Interfaculty Council Meeting Minutes  
FY 2021 – April 21, 2021 – Webex

Present:  Dr. Tiffany Champagne-Langabeer, Dr. Cameron Jeter, Dr. Elda Ramirez, Dr. Jennifer Bailey, Dr. Nicholas De Lay, Dr. Joseph Alcorn, Dr. Catherine Ambrose, Dr. Sayed Hashmi for Dr. Elaheh Ashtari, Dr. Kulvinder Bajwa for Dr. Meena Bhattacharjee, Dr. Linh Bui, Dr. Nachum Dafny, Dr. Carmen Dessauer, Dr. Rhashedah Ekeoduru, Dr. Nahid Rianon, Dr. Bethany Williams, Dr. Licong Cui, Dr. Luca Giancardo, Dr. Kirk Roberts, Dr. Debora Simmons, Dr. Kurt Kasper, Dr. Dharini van der Hoeven, Dr. Michele White, Dr. Sandra Branson, Dr. Carole Mackavey, Dr. Seth Stephens, Dr. Cecilia Ganduglia-Cazaban, Dr. Craig Hanis, Dr. Ross Shegog, Dr. Michael Swartz, Ms. Ankita Podichetty, and Dr. Pauline Monsegue-Bailey

Absent:  Dr. Elaheh Ashtari, Dr. Daniel Harrington, Dr. Vaunette Fay

Guests:  Rebecca Lunstroth, J.D.

Ex-Officio Attendees:  Dr. Kevin Morano and Dr. Gurur Biliciler-Denktas

Administrative Personnel:  Ms. Terrie Schade-Lugo

I. CALL TO ORDER | APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES  
   Dr. Tiffany Champagne-Langabeer, IFC Chair FY 2021

Dr. Tiffany Champagne-Langabeer, IFC Chair FY 2021, called the meeting to order at 11:36 AM. The members were polled for any objections or corrections to the minutes for January 20, 2021, after the presentation concluded. Upon motion made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved, as presented.

II. NEW BUSINESS  
   Rebecca Lunstroth, J.D., Associate Professor, Director, Administration and Ethics Education, and Director, UTHealth QEP, Healthcare Policy for Health Professionals

Ms. Rebecca Lunstroth provided information and conducted an open discussion with the membership concerning the QEP.

1. What is the QEP – An accreditation standard established by SACSCOC to enhance student learning across the campus.

2. How the QEP came to be: it was based on years of student input requesting more health policy instruction. After completing a literature search, our team learned that seminal reports have called for better integration of health policy into health science education. The baseline survey we conducted with our learners suggested that there were indeed gaps. Equally important is the fact that HP2 is aligned with UTHealth’s strategic plan.

3. Who’s on the team: Francine Snow–CSON; Shane Cunha–GSBS; Susan Fenton–SBMI; Stephen Linder–SPH; Debbie Franklin–SOD; Sandy McKay–MMS; Angela Polczynski–MMS (assessment)

4. What are the QEP’s learning outcomes?
   a. Evaluating key factors in how policy is made and changed in the US healthcare system
   b. Explaining the role that government and nongovernment agencies play in science and scientific innovation
   c. Analyzing how health policy influences how healthcare is accessed, delivered, and financed in the US

5. How will we achieve these learning outcomes? There are 6 University-Action Items:
   a. Faculty Development – ensuring
   b. Civics 101 modules
   c. Health Policy simulation
   d. Curricular enhancements
   e. Policy Forums
   f. Advocacy

6. Timeline – over the next five years, each of these initiatives will be rolled out and assessed

7. Assessment – iterative process

The IFC membership participated in an open discussion regarding the ongoing development and future focus of the Office of Academic Ombuds in Fiscal Year 2021.
III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Kevin A. Morano  
Associate VP for Faculty Affairs & Development, UTHealth

