

# UNT SYSTEM™ HR HIGHLIGHTS

S E R V I N G . E M P O W E R I N G . T R A N S F O R M I N G .

UNT System HR Highlights is the Official Newsletter of UNT System.



## FACULTY & STAFF

# Spotlight

### SABRINA HODGE, ED.D.

Supervisor of the Trailblazer Elite Program & Program Manager of Dr. Emmett J. Conrad Leadership Program  
University Advancement

**University of North Texas at Dallas**

In 2020, UNT Dallas brought in Dr. Sabrina Hodge as the supervisor of the new Trailblazer Elite program. She is also the Program Manager for the Dr. Emmett J. Conrad Leadership Program. Learn more about Dr. Sabrina Hodge as she applies her passion, dedication, and understanding of student development within her role at UNT Dallas.

[READ MORE](#)

If you'd like to nominate a faculty or staff member to spotlight, please email [communications@untsystem.edu](mailto:communications@untsystem.edu).

## YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Reminder: [The Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey](#) is open until Oct. 14

Your email from Gallup with your unique link should have already arrived. The annual Gallup Survey will ask [12 questions](#) that assess workplace needs, such as the need for growth, development, and recognition. All faculty and staff are asked to please complete the five-minute survey, which is important in helping to identify progress and areas for improvement — individual responses are confidential. The survey closes Oct. 14, and results will be released later this fall. **Make sure your voice is heard.**

## OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

### Legislative Update and Upcoming Town Halls

Dear Faculty, Staff, and Students of the UNT System:

Our Presidents and I have spent a good deal of time in Austin recently, providing testimony to the Texas State Legislature. We want to be sure that you are kept up to date on our messaging to our state leaders, as they are the key stakeholders who make vital decisions that impact us in many ways.

We will continue to communicate externally in a way that is aligned with our efforts to build a values-based culture centered on why we are all here: ensuring our students are successful in receiving the best education possible.

Simultaneously, the value proposition of higher education is being questioned by individuals across the country as tuition costs rise, and as we prioritize

students and families, we must also be responsive to workforce demands that will employ our students and fuel our state's economy. One of the most important factors in this "customer-focused" mindset is ensuring college remains accessible and affordable for our students at each UNT System campus. This is critically important to me, our campus leadership, our board of regents, and the Texas Legislature.

I am proud that for the seventh consecutive year, no UNT campus has raised tuition – HSC has not raised tuition once in the last 10 years, and UNT Dallas has raised tuition only once in the past decade. At UNT Denton, 41% of our undergrad students graduate without any debt, and the total amount of debt per student is decreasing. These measures continue to trend in the right direction across the entire UNT System.

On returning from these conversations at the legislature, we can be confident that we are well-positioned to become an even more significant leader in higher education in Texas; our message must remain crystal clear about where we are going and how we want to lead. We believe that our message was well received by the legislators, who see us as solution-oriented in higher education. I expect a successful upcoming legislative cycle that will allow us to continue, and even expand, our hard work.

Lastly, I want to be sure to remind you that our team will be at each campus for a town hall style listening tour during October. The dates, times, and locations below can also be found at [this website](#), where additional listening sessions will also be posted in the future; keep checking in for updates.

We look forward to hearing from you live – be it in-person or virtually – starting in a week. In the meantime, as always, please feel free to send me your thoughts directly and our team will be in touch.

Very respectfully,

Dr. Michael R. Williams  
Chancellor

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# CHANCELLOR'S TOWN HALL & LISTENING TOUR

UNT SYSTEM



UNT DALLAS

All the Chancellor's Town Hall events will be hybrid, and the online option will be open to any member of the UNT System community – so please come to one or more than one! For the most up-to-date information, check out the [Chancellor's Listening Tour](#) website. Additional dates will be announced on a rolling basis, as well as the links for virtual viewing and participation. Our goal is to connect personally with as many students, faculty, and staff as possible.

## UNT Dallas Town Hall

Friday, October 14. 9 a.m.

[Location: Student Center, Campus Hall](#)

## HR RESOURCES



## Blue365 Discount Program

We often don't associate our health insurance with discounts on great products that can improve yoga, ergonomics of our home workspace, and discounts on eyeglasses, contact lenses, and hearing aids. If you don't know about [Blue365](#), it's time to check it out. It's the Blue Cross Blue Shield discount program available to you as a UNT System employee. [Register](#) today to get started (be sure to have your insurance card handy). Don't forget about all your other perks via the [UNT System discount programs](#).

*UNT System Human Resources has numerous programs and tools available at no cost to assist you with health or well-being issues, work-life balance, financial issues and more. Explore your [UNT System benefits](#), and follow this space for tips, programs and promotions.*

# Blue365<sup>®</sup>



## Free wellness resources are part of your employee health insurance benefits

- [Weight management](#) – Two free programs to choose from – explore which plan is best for your needs
- [Tobacco Cessation](#) – Two free programs to choose from – depending on where you are in your journey
- [Maternity Resources](#) – Learn about your HealthSelect benefits provided coverage
- [Well onTarget<sup>®</sup>](#) – Tools for enhancing your wellness – earn points as you do and shop for fitness equipment with your points!

