had many accomplishments this past year, and we have even more to look forward to in the year ahead.

This fall, we will celebrated the grand opening of the School of Medicine Education Building II, a building whose construction we've watched for the past two years though it was in the works for far longer. The new space will allow us to expand each class to 125 medical students while providing specialized teaching spaces, study facilities, and student support areas.

Next May, the UCR School of Medicine will also host the 2024 Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Western Group on Educational Affairs (WGEA) Spring Conference to promote excellence in medical education alongside our colleagues from across the west coast.

Throughout 2023 we have been celebrating the first decade of the School of Medicine, reflecting on our past and present while looking forward to our future. These themes are reflected throughout this report, and I look forward to celebrating the remainder of our anniversary year.

Deborah Deas, M.D., M.P.H.
Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences
Mark and Pam Rubin Dean



BY THE NUMBERS

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

32 PhD students/candidates

16 MS students

MEDICAL STUDENTS

341 MD students **39%** First in family to complete college

51% Ties to the Inland Empire **39%** Underrepresented in medicine

60% Disadvantaged background

PATHWAY PROGRAMS

2100+ Pre-med students reached by pathways

122 Matriculated at UCR School of Medicine

FACULTY & STAFF

64 Biomedical Sciences faculty*

385 Clinical faculty

486 Staff employees

1419 Community-based clinical faculty

TRAINING SITES**

111 LACE sites

87 Clerkship sites

EXTRAMURAL FUNDING

\$18.5M Research grants awarded

\$5.02M In philanthropic gifts

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

127 Residents & Fellows (UCR School of Medicine sponsored programs)

UCR HEALTH CLINICAL CARE

46,016 Total patient visits (Excluding hospital patients)

7316 New patients in FY 2023

All numbers presented are as of the end of the 2021-2022 academic year.

* Biomed faculty includes affiliated faculty from across UCR

** There are community partners who support us in both LACE and clerkship training; many are represented in both numbers displayed.



UCR SOM CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 2013, the UCR School of Medicine has worked to fulfill its mission of improving the health of the people of Inland Southern California. Built off the legacy of the UCR/UCLA Thomas Haider Program in Biomedical Sciences, the school is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2023 after graduating nearly 400 medical doctors.

Currently, the School of Medicine is home to a diverse group of over 300 aspiring physicians and researchers, many with personal connections and

a lasting commitment to the area. A brand new education building and the innovative Center for Simulated Patient Care help provide a first-class medical education for the region's future physicians. Alongside the graduate medical education program, the UCR Health clinical group, the Biomedical Sciences researchers and students, and a variety of education and pipeline programs, the school continues to grow and increase its impact on the region's medically underserved.

10 FACTS – THE BUILDING OF OUR MEDICAL SCHOOL

This year may mark 10 years since our school first accepted medical students, but the journey to opening our doors is a rich history of campus and community efforts that date back to 1974.

SEE OUR HISTORICAL TIMELINE AT medschool.ucr.edu/history



01 Before the UCR School of Medicine opened its doors, medical students came to UCR since 1974 as part of the UCR/UCLA Program in Biomedical Sciences, which was backed by Dr. Thomas and Mrs. Salma Haider in 1997.

02 In 1999, the FastStart residential summer bridge program for entering freshmen was established. This program is still one of our school's pathway programs to this day.

03 The foundation of our school's mission was built in 2002, when the JW Vines Medical Society lobbied the California State Legislature to mandate structural and curricular changes to the UCR/UCLA Thomas Haider Program.



04 In 2003, UCR's then-Chancellor France A. Córdova appointed leaders to begin planning for a four-year medical school in response to forecasts of a severe physician shortage in rapidly growing Inland Southern California.

05 Longtime friends and advocates of our school Mark and Pam Rubin designated funds from a campus gift to endow the chair of the founding dean for the proposed UCR School of Medicine in 2006.

06 Phyllis A. Guze, MD led 80 campus and community leaders to develop the final medical school proposal which was unanimously approved by the UCR Academic Senate in 2008.



07 The School of Medicine Research Building opened in March 2011; Education Building I opened in 2012.

08 In 2011, our school's initial accreditation was denied due to concerns about the state's ability to provide funding, but we were granted preliminary accreditation in October 2012 after getting alternative financial backing from private donors, local government and the UC system.

09 In 2013, State Senator Richard Roth and Assemblyman Jose Medina introduced measures to appropriate \$15 million per year in state funds for the UCR School of Medicine.

10 The White Coat Ceremony for the School of Medicine's inaugural class, held in 2013, was hosted in the Orbach Library, with the reception held immediately outside Education Building I.

WGEA 2024 RIVERSIDE California

WGEA CONFERENCE COMING TO UC RIVERSIDE

The UC Riverside School of Medicine will host the 2024 WGEA Spring Conference on May 4-7, 2024 in Downtown Riverside.

“We are so excited to welcome the WGEA to Riverside in 2024,” said Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education Pablo Joo. “It will be a great opportunity for our colleagues from across the western region to see what we have here at UCR.”

The announcement was made on the last day of the 2023 conference, which was held in Honolulu, HI.

Hosted by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the conference is one of four regional groups that strives to promote excellence in the continuum of medical education by fostering the professional development of medical educators and advancing research in medical education. It is open to all faculty, staff, and learners involved in medical education.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONFERENCE CAN BE FOUND AT [MEDSCHOOL.UCR.EDU/WGEA24](https://medschool.ucr.edu/wgea24)

Pictured: Construction of Education Building II taking place behind Education Building I.



ADVANCEMENT

Featured: Education Building II nears completion in Spring 2023 and is set to open later in the year.



LIVE CONSTRUCTION CAM FROM JUNE 30, 2023



LIVE CONSTRUCTION CAM FROM JULY 1, 2022



EDUCATION BUILDING II CONSTRUCTION NEARS FINISHING TOUCHES

By the end of the 2023 academic year, the School of Medicine Education Building II was already closely resembling the renders chosen by our school's working group in early 2021.

At this point, the idea of faculty and staff soon moving in felt like more of a reality, and the exciting possibilities that the new study and classroom space would bring for our students and mission felt closer than ever. This excitement now accompanied anticipation for the building's Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, scheduled for September 26, and the Grand Opening, which is to be combined with the school's 10th Anniversary Celebration at the annual fall gala on October 21.

"THIS [BUILDING] WILL TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL FOR SURE. THERE WILL BE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO WORK TOGETHER."

— ANDRE-PHILIPPE SAM,
CLASS OF 2026

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

With the opening of the new medical Education Building II, there comes a variety of opportunities to support the growth of the UCR School of Medicine (SOM) via naming opportunities for rooms, facilities, and even entire buildings. This cutting-edge new facility will allow the SOM to eventually expand to 500 students and increase our ability to graduate more doctors working in Inland Southern California.

The School of Medicine has open naming opportunities in the new Education Building II, the Center for Simulated Patient Care (CSPC), the SOM Research Building, and the Education Building I.

Most recently, spaces in the CSPC were named after donors Teresa and Byron Pollitt and Dr. Joseph Sison '85.

"Naming a space after a family member or loved one is a great way to leave a legacy and support our continuing mission to improve healthcare in Inland Southern California," said Edna Yohannes, executive director of development for the School of Medicine. "We hope to have more people join us as we enter a robust new era of growth and diversity in academic medicine."

To learn more about philanthropic opportunities, contact our advancement team by email at development@medsch.ucr.edu.

"IT'S LIKE AN EMPHASIS ON HOW UCR CARES FOR ITS STUDENTS AND LISTENS TO FEEDBACK. WE'VE DEFINITELY NEEDED THIS BUILDING."

— SOPHIA POTALIVO,
CLASS OF 2026



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE RANKED NO. 5 FOR DIVERSITY IN US NEWS & WORLD REPORT

“IT FEELS GREAT TO BE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST MEDICAL SCHOOLS FOR DIVERSITY.”

