



The logo for the Student InterCouncil (SIC) is circular, featuring the acronym 'SIC' in large, bold, black letters. The letters are surrounded by a ring of ten gold stars. The text 'Student InterCouncil' is written in a smaller font around the perimeter of the circle, and the slogan '-Working For You-' is at the top. To the right of the logo is a grey heartbeat line. Below the logo, the words 'STUDENT PULSE' are written in a large, bold, orange serif font.

STUDENT PULSE

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 **UTHealth**[®] | **The University of Texas**
Health Science Center at Houston

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UTHealth in times of COVID-19

When COVID19 initially surfaced, I was told my clinical rotation was to have among the first patients diagnosed within the Houston area. What I didn't know was that day was going to be the last full day of my first semester nursing clinical within the hospital. The weeks following seemed to be organized chaos as professors struggled to keep us informed with the massive changes needed for in-person exams, lectures, and clinical labs to be converted into a never-to-be-done-before distanced, remote and undoubtedly functional online nursing education system. Saying the transition was difficult does the circumstance an injustice.

Nevertheless, the Cizik School of Nursing strived to suggest solutions for each unique concern by creating outlets for students to communicate with faculty. Open office hours were offered via WebEx while lectures were recorded by professors and made available on class canvas websites. In-person clinicals were substituted by simulated patient experiences, followed by a virtual post-clinical conference alongside our peers and preceptors. While academic accommodations had been made the school was not quick to overlook extracurricular struggles, limited by issues such as finances, newly created by the pandemic. UTHealth ini-

tiated and continues to offer additional scholarship funding to students who need help covering overwhelming life expenses. The Student Government Organization of the Cizik School of Nursing even went as far as to develop a partnership with the Houston Food Bank in the hope of relieving families of the financial burden associated with non-perishable groceries.



Fast Forwarding to our current fall semester, I can proudly say students have successfully accommodated. The adaptations made by faculty have been refined, revised, and continue to promote continued excellence in professional education. The Cizik School of Nursing has begun to bring students back to campus for exams and in-person lab instruction while preserving our opportunity to participate and learn within the hospital settings. To promote a healthy learning environment, the

school consistently prioritizes the safety of students during this pandemic. Some of the current adaptations include examinations offered both online and in-person. If students have to take examinations in-person, personal laptops are strongly encouraged, personal protection equipment required (provided if needed), and each student is asked to appear at their assigned room, sit at designated spots, each marked 6 feet apart.

UTHealth continues to keep its students physically safe through required screenings. The student health center has also been equipped to handle possible COVID19 cases and can provide necessary diagnostic testing for students.

There is no doubt this pandemic raised many concerns as its blindsided universities across the nation... But there is one that thing remains certain. Even amongst such hardship, UTHealth Houston remains one of the most resilient, forward-focused health professional campuses while continuing to provide astounding educational opportunities for each student.

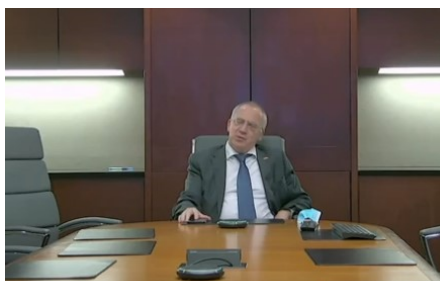
Naomi Donadio Cizik
School of Nursing

SIC Salutation 2020

Whether it is your first month in Houston and you are trying to navigate the city for the first time while managing new virtual classes, or you have had a few semesters under your belt, the beginning of each academic year offers students a fresh start that can be both exciting, and sometimes intimidating. Students attending UTHealth are lucky enough to have an administration and student governance organization who understand the stresses of beginning a new academic year during a pandemic and managed to host a virtual event focused on orienting students, as well as celebrating new beginnings.

On Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2020, the Student InterCouncil (SIC) and the Office of the President hosted a virtual event to welcome the new and returning students- 22nd Annual Virtual Salutation. Salutation is an event held annually to welcome students to the new academic year and introduce them to various offices and services offered by the university and affiliates to enhance student life on campus. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on campus, this year, SIC pulled off the first-ever virtual Salutation event on WebEx to celebrate all the things that UTHealth has to offer on a wonderful Wednesday evening. Salutation 2020 was opened by Eric Solberg (Vice President for Academic and

Research Affairs) followed by Rachel Pham, SIC President. The President of UTHealth, Dr. Giuseppe N. Colasurdo, gave a speech followed by talks by the Deans from all the six UTHealth schools. Important issues regarding COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, International Students Visa and New presidential proclamation issues, etc. were discussed during the Q&A session. The participants were then allowed to move into the Salutation Vendor Booth WebEx Breakout Sessions held by various UTHealth student services and organizations. Several of the Salutation vendors had their pre-recorded video posted, which can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.uth.edu/sic/documents/Salutation-Attendee->



[Agenda.pdf](#)

During the past years, salutation was set up in many ways like an orientation fair; there were multiple booths

set up around the event center's perimeter for students to move through along with lots of delicious food. Students had the opportunity to meet in person with Auxiliary Enterprises, which runs student housing, UTHealth shuttle buses, the recreation center, and campus printing, to name a few services. These offices and services were invited to orient students to UTHealth and the Texas Medical Center campus to help the new academic year run smoothly. Students would have access to knowledge about which services were readily available to them throughout the semester. SIC looks forward to hosting this event in-person again in the future! If you missed Salutation 2020 and would like more information about the services offered to students, please visit the website:

<https://www.uth.edu/sic/events/salutation.htm>

Swati Mohapatra, GSBS



Mental Health Initiatives

Our mental wellbeing is often affected by big life events that we have little or no control over such as bereavement, illness or redundancy. In these situations, it's about how we respond - our behaviors and habits - that will determine the impact on our mental wellbeing. Graduate students face daily struggles that affect their mental well-being and have little or no information on how to deal with such issues in a healthy manner.

Given the current times, COVID-19 pandemic has added to mental distress, fear and anxiety amongst many across the globe. COVID-19 has posed a unique set of challenges for graduate students, who find themselves navigating a new educational environment. Student InterCouncil (SIC) has stepped forward to help tackle mental health issues across the UT system. Many students strive hard to find the right help. Hence, in this regard, various platforms like counseling, Therapy Assistance Online (TAO), Thrive, Hotlines provide resources to alleviate mental well-

being of students. UTHealth student counseling services provide mental health services in the form of in-house sessions with expert psychiatrists and psychologists, resources with a focus on wellness, and short presentations on how to cope. Thrive and TAO are interactive, self-guided web-based programs that contain tools and materials on tacking stress, coping, and mental well-being. IMUT crisis hotline is available 24/7 for students that need urgent help.

The COVID-19 era is unpleasantly unique for everyone including graduate students. Thus, SIC urges students to reach out- we're here to help with an army of resources. Just give us a shout when distressed and we'll take care of the rest!

Tanvi Visal, International Student Representative

Resources

UT Student Counseling
713-500-5171 (8am - 5pm)

Check out the NEW UTHealth Wellness Connection Blog:

<https://www.uth.edu/blog/wellnessconnection/>



THRIVE at UT now live!
Download here: <https://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/thrive/index.html>



713-500-I·M·UT (4688)

Diversity at UTHealth

As the turbulent year of 2020 comes to an end, let's take a look back on the actions UTHealth took on Diversity and Inclusion. In the wake of Gorge Floyd's death and the Black Lives Matter protests

over the summer, UTHealth President Colasurdo published a message standing in support of racial justice and inclusion. Beyond this statement, UTHealth showed its support for the BLM movement by en-

acting change. A Diversity Task Force was swiftly created in response to the movement with the goal of finding ways to improve diversity and inclusion on campus. The Diversity

Task Force is comprised of faculty and student representatives from all UTHealth schools. Through their hard work this year, they presented recommendations to the UTHealth Executive Council on methods to ensure Diversity & Inclusion. Many of the recommendations were met with good favor, and of note, the Diversity Task Force has been officially approved as a permanent Diversity Com-

mittee! We look forward to seeing what's in store next semester.

SIC has also been a strong proponent for emphasizing the importance of Diversity & Inclusion at UTHealth. During the 2018-2019 Academic year, SIC created its own Diversity & Inclusion committee. In 2019, we created a diversity & inclusion report that provid-

ed information about student mentorship, diversity, and inclusion at all schools. The Diversity Committee continues to be a committee within SIC that is actively working towards promoting these values across all UTHealth.

Kate Wall, Member at Large

Melissa Yang, McGovern Medical School

SIC Community Service Events

The 2020-2021 academic school is in full swing and the SIC Outreach committee has been doing a great job! Here are some of the ways we've been involved this year:

Ronald McDonald House

On Nov 8th, the UT SIC Community Outreach committee came together to assemble lunch packs for over 30 families staying at the Holcombe Ronald McDonald house. The Ronald McDonald charities is a non-profit organization that provides housing and resources for sick children and their families. The SIC is grateful to help support these patients during their lengthy treatments at nearby Texas Medical Center hospitals. Most of these children have traveled far from home to receive this medical care and therefore greatly benefit from the Ronald McDonald House services.



Star of Hope Turkey Donation

Every year, the SIC community outreach committee reaches out to Star of Hope to donate turkeys for their annual Thanksgiving meal. Star of Hope is a shelter that supports Houston's homeless population of men, women, and children. This year, SIC's turkey donation took place on



November 14th. SIC was able to donate thirty, fourteen pound turkeys!

UTPD Annual Children's Gift Drive

Annually, SIC helps promote the UTPD Children's Gift Drive, in which toys are given to patients at the Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital, CE Odom Pediatric and Adolescent Health Center, and Harris County Psychiatric Center. Due to COVID, this year's toy drive may be postponed to January; however SIC will continue to support our friends at UTPD. Thanks for keeping us safe and bringing holiday cheer to children!



Things to Know: Upcoming Events at UTHealth

HEALTHCARE INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2020

The annual Healthcare Innovation Challenge will be held virtually on Saturday, February 27, 2021. This is a competition that resembles a hackathon and requires teamwork to solve systemic issues in healthcare.

Winning teams have the chance to win up to \$1,200! This event relies on the multidisciplinary contributions of students; therefore, we encourage students across all schools in UTHSC Houston to register. For more information and to join our listserv, please visit our website: tmc-hic.com ('Get Involved' → 'Registration' → 'Join Listserv')



OUT FOR HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 8th annual Out for Health conference will be hosted by McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston!

Out for Health is a medical conference founded and organized by students across all Texas medical schools in order to address the needs of the LGBTQIA+ population. Out for Health unites students and health professionals across disciplines to learn how to provide more inclusive health care. In order to adhere to proper social distancing guidelines, this year's conference will be virtual. CME credit will be provided.

This year we are focusing on intersectionality, recognizing the marginalization of minority groups within the LGBTQIA+ community.

By drawing parallels between the current Black Lives Matter movement and the queer liberation movement of the 1960s and between the current COVID-19 pandemic and the AIDS epidemic, we strive to empower the healthcare field to identify and fight systemic discrimination on all levels. Join us as we work toward Revolutionizing Healthcare with Pride!



SIC SPORTS DAY

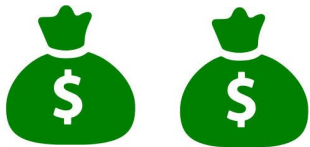
Mark your calendars! SIC's annual Sports Day event is scheduled for next semester on Saturday February 20, 2021. Join other UTHealth students in friendly sports competitions. Due to COVID, a more social distancing friendly version of Sports Day will be taking place this year. Come with your A game!

SIC ANNUAL CRAWFISH BOIL

The much anticipated annual Crawfish Boil is happening in the spring and you do not want to miss out on this event. Every year, Auxiliary Enterprise and SIC host a university-wide crawfish boil for students and their guests across all six UTHealth schools. Mark your calendars for Friday April 9, 2021.

Apply for SIC Funding!

- Are you interested in receiving funding from SIC? Each year SIC helps make student-driven ideas come to life.
- SIC provides up to \$500 of funding available for inter-professional ideas at UTHHealth.
- Selected projects must benefit the student body and should be educational in nature. Projects should aim to enhance students' knowledge, educational experience and/or promote cultural exchange.
- Student organizations must be registered at UTHHealth within the fiscal year of the funding request.



Link to the application here:



2020-2021 SIC Officers



President:
Rachel Pham,
McGovern Medical
School



Secretary:
Ankita Podichetty,
School of Public Health



Treasurer:
Niharika Neela,
McGovern Medical
School



Vice President:
Rachel Buckley,
School of Dentistry



Historian:
Melissa Yang,
McGovern Medical
School

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<https://www.facebook.com/UTHealth.SIC>



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@uthealthsic



What is the Student InterCouncil?

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) is the official UTHealth student governance organization. It is a recognized forum of student opinion and the primary vehicle for student participation in the governance of UTHealth. The organization is comprised of three representatives from each of the six UTHealth schools, three representatives from underrepresented student groups, and three representatives from international student constituencies.

The SIC contributes to student life at UTHealth by participating in developing and implementing policies and procedures affecting students. SIC also provides funds to support other UTHealth registered student organizations' special projects and represent student interests on external and internal committees. The SIC promotes communication and collaboration among the UTHealth schools by the publication of the official SIC newsletter- *Student Pulse*, facilitating planning, and implementing activities that encompass all students across UTHealth.

We are here to be your voice, so feel free to contact us anytime at sicgov@uth.tmc.edu.

2020-2021 SIC Representatives

McGovern Medical School:

Niharika Neela
Rachel Pham
Melissa Yang

School of Dentistry:

Rachel Buckley
Rohail Momin
Brittany Trinh

Members at Large Representatives:

Mariaelena Boyle
Omid Hadj
Katherine Wall

Graduate School of Biomedical Science:

Medina Colic
Swati Mohapatra
Sonia Patel

International Student Representatives:

Cem Dede
Jayanta Mondal
Tanvi Visal

School of Public Health:

Alison Kiley
Ankita Podichetty
Sharmily Roy

School of Biomedical Informatics:

Nour Alia
Angela Hayes

School of Nursing:

Naomi Donadio



For more information visit: <https://www.uth.edu/sic/funding-guidelines.htm>