Additionally, there is a low-cost fitness program benefit – [learn more about joining](#) and using the program to achieve your fitness goals.

## HIGHLIGHTS



### HSC Health welcomes Dr. Janice Knebl as Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Knebl brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise with more than 34 years of clinical practice in geriatrics, ambulatory care, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, memory care, house calls, hospice, and palliative care teams. She has most recently served as the interim Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director for HSC Health's Center for Older Adults, and Interim Chair - Internal Medicine and Geriatrics, while maintaining her educational roles with the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Learn more: [Chairman's Welcome](#)



## UNT Biological Sciences welcomes Dr. Patrick Horn

The College of Science welcomes Dr. Patrick Horn as an assistant professor in the [UNT Biological Sciences](#) department. Dr. Horn is a proud alumnus of UNT, earning his Ph.D. in biochemistry in 2013. In rejoining his alma mater as an educator and researcher, Dr. Horn is excited in collaborating with other researchers at the [BioDiscovery](#) Institute. Dr. Horn teaches undergraduate and graduate biochemistry courses, which integrate many sub-disciplines such as biology, chemistry, genetics, cell biology, analytical chemistry, and computational modeling.

Learn more: [College of Science News](#) and [Dr. Horn's lab research](#)

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## UNT College of Music welcomes Brooke Miller

Brooke Miller (alumna DMA '22) is the **Senior Administrative Coordinator for Community Outreach and Collaboration**. An accomplished clarinet performer and educator, she teaches a vibrant studio of clarinetists in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. An advocate for new music, Brooke has been involved with many composer premieres, projects, and recordings.

Learn more: [University of North Texas College of Music](#)

# CONGRATULATIONS



## UNT earns national diversity award for fifth year in a row

UNT has been recognized once again for its dedication to diversity and inclusion. For the fifth straight year, UNT has earned a national HEED Award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine. The award is given to colleges and universities that cultivate a more inclusive and diverse campus environment. UNT has made it a priority to engage its community members in programs that continue to promote inclusion on campus. Through the [Division of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access](#) (IDEA), there are numerous initiatives that make UNT a welcoming community. UNT will be featured alongside other winners in the magazine's upcoming issue.

Learn more: [UNT News](#)

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## HSC Institute for Translational Research awarded \$148.78 million grant from NIH to study biology of Alzheimer's in ethnically diverse groups

The Institute for Translational Research at The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth is the recipient of a five-year grant of up to \$148.78 million from the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health. The grant will fund one of the largest studies ever of Alzheimer's

disease, and is the largest grant the University of North Texas System has ever received. Dr. Sid O'Bryant is the lead researcher and executive director of the Institute for Translational Research.

Learn more: [HSC Newsroom](#)

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## UNT joins Excelencia in Education's Presidents for Latino Student Success

UNT is a new member of Presidents for Latino Student Success, a network of college and university leaders created by Excelencia in Education, the nation's premier authority in efforts accelerating Latino student success in higher education. As a Hispanic and minority serving institution, UNT leadership is committed to cultivating a learning environment where Latino students thrive. Working with Excelencia's network will bolster UNT's progress to transform higher education.

Learn more: [UNT News](#)

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## College of Pharmacy's Jessica Bradshaw gets Perinatal Research Society Award

HSC's Dr. Jessica Bradshaw was awarded the Young Investigator Cassady Presidential Award by the Perinatal Research Society. Dr. Bradshaw is a postdoctoral research fellow with Dr. Rebecca Cunningham. Her research focuses on understanding the impact of healthy & unhealthy pregnancies on memory & dementia risk. The award was established in 2012 in honor of Al Cassady, from Mead-Johnson Nutrition, in recognition to nurture young investigators far beyond the norm in his work.

Learn more: [Perinatal Research Society Award Info](#)

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## HSC Office of Culture and Experience's Brittany Brookens wins Smarty Award

HSC's Brittany Brookens, project manager for the Office of Culture and Experience, was awarded HR Hero of the Year – Large Business by Ramsey Solutions for her promotion of SmartDollar. Brittany and her team have worked hard to present financial wellness benefits to the employees and students at HSC. Not only do they send out monthly communications about SmartDollar, they also set up booths at employee service fairs, and offer learning sessions on campus to incoming students and their parents.

Learn more: [2022 Smarty Award Winners](#)

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## UNT Dallas hosts constitution and citizenship celebration

In a celebration of the U.S. Constitution and citizenship rights, UNT Dallas with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) encouraged students, staff, employees and their families, and community members to apply for citizenship with free citizenship classes, such as ESL classes and GED classes, career training, and job placement. The Master of Ceremony was USCIS Ambassador/UNT Dallas U.S. Citizenship Program Director, Mara Vaughn.