- Dr. Morano advised that UTHealth recently went through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaccreditation visit, and we passed with flying colors. We do not have any citations or anything to address. This outcome was a remarkable achievement with the volume of data we have to put together at all the schools, the coordination of the data, and in no small part was the quality of the QEP put forth. The SACSCOC reaccreditation happens every ten years, so we will be able to relax for a while, and then it starts back up with updating materials required for the review.
- The University Promotion and Tenure Committee met two weeks ago, and the results were provided to all schools. For anyone that was reviewed this year, congratulations. Dr. Morano advised that if anyone is not at this place yet and wants to know how to get there, please reach out to the Faculty Affairs and your Chairs at the schools. He advised that everyone should always feel free to contact him to discuss. Our tenure rate is high, and our promotion rate is very high, probably due to all of the work done by the schools on the front-end.
- About two weeks ago, we successfully achieved securing LabArchives electronic notebook software package for UTHealth. He provided a demonstration to the attendees. LabArchives provided a Zoom 90-minute training on April 12 and will provide another training on April 29. For more information, please review the information on the website https://uth.edu/research/labarchives/about.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Campus Reports:  
Dr. Sandra Branson

Cizik School of Nursing  

- Jessica Hartos, PhD, joined Cizik School of Nursing at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston as the new Assistant Dean for Education and Assessment effective March 1, 2021. In this role, Dr. Hartos reports to Vice Dean for Academic Affairs Cathy L. Rozmus, PhD, RN, FANN, and will focus on program evaluation, assessment, and accreditation activities.
- Assistant Professor Anitra Frederick, PhD, RN, has been named director of the Pacesetter BSN program effective April 1 at Cizik School of Nursing at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.
- UTHealth formed a DEI task force, and Elda Ramirez, PhD, RN serves as the inaugural chair of the council.
- Dr. Elda Ramirez is a 2021 recipient of the Caring Heart Award from the Institute for Spirituality and Health. She and other frontline workers were honored during a live-streamed celebration last night. Watch Dr. Ramirez’s acceptance video.
- Dr. Diane Santa Maria has been named president, and Dr. Sydnee Lucas, secretary of the Texas Regional Chapter of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine. They will each serve two-year terms.
- Stacey Crane, PhD, RN received a K-23 Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Nursing Research (NIH/NINR) titled “Facilitating Comprehensives Self and Proxy Symptom Assessments for Children with Cancer” (K23 NR019294). This $445,144 three-year grant builds on Crane’s earlier research to expand her development of the Smart Pediatric Oncology Tracker of Symptoms (SPOTS), a web-based interface designed to make it easier for kids with cancer and their parents to report symptoms in real-time.
- Assistant Professor Daniel Arellano, PhD, RN, worked with the National Disaster Medical System and a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) in a New York vaccination clinic. DMATs are civilian teams of health care professionals who typically respond to hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, and other natural disasters.
The Nancy Bergstrom Gerontological Nursing Scholarship will provide an annual award to a doctoral student with a study concentration in gerontology. The Diane Evans Trabulsi Nursing Scholarship will support one Pacesetter BSN student annually.

The CSON is in the process of creating our next 5-year Strategic Plan. Over the next few months, the CSON will make revisions based on faculty feedback as well as that of our communities of interest, including the Advisory Council, PARTNERS, students, and our hospital/community partners.

Researchers with The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) have created an acronym, RAPIDO(c), to move forward much-needed efforts to address stroke sign and symptom awareness among at-risk Spanish-speaking individuals. A collaboration among Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth, McGovern Medical School at UTHealth, and the UTHealth Institute for Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease won first place at the International Neuroscience Nursing Research Symposium, and the acronym will be published by the International Stroke Conference (ISC) this week. [https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/03/12/rapido-a-new-spanish-acronym-to-raise-stroke-awareness](https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/03/12/rapido-a-new-spanish-acronym-to-raise-stroke-awareness).

