Volume II | Fall 2017

THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA
COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES
CONNECT • TRANSFORM • SUCCEED

CNHS Newsletter
Winter 2026

Visit Our Website

Dean Greenwood's Note

The hallways of the college are gradually getting busier as faculty and staff begin to prepare in earnest for the upcoming spring semester. Most of this newsletter is dedicated to the great work that has been done by CNHS faculty and students during the fall semester of this year. While each of these accomplishments is worthy of praise on its own, of particular note is 1) a paper co-authored by Professor Anna Ragni (Biology) published in *Nature*, work that received considerable attention in the popular press, and 2) a prestigious national sustainability scholarship awarded to Declan Lustenberger Environmental Studies Class of 2026.

I enjoy reading about the many ways our students and faculty are engaged with the Tampa Bay community and beyond, and I look forward to seeing what the new semester brings!

I wish you all the very best for a productive and enjoyable spring!

Cordially,

CNHS Happenings

The University of Tampa 2025 Years of Service and Edmund P. Sliz Awards Ceremony

20 Years
Angela Perry (Chemistry & Biochemistry)
15 Years
Rebecca Waggett (Biology)
Eric Werner (Chemistry & Biochemistry)
10 Years
Eduardo De Souza (Health Science & Human Performance)
Jeffry Fasick (Biology)
Shirley Franks (Nursing)
Christine Theodore (Chemistry & Biochemistry)
5 Years
Celina Bellanceau (Biology)
Amber Brace (Biology)
Joseph Walters (Health Science & Human Performance)

Fall 2025 Commencement

Florida Academy of Sciences Hosted by UTampa!

The Florida Academy of Sciences, Inc. was founded in 1936 as a non-profit organization. The Academy is the Florida Affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and is the only organization in Florida that represents all disciplines of sciences.

This year, The University of Tampa will be hosting FAS! If you are interested in submitting an abstract, all FAS abstracts must be submitted online at: https://www.flacademyofsciences.org/abstract-submission/
Abstract Deadline: Friday, 30 January 2026

Registration for the annual meeting as well as other questions can be found here: https://www.flacademyofsciences.org/

Community Outreach by Public Health Students

In November, three senior public health students visited the 7th and 8th graders at Corbett Preparatory School in Tampa and educated 120 students on the health risks of vaping. Ava Doreste, Mary Sives and Ashton Sloan talked about "What you should know about Vaping".

The student presenters had this to say about their experience: **"***This morning, I had the opportunity to present to a group of middle school students about the real impacts of vaping. We discussed topics regarding the negative effects of vaping on your lungs and brain, how big tobacco companies profit from addiction, and how to resist peer pressure*".

"*Through this presentation, we aimed to educate, empower, and initiate conversations that help young people make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Seeing how engaged the students were reminded me why public health education and prevention work are so important*".

A Bright Moment in the Dark

On the afternoon of November 11, just as the lights went out across the entire campus due to a campus-wide power failure, the Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy lab was in the midst of student presentations. One student, Lilli Cavanagh (Biology major, Chemistry minor, Class of '26), still needed to give a presentation to her group on the comparative anatomy of the circulatory and respiratory systems, dissection specimens already laid out and prepared. When the room went dark, I offered Lilli the obvious choice: postpone the presentation to another day, or she could go ahead in the darkness. She didn't miss a beat, insisting that she wanted to give the presentation then. She was ready.

The rest of the class were told they could head out, their presentations completed, but not one of them left. They stayed, phones lighting the room just enough to see, and listened as Lilli delivered her presentation in the black, windowless laboratory. Every one of them stayed to listen to Lilli's presentation, and then even helped that group to clean up afterward (put away dissection specimens, wash tools and trays, and other things). It was a nice moment of students supporting one another, and a clear

demonstration of the camaraderie that develops in our lab courses where students don't just learn science but learn how to support one another in their learning.
*-Story submitted by **Dr. Mason Meers** (Biology)*

Sport Management Class Hosts Gobble Games

This fall semester, the SPM 493-1 Venue and Event Management course designed and hosted a unique campus wide event named the UTampa Gobble Games. From the early days of the semester through the final evaluations of the event, the students took full ownership of the event and demonstrated their growth on various spartan ready skills including teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, communication, and interpersonal abilities.

The event drew strong attendance from across the campus community, offering an engaging mix of activities, learning opportunities, and community-building moments. Students coordinated logistics, marketing, budgeting, and on-site operations ensuring the event ran smoothly and delivered an enjoyable and memorable experience for the over 200 students that attended.