UC Riverside’s School of Medicine ranked No. 5 (tie) for diversity in U.S. News & World Report’s 2023-2024 Best Grad School rankings, released on May 11. Among public schools, the medical school ranked No. 4 for diversity. This year improved the medical school’s 2022-2023 ranking of No. 11 (tie) for diversity.

“As we celebrate our 10th anniversary this year, it feels great to be nationally recognized as one of the best medical schools for diversity,” said Deborah Deas, MD, MPH vice chancellor of health sciences and the Mark and Pam Rubin Dean of the UCR School of Medicine. “We

take great pride in our mission to train a diverse physician workforce throughout Inland Southern California.”

The School of Medicine enrolled a student population of nearly 37% from underrepresented minority communities in fall 2022. The school’s diversity ranking validates its many signature diversity efforts, including the Health Equity, Social Justice, and Anti-Racism (HESJAR) curriculum thread, the Designated Emphasis in Medical Spanish (HABLAMoS) program, and the Program in Medical Education (PRIME).

READ THE FULL STORY AT atu.cr/yirdiversity



TWO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FACULTY ELECTED TO NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE

On October 17, 2022, the School of Medicine received word that two faculty members had been honored with election into the National Academy of Medicine (NAM).

Vice Chancellor and Dean Deborah Deas and Mario Sims, PhD, MS, FAHA, a professor in the medical school’s Department of Social Medicine were welcomed into the academy, considered one of the highest national honors in health and medicine.

Deas was recognized for her research in adolescent substance abuse treatment and mental health. She has been a leader in medical education, diversity, and inclusion efforts, significantly increasing underrepresented students, faculty, and

staff in medicine at the UCR School of Medicine.

Sims has made pioneering contributions to understanding cardiovascular disease disparities, particularly among African American individuals. His research delves into the influence of racism, stress, and psychosocial factors on health disparities.

They join other esteemed NAM members at UCR, making it a total of 90 regular members and 10 international members elected during this annual meeting, bringing NAM’s total membership to over 2,200.

READ THE FULL STORY AT atu.cr/yirnam



CELEBRATION OF MEDICAL EDUCATION RETURNS IN PERSON

Our fifth annual Celebration of Medical Education Gala returned as an in-person event with nearly 200 community members, staff, faculty and students coming together at the Riverside Convention Center on Nov. 19, 2022.

It was the first in-person gathering since 2019, with the 2020 and 2021 versions being held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s very rewarding to see that each year we are expanding our community of supporters for Mission Award Scholarships. For the first time since the pandemic, it was thrilling to host our donors and medical students in person and witness the excitement of fellowship with each other in the room. The Mission Awards

Scholarship program has grown exponentially with a total of 151 scholarship recipients thus far since the inception of the medical school almost 10 years ago. We’re grateful for all of our donors’ ongoing support and commitment to expanding medical care in the Inland Empire,” said Edna Yohannes, executive director of development for the School of Medicine.

First year medical student Arturo Chavez, the recipient of the 2021 Gala Mission Award Scholarship, provided the keynote address, telling the story of his path to a career in medicine. MS2 Aliyah Qurashi and MS3 Danae Bowen, past recipients of the Mission Award, were also featured in a short video in which they reflected on the importance of the award.

The Mission Award Scholarship Endowed Fund is one of the many efforts that the School of Medicine uses to deliver on its mission. The award offsets the cost of two or four years of tuition and fees for medical school for select mission-fit students who agree to serve in the Inland Empire after they complete their post-MD training. There are currently about 151 students who have received the Mission Award.



VIEW THE MISSION AWARD VIDEO AT youtu.be/rweExdfF2sM



POLLITTS ESTABLISH FIRST SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MISSION AWARD SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWED FUND

Teresa and Byron Pollitt donated a gift of \$250,000 to establish the first endowed Mission Award Scholarship at the UCR School of Medicine.

“As we grow this fund, it will make a profound impact on the retention of a diverse physician workforce in Inland Southern California and will continue to challenge other donors to contribute,” said Deborah Deas, vice chancellor for health sciences and the Mark and Pam Rubin Dean of the School of Medicine. “Currently, our region faces an acute physician shortage that this fund directly addresses.”

The gift also offered a match challenge to attract new donors and gifts in support of the fund that was matched dollar for dollar by the Pollitts.

In recognition of the Pollitts’ support, five spaces in the medical school’s Center for Simulated Patient Care — the Simulated Emergency, Simulated Intensive Care Unit, Simulated Obstetrics/ Gynecology, Simulated Operating, and Simulation Monitoring rooms — have been named after them to recognize their philanthropy.

“We were both so impressed with the School of Medicine’s commitment to hands-on-training, which really came to life in the simulation labs,” the Pollitts said in a statement. “This type of preparation will most certainly be a hallmark of UCR-trained physicians.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT development@medsch.ucr.edu



EDUCATION

Featured: The School of Medicine welcomes its 10th class of medical students at the 2022 White Coat Ceremony.



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE WELCOMES 10TH COHORT

The UCR School of Medicine welcomed 81 new medical students and 11 new biomedical sciences students at the annual White Coat Ceremony, held Friday, August 5, 2022 at the Riverside Municipal Auditorium.

This was the 10th White Coat Ceremony in the school's history and marked the first time that it has been held off campus. It was also the first ceremony since 2019 to be held without any pandemic-related attendance restrictions.

Javier Sanchez, MD, president of the San Bernardino County Medical Society and a family medicine doctor at Kaiser Permanente in Redlands, provided the keynote address.

Sanchez, who is also a member of the SOM's clinical faculty, lauded the school for the difference it is making in Inland Southern California and commended the students for choosing to be part of it.

"The UCR School of Medicine isn't just talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion, but they are delivering on it," Sanchez said. "You should be very proud to be part of the UCR School of Medicine community, because you will shape the future of the Inland Empire for generations to come."

The new class includes 32 students from groups underrepresented in medicine, 49 from socioeconomically or educationally disadvantaged groups, and 32 who are the first in their family to complete college. Overall, the School of Medicine's total class size increased to 327 medical students, 42 biomedical sciences PhD students, and 26 master's degree students.



97% MATCH RATE

73%

REMAINING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

42%

REMAINING IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

85% MATCHED IN PRIMARY CARE & IE SHORTAGE SPECIALTIES

- 15 FAMILY MEDICINE
 - 11 EMERGENCY MEDICINE
 - 8 INTERNAL MEDICINE
 - 6 PSYCHIATRY
 - 4 GENERAL SURGERY
 - 2 PEDIATRICS
 - 1 OB/GYN
-
- 4 ANESTHESIOLOGY
 - 4 DERMATOLOGY
 - 2 OPHTHALMOLOGY
 - 2 ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY
 - 2 TRANSITIONAL
 - 1 CHILD NEUROLOGY
 - 1 RADIOLOGY



CLASS OF 2023 MEDICAL STUDENTS

The School of Medicine Class of 2023 gathered on March 17 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Ontario Airport to join medical schools across the west to simultaneously learn where they will be spending the next portion of their medical training. The class received a 97% match rate, with 42% remaining in the Inland Empire and 73% staying in Southern California. In all, 85% matched to primary care and shortage areas.

The 64 members of the class received their medical degree on June 2 at the school's seventh Commencement and Hippocratic Oath Ceremony. The event was

highlighted by words from keynote speaker Peter Igarashi, MD, dean of Stony Brook University Renaissance School of Medicine and a member of the inaugural UCR/UCLA Biomedical Sciences program that was the forebearer of the UCR School of Medicine, as well as student speaker Patrick Samones, MD.

READ ABOUT MATCH DAY AT atu.cr/yirmatchday



VIEW THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AT atu.cr/yircommencement



BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES CLASS OF 2023

On Saturday, June 3, 2023, the UC Riverside Graduate Division held its commencement ceremony to mark the completion of graduate education for 11 PhD members of the School of Medicine's Division of Biomedical Sciences, along with graduate students from other schools across campus. Two weeks later on Tuesday, June 20, the program's 12 MS graduates celebrated their commencement at the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences ceremony.