**Operations**

- **Accreditation.** The Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation team found that the CSON met all standards with no compliance concerns across all four programs (Baccalaureate (BSN), Master’s (MSN), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and Post-Graduate APRN Certificate).
- **Hybrid Model.** The CSON continues to work in a hybrid model for the fall/spring, with didactic courses primarily online with simulation and clinical placement in our acute care and community settings. BSN and FNP students practiced a new intraprofessional collaboration via simulation.
- **COVID-19 Vaccines.** Students and faculty from the CSON are volunteering to provide COVID-19 vaccinations.
- **COVID-19 Testing.** Nurses at Cizik School of Nursing at UTHealth’s nurse-led clinic, UT Health Services, continue as the university’s COVID-19 testing operation site. The employee health clinic operates a drive-thru testing center every morning, serving the nearly 9,300 employees at UTHealth.
- **Open positions.** Cizik Nursing Research Director, Director – MSN Program, Director – DNP Program, Associate Dean for Practice and Community Engagement, Director – Corporate Occupational Health and UT Health Services Clinic, Associate Dean of Faculty Development, and a variety of undergraduate and graduate faculty positions.

**Publications and Presentations**


• Sajeevika S. Daundasekara, Chisom N. Iwundu, Daphne C Hernandez, Diane Santa Maria, Michael J. Zvolensky, Darla E. Kendzor & Michael S. Businelle (2021) Depression is associated with poor physical health through lower distress tolerance among adults experiencing homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*. Published online 03 Apr 2021. DOI: 10.1080/10530789.2021.1908488


• Layton Reesor-Oyer, Aliye B. Cepni, Che Young Lee, Xue Zhao, and Daphne C. Hernandez. Disentangling food insecurity and maternal depression: Which comes first? *Public Health Nutrition*, 01 Feb 2021. Published online. DOI: 10.1017/S1368946521000434


- **Maja Djukic, PhD, RN, FAAN**: Jason Fletcher PhD; Amy Witkoski Stimpfel, PhD, RN; Christine Kovner PhD, RN, FAAN. Variables Associated With Nurse-Reported Quality Improvement Participation. *Nurse Leader*, 19(1). February 2021. Pages 76-81, ISSN 1541-4612. doi:10.1016/j.mnl.2020.06.009

**Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

**Dr. Nicholas De Lay**

**Virtual GSBS Student Research Day is on Thursday, June 24th.**
- Keynote speaker is Shelina Ramnarine, Ph.D. from Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies
- Other events include an Oral Skills presentation competition and an Elevator speech competition.
- Additional information can be found at: https://gsbs.uth.edu/gsrd/index.htm

**2021 GSBS Spring Awards Common Application is due by Monday, April 26th.**
- GSBS is accepting submissions for the Spring Common Application Cycle for Fellowships and Scholarships.
- 10 Fellowship and 2 Scholarships will be awarded.
- More information can be found at: https://gsbs.uth.edu/current-students/awards-and-funding-opportunities/scholarships-and-fellowships.htm

**Dr. Eric Swindell, Associate Dean of Graduate Education, has left GSBS.**
- Dr. Swindell has accepted a position as Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine. His last day of work at GSBS was April 16th.
- Dr. Swindell joined GSBS as Assistant Dean of Graduate Education in 2015.

**McGovern Medical School**

**Dr. Catherine Ambrose**

- The McGovern Faculty Senate task force on faculty mentoring, headed by Dr. Nahid Rianon, is continuing to meet with Dr. Morano to develop a faculty mentoring program
- At recent Faculty Senate meetings:
  - We had updates on Women Faculty Forum sessions, including the “Picture a Scientist” viewing and roundtable discussion as well as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science Symposium (held February 11) with Nancy Hopkins.
  - UTP continues to move towards the EPIC EMR conversion, and we have had multiple updates on how this is progressing. Go Live Date is May 8.
  - The Summer Research Program has been revised to only include McGovern medical students for summer 2021.
  - President Colasurdo gave an update on the Texas budget cycle and McGovern MS budget. UTHealth is doing well (in the black), and the legislative session seems to be going well.
    - Graduation will be in person this year at Minute Maid Park, with limited family members invited. Students will be split into two different groups:
      - Medical School, Graduate School, and School of Informatics on May 2nd
      - Nursing School, Dental School, School of Public Health on May 23rd
  - Search for a new Dean is progressing. Some finalists are being interviewed.
  - An introduction to the new ELN system, LabArchives, was presented.
  - Recent meetings included updates from our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion office, the MMS Admissions Committee, and the University of Texas System Health Biobank Consortium (UTSHB).