Faculty and staff praised the student's initiative and problem solving throughout the process. Students were able to obtain sponsorships from several area businesses who offered in-kind donations of food and giveaway products. Special thanks to some of the local food sponsors of Hattricks, Hendersons, and Gateway Subs. Most importantly, attendees left energized and impressed by the level of student innovation on display, and future students have already started brainstorming event ideas for when they enroll in the course.

This event is a shining example of what our students can accomplish when given the opportunity to lead. We are so proud and excited to see how students will utilize these experiences in their future careers.

Student Success

Sustainability Scholarship for Rising College Seniors

Celebrating the Next Generation of Sustainability Leaders

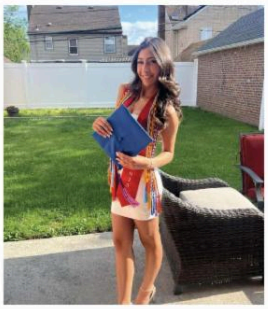
The Green Building Education Services (GBES) Sustainability Scholarship recognizes undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional commitment to the built environment, leadership within their campus or community, and a clear passion for advancing sustainability. This scholarship supports rising college seniors pursuing careers in architecture, engineering, environmental science, sustainability, and related fields.

The 2026 Scholarship Winner is Declan Lustenberger (Environmental Studies, Class of '26), Declan stood out for his leadership in sustainability, his systems-thinking approach to the built environment, and his academic excellence. Recognized by faculty as highly motivated, creative, and an exceptional communicator, Declan exemplifies the purpose of this scholarship.

University of Tampa Bonner Program

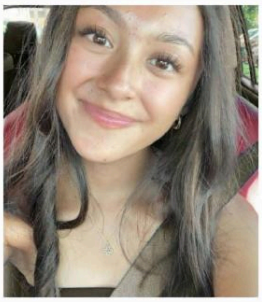
New Members

WELCOMING OUR NEWEST BONNER TEAM MEMBERS



ALEXIS BURTON

🎓 **Major:** Biology, Pre-Veterinary
🏠 **Home State:** New Jersey
❤️ **Hobbies:** Running and listening to music
🤝 **Non-Profit:** Empath Partners in Health



ALLYSON RAMOS CHAVEZ

🎓 **Major:** Nursing
🏠 **Home State:** New Jersey
❤️ **Hobbies:** Swimming and baking
🤝 **Non-Profit:** Tampa Bay History Center

MIA ALBARRAN

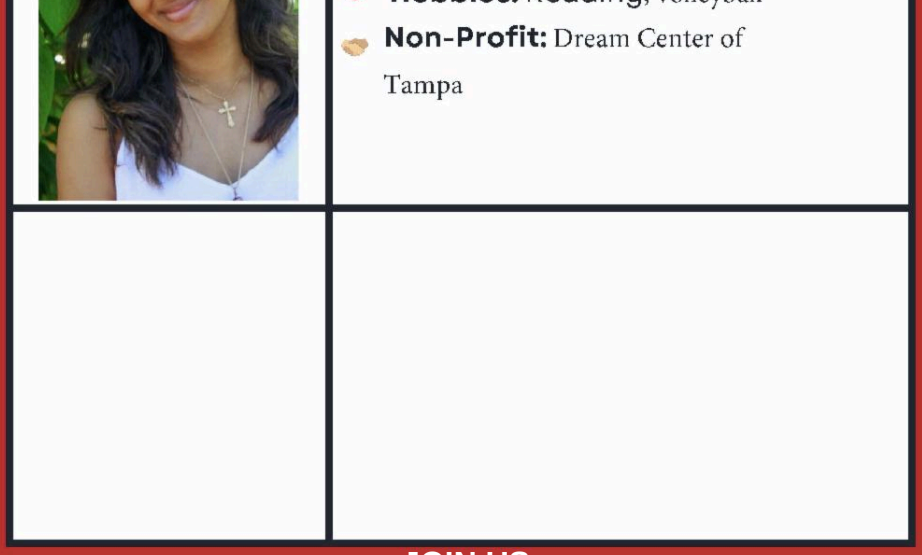
🎓 **Major:** Forensic Science
🏠 **Home State:** Michigan
❤️ **Hobbies:** Reading, gardening, and swimming
🤝 **Non-Profit:** Tampa Museum of Arts