This year was the first year that our program graduated masters students in addition to the usual doctorate-only classes.

PHD GRADUATES

- Bryant Avalos Leyva
- Trevor Biddle
- Shyleen Frost
- Jeffrey Koury
- Rogelio Nunez Flores
- Ogadinma Kingsley Okakpu
- Kathy Pham
- Rebecca Ruggiero
- Samantha Sutley
- Stefanie Sveiven
- Pedro Villa

MS GRADUATES

- Moyinoluwa Ajayi
- Sumaya Troy Alaama
- Loic Ciamposin
- Shane Erickson
- Ana Garza-Granados
- Amritpal "Amrit" Jalf
- Sirajan Kamara
- Akash Lalka
- Oluwadara Ogundare
- Maxine Ortega
- Brandon Bernardo Tan
- William Tiessen



VIEW THE PHD COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AT youtu.be/b1fNWUur6T8



VIEW THE MS COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY AT youtube.com/watch?v=_vj7-gYmvdg





USING (NOT BANNING) CHATGPT IN SCHOOLS

UCR researcher Daniel Novak is creating a set of guidelines to facilitate ChatGPT's use as an educational tool.

As a researcher in the educational

technology space, Daniel Alexander Novak, PhD, assistant clinical professor in health sciences and director of scholarly activities at UC Riverside, has frequently heard that a new technology will change the world. He's often been disappointed. But in late December last year, he pulled up OpenAI's ChatGPT on a whim while watching Netflix.

"I was amazed really out of the gate with its ability to both understand and answer fairly esoteric questions related to my research," he said of the program, which provides human-like responses to text queries based on a language model and can be used to write everything from code to song lyrics in a variety of styles. "The more I worked with it, the more I understood that it was really a powerful tool."

CREATING CHATGPT GUIDELINES

Novak uses ChatGPT for his research and is now teaching his students to use it, too. He said that ChatGPT may help students explore research questions and evaluate their papers before submitting them for grading, among other uses.

Despite ChatGPT's potential for benefiting education, though, Novak recognizes that it can also be used unethically — an issue that has caused ChatGPT to be banned at many schools. These issues include plagiarism by students submitting content written by ChatGPT as their own or students using ChatGPT to reword someone else's work.

Understanding that students would find ChatGPT on their own, making it futile to try to block it, Novak is creating guidelines and teaching students to use ChatGPT within well-defined boundaries. The principles include:

ACCOUNTABILITY: The user is responsible for the consequences of using ChatGPT, including any inaccurate information it provides.

BENEFICENCE: ChatGPT and similar tools should be used in a way that advances the public good without advancing biases.

CREATIVITY: Use of the tool should promote new ideas and approaches.

DEVOLUTION: Individuals, including instructors, editors, and others, should have a say in how these tools are used in their courses or other areas.

ETHICALITY: The user should follow existing rules and policies when using ChatGPT and other tools.

"THE MORE I WORKED WITH IT, THE MORE I UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS REALLY A POWERFUL TOOL."

CHATGPT'S FUTURE POTENTIAL

With ChatGPT likely to become a "universal issue" in education at all levels and even the corporate world, Novak hopes schools adopt and add to policies and include student and faculty

input in the process. "It's better to do that now than to wind up in a situation where we have students brought before professionalism boards," he said. "And it's also better than finding out they're surreptitiously using it in some way that we don't know about."

Novak noted that fear around ChatGPT distracts from its potential. "There are major ethical issues and challenges, but ultimately, as with many other technologies in the past, this is going to be a real net positive for the way we teach and the way we learn," he said. "The sooner we can get people into that mindset, the sooner we can both identify dangers, of course, but also identify real benefits."



COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO FIRST CALIFORNIA MEDICINE SCHOLARS PROGRAM

This year, the UC Riverside School of Medicine welcomed its first class of California Medicine Scholars: 37 community college students from across Inland Southern California who

are receiving tailored academic support on their path to medical school. The inaugural class is part of a new state-funded effort, the California Medicine Scholars Program, or CMSP, to diversify the primary care physician workforce and respond to looming shortages in the health workforce.

Almost 45% of Californians have insufficient access to a primary care physician, and only 17% of medical students come from underrepresented groups. CMSP, which is administered as one of the medical school's Pathway Programs, is a key part of the state's strategy to close a projected shortfall of more than 4,000 primary care physicians by 2030. It will help address

widening disparities in access to care in rural and underserved communities by expanding the number of physicians from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine, who are more likely to practice in rural and low-income areas where physician shortages are most acute.

"Starting this spring, this program [began] providing these new scholars with opportunities they might never have had to put themselves on the path to medical school — and, ultimately, to work as physicians in California," said Rowena Robles, executive director of CMSP.

The scholars are provided a range of advising, internship, and volunteer healthcare experiences through a Regional Hub of Healthcare Opportunity, or RHHO, based at the UC Riverside medical school. They also receive support such as mentoring and networking opportunities with medical professionals and medical school students. CMSP's four RHHOs include community colleges, along with universities, medical schools, community health clinics and community-based organizations that collaborate to provide greater pre-med opportunities for students.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT atu.cr/yirscholars

READ THE FULL CHATGPT ARTICLE AT atu.cr/yirchatgpt

A LIFELONG PURSUIT OF HEALTH JUSTICE

Dr. Bajwa's career has focused on increasing health equity through a variety of educational and community initiatives.

For UC Riverside's LACE program director, Moazzum Bajwa, MD, MPH, working as a family medicine physician and advocate comes down to one simple question: "How do you use the skills and resources that you have to make an impact at the one-on-one level and at that larger community level in a meaningful way?"

This question has informed his entire professional life. After earning a master's degree in public health, completing internships at community health centers, and teaching middle school to directly impact his community, Bajwa decided to pursue his "first love" of public health and became a physician.

CREATING STUDENT LEADERS WHO HELP THE COMMUNITY

Bajwa now serves as an assistant clinical professor of medical sciences and director of the Longitudinal Ambulatory Care Experience (LACE) at UCR. The program, a core part of the UCR School of Medicine curriculum, pairs first- through third-year medical students with primary care physicians in the region to provide hands-on experience, connect students to the community, and foster mentorship.

"My ultimate goal is to have future physicians who understand what it means not just to care for a patient, but [...] feel comfortable that they have the skills to advocate for or intervene on behalf of some of the structural determinants of health," said Bajwa.

As the faculty advisor for UCR's Inland Empire Street Medicine program, Bajwa also guides students in providing high-quality care for unhoused populations while gaining leadership experience. "The philosophy behind street medicine, as a nationwide movement, is doing what you can, where you can, with who you can," he said.

FINDING BALANCE

In all his work with students and on community initiatives (including arranging monthly food box deliveries to his clinic, the RUHS Moreno Valley Community Health Center, to counter food insecurity), Bajwa still prioritizes his individual patients. "That very precious one-on-one patient interaction is what I hold most sacred," he said.

Now, he wants to help his students achieve the same balance he struggled to find. "I desperately want to be able to share that with students who may be going through that same difficulty, and help them connect those larger themes with their individual patients," he said.