**School of Biomedical Informatics (SBMI):**

**Dr. Kirk Roberts**

- Professor Hua Xu has been promoted to Associate Dean for Innovation. He will help guide SBMI researchers in innovation, product development, and technology transfer in this role. In the short term, this includes a specific focus on business operations at SBMI, UTHealth, and UTHealth affiliated clinical entities. In 2018, Professor Xu founded Melax Technologies, Inc., which develops tools for machine learning and natural language processing applications.
• In March 2021, SBMI hosted its fourth Datathon (in a virtual format). Participants included undergraduate and graduate students from the Gulf Coast Consortia institutions as well as students studying at other universities in the Houston area. These students used their programming skills and knowledge of machine learning to focus on the event theme – building an algorithm to predict stroke patient rehabilitation scores. The effort was led by SBMI’s Dr. Xiaoqian Jiang in collaboration with Dr. Sean Savitz of the UTHealth Institute for Stroke and Cerebrovascular Disease. A total of 26 students participated in the 24-hour competition.
• The first cohort of students in the Doctorate in Health Informatics (DHI) program, which is the first-degree program of its kind in the world, is preparing for their qualifying exams later this semester. Dr. Angela Ross is leading the qualifying exam development process. Unlike SBMI’s traditional doctorate qualifying exam, the DHI qualifying exam will focus on the science of implementing state-of-the-art informatics research into clinical practice. The DHI program as a whole is led by Drs. Susan Fenton, Debora Simmons, and Angela Ross.

School of Dentistry

Dr. Michele White

• UTSD Table Clinics were successful with a plan for students to present in person at the annual Greater Houston Dental Society the Star of the South Convention this summer
• Behind the Smile Event TBD
• UTSD pre-doctoral students have been able to see patients for dental procedures that do not produce aerosols without the need to have an assistant. Pre-doctoral, Post-doctoral, and UT Dentist clinics have been productive.
• April 30 – Last day of Spring Clinic
• May 3 – 8: Western Regional Examining Board (WREB)
• May 23 – Commencement with SCON, SPH; Dr. John Zerwas as commencement speaker
• UTSD Strategic Plan Refresh – Discuss at Faculty Retreat with faculty this summer
• June 1 – First day of Summer clinic

School of Public Health

Dr. Ross Shegog

Faculty Council continuing and new items (selected):
• Nominations for faculty chair.
• Faculty development, recruitment, and retention review.
• Faculty equity (IDEA committee)
• Onboarding and mentoring
• Workload dashboard.
• Planning for returning to campus
• AAR and peer review –
  o Instructions for Faculty on Different Tracks for AAR and Peer Review
  o Quantifying Service and Public Health Practice/Engagement Activities on AAR
  o List Publications for Calendar Years instead of Two Academic Years on AAR

Upcoming public health campus events (selected):
• The Brownsville campus continues to celebrate its 20th anniversary with speakers and featured stories.
• 29th Annual James Steele Lecture featuring Dr. Carol J. Baker presenting “Developing Vaccines to Emergent Pathogens: “Lessons From Group B Streptococcal Perinatal Disease.”

Media exposure (selected):
• Katelyn Jetelina, PhD, MPH, spoke to KHOU-TV Channel 11 about an emergency external advisory panel meeting called by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the impact this pause may have on the nation’s vaccine efforts.
• Maria Fernandez, PhD, was interviewed by Univision Houston Channel 45 about the importance of being vaccinated against HPV.
Dissertation / thesis presentations
One dissertation defense, 3 dissertation proposal defenses, and 2 thesis presentations are occurring in the second half of April 2021.

Dissertation presentations
Three proposal defenses are occurring in Jan. 2021.