SYDNEY JONES

🎓 **Major:** Biology, Pre-Dental
🏠 **Home State:** Florida
❤️ **Hobbies:** Reading
🤝 **Non-Profit:** Tampa JCCs and Federation

TRINITY SMITH

🎓 **Major:** Forensic Science
🏠 **Home State:** Tennessee
❤️ **Hobbies:** Reading, volleyball

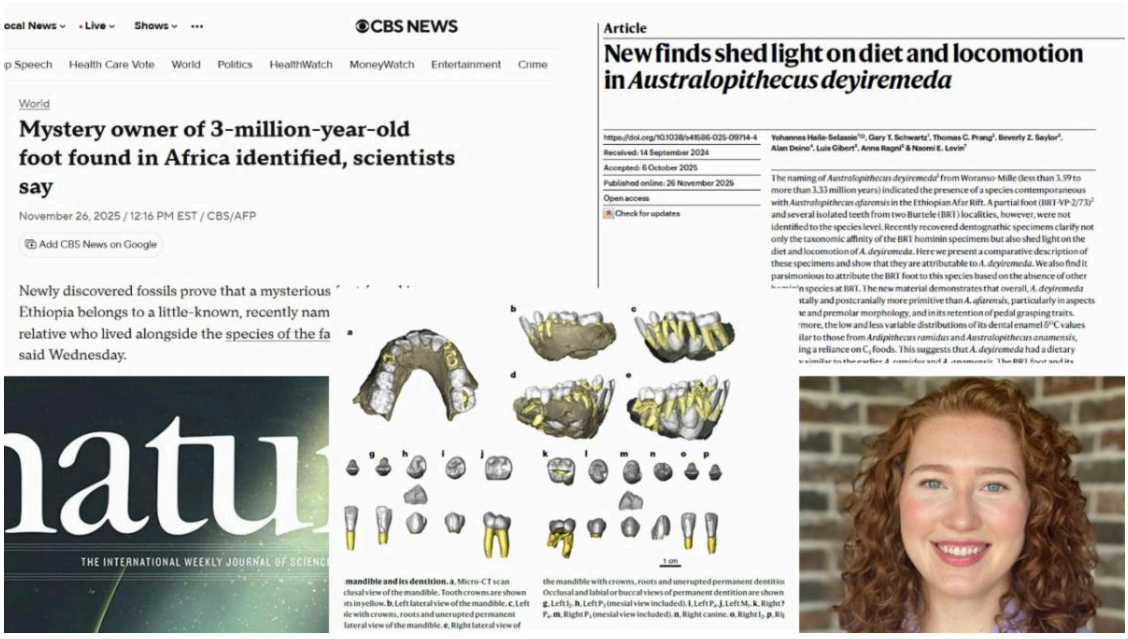


JOIN US

We look forward to a successful year together at UTampa!
@utampa_bonner

Bonner students intern at a nonprofit partner for nine hours/week and have a weekly training on campus for two hours/week. The program is unique because students stay at that nonprofit for their UTampa career gaining increasing developmental experiences. Also, Bonner students receive a scholarship each semester and are paid for their hours by Federal Work Study Funds. During their junior and senior years, Bonner students complete a capstone project. UTampa is one of three Florida schools to feature a Bonner program.

Faculty and Student Scholarship



Dr. Anna Ragni (Biology) co-authored a recent paper in the journal *Nature*, one of the world's most prestigious and highly cited multidisciplinary science journals. The article entitled, "*New finds shed light on diet and locomotion in Australopithecus deyiremeda*", was authored by an international team of early hominin experts. Dr. Ragni and her co-authors have finally identified who the mysterious "Burtele foot" belonged to by linking it to dental remains of *Australopithecus deyiremeda*, an early

human relative that lived alongside Lucy's species. This shows the previously unassigned 3.4-million-year-old "Burtele foot" was not an odd individual of Lucy's species, but a different early hominin species with a more grasping, tree-friendly foot and a more tree-based diet. The paper demonstrates that early human relatives were experimenting with multiple ways of moving at the same time, not following a single path toward modern walking. The link to the article can be found here:

https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-09714-4

Dr. Eric Werner (Chemistry & Biochemistry) and undergraduate research student Thea Matter (Chemistry B.S.- ACS certified major, Music minor, Class of '26) recently attended the joint 2025 Southeastern/Southwest Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society (SERMACS/SWRM) in Orlando, FL. Thea delivered a poster entitled "Variation of Tripodal CMPO-Based Ligand Structure and Liquid-Liquid Extraction Protocol Parameters for Enhanced f-Element Separations" which described results from her summer research aimed at optimizing selective thorium and lanthanide metal extraction for mineral purification applications. Dr. Werner delivered an invited talk at the meeting as part of the *REACh: Rare Earths and Actinide Chemistry Symposium* that gave an overview of the past several years of results from the lab focused on rare-earth element and related metal separations.