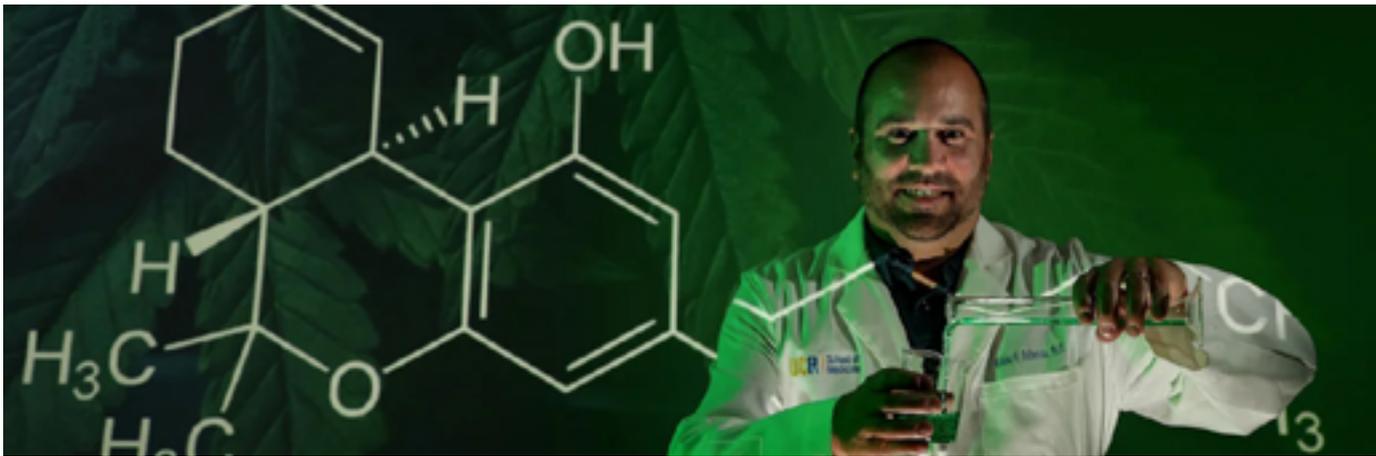


"THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND STREET MEDICINE, AS A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT, IS DOING WHAT YOU CAN, WHERE YOU CAN, WITH WHO YOU CAN."



RESEARCH

Featured: Research at new center led by Nicholas V. DiPatrizio, PhD will focus on the health impact of cannabis use (page 22).



DIPATRIZIO FOUNDS NEW CENTER FOCUSED ON CANNABINOID RESEARCH

One of the newest research centers at UC Riverside will turn its focus to cannabinoids, the chemical in marijuana that mimics naturally produced chemicals in the body called endocannabinoids.

The Center for Cannabinoid Research (UCRCCR) was founded by Associate Professor

of Biomedical Sciences Nicholas V. DiPatrizio, PhD. The center is housed in the School of Medicine, but includes a multidisciplinary cadre of research faculty from across the campus.

“UCRCCR will be a central hub for collaborative studies aimed at improving our understanding of roles for the endocannabinoid system in health and disease, and the impact that cannabis use has on these processes,” DiPatrizio said. “This work requires a highly multi-disciplinary approach, which is inherent in our participating faculty’s research programs and will ensure success at the interface of translating cannabinoid-related biomedical knowledge to clinical application.”

The endocannabinoid system (ECS) was discovered in the 1990’s and the research field is still in its infancy. Everyone has some naturally occurring endocannabinoids in their bodies, and the network of receptors controls the levels and activities of other

neurotransmitters, regulating the functions of our bodies. The ECS receptors in the brain outnumber all other receptors.

Cannabis plants contain a variety of unique cannabinoid chemicals including delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD), which interact with the ECS. THC is the chemical that is responsible for the intoxicating effects of cannabis, while CBD has no intoxicating qualities and is being investigated as a means to treat conditions like chronic pain, inflammation, depression, and anxiety.

“It’s a very exciting time for cannabinoid research,” DiPatrizio said. “Cannabis is rapidly becoming legalized across the United States for medicinal and recreational purposes, with 37 states (and Washington D.C.) to date having laws for medicinal use and 19 for recreational use. There are large gaps, however, in our understanding of how cannabis use impacts health and disease. UCRCCR was developed to advance our knowledge in this area and to do so in an unbiased manner unaffected by dogmas and stigmas that have plagued cannabinoid research for decades.”

In addition to biomedical sciences research, center members are investigating topics including adolescent substance abuse, cannabis policy, the role of endocannabinoids in the regulation of voluntary exercise and physical activity, the regulation of the intestinal barrier function by endocannabinoids, and pest management practices.

DEMYSTIFYING CANNABIS RESEARCH

DiPatrizio may be one of the few people who have been featured in the Los Angeles Times, multiple high-profile research journals including Science Direct, and the cannabis-culture magazine *Head*. But considering his role as one of the nation’s foremost experts in cannabinoids, which are chemicals in cannabis (marijuana) that mimic naturally produced chemicals in the body called endocannabinoids, his popularity across these diverse outlets becomes clear.

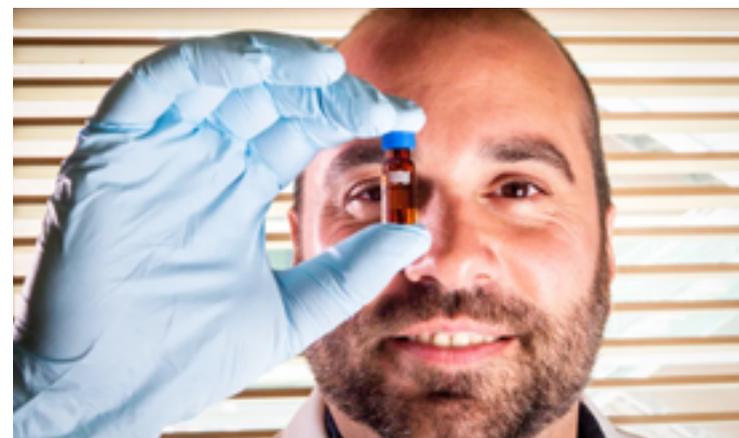
While there can be a stigma about cannabis-based research, it’s plain that DiPatrizio takes his work seriously, treating all audiences equally.

“I try to provide a high-altitude view of the biology of the endocannabinoid system and the consequences of cannabis interactions with this system in health and disease,” he said. “I ask myself, ‘Would my mother understand what I am explaining?’”

“We should always form our opinions as citizens and base our hypotheses and interpretations of data as scientists on the most current scientific knowledge,” he said. “This can, of course, be challenging with all the misinformation and lingering stigma surrounding cannabis.”

DiPatrizio was the recipient of the UCR School of Medicine’s first ever cannabis grant in 2019 and, in 2022, opened the UCRCCR. The center is made up of scientists and clinicians from across

“I ASK MYSELF,
‘WOULD MY MOTHER
UNDERSTAND WHAT I
AM EXPLAINING?’”



campus who are using holistic approaches to investigate not just the biochemical aspects of cannabinoids and endocannabinoids, but also a wide variety of other cannabis-based topics including psychological and public health-related topics.

One of the challenges for anyone doing research in cannabis is that while the drug is legal for both recreational and medicinal use in the state of California, the federal government still classifies it as a schedule 1 drug with no currently accepted medical use.

“There are a variety of challenges [...] including difficulty in acquiring cannabis and its related chemicals for study, and the enormous red tape and restrictions in performing the studies,” DiPatrizio said.

He added that the Drug Enforcement Agency is likely to consider whether to move cannabis to a schedule 3 classification, meaning that it would be considered to have a currently accepted medical use, within the next year. It would still be regulated, but would be easier for researchers to study.

