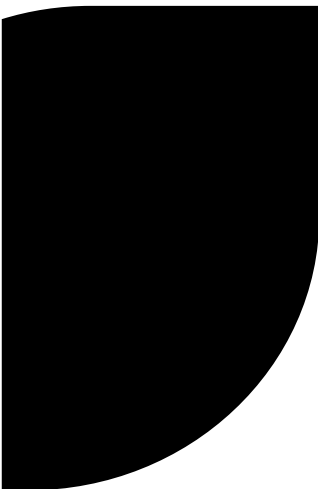
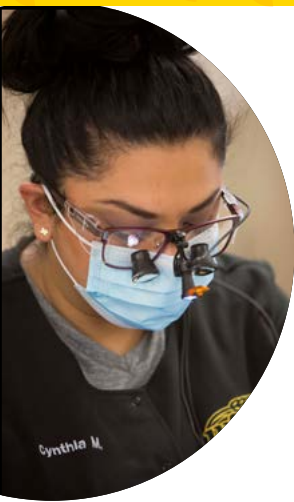




WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY



ANNUAL REPORT

COLLEGE *of* HEALTH
PROFESSIONS

2024



WHAT SETS US APART

Outstanding Board Scores

➡ Every year our programs in the College of Health Professions achieve some of the highest program board exam pass rates in the U.S., ranking competitively with top-tier universities—all at a much more affordable rate.

Our commitment to excellence ensures students receive high-quality, affordable education that prepares them for success in their healthcare careers.

MEANINGFUL WORK. UNLIMITED IMPACT.

From bench to bedside, from clinic to community, to populations, our goal is to shape health care leaders for the 21st century.

Our students, faculty and staff do real work that impacts health care, the economy, and the vitality of our communities.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Preparing tomorrow's healthcare leaders

We offer 27 health professions programs from undergraduate through doctoral levels. We prepare students for a career in healthcare through state-of-the-art technology, access to industry experts and valuable hands-on learning experiences.

Community Impact

Our patient-serving clinics provide affordable, quality care to our community and hands-on learning experiences for residents and students.

Applied Learning

CHP students benefit from our exceptional health care industry partnerships, with clinical affiliation sites across the U.S. – from large hospitals and private practices to local schools and neighborhood clinics.

Professional Success

Graduates enjoy high post-graduation employment rates and exceptional success in advanced careers.



ABOUT US

MISSION

Improve the health of the community by engaging students, faculty, staff, and the larger community in the preparation of healthcare leaders, scholars, and professionals.

VISION

Leading change in high-quality healthcare education.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ➔ Strive for excellence and continuous improvement in healthcare education, scholarly engagement, and service to students, colleagues and the community.
- ➔ Equip graduates with applied learning skills necessary to address the challenges in healthcare.
- ➔ Exemplify stewardship and accountability for the resources provided by the citizens of the State of Kansas.
- ➔ Assure that all graduates excel in providing evidence based professional care within an interdisciplinary healthcare system.
- ➔ Promote and sustain a culturally diverse environment, which respects the values and perspectives of individuals and professional disciplines.

ENGAGE. LEAD. EDUCATE.

DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAMS

DEAN'S OFFICE

SCHOOL OF
NURSING

SCHOOL OF
HEALTH SCIENCES

SCIENTIFIC
FOUNDATIONS
DIVISION

COMMUNICATION SCIENCES
AND DISORDERS

MEDICAL LABORATORY
SCIENCES

PHYSICAL THERAPY

PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE

PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF
ORAL HEALTH

ADVANCED EDUCATION IN
GENERAL DENTISTRY

DENTAL HYGIENE

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gregory Hand - Dean

Voncella McCleary-Jones - Associate Dean for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs

Lisa Belt - Chair, Dental Hygiene

Dean Elledge - Director, Advanced Education in General Dentistry

Evan Ohlman - Chair, Physician Associate

Douglas Parham - Chair, Communication Sciences and Disorders

Debra Pile - Chair and Associate Dean for Nursing Practice

Nikki Keene Woods - Chair, Public Health Sciences

M'Lisa Shelden - Chair, Physical Therapy

Samuel Smith - Director, Scientific Foundations Division

Aisha Waite - Chair, Medical Laboratory Sciences

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



It is my pleasure to present the College of Health Professions’ annual report. The year 2024 was marked by significant growth, new initiatives, and progress on vital projects aimed at improving the health of Kansans.

One of our most exciting milestones was the groundbreaking of the Wichita Biomedical Campus. This project is steadily progressing, and growth is happening all around the Biomedical Campus to create a thriving healthcare corridor, where health care services, education, research and technology will be established near existing private hospitals and healthcare providers. These partnerships hold immense potential to enhance healthcare across the state.

Another major initiative is the Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistive Technology. This collaboration brings together Wichita State’s College of Health Professions, College of Engineering, and Industry and Defense Programs, along with key clinical partners Ascension Via Christi’s Rehabilitation Hospital, Heartspring’s Outpatient Services and the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center. Together, we are working to advance rehabilitation medicine and assistive technology, significantly improving the health and well-being of Kansans.

Our commitment to the health of our communities continues through initiatives such as the new Licensed Mental Health Technician Pathway in the School of Nursing and expanded clinical services contracts, which places Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in schools and communities throughout the state, particularly in rural areas where access to these services has traditionally been limited.

Additionally, our students continue to excel, as reflected in our outstanding program board scores—demonstrating the exceptional education and training provided by our faculty in the College of Health Professions.

The achievements highlighted in this report are just some of the incredible things happening in the College of Health Professions. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to our vision: Leading Change in Healthcare Education.

Gregory Hand
Dean and Professor
College of Health Professions

FACULTY/STAFF WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

NEW FACULTY/STAFF

Advanced Education in General Dentistry

Tanner Brock
Stephanie Cameron
Veronica Chavira
Mark Hagan
Emily McMillan

Dean’s Office

Madison Bolton
Cory Rooney

Dental Hygiene

Calee Courter
Julie Nash

Nursing

Sara Idol
Rachel Johnston
Christy Reser

Physician Associate

Marc Duverseau
Lorna Nguutu

Physical Therapy

Catelin Kass
Audrey Garcia
Ryleigh Williams

Public Health Sciences

Allison Apaza

RETIREEES

Advanced Education in General Dentistry

Andre Thibault (Served at WSU for 7 years)

Medical Laboratory Sciences

Susie Jaques (Served at WSU for 7 years)

Nursing

Mary Faragher (Served at WSU for 23 years)
Maryon Habtemariam (Served at WSU for 14 years)

Physician Associate

Garold Minns (Served at WSU for 14 years)

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS: BY THE NUMBERS

More than **700**
active clinical affiliation sites

Over **250**
employees

The College awarded over **\$400,000** to recipients
from over **100 scholarship** programs

271 students
received CHP scholarships

Our **3** community-serving clinics
reported approximately
13,000 appointments

70% of students are from **underserved**
communities, including **first generation**

More than **1,900**
students enrolled in fall 2024

508
students graduated

12
student
organizations

LEADING CHANGE IN HEALTHCARE EDUCATION

WICHITA BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS BREAKS GROUND DOWNTOWN



Hundreds of people gathered on May 8 at the intersection of Broadway Ave. and William St. to celebrate the start of Phase One construction on the new Wichita Biomedical Campus, a \$300 million, 471,000-square-foot joint health sciences center in the heart of downtown Wichita. The campus will combine WSU's College of Health Professions programs, including its Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, WSU Tech's Health Professions programs and the Wichita campuses of KU School of Medicine and KU School of Pharmacy – all into one location.

The Wichita Biomedical Campus will be the southern anchor and education core of a thriving healthcare corridor, where healthcare services, education, research and technology will be established near existing private hospitals and health care providers. The biomedical campus building is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, and programs will move to the new building as individual areas are completed.

View the construction progress of the Wichita Biomedical Campus live at bigview.ai/wichitabiomedicalcampusliveview.



WICHITA STATE LAUNCHES INSTITUTE FOR REHABILITATION MEDICINE AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (IRMAT)

Wichita State University has launched the Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistive Technology (IRMAT), an innovative collaboration focused on addressing disease and disability through applied research and technology. IRMAT will serve as a hub for cutting-edge, patient-driven research and development of transformative technologies to improve the quality of life for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities.

The groundbreaking collaboration brings together Wichita State's College of Health Professions, College of Engineering, and Industry and Defense Programs, along with inaugural clinical partners Ascension Via Christi's Rehabilitation Hospital, Heartspring's Outpatient Services and the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center, to accelerate scientific advancements and develop assistive technologies.

Learn more at wichita.edu/IRMAT.



LEADING CHANGE IN HEALTHCARE EDUCATION



SCHOOL OF NURSING LAUNCHES LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH

The School of Nursing has launched a Licensed Mental Health Technician (LMHT) pathway. This pioneering initiative, the first of its kind in the state, will address the growing need for mental health care professions in Kansas.

Key features of the LMHT pathway:

- ➔ Coursework is completely online, making the curriculum accessible to individuals across the region.
- ➔ All credit hours earned through the pathway can be applied toward a health care degree program for students pursuing further education.
- ➔ The School of Nursing is establishing clinical partnerships in rural areas, with the goal of allowing rural students to complete their clinical requirements close to home.

The need for patient mental health care has increased substantially, and there is a severe shortage of health care professionals trained in this area. Licensed Mental Health Technicians are trained to care for patients who are challenged with mental or behavioral health issues and will fill a vast health care need across Kansas. Learn more about the pathway at wichita.edu/LMHT.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS EXPANDS CLINICAL SERVICES FOR PEDIATRIC PATIENTS

The Physical Therapy and Audiology programs have launched clinical services contracts, expanding our reach beyond traditional clinics into schools and community locations across rural Kansas. This initiative increases access to essential physical therapy and audiology services for children who might otherwise go without much-needed treatment or care. In 2024 the physical therapy program served multiple school districts, including the Emporia School District, Sumner County Educational Services—covering Argonia, Belle Plaine, Caldwell, Oxford, South Haven and Sumner County Academy Day School—and the Wellington School District, including Futures Unlimited - Head Start. These efforts not only expand access to care, but also establish our physical therapy program as a leader in pediatric physical therapy training.

Additionally, the College has formed a new partnership with Heartspring, bringing our faculty and students on-site to Heartspring's Pediatric Outpatient Clinic to provide audiology and physical therapy services to children across Kansas. Heartspring specializes in interdisciplinary therapies that help children with neurodevelopmental differences realize their full potential in communication, social interactions, mobility and daily living. We are excited about this collaboration and the opportunity to expand services for underserved communities.

Spotlight on Physical Therapy Chair

Our physical therapy program features nationally recognized faculty in orthopedics and pediatrics who are active in research and clinical practice. Dr. M'Lisa Shelden, Chair and Program Director, is a renowned pediatric therapist with over 40 years of experience in developmental disabilities, school-based services, and early intervention. Dr. Shelden has held prominent roles, including Director of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program in North Carolina and Practice Chair for the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy. She is a graduate Fellow of the ZERO TO THREE National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Their Families and recipient of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research Mary E. Switzer Merit Fellowship. She has coauthored many publications and consulted with more than 35 states and programs nationwide, presenting nationally and internationally on pediatric physical therapy. She also served as the chair for the revision of the International Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices. Dr. Shelden's leadership and expertise has been instrumental in developing our pediatric physical therapy programs and advancing education, research, and service.



COLLEGE HIGHLIGHTS

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS DIVISION PROVIDES RECORD NUMBER OF TOURS TO HIGH SCHOOLS

In 2024, the College of Health Professions welcomed over 800 students from more than 20 high schools across Kansas, reaching as far as Dodge City. Interest in high school visits continues to grow, reflecting a strong enthusiasm for our College and students exploring healthcare careers. A special thank you to Coni Nutter for serving as the face of the College, scheduling school visits and hosting the events. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to the faculty and staff who have volunteered their time to make these tours successful.



SCHOOL OF NURSING EXPANDS DEDICATED EDUCATION UNITS

In 2024 the School of Nursing expanded its Dedicated Education Units (DEUs) by establishing two new DEUs in partnership with Ascension Via Christi. Since 2021, the School of Nursing has maintained two DEUs at Wesley Medical Center, with plans to add more DEUs in the near future.

The new DEUs at Ascension Via Christi St. Francis Hospital focus on medical-surgical care, which involves treating patients with both medical and surgical conditions, and medical oncology, which specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. The longstanding DEUs at Wesley Medical Center have served second-and-third semester nursing students, offering experience in general medical-surgical care and orthopedic/spine care, working with patients who have suffered broken bones or undergone orthopedic surgery.



PA PROGRAM WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL DIRECTORS

The College of Health Professions and Physician Associate program welcomed Dr. Lorna Nguutu as the new medical director. Dr. Nguutu is currently a practicing physician at Hutchinson Regional Medical Center, where she also serves as the stroke program director. The program also welcomed Dr. Marc Duverseau as the new associate medical director. Dr. Marc Duverseau is currently a practicing general surgeon specializing in robotic and endoscopic surgery at NMC Health in Newton. Drs. Nguutu and Duverseau succeed longtime medical director, Dr. Garold Minns.

GRANT ENHANCES TRAINING FOR AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY STUDENTS AT WICHITA BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS

The Wichita Biomedical Campus is using a \$2 million grant to purchase state-of-the-art audiology equipment for training, research, and client care. This investment will provide top-notch training for students in our Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology programs and enhance services for clients at the Wichita State Cassat Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic. Funds will be used to purchase equipment including audiology testing booths, electrophysiology devices, vestibular balance systems, simulation tools and ultrasound imaging technology. Additionally, the grant will help establish educational and clinical audiology and speech-language pathology laboratories at the Wichita Biomedical Campus.

Follow us on social media to see the latest stories!



COLLEGE HIGHLIGHTS



COLLEGE HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL HEALTH SCIENCE TEACHER'S WORKSHOP

The College of Health Professions hosted the third annual Kansas High School Health Science Teacher's Workshop, an event aimed at enhancing high school educators' knowledge and teaching strategies in healthcare education. This year's workshop featured expert speakers Dr. Sam Smith, Brittini Mayagoitia and Dr. Rhonda Williams, who provided insights into topics such as active learning techniques for mastering the nervous system, transitioning from healthcare practice to classroom teaching, and hands-on approaches for teaching clinical skills. A special thank you to Stanley May, instructor at Bishop Carroll High School and president of the High School Teacher's Advisory Council, who performed as the host and master of ceremonies.

Participants engaged in interactive skill-building exercises and toured the College's cutting-edge laboratories, including the Gross Anatomy, Human Simulation, and School of Nursing Simulation labs. These experiences provided valuable resources and innovative methods to help educators inspire their students to pursue healthcare careers.

To support teachers traveling from outside the Wichita area, travel scholarships were offered. A special thank you to Ascension Via Christi for co-sponsoring the event and contributing to its success.

This workshop continues to serve as a unique networking and professional development opportunity for high school health science teachers across the state. Building on the success of these workshops, the College is collaborating with the High School Advisory Committee to plan the fourth annual Health Science High School Teacher Workshop, scheduled for July 2025.

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM HOSTS ICAN BIKE AND ICAN SWIM CAMPS

The Department of Physical Therapy hosted another successful session of the iCan Bike camp at Wichita State, helping local children with disabilities learn to ride a bike. New in 2024 was the introduction of the iCan Swim program, which provided swim instruction to children with disabilities, increasing their independence and confidence in the water. With the support of students, faculty, volunteers, families, and sponsor Davis-Moore Auto Group, more than 40 children with neurodevelopmental or physical disabilities learn to bike or swim independently in just five days. Thank you to everyone who contributed to making these life-changing events possible.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES Health Care Detectives

Medical Laboratory Scientists' work behind-the-scenes is crucial in healthcare. Medical Laboratory Scientists use scientific testing to provide fundamental data that is critical for diagnosing disease and treating patients. About 70% of all decisions regarding a patient's diagnosis, treatment, hospital admission, and discharge are based on the work of medical laboratory scientists.

Students in our Medical Laboratory Sciences program perform a variety of tests using state-of-the-art equipment to analyze body fluids, tissues, and cells. Through clinical rotations students get special training in microbiology, hematology, chemistry, and blood banking. Our students achieve above-national-average certification scores and 100% job placement after graduation.

Graduates of our Medical Laboratory Scientists program work in a variety of settings, including hospitals and clinics, research labs, forensic sciences facilities, as well as pharmaceutical industries and biotech industries.

Learn more about the MLS program at wichita.edu/MLS.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES CHAIR LEADS NIH-FUNDED RESEARCH

Dr. Nikki Keene Woods, professor and chair of the Department of Public Health Sciences, is a maternal, infant, and child health researcher and educator with an emphasis on addressing health disparities. Dr. Keene Woods is leading an interdisciplinary research team at Wichita State that was awarded a National Institutes of Health (NIH) R15 grant to develop a wearable fetal heart rate monitor. This project, “Examining the feasibility of a wearable device for fetal heart rate monitoring through interdisciplinary research,” aims to create a wireless, non-invasive device to continually monitor fetal heart function. The

device will use algorithms and cloud-based health monitoring to improve clinical care for pregnant women.

By leveraging technology, this project will bridge gaps in maternal healthcare access, particularly for populations with limited resources, ultimately promoting more equitable maternal and infant health outcomes. The fetal heart rate monitoring device will also improve prenatal care access in rural areas, support remote monitoring and telehealth integration, and enhance patient care by allowing increased mobility during labor.

The research team members are Dr. Nikki Keene Woods, principal investigator; Dr. Yongkuk Lee, assistant professor and chair in Biomedical Engineering; Jolynn Dowling, Janice M. Riordan Distinguished Professor in Maternal Child Health in the School of Nursing; and Jamie Harrington, assistant professor in the School of Nursing.

Dr. Keene Woods created the research team based on the group member’s shared interests in wearable devices and maternal/child health. Dr. Keene Woods and Dr. Lee previously collaborated on a Regional Institute of Aging grant to develop a fall-risk monitoring device for older adults. Dr. Keene Woods, Dr. Harrington and Professor Dowling have an extensive history of working together on maternal and child health projects. This grant also provides valuable research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students at Wichita State, allowing them to acquire new research skills in the fields of biomedical engineering, nursing and public health. Although the research project is still in-progress, student collaborators have already received several awards and recognitions for their contributions to health science, including Top Student presentations at both the WSU Undergraduate Research and Creative Forum and the Kansas-IDEA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence Symposium.

The team is currently developing a prototype of the fetal heart monitor, with plans to apply for a patent as the next step in this groundbreaking technology.



DR. ERIN O'BRYAN ADVANCES APHASIA RESEARCH

Dr. Erin O'Bryan, Assistant Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders, is advancing innovative treatments for individuals with aphasia, a condition resulting from injury that affects a person's ability to communicate and understand language. Dr. O'Bryan's research includes storytelling and music-based interventions to help people with aphasia regain the ability to communicate. She also mentors students in clinical research projects, while educating clinicians and the public on improving life for people with aphasia.

The Melodic Intonation Therapy (MIT) Project investigates the use of melodic intervals—the spaces between musical notes—in aphasia therapy, to help people improve their ability to speak phrases and sentences. This project is a collaboration with researchers in Audiology, the School of Music, and the Department of Public Health Sciences. The findings, published in *Aphasiology*, have led to expanded research through a grant from the Regional Institute on Aging.

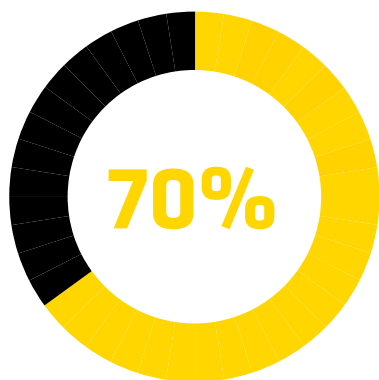
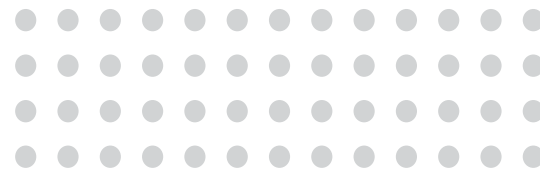
Dr. O'Bryan also collaborates with the Department of Veterans Affairs on the Supported Conversation for Aphasia (SCA) project, training healthcare providers to improve interactions with patients who have aphasia or other communication disorders. Additionally, she is developing the Word Maze for Aphasia therapy app with researchers in the College of Engineering and Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders to aid patients with sentence formulation.

Dr. O'Bryan's research interests make her a key member of the Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistive Technology team, which is focused on addressing disease and disability through transformative, applied research and development. Through innovative research and collaborations, Dr. O'Bryan's work is driving meaningful advancements in aphasia care and education.

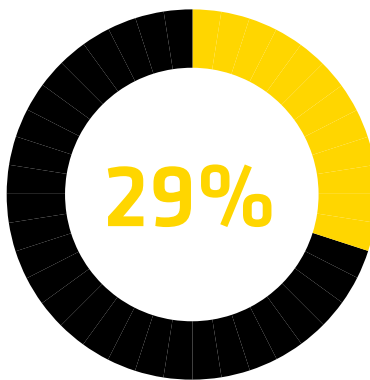


STUDENTS

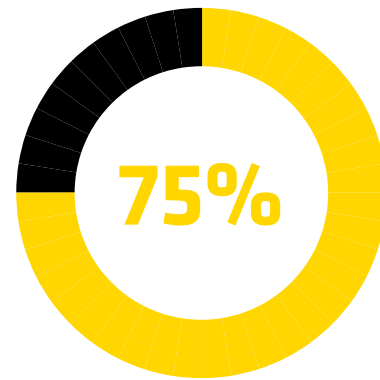
BY THE NUMBERS



From underserved communities,
including First Generation



Over the age
of 25



Undergraduate
students

➡ The College exceeds the national examination pass rate average for Physician Associate, Dental Hygiene, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and Nurse Practitioner.

➡ The CHP has the highest proportion of first generation and underserved students among the academic colleges.



COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS WINS CLASH OF THE COLLEGES

The College of Health Professions is proud to be the 2024 Clash of the Colleges champions! It was a wonderful night filled with competition, teamwork and school spirit, and we are very proud of our students. To celebrate, the College hosted a pizza party, and the championship banner is proudly displayed in front of Ahlberg Hall.

Clash of the Colleges is a high-energy field day event where students compete in exciting team games and a competition between academic colleges to determine which college will reign supreme. A special shoutout to all the event organizers and students who make this unforgettable event possible every year.

STUDENTS



INAUGURAL PATHWAY TO NURSING CLASS GRADUATES

In spring 2024, the inaugural class of the Pathway to Nursing program graduated, marking a historic milestone for the program. We are very proud of this group: Elyssa Lenz, Carly Howard, Jana Rosich, Alexis Streeter, and Kelby Wilson.

Pathway to Nursing is a unique dual degree program that offers students the valuable opportunity to earn both a Bachelor of Science degree from Kansas State, and a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Wichita State. Both programs are located on the K-State campus in Manhattan. To learn more about the program, visit wichita.edu/PathwayToNursing.

DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM EXPANDS TO ADMIT MORE STUDENTS

The Department of Dental Hygiene received approval from the Commission on Dental Accreditation to expand its annual admissions to 38 students, representing an increase of over 5%. The expanded cohort began in fall 2024 and will graduate in spring 2026. With the high level of interest and competitive acceptance rate of just 38%, this increase allows more aspiring dental hygienists to pursue their education at Wichita State. This expansion also helps address the growing demand for trained dental hygiene professionals in local dental practices and community healthcare centers.

Recent renovations at the School of Oral Health have further enhanced the student experience by providing comfortable, quiet study spaces and a designated area for lunch. Being located in the School of Oral Health allows dental hygiene students to engage closely with faculty and staff in the Advanced Education in General Education (AEGD) program and WSU dental clinic, gaining valuable hands-on experience and building confidence in clinical rotations.

"Our faculty now have a shared office space in the School of Oral Health, which fosters collaboration with the AEGD faculty, residents and staff, and allows them to conveniently meet with students. Faculty also use the remodeled spaces for break-out sessions during course-learning activities and for fun events like social gatherings." – Lisa Belt, Chair, Department of Dental Hygiene

FIRST COHORT OF EXPANDED PHYSICAL THERAPY PROGRAM BEGINS

In June 2024, the first expanded cohort of Physical Therapy students began at Wichita State. With this expansion, class sizes increased from 40 to 60 students, marking a significant milestone in the program's growth. To support this increase, WSU Old Town underwent extensive renovations, expanding classrooms and lab spaces to accommodate more students. Additionally, the department invested in new PT equipment and expanded its team by adding faculty members, administrative support staff, and graduate teaching assistants, ensuring that students continue to receive high-quality education and support.

The expansion of the Physical Therapy program at WSU is a crucial step toward meeting the rising demand for skilled physical therapists and improving healthcare in the region. By increasing the program's capacity, we are able to serve more students and create a stronger workforce to meet the diverse healthcare needs of the region.

CHP STUDENTS PLACE SECOND AT NATIONAL CLARION COMPETITION

Congratulations to Taylor Lipford, (Speech-Language Pathology); Kristen Geiger (Physician Associate); and Taygen Altenburg (Health Administration) who were part of the interdisciplinary team that won 2nd place at the CLARION Interprofessional National Case Competition. The students presented "Pandemics Past, Present, and Future: Emphasizing Trust & Equity in Emergency Preparedness and Response," showcasing their analysis and implementation plans on how to effectively prepare for and respond to an arising pandemic.



STUDENTS

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT - KADRIAN AYARZA, NURSING

Kadrian Ayarza, born in Las Vegas and raised in Hays, KS, comes from a diverse family of six, as her father is from Panama and her mother is from Utah. Kadrian's academic journey began early when she attended Fort Hays State University during her last two years of high school through the Kansas Academy of Mathematics and Science program, an early college program for students interested in STEM.

Kadrian's passion for healthcare is deeply personal –multiple family members have undergone colectomies due to a hereditary predisposition to colon polyps and cancer. Witnessing these medical challenges and knowing she and her siblings have a 50% chance of inheriting the same condition, Kadrian was inspired to pursue a career in healthcare.

Kadrian always knew she wanted to work in the medical field, and her involvement with HOSA: Future Health Professionals of America cemented her decision to pursue nursing. Through the shadowing program at Wesley Medical Center and working in nursing homes, her eyes were opened to the critical role nurses play in healthcare. The field also offers a variety of positions, flexibility and endless opportunities for growth, which align with Kadrian's long-term vision, and she is grateful to be on this path.

Kadrian chose Wichita State for its wide range of opportunities, including the Wichita Biomedical Campus, strong healthcare connections, and extensive applied learning opportunities. She also values WSU's commitment to diversity and efforts to address healthcare disparities in minority populations. The supportive faculty, hands-on learning, and welcoming campus culture have all contributed to a great experience and helped propel her towards success. Kadrian was also honored to receive the Richard "Dick" Smith scholarship through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's Passage 2 Success program. This support has made it possible to focus on her education and career, for which she is incredibly grateful.

Kadrian serves as the President of HOSA, fundraising and planning events to expand opportunities for students. She competed at the State Leadership Conference (SLC) and qualified for Nationals, an experience she found rewarding. She hopes to secure funding to inspire more students to participate and potentially host the SLC in Wichita one day.

Balancing academics, campus involvement, and work has been one of Kadrian's biggest challenges. Like many WSU students, she relies on public transportation, which can make managing multiple commitments difficult. However, she has built a strong support system and learned to prioritize opportunities that align with her happiness and career goals.

Currently, Kadrian is a nurse intern at Ascension Via Christi, gaining experience across various units. Previously, she worked as a peer advisor at Shocker Career Accelerator, assisting students with resumes, mock interviews, and professional branding. This role helped her build networking and professional development skills, ultimately leading to her current position at Ascension.

Looking ahead, Kadrian plans to graduate in fall 2026 and continue working in Wichita while applying to graduate programs. Her goal is to contribute to research on gastrointestinal diseases and the rising rates of colon cancer. She aspires to work as an RN in gastroenterology or a related field and may pursue travel nursing in the future. Eventually, she and her siblings hope to open a practice and foundation dedicated to gastrointestinal research and treatment.

Her advice for future WSU and nursing students is to build a solid support network, stay organized, and embrace new opportunities for growth. Outside of academics, Kadrian enjoys photography, media, cooking, yoga, and weightlifting.



CHP ADVISING CENTER: SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

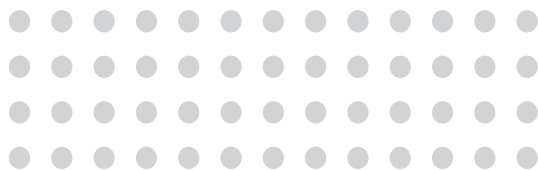
The College of Health Professions (CHP) Advising Team is committed to helping students achieve their academic and professional career goals. Our College advisors offer guidance on a variety of topics, including exploring majors, applying to undergraduate professional programs, understanding university policies, creating academic plans, transferring courses, and accessing campus resources. Additionally, the team engages with prospective students through virtual appointments, recruitment events and departmental information sessions. To further enhance student success, the College has a dedicated Success Coach who offers advice on time-management, motivation, study strategies, and navigating college life.



"My advisor was essential to my experience as a student, working with me to establish a plan that made the most sense for me and my future goals." – Camille, Health Professions student

"Our team of advisors have extensive experience working with students with different backgrounds and goals, and who face different challenges. We understand students have many responsibilities and our mission is to help them navigate the environment of higher education toward a future in healthcare."

– Mandy Konecny, Director, CHP Advising Center