Also speaking in the *REACh* symposium was UTampa and Werner group alum, Bailey Lake (Chemistry B.S.- ACS certified, Spring 2023), who is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering with a materials science focus at Florida State University. Bailey delivered an excellent talk over her graduate research focused on rare-earth element separations that utilize the unique magnetic properties of the metals to drive physical metal separation. All presentations were well-received as UTampa f-element researchers, past and present, left their mark this year at SERMACS!

> Nurs Educ Perspect. 2025 Sep 22. doi: 10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000001471. Online ahead of print.

Food Insecurity Among Undergraduate Nursing Students: A Post-Pandemic Assessment

Karen Aul [1], Kailey Rinaldi, June Llerena, Brittany Nettles, Lauren Boardman, Patrick Nobles, Bryce Catarelli, Sally Bethart, Amelia Phillips

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 41021738 DOI: 10.1097/01.NEP.0000000000001471

Abstract

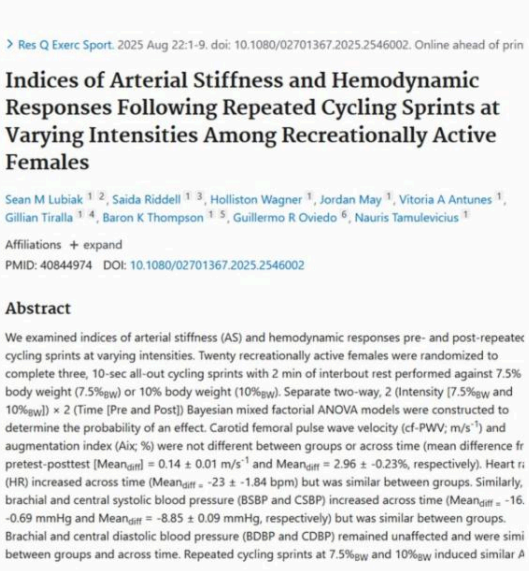
Food insecurity is more prevalent among college students than in the general US population. This study examined the prevalence of food insecurity specifically among nursing students during the post-pandemic period. Survey data were collected from 199 students across four southeastern baccalaureate nursing programs. Between 44 and 60 percent of respondents reported being unable to afford balanced meals in the past year. To address this issue, strategies such as establishing campus food pantries, providing nutrition education, and raising awareness of community resources should be prioritized.

Keywords: Food Insecurity; Nursing Students.

Dr. June Llerena (Nursing) and co-authors had their manuscript entitled, "*Food insecurity among undergraduate nursing students: A post-pandemic assessment*" accepted for publication in the journal *Nursing Education Perspectives.* A link to the online pre-print can be found here: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41021738/

CCNE Trains New Cohort of On-Site Evaluators

Dr. Tressa Pedroff (Nursing) was invited to be a Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) site evaluator and attended the training in June of 2025. Dr. Pedroff was selected from a pool of 500 applicants with 105 faculty being invited to the training session.



> Res Q Exerc Sport. 2025 Aug 22:1-9. doi: 10.1080/02701367.2025.2546002. Online ahead of prin

Indices of Arterial Stiffness and Hemodynamic Responses Following Repeated Cycling Sprints at Varying Intensities Among Recreationally Active Females

Sean M Lubiak [1 2], Saida Riddell [1 3], Holliston Wagner [1], Jordan May [1], Vitoria A Antunes [1], Gillian Tiralla [1 4], Baron K Thompson [1 5], Guillermo R Oviedo [6], Nauris Tamulevicius [1]

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 40844974 DOI: 10.1080/02701367.2025.2546002