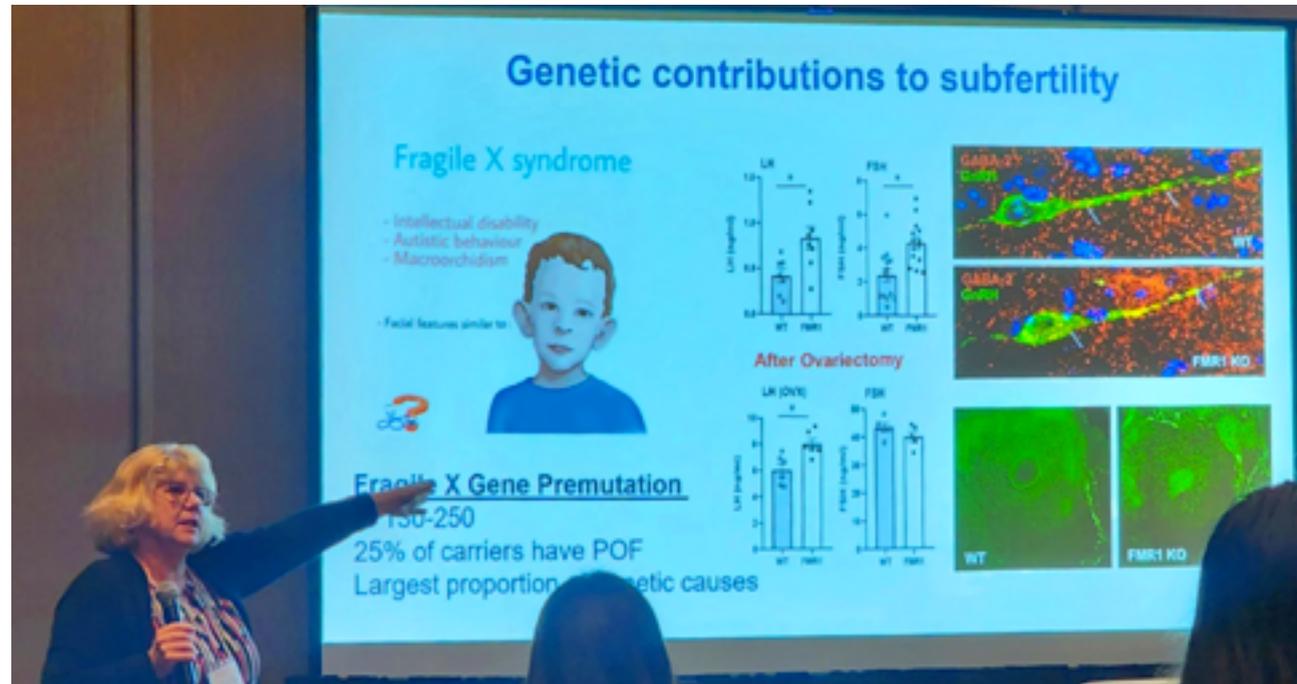
Regardless of the challenges, DiPatrizio is optimistic about his research, the center, and the possibilities that it brings to the table for health.

“It’s not going to be a panacea, but there are clear benefits of cannabis and some of its chemical constituents for selected ailments,” he said. “We need more investigation and I am pleased that UCR is at the forefront of it.”



Cannabis plants, photographed by Matthew Brodeur

Nicholas DiPatrizio, photographed by Watchara Phomicinda (The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)



HOW AN AUTISM GENE CONTRIBUTES TO INFERTILITY

A study led by Professor of Biomedical Sciences Djurdjica Coss, PhD, has discovered that a genetic mutation that causes Fragile X Syndrome, a genetic condition leading to intellectual impairment and autism, also can lead to a reproductive disorder called premature ovarian failure (POF).

POF is a severe form of premature ovarian aging that affects about 10% of women and leads to early menopause and infertility. The researchers focused on the Fragile X messenger ribonucleoprotein1 gene (FMR1), which contributes to premature ovarian failure (POF) due to changes in neurons that regulate reproduction in the brain and ovaries.

The study, supported by the National Institutes of Health, provided valuable insights into the biological mechanisms underlying reproductive disorders caused by the FMR1 gene mutation and will pave the way for further investigations into potential treatments.

It is especially important since infertility affects a significant portion of heterosexual couples in the United States, and assisted reproductive technology can be expensive. As the median age of first-time mothers increases, understanding the causes of these reproductive disorders becomes crucial.

The team aims to explore if partially inhibiting neurons in the ovaries can alleviate the effects of the FMR1 mutation and normalize hormone levels, potentially allowing for a normal reproductive lifespan. This research may eventually lead to treatments for reproductive disorders and better guidance for women at risk.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT atu.cr/yirin infertility

HOW IBD CAN DEVELOP

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a chronic, autoimmune disorder that causes inflammation in the intestine, affecting around three million adults in the US.

Researchers led by Declan F. McCole, PhD, of the Division of Biomedical Sciences have identified a potential genetic cause of the condition. Their work, published in the journal Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology and Hepatology, establishes a critical link between the intestinal epithelial cell PTPN2 and specialized cells called Paneth cells that plays a major role in regulating the gut microbiota, the community of microorganisms in the gut.

McCole and his team found that reduced activity of the PTPN2 gene leads to a decrease in the production

of antimicrobial peptides by Paneth cells, causing significant changes in the gut microbiota, including an increase in a specific harmful bacterium called adherent-invasive E. coli (AIEC). AIEC is linked to IBD and worsens inflammation by adhering to and invading intestinal cells.

In late 2022, McCole's research on PTPN2 was recognized with the Research Achievement Award in Biomedical or Basic Science Research.

"Collectively, these publications represent significant advances to our understanding of how disease susceptibility mutations increase risk of developing chronic inflammatory conditions such as IBD, and how they can be therapeutically targeted by a personalized medicine approach," the awards committee said.

The research paves the way for a new project aimed at finding drugs to restore Paneth cell function and reduce the role of microbes in intestinal inflammation. This could improve personalized medicine approaches for IBD patients with variants in the PTPN2 gene.

The study was supported by various organizations, including the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation and the Swiss National Science Foundation. The researchers hope their work will lead to more effective treatments for IBD, helping those living with the condition to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life.

"COLLECTIVELY, THESE PUBLICATIONS REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT ADVANCES TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW DISEASE SUSCEPTIBILITY MUTATIONS INCREASE RISK OF DEVELOPING CHRONIC INFLAMMATORY CONDITIONS."



AS PANDEMIC EFFECTS CONTINUE, SO DOES RESEARCH

The worst of the COVID-19 pandemic appears to be behind us, with vaccines, treatments, and gained immunity helping reduce the impact of the disease. However, the pandemic has had widespread, persistent effects on health, healthcare, and other issues.

Recognizing the need to delve into both the disease itself and its complex yet significant role in areas from mental health to related health risks, researchers at the UCR School of Medicine continue to ask probing questions and conduct innovative studies to understand and counter the effects of the pandemic. We highlight some of their work here.

THROMBOTIC COMPLICATIONS WITH COVID-19

Gagandeep Singh Arora and Divya Bhanu Sree Madisetty (pictured left), both UCR School of Medicine resident physicians in internal medicine, co-authored a case report titled “Right Atrial Thrombus and Submassive Pulmonary Embolism in a COVID-19-Infected Patient: A Case Report,” which was published in

Cureus in July 2023. The report highlighted COVID-19’s tendency to lead to systemic illnesses and particularly cardiovascular complications that affect areas throughout the body, drawing attention to the fact that COVID-19 is more than a respiratory infection.

ADDRESSING THE PANDEMIC THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ann Cheney, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Social Medicine, Population, and Public Health (SMPPH), co-authored “STOP COVID-19 CA: Community engagement to address the disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in California.”

Published in November 2022 in *Frontiers in Health Services*, the article reviewed a new community engagement model for addressing health disparities from COVID-19 and potential future health issues in underserved California communities.

COVID-19’S IMPACT ON NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER POPULATIONS

Andrew Subica, an associate professor in the SMPPH, led two studies published in August and September 2022 focusing on the effect of COVID-19 among people in ethnic groups from Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia residing in several U.S. states. The first study, “Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, mental

health and treatment need in the United States during COVID-19,” found heightened rates of depression along with substance use among these populations during the pandemic, suggesting the need for increased services. The second study, “Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on the Health of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander People in the

United States, 2021,” highlighted significant COVID-19 infection and fatality rates in these groups, which represent quickly growing populations in the U.S.

HELLP SYNDROME AND COVID-19

Gastroenterology fellow Carlos Buitrago, MD, Keon Hessamian, MD (Class of 2023, pictured right) and GI Fellowship Associate Program Director George Saffouri, MD co-authored a case report on the effect of

COVID-19 on liver disease during pregnancy. Titled “HELLP Syndrome and COVID-19: A Case Report and Literature Review,” the October 2022 report was published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*.