The UTHealth Diversity, Equity Inclusion (DEI) Council Update

Dr. Elda Ramirez for Dr. Elaheh Ashtari

- Our Legal Affairs Office reviewed the Bylaws, and the Task Force is now an official UTHealth Council. The DEI Council has an equal number of faculty and staff on the Council and a student representative from each school. The Council had its first meeting in March and will meet again the week of April 26. The Task Force identified that we want to have something established for all schools regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts. Our goal is to ensure that all schools are speaking the same language. The Council is very transparent and conducts honest and positive discussions. We need to be able to respond in the best way to ‘help’ and not ‘hurt’ people. Dr. Ramirez encouraged the membership to communicate to their respective schools that this Council is diligently working and responding in an intelligent, professional, and respectful way. A website is also being created where educational opportunities, seminars, announcements, etc., will be easy for all to access.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

UTFAC Update: Dr. Elda Ramirez

- The fourteen institutions usually meet each quarter. We have been meeting virtually during the pandemic, and instead of a two-day in-person meeting in Austin, we have attended a six-hour-long virtual meeting on one day. Dr. Ramirez shared a few of the main topics being discussed by the UTFAC are (1) a big push regarding paternal leave, (2) seeking relief for the tenure track faculty by releasing fiscal year 2020 from counting on their tenure clock.
- Dr. Ramirez is the chair for the ad-hoc committee on diversity, and she is using the model of placing diversity on this council’s agenda, also at the UTFAC level.

IFC Chair-Elect Nominations: Dr. Champagne-Langabeer

Dr. Champagne-Langabeer announced that it is time for the IFC Chair-Elect Nominations process. She encouraged the membership to consider self-nominating or nominating an IFC member for this position. She reminded the membership of the IFC’s Bylaws, Article 4, Section 3, as follows:

“The duties of the Chair-Elect shall be to serve as parliamentarian, participate in voting on the IFC, and on the IFC Executive Committee. In the absence of the Chair, the Chair-Elect will preside at meetings, and otherwise carry out the duties of the Chair. The Chair-Elect will assume the Chair position of the IFC after completion of a one-year term. The Chair will assume Past-Chair position of the IFC after completion of a one-year term.”

Each nominee will provide a short description of his/her proposed role and plans for the IFC and address the membership before a formal vote. A confidential voting poll will be conducted after the June meeting. Once all votes are received and tallied, we will make the announcement.

Dr. Champagne-Langabeer did explain the types of activities she engages in on behalf of the IFC. As Chair of the IFC, she explained the different groups she participates with on the local and UT System levels.
Subcommittee Brief Updates:

Governance & Academic Affairs  
Dr. Carole Mackavey

The GAA subcommittee is reviewing the transition of in-person to online education—how it is being delivered online, some of the strategies being used, and took a look at best practices around the country. The subcommittee found that UT is not behind; the schools all use active strategies to engage students, but there is no central location to permit access to all the resources. Everything is isolated, and we practice in silos. Finding a central repository is something the subcommittee is looking at for the benefit of all. The University of Michigan has an interprofessional Center which included ten schools across three campuses serving over 4,000 students. They also had an Innovation Center, which assisted with creating platforms, building software, etc. As far as UTHealth is concerned, other than having a central location for accessing all the different resources across our campuses, we are on top of best practices or at least participating in best practices as most of the country is at this time. We thought we might be behind but discovered this was not the case.

Faculty Status, Rights & Responsibilities  
Dr. Linh Bui

The FSRR subcommittee had three charges regarding assessing and reporting the awareness of available resources, the utilization of resources pre-pandemic versus the present time and identifying gaps in necessary resources between different schools. The subcommittee has put together what is available using the survey they received help from at the School of Public Health. We looked at the available resources at the different schools to see what is missing, are they the same, what can we do about it? Tables and charts will be provided in the subcommittee’s final report.

Administrative Affairs  
Dr. Carmen Dessauer for Dr. Ashtari

The AA subcommittee was to perform a gender equity study across UTHealth. We looked at the gender distribution of administration for each school, including the President’s Office. Some things were revealed that you might expect, i.e., Cizik School of Nursing having a greater percentage of women in their administration to almost exactly opposite findings in the School of Dentistry. The subcommittee further investigated gender and ethnicity at McGovern Medical School. We also reviewed gender equity with things like endowed professorships and then broke that down between the schools. Other areas reviewed were UT System STARs Awards and broke that down to the dollar amounts, ROTA, and Shine Academy Awards. We looked at the differences between gender/equity in the selection committees, applicants, and eventually the awardees.

VI. ADJOURNMENT  
Dr. Champagne-Langabeer

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 PM.

Approved by Interfaculty Council on May 19, 2021.