Abstract

We examined indices of arterial stiffness (AS) and hemodynamic responses pre- and post-repeatec cycling sprints at varying intensities. Twenty recreationally active females were randomized to complete three, 10-sec all-out cycling sprints with 2 min of interbout rest performed against 7.5% body weight (7.5%$_{BW}$) or 10% body weight (10%$_{BW}$). Separate two-way, 2 (Intensity [7.5%$_{BW}$ and 10%$_{BW}$]) × 2 (Time [Pre and Post]) Bayesian mixed factorial ANOVA models were constructed to determine the probability of an effect. Carotid femoral pulse wave velocity (cf-PWV; m/s^{-1}) and augmentation index (Aix; %) were not different between groups or across time (mean difference fr pretest-posttest [Mean$_{diff}$] = 0.14 ± 0.01 m/s^{-1} and Mean$_{diff}$ = 2.96 ± -0.23%, respectively). Heart r (HR) increased across time (Mean$_{diff}$ = -23 ± -1.84 bpm) but was similar between groups. Similarly, brachial and central systolic blood pressure (BSBP and CSBP) increased across time (Mean$_{diff}$ = -16. -0.69 mmHg and Mean$_{diff}$ = -8.85 ± 0.09 mmHg, respectively) but was similar between groups. Brachial and central diastolic blood pressure (BDBP and CDBP) remained unaffected and were simi between groups and across time. Repeated cycling sprints at 7.5%$_{BW}$ and 10%$_{BW}$ induced similar A

Professor Nauris Tamulevicius (Health Sciences and Human Performance), together with alumni, published a paper in the journal *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*. The paper entitled: "*Indices of Arterial Stiffness and Hemodynamic Responses Following Repeated Cycling Sprints at Varying Intensities Among Recreationally Active Females"* (link below). Alumni co-authors Sean Lubiak, Saida Riddel, Gillian Tiralla, and Baron Thomson are presently pursuing their doctorate degrees.

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02701367.2025.2546002#d1e462.

Dr. Rebecca Waggett (Biology) attended the 28th Biennial Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) Conference in Richmond, VA with OURI/Honors student Jessica Sullivan (Marine Science-Biology, Class of '27). Dr. Waggett presented an oral presentation entitled "*After the Storms: Unraveling hurricane impacts on Tampa Bay's zooplankton dynamics*" on work done with recent UTampa graduate Jillian Arzoumanian. Jessica and Dr. Waggett presented a poster entitled, "*Zooplankton as Indicators of Ecosystem Health: Baseline Assessments in Tampa Bay*". Dr. Waggett also ran into UTampa alumni Amanda Khan and Eammon Hennessy.

Jessica Sullivan (Marine Science-Biology, Class of ’27) had the privilege of meeting with the Walter C. Jaap Memorial Scholarship Committee, as well as representatives from the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay to get to know each other and take some photos.

Jessica was incredibly grateful to have received the 2025 Walter C. Jaap Memorial Scholarship in recognition of Dr. Jaap, an extraordinary figure in the field of Marine Biology, and more specifically coral restoration.

“*I can not say thank you enough to the committee for choosing me as the recipient of this generous scholarship in honor of such a remarkable individual and ecologist who is the epitome of who I want to become in my career*”.

Kirsten Banks, a December 2025 s*umma cum laude* graduate studying Marine Science Biology and research student of **Dr. Michael Middlebrooks** (Biology), won an award for best undergraduate presentation at the Florida Association of Aquatic Biologists Meeting. Her presentation was titled "An Analysis of Gastropod Populations in a Mixed *Caulerpa prolifera* and *Halodule wrightii* Seagrass Bed ". Dr. Middlebrooks also presented a talk at the meeting entitled "Herbivore Implicated in the Local Disappearance of *Caulerpa* in Tampa Bay, FL".

Important Dates

UT Master Calendar
UT Academic Calendar

January 14 - College Meeting (Vaughn Center Crescent Club, 9-11 am)
January 20 - Classes begin for Spring Semester
February 18 - Midterm progress reporting process begins for faculty of undergraduate students (ends March 8)
March 12 - Tenure & Promotion Ceremony (Vaughn Crescent, 3 pm)
March 15 - 22- Spring Break
March 27 - Admitted Student Day
April 3 - Admitted Student Day
April 6 - Registration begins for Fall continuing students
April 10 - Admitted Student Day
April 16 - University Academic Awards (Fletcher Lounge, 3 pm)
April 24 - CNHS Research Symposium (Vaughn Center Crescent Club, 3-5 pm)
April 29 - CNHS Academic Awards (Vaughn Crescent, 3 pm)
May 4 - Last day of Spring classes
May 5-8 - Spring Final Exams
May 9 - Spring Commencement

Please send future news items to Jeffry Fasick (jfasick@ut.edu)

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