ADOLESCENT ANXIETY BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC

Kalina J. Michalska, PhD, a member of the SOM’s Psychiatry Department, co-authored “Longitudinal Change in Adolescent Depression and Anxiety Symptoms from before to during the COVID-19

Pandemic,” which was published in July 2022 in the *Journal of Research on Adolescence*. The research combined data from 12 longitudinal studies and found that depression symptoms increased significantly during the

first six months of the pandemic, particularly among multiracial adolescents and those dealing with lockdown-related restrictions.

THE PANDEMIC’S IMPACT ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

Janet Cruz, MD, an assistant clinical professor of health sciences and a gynecologist at UCR Health, served as the lead author of “Medical Student and Faculty Perceptions of the

COVID-19 Pandemic on Medical Education and Personal Well-Being” alongside co-authors from the UCR SOM. Published in the May-August 2022 edition of *Education in the Health*

Professions, the study identified detrimental effects of the pandemic on medical education quality and mental health.

DISCOVERY OF ANTIBODY STRUCTURE COULD LEAD TO TREATMENT FOR CRIMEAN CONGO HEMORRHAGIC FEVER VIRUS



A research team led by Professor of Biomedical Sciences Scott D. Pegan achieved a significant breakthrough in understanding how human antibodies can protect against the deadly Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever virus (CCHFV). This zoonotic disease is considered a high-priority pathogen by the WHO, with outbreaks having mortality rates as high as 40%. Originally identified in Crimea and later in the Congo, the virus has spread to Western Europe via migratory birds, making it a global concern. It has no vaccine or effective treatment.

Working with serum collected from survivors of CCHFV, the researchers gained an understanding of how the protein works, providing crucial insights into potential therapies and vaccine development. The function of GP38 and its role in CCHFV infection remain unclear.

“We know that targeting GP38 stops CCHFV’s progression, but no one is fully certain about how it works,” Pegan said. “We would like to know more about its mechanism of action so that specific and effective therapeutics can be developed.”

The research was funded by grants to Pegan and his CDC partner, Éric Bergeron, from the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense.

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER MELI’SA CRAWFORD AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS UC PRESIDENT’S FELLOWSHIP



Meli’sa Crawford, a postdoctoral researcher in biomedical sciences, has received a University of California President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship for the 2023-24 academic year.

The one-year fellowship covers the annual salary for postdoctoral researchers of about \$67,000 and is renewable for a second year, contingent on demonstration of scholarly productivity and participation in program events. Crawford will receive an additional \$4,000 for research-related expenses and up to \$1,000 for travel related to UC campus visits to present work or for job talks and professional development.

Crawford’s research examines the effects of agricultural dust exposure on the intestinal barrier function. The intestinal barrier function is critical for maintaining a healthy intestine. When the intestinal epithelium is disrupted, it can lead to increased permeability or leakiness, increasing the risk of infections and chronic inflammatory conditions.

“This project lies at the intersection of climate change-induced environmental pollution, the rapid increase in respiratory driven diseases in inland California, and addresses causes of health disparities in poorer rural areas of the U.S. that are dependent on agriculture,” she said.

Crawford received her doctoral degree in biology with a focus in physiology at Arizona State University in 2019. As a doctoral student, she was awarded the National Science Foundation-Bridge to the Doctorate Fellowship in 2014. She has been a postdoctoral researcher in the UCR Division of Biomedical Sciences since February 2020.

“Meli’sa has demonstrated a remarkable tenacity to overcome various hurdles along her academic career that mark her out as someone with a great passion for research,” said Declan F. McCole, a professor of biomedical sciences at UCR and Crawford’s advisor.

HIGH RELIGIOSITY/ SPIRITUALITY LINKED TO BETTER CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

A study led by Professor Mario Sims of the Department of Social Medicine, Population, and Public Health, revealed that African American men and women who embrace religiosity and spirituality tend to enjoy better cardiovascular health. This research, a first of its kind, looked at various factors like diet, smoking, weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure in relation to religious beliefs and practices among African Americans in a group of nearly 3,000 men and women in and around the Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area.

Nearly half of all African American adults suffer from some form of cardiovascular disease, encompassing conditions like coronary heart disease, heart failure, stroke, and peripheral artery disease. Surprisingly, higher religiosity and spirituality were also linked to higher rates of hypertension and smoking. The study, however, revealed

that those who were more religious were more likely to quit smoking or never start.

Sims said he believes that by acknowledging and encouraging religiosity and spirituality in healthcare and combining them with culturally relevant lifestyle changes, we can reduce the risk of heart disease in African American communities, thereby lessening existing health disparities.

“Religiosity and spirituality are integral parts of the African American experience and should be acknowledged as prominent sociocultural influences on cardiovascular health in the lives of this population,” Sims said.

The study included researchers at Mayo Clinic, Minnesota; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Maryland; and University of Mississippi Medical Center and had the support of grants from several organizations, including the National Institutes of Health/National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the American Heart Association, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The paper, titled “Religiosity/ Spirituality and Cardiovascular Health: The American Heart Association Life’s Simple 7 in African Americans of the Jackson Heart Study,” appears in the Journal of the American Heart Association.



EVELYN VÁZQUEZ CONTINUES MULTIPLE RESEARCH STUDIES

Evelyn Vázquez, PhD, an assistant professional researcher in the Department of Social Medicine, Population, and Public Health, focuses her research on mental health in higher education as well as social determinants of health. Her work resulted in her receiving the 2023 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Award from the Association of Recovery in Higher Education. See an overview of her recent projects below.

“THE TRAJECTORIES OF UNDERREPRESENTED GRADUATE STUDENTS WHILE IN GRADUATE SCHOOL”

As part of the Engaging the Academy project, Vázquez created a photovoice gallery and exhibit that highlighted the unique mental experiences and needs of historically marginalized graduate and professional students (HMGPS). The project, which she presented at the UC Board of Regents meeting in May 2023, helped raise awareness of the hostile social environments experienced by HMGPS within graduate school.

“NEGATIVE EMOTIONS, SOCIAL ISOLATION, AND IMPOSTOR SYNDROME IN THE PURSUIT OF PROFESSIONAL MASTERY IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES”

Published in the *International Journal for Academic Development* in June 2022, research authored by Vázquez explored the effect of academic development on the psychological states of university professors during graduate school and the tenure process, revealing widespread feelings of social isolation and impostor syndrome.

“VOICING STUDENT RECOVERY: EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMS”

Vázquez was the lead author on a September 2022 research paper published in the *Journal of American College Health*. The research engaged student patients and stakeholders to identify and prioritize topics for future studies on colleges’ role in supporting students in substance use recovery.

“ENGAGING THE ACADEMY TO ADDRESS UNDERREPRESENTED GRADUATE STUDENTS’ MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS”

Vázquez received a two-year funding award of nearly \$250,000 in Fall 2022 from the Eugene Washington Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Engagement Awards program for this project, which will use community-based participatory research (CBPR) techniques to help discover the challenges facing underrepresented graduate students.

READ ABOUT VÁZQUEZ'S AWARD AT atu.cr/yirvazquez



CLINICAL

Featured: Toshia Yamaguchi, MD speaks on the importance of mental health among students and developing an LGBTQ+-centered curriculum.



TOSHIA YAMAGUCHI: SUPPORTING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

“KEEPING DIVERSE STUDENTS ON A PATH TO GRADUATION IS SO IMPORTANT TO ME, AND THAT’S WHY I WANT TO WORK AT UCR.”

Graduation is a rewarding time of year for Toshia Yamaguchi, MD, a psychiatrist at UCR Health who is passionate about helping undergraduate students complete their degrees. Her commitment to supporting students’

mental health while helping diverse students succeed brought her back to UCR after she completed her residency and fellowship in the school’s psychiatry graduate medical education program.

Her work, particularly with mental health among students, is a necessity. A 2022 study published in the *Journal of Affective Disorders* found that across the nation in 2020-2021, over 60% of college students were eligible to be diagnosed with at least one mental health issue.