## UNT Dallas receives grants to celebrate Big Day for Teachers

UNT Dallas is proud to partner with the Cotton Bowl Foundation and the College Football Playoff Foundation to combat teacher shortages. During a presentation at the student center on the UNT Dallas campus, the two foundations extended grants totaling \$200,000, including \$50,000 to the UNT Dallas THRIVE programs. Educate Texas received \$50,000 from the CFP Foundation on the heels of receiving \$50,000 from the Cotton Bowl Foundation.

Full story: [UNT Dallas News](#)

## WELL-BEING CALENDAR

Upcoming well-being opportunities from UNT System. Visit our [website](#).

### October is National Retirement Security Month

Please visit our [Voluntary Retirement Savings Plans](#) page to learn more and access links to enroll, if you haven't already.

Your [Benefits Advisors](#) are here to help, so don't hesitate to contact them if you have questions or need assistance.

Now's the perfect time to enjoy our free financial webinars from UNT System [Well-Being](#), below:

#### Money at work: foundations of investing

Hosted by TIAA

[Wednesday, October 12, 2022. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM \(CDT\)](#)

#### Live with confidence in retirement

Hosted by TIAA

[Thursday, October 13, 2022. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM \(CDT\)](#)

#### Virtual Wellness Fair Morning Check-in: Welcome Session!

Organized by ERS

[Monday, October 17, 2022. 9:00 AM - 9:15 AM \(CDT\)](#)

#### Social Security Considerations

Hosted by TIAA

[Wednesday, October 19, 2022. 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM \(CST\)](#)

#### Coping with compassion stress

Organized by ComPsych EAP

[Thursday, October 27, 2022. 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM \(CDT\)](#)

#### Keep Moving Through the Holidays

Organized by BlueCross BlueShield of Texas

[Tuesday, November 8, 2022. 10:00 AM - 10:15 AM \(CST\)](#)

## STRONGER TOGETHER



*The UNT System DE&I  
Celebrating our connections*

## Make a plan to act

*"Achieving true peace requires the building of societies where all members feel that they can flourish. It involves creating a world in which people are treated equally, regardless of their race."*

While there are many holidays, observances, and commemorations to celebrate equity, the Office of [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\)](#) wants to highlight **National Hispanic Heritage Month**. Please follow the instructions and be sure to tag [#IamDEI @untsystem](#) on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and/or YouTube with your team's thoughtful participation, recognition, celebration, or activity throughout the month.

Each year, Americans observe *National Hispanic Heritage Month* from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors originated from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on Sept. 15 and ending on Oct. 15. It was enacted into law on Aug. 17, 1988. Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively. Also, Columbus Day or Día de la Raza, which is Oct. 12, falls within this 30-day period.

## It's as easy as watching a video

As National Hispanic Heritage Month concludes, watch this three-minute video with your team: [Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope | Race and Culture](#). Discuss your thoughts on the video. Reserve time for members on your team who are of Hispanic heritage to share ways in which they celebrate their roots.

Ask your DEI Program Coordinator to join and help facilitate: [krystal.onyekwuluje@untsystem.edu](mailto:krystal.onyekwuluje@untsystem.edu) or 214-752-8827

*From The UNT System Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)*

*DEI strongly believes in being a valued strategic partner accessible to everyone, regardless of race, gender identity/expression, age, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, Veteran status, or diverse perspectives in order to create an environment that fosters engagement by serving people, empowering teams and transforming lives.*

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## HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

Provided by [The Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion \(DEI\)](#).

Learn about all of these cultural celebrations that are listed below at [DEI Event Calendar: October](#)

[Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

[Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)

[Global Diversity Awareness Month](#)

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### [October 10 - World Mental Health Day](#)

This day promotes mental health awareness and education. Explore the importance of self-care and mental wellness.

### [October 10 - Indigenous Peoples' Day \(USA\)](#)

Honoring the original inhabitants of the Americas. Celebrated in place of or alongside [Columbus Day](#).

### [October 20 - Spirit Day](#)

Go purple to support LGBTQ youth. Take the pledge against bullying.

[October 24 - Diwali](#)

Diwali is derived from Sanskrit word Deepavali meaning 'Line of Lamps'. It is one of the most important festivals in India, marking a new year.

[October 28 - National Immigrants Day](#)

Recognizing the day as a nation of immigrants and natives coming together as citizens to pursue "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

[October 31 - Halloween](#)

The tradition originated with the ancient Celtic festival of [Samhain](#), when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts.

## CAMPUS NEWS

Click our member institutions' logos for the latest news



If you have an HR question or topic you'd like covered in the newsletter, please email [HR@untsystem.edu](mailto:HR@untsystem.edu).



Miss an issue of HR Highlights? [CLICK HERE](#) to catch up.