If not for technologically savvy saviors like Mohammed Mobashirin -- we call him, Mo -- many of us would be stuck in the dark ages. A 1998 UNT graduate, Mo joined UNT System in 2013. He works on IT projects and initiatives that benefit faculty, staff and students, such as the launch of the all-in-one mobile applications now being used by students at UNT, UNT Dallas and the Health Science Center.

Mo, a husband and father of three, has an impeccable sense of humor considering his list of favorite TV shows is filled with legendary sitcoms (Hello, Newman!). He’s a world traveler -- check out his list of favorite countries to visit (eat your heart out, Rick Steves). Yet, perhaps most impressive is his green thumb. And, feel free to ogle at his incredible vegetable harvest (🍆🍆 🥒🥒 🍅🍅 🥦🥦🧅🧅 & more) on his Facebook page. Get to know Mo by clicking the button below.

If you’d like to nominate a faculty or staff member to spotlight, please email communications@untsystem.edu.
UNT System HR is bringing UNT World experts directly to you with this periodic and always timely installation called “Ask An Expert.” So, let’s ask...

EXPERT: Dr. Diana Cervantes, UNTHSC
EXPERTISE: Epidemiology

Known as Dr. Microbe, the assistant professor and Director of the Master of Public Health Epidemiology program is the go-to expert for reporters seeking the inside scoop on infectious diseases. With COVID-19 still raging, Dr. Cervantes is in high demand. We were fortunate to catch up with her to discuss everything from trusting the vaccines to traveling during the holidays to how we'll look back on 2020.

To check out her expert advice, click the button. Listen to her full interview on the We Are North Texas podcast.

BENEFITS NEWS YOU CAN USE

KNOW HOW IT AFFECTS YOU: Health insurance deductibles restart Jan. 1
With the new year comes the resetting of both medical and prescription drug insurance coverage deductibles. That means you might pay more the next time you fill a prescription, or visit the doctor. Access all the info you need to know, CLICK HERE.

GOT CONSUMER DIRECTED HEALTH SELECT?: Take advantage of your HSA
If you have the Consumer Directed Health Select plan -- that's the high deductible plan -- you have a Health Savings Account (HSA) that provides funds for medical expenses well beyond standard deductibles and copays. Use your HSA for dental, vision, chiropractic care and more. To take full advantage of your HSA, CLICK HERE.

BENEFITS REMINDER: Make changes to voluntary retirement savings plans
If you participate in a voluntary retirement savings plan, you'll want to be sure to check out the IRS' 2021 tax year limits that were recently announced. We have those for you here. Also, learn more about great ways to tax-shelter retirement income via easy payroll deduction.

FEDERAL LEAVE OPTIONS TO EXPIRE: Coronavirus relief likely not extended
The options that became available on April 20, 2020 as part of a relief package related to COVID-19 are set to expire on Dec. 31. Currently, there is no signed legislation that would extend the use of these types of leaves. Read more to understand which emergency leave options these are and what it means.
HIGH FIVE: UNTSC Dean earns national research achievement award
Dr. S. Suresh Madhavan is the recipient of the 2021 American Pharmacists Association (APhA) Academy of Pharmaceutical Research & Science Awards, earning the Research Achievement Award in the Pharmaceutical Sciences. The award recognizes and encourages outstanding, meritorious achievement in any of the pharmaceutical sciences. Dr. Madhavan is recognized for his outstanding research achievements, international work, total funding and number of graduate students supported throughout his career. Dr. Madhavan joined the System College of Pharmacy as Dean in June 2019. Congratulations, Dean Madhavan.

HIGH FIVE: UNT Dallas English adjunct pens the perfect holiday gift
Congratulations to Lauren Kalstad Coe, UNT Dallas adjunct English professor and fiction writer, on publishing her debut children's book, "To the Stars in Bumper Cars." The book follows a little boy who takes fantastical trips in his dreams, and is billed as an "imaginative bedtime story with a poetic touch that inspires creativity through dreams." Learn more about her book [here](#) and [here](#).

BE AWARE: Unemployment fraud attempts continue to target UNT World
UNT World employees continue to be targets for fraudulent unemployment claims by criminals outside our universities and System. HR Records has been carefully responding to receipt of fraudulent unemployment claims and immediately notifying Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), which initiates an investigation. A major concern is the fraudulent use of social security numbers. If you should receive a fraudulent unemployment claim, please immediately contact HR Records at [hrrecords@untsystem.edu](mailto:hrrecords@untsystem.edu). HR Records can also send you information including actions you can take as well as recommendations.

HOLIDAYS ARE HERE: Visit our ED&I calendar; find fun ideas; help is near
Which holidays are you most looking forward to celebrating? There's plenty to go around in December, and we encourage you to check out the new [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Calendar of Holidays & Observances](#) to learn more about the holidays you know and discover the ones you don't. Also, [CLICK HERE](#) to find fun holiday videos and virtual games to play and share during the holiday break. We also know that the holidays can be a difficult time. Remember, the [Employee Assistance Program](#) is here to help. Please take advantage of its many benefits.

Staying In The Green. UNT World Well-Being.
Enroll in Texa$aver (Savings Plan)  
Dec. 11 at 11:30 a.m.

Managing Holiday Stress  
Dec. 14 at 9 a.m.

Fund Your Future: Texa$aver  
Dec. 14 at 11:30 a.m.

Suicide Prevention webinar  
Dec. 15 at 2 p.m.

What is Real Appeal?  
Dec. 16 at 10:30 a.m.

Nutrition 101  
Dec. 17 at 11 a.m.

If you have an HR question or topic you’d like covered in the newsletter, please email HR@untsystem.edu.

Miss an issue of HR Highlights? CLICK HERE to catch up.