“I am really passionate about college students’ mental health,” said Yamaguchi, who serves as UCR Health director of Student Mental Health and works at UCR’s Student Health Center. “A lot of mental health conditions first emerge during this period, like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. So it’s a very important time to be vigilant and on top of your diagnostic game.”

She is particularly dedicated to supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds. “Keeping diverse students on a path to graduation is so important to me, and that’s why I want to work at UCR,” she said. This year, the School of Medicine ranked No. 5 for diversity in U.S. News & World Report’s

2023-2024 Best Grad School rankings.

In fact, the School of Medicine’s mission to train a diverse workforce — and UCR’s commitment to walking the walk — were essential to Yamaguchi’s decision to remain at the university. “By having a diverse workforce, we can hopefully begin to address some health inequities,” she said. “And the way it’s doing that is by admitting a diverse medical student body.”

Still, she said even more needs to be done to help diverse students. “Diversifying the workforce doesn’t just stop at accepting a diverse student body; you have to actually get them to graduation,” she pointed out.

Yamaguchi has ideas for closing the gap. Besides working directly with students at the health center and as an instructor, she’s pursuing research focused on ways to better support diverse students in school.

She is also working to support other marginalized groups through her role as psychiatry site director at UCR Health. Recently, she began developing an LGBTQ+ curriculum after recognizing the need for deeper coverage in her own training.

“As doctors, we’re all going to be working with a number of LGBTQ+ patients and it may not be obvious to us at the time,” she said, emphasizing the need to understand best practices around working with LGBTQ+ patients. “They need and deserve health care as much as anyone else does. So it’s really important to build that foundation of partnership and welcome them into health care.”

SERVING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH UCR HEALTH

New CEO Timothy Collins seeks to help UCR Health meet the healthcare needs of the Inland Empire



Growing up as a lifeguard in Long Beach, Timothy J. Collins, EdD, MHA, FACHE, EMT, always wondered what happened to people after he rescued them from the water. This curiosity led to his lifelong medical career, including serving as an emergency medical technician and other roles that focused on improving health in the community.

“All these events during my life really instilled in me that it’s not about me or the success that I might have. It’s about what I can do for others,” said Collins, who joined UCR Health in May. “Serving others is my priority, and when I found out about this opportunity, I saw it as a way in which I could continue a life calling to give back.”

His variety of experiences in healthcare over the past 30-plus years and his personal commitment to the region uniquely positioned Collins to lead UCR Health and continue its mission to improve healthcare in the area. Collins intends to add services and capacity, particularly in underserved urban and rural areas, while continuing to focus on clinical quality. He also plans to increase collaboration with local clinics, hospitals, and community-based organizations to strengthen the overall care available to the community.

PARTNERING WITH THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Collins is also focused on working with our medical school, particularly through training and retaining physicians who are dedicated to the region. “That partnership, where we educate and then bring those individuals back to this marketplace, and they will work for UC Riverside Health? That’s the cool thing,” Collins said. “That’s the partnership that’s going to change the game.”

“It’s refreshing to work with a leader like Tim who deeply understands how training local physicians will serve the Inland Empire’s healthcare needs for generations to come,” said Rajesh Gulati, MD, associate dean of Graduate Medical Education, designated institutional official for the School of Medicine, and interim chair of Internal Medicine.

“I would be remiss in not saying that we owe a huge debt of gratitude for all the people that had the vision of what this could be,” Collins added, pointing to the legislators, community leaders, donors, city council, and many others who have supported the UCR SOM and UCR Health. “UCR Health is a bigger purpose and there’s a lot of people on the team,” he said. “I’m excited about what it will be and what it can be.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking forward, Collins hopes people will feel excitement about UCR Health’s presence and its willingness to invest to help those in need of health services without focusing on monetary gain.

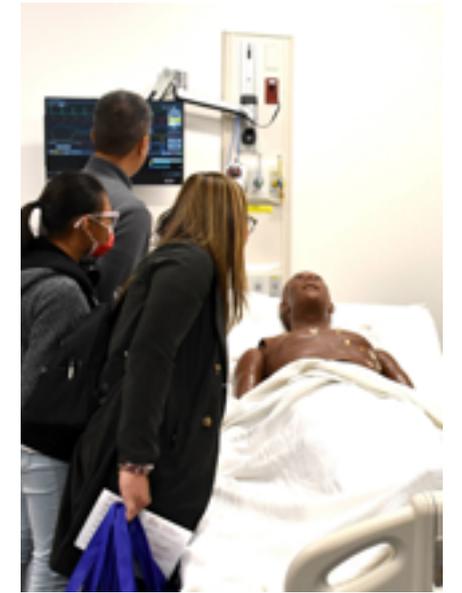
And while UCR Health is centered on the bigger picture of improving healthcare in the Inland Empire, he said providing quality care for each patient is their foremost goal.

“We do our best every single minute of every single day for our patients, and focus on service, quality, access, communication, follow up and follow through, and doing things that benefit our society, our population, and our community,” Collins said.



COMMUNITY

Pictured: School of Medicine staff volunteers at our 2023 Community Open House.



SOM WELCOMES COMMUNITY FOR OPEN HOUSE 2023

The UC Riverside School of Medicine Open House returned as a fully in-person event on Saturday, April 8 for the first time since 2019.

“This is really exciting,” said Kate Dorff, manager of external relations and protocol. “Since we’ve been doing it online for the past few years, we haven’t had the touch point with people who aren’t necessarily a ready-to-go, eager to be admitted student, so this is more of a community open house.”

The event welcomed approximately 700 guests, including high school students with their families, college

students considering careers in the medical field, current applicants to the School of Medicine, and some recently admitted medical students.

Attendees learned about the school and its programs through lectures, a medical student panel, tours of the Center for Simulated Patient Care, CPR demonstrations, and more. Representatives from the admissions office and the Pathway Programs answered questions in tents set up on the lawn, and a kids’ corner offered health-themed coloring books, anatomy models, and stethoscopes to younger visitors.



READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT atu.cr/yiopenhouse

CHC MINI-GRANTS AWARDED TO TWO HEALTH PROJECTS

A pair of innovative community medicine and population health projects focused on improving the health of underserved communities in the Inland Empire by offering education, preventative measures, and support each received funding of \$5,000 from the UCR SOM's Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) Mini-Grant program.



The Healing Hearts Initiative, led by first-year UC Riverside School of Medicine student Darby Graham, aims to improve heart health and prevent

heart disease in uninsured and economically disadvantaged patients at the San Bernardino Free Clinic (SBFC). The project includes heart health education workshops, nutritional support like cooking demonstrations and meal prepping, and educating future healthcare providers in the Inland Empire. The grant will enable the SBFC to better assess patients with heart abnormalities and promote preventative health measures, ultimately supporting the well-being of their community.

The Bayanihan Project, led by third-year California University of Science and Medicine student Alexandra Celino Gacuya, draws its inspiration from the Filipino term *bayanihan*, which signifies community unity. This project aims to provide health screenings and disease prevention techniques to Filipino-Americans in the Inland Empire, empowering them to take an active role in improving their health outcomes. Gacuya, a first-generation medical student, is grateful for the opportunity to make a positive impact on her community, as she has witnessed the devastating effects of preventable health conditions among Filipino immigrants. CHC's support allows the Bayanihan group to carry forward the legacy of caring for the community, leading to a healthier and happier future for Filipino-Americans.



The review committee included representatives from Inland Empire Health Plan, TruEvolution, Inc., SBX Youth & Family Services, and UCR SOM. Special thanks are also given to Nnennaya Akabogu, the administrative fellow for the SOM, for her project support.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE AT atu.cr/yirminigrant



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FEATURED ON AMAZON PRIME'S "THE COLLEGE TOUR"

Amazon Prime's "The College Tour" visited UC Riverside in July 2022 and fourth year medical student Patrick Samones was among the students who were profiled.

