

# News Release

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Young Scientists Meet in Lubbock for 2020 Student Research Week**

Students from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry hosted the university's 32nd Student Research Week March 10-13 in Lubbock.

Student Research Week provides an opportunity for TTUHSC student investigators to showcase their work and hear presentations from distinguished national speakers related to the year's specific theme. Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences student Bradley Schniers, Student Research Week director for 2020, said this year's theme was 20/20 - Visions of Biochemistry.

"We wanted to have a little bit of a play on words with it being 2020 and show our gratitude for the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry for hosting it," Schniers said. We also wanted to encompass and focus on the research that our presenters were giving as well."

Travel restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic meant keynote speakers Ernest M. Wright, Ph.D., a Distinguished Professor at the UCLA Department of Physiology, and Maralice Conacci-Sorrell, Ph.D., assistant professor at the Department of Cell Biology at UT Southwestern Medical Center, were forced to cancel their appearances.

Wright was able to make his presentation via Zoom. Because Conacci-Sorrell was unable to do so, Schniers said Vadivel Ganapathy, Ph.D., chair of the TTUHSC's Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry served as the second keynote speaker.

"We're really thankful that Dr. Ganapathy was able to step in and fill that time slot and give an interesting keynote address," Schniers said.

COVID-19 restrictions also forced the Graduate Student Association's (GSA) annual banquet to be canceled, though Schniers said there is still hope the event can be rescheduled later in the year.

"I do want to make sure the GSA, and especially their president this year, Ksenija Korac, get recognition for the time that they put in," Schniers said. "Even though we were unable to have the banquet, they did put in the same amount of time and effort that we put into planning Student Research Week."

Student Research Week also features a poster competition whereby students present their research projects and discuss their findings and ideas from diverse research areas. In addition to Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences students, poster competition entries span the TTUHSC family, including the Schools of Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy from campuses in Lubbock, Amarillo, El Paso and Abilene.

Schniers said there were 256 poster entries this year, a slight increase over the 2019 competition.

“We did see a pretty significant increase in our first- and second-year presenters from the School of Medicine this year,” Schniers said. “Looking at the overall quality of the entries, especially with the new layout that we were able to have in the Academic Event Center, I think the posters were really good this year.”

Poster competition winners for 2020 included:

- School of Nursing: Ashley James, BSN, RN and Julie Vereen, BSN, RN (1st Place); Matt Ellis and Troy Faulkner (2nd Place); and Elana Sherwood and Janelle Calloway (3rd Place)
- Health Professions: Brandi Murphy (1st)
- L. Luther Award: Chloe Cooper (School of Medicine)
- First- and Second-Year Medical Students, Graduate Medical Sciences and Public Health: Rachel Wagstaff (1st), Christopher Peterson (2nd) and Sabiha Armin (3rd)
- Third- and Fourth-Year Medical Students: Andres Guerrero Criado (1st), Kandis Wright (2nd), Ryan Dean (3rd)
- Residents and Fellows: Anastasia Ruiz (1st) and Ashish Sarangi (2nd)
- Undergraduate Research: Emily Ostermaier (1st), Betsaida Delgado (1st), Andrew Ibrahim (1st) and Andrea Lopez (1st)
- School of Pharmacy/Pharmaceutical Sciences: Itishree Kaushik (1st)
- Lubbock Economic Development Alliance: Whitney Redman (1st), Shawn Macha (2nd) and Monica Sharma (3rd)
- Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences First- and Second-Year Biotechnology: Ismail Mohiuddin (1st) and Rachel Washburn (2nd)
- Third- and Fourth-Year Doctoral Students: Xiaobo Liu (1st), Diego Pedroza (2nd) and Monica Sharma (3rd)