Samones was an ideal choice for the show. He is a first-generation college student who grew up in nearby Moreno Valley. He earned his undergraduate degree at UCR and participated in several Pathway Programs on his way to joining the SOM, choosing to stay at UCR to support his local community.

"I'm just hoping more people learn about the mission of the school and how important it is for underserved communities like our own," he said.

Samones was filmed in segments at the School of Medicine's Center for Simulated Patient Care and the Health Professions Advising Center, where he was a mentor as an undergraduate.

Others profiled include international students, a student who was in the foster youth system, a transfer student, and one involved in student

government. Each segment was filmed at a different location including Tomás Rivera Library, the HUB, the Student Recreation Center, and various outdoor areas around campus.

Each episode of The College Tour highlights a college or university through the eyes of its students, faculty and alumni, providing prospective students with an intimate look at life on campus beyond what is written in brochures or websites. From academics to sports, club activities, city life and much more, viewers can visit the campus of their dreams as they're making the important decision of where to apply or where to attend.

Samones, who was a class representative, later was a featured speaker at the UC Regents meeting on January 27 along with Chancellor Kim Wilcox, Vice Chancellor and Dean Deborah Deas and Senior Associate Dean for Research David Lo. He wrapped the year by providing the student address at the Commencement and Hippocratic Oath Ceremony and began a residency in family medicine at the UCLA Geffen School of Medicine in the summer of 2023.

VIEW THE MISSION AWARD VIDEO AT youtu.be/Qf-QICfAEps



CELEBRATING WOMEN IN MEDICINE AND SCIENCE WITH DR. CARRIE L. BYINGTON

The annual Celebration of Women in Medicine and Science, co-hosted by the Office of Faculty Development and the Office of Strategic Initiatives, was held on Sept. 14, 2022 as part of the American Medical Association's Women in Medicine Month.

The event was highlighted by a keynote address by Dr. Carrie L. Byington, former executive vice president of University of California Health, titled From Imposter to Leader: A Story of Integration. Byington shared her personal journey in medicine, highlighting the challenges she faced and the lessons she learned, and emphasized the importance of diversity, inclusion, and mentorship in creating an equitable environment for women in these fields.

"I felt like an imposter my entire undergraduate career, my entire medical career until about 2005 as a full professor. I said enough is enough. I am

not an imposter, and neither are you," Byington said. "There is no one in this room that is an imposter."

"I refused to be made to feel like an imposter," she added. "I think it is a societal construct. We all have doubts, but our society tells us that we are imposters. You do not see majority individuals being told that they are imposters. You see women and minorities told that they are imposters, and I won't have it anymore."

"YOU SEE WOMEN AND MINORITIES TOLD THEY ARE IMPOSTERS, AND I WON'T HAVE IT ANYMORE."

The event also featured a reception and a roundtable discussion about the valuable role of allies who support women in their professional endeavors by acknowledging their contributions, fostering collaboration and promoting gender equality.

 VIEW DR. BYINGTON'S KEYNOTE AT youtu.be/2qdAWLcCU14

 VIEW THE ALLYSHIP PANEL AT youtu.be/NY1MjYQ9gRQ

CONGRESSMAN RUIZ FEATURED AT SCHOOL'S INAUGURAL DEI COLLOQUIUM

Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD, congressman for California's 36th Congressional District, was the keynote speaker at the inaugural School of Medicine Colloquium on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Sept. 1, 2022.

The colloquium was convened by the SOM's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, who invited Ruiz as the inaugural speaker. Ruiz's address was titled "DEI and Healthcare in our Region" and was followed by a Q&A session. He also met with students during his visit to the SOM Education Building.

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion - those three words carry so much power and potential," he said. "They affect health outcomes and can move mountains, ensuring that populations can have a better life. They illustrate a future where your background, your ZIP code, and your income do not determine whether you have access to quality, affordable care."

"The fact that we're all here today to discuss this very topic gives me hope that the future is within our reach," he added.

Ruiz is an emergency room doctor who was a senior associate dean and faculty member at the School of Medicine before being elected to the House of Representatives in 2012. He has degrees in medicine, public policy, and public health from Harvard University and is chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and serves on the House Energy and Commerce and House Veterans' Affairs Committees. He also helped to found the SOM's Future Physician Leaders Pathway Program.



VC AND DEAN DEBORAH DEAS RECEIVES HONORARY DEGREE

Vice Chancellor and Dean Deborah Deas was surprised with an honorary doctorate from the Western University of Health Sciences prior to delivering the keynote address at the commencement ceremonies for the College of Health Sciences and Graduate College of Biomedical Sciences on May 17.

After being introduced by Gail Evans Grayson, EdD, the acting dean of the College of Health Sciences at Western, the doctor of humane letters (LHD) was conveyed by University President Robin Farias Eisner, MD, PhD, MBA.

"It is an honor to stand before you today to pay tribute to one of the most influential trailblazers in the field of medicine," Grayson said. "(She) has trained and inspired countless future generations of medical professionals to follow in her footsteps. But perhaps what sets (her) apart as a trailblazer in medicine and public health is her unwavering commitment to using her knowledge and expertise to benefit humanity."

Deas' remarks emphasized the importance of the many varied roles in healthcare.

"Medicine is a team sport and without the collaboration of many healthcare professionals, we can't accomplish what is most optimal for the patients and their families. You are important to the delivery of healthcare and the research and science of medicine and other healthcare professions," she said.

2022-2023 END OF YEAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AWARDS

Faculty Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Award

Dr. Takesha Cooper

Staff Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award

Michelle Burroughs

Outstanding Mentor of the Year

Dr. Ann Cheney

Distinguished School of Medicine Service Award

Dr. Declan McCole

Distinguished SOM UC Systemwide Service Award

Dr. Declan McCole

Distinguished SOM Service to UCR Cross-Campus Community Award

Dr. Maurizio Pellecchia

SOM Junior Faculty Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Erica Heinrich

Research Achievement in Biomedical or Basic Science

Dr. Declan McCole

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AWARDS

Best Didactic Lecturer

Dr. Iryna Ethell

Best Seminars Lecturer

Mary Hamer

Phenomenal Faculty

Dr. Erica Heinrich

Magnificent Mentor

Dr. Ansel Hsiao

Pizza Friday Students

Kathy Pham

Samuel Asiedu

BMSC Fellowship Recognition

Elyza Do

Micah Feri

Yi-Li Lam

Andy Lei

Martin Olmos

Rebecca Ruggiero

Emily Tabaie

Pedro Villa

Dissertation Year Program

Rogelio Nunez-Flores

Graduate Research Mentorship

Yi-Li Lam

Competitive Graduate Research Mentorship Fellowship

Andy Lei

Outstanding Graduate Student Association Officer

Elyza Do

MEDICAL EDUCATION AWARDS

Outstanding Office of Medical Education Staff

Olivia Doyle

Outstanding Student Affairs Staff

Office of Financial Aid (Kathleen

Buckner, Theresa Luther)

Outstanding General Staff

Velika Patterson

Outstanding Doctoring Instructor

Dr. Rosanna Jhawar

Outstanding Clinical Skills Instructor

Dr. William Hunt

Outstanding CBL Instructor

Hania Shahin

Outstanding LACE Doctors

Dr. Elliot Weinstein

Dr. Jean Everly LaFontant

Dr. Uziel Saucedo

Outstanding Block Instructors

Dr. Ahmed Alassal

Dr. Monica Carson

Dr. Nicholas DiPatrizio

Dr. Chris Lytle

Dr. Elizabeth Morrison-Banks

Dr. Meera Nair

Dr. Maurizio Pellecchia

Dr. Zhenyun Yang

Outstanding Specialty Instructors

Dr. Stephanie Handler

Dr. Beatriz Leong

Dr. Esther McGowan

Dr. Nathan McLaughlin

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The mission of the UCR School of Medicine is to improve the health of the people of California and, especially, to serve Inland Southern California by training a diverse workforce of physicians and by developing innovative research and health care delivery programs that will improve the health of the medically underserved in the region and become models to be emulated throughout the state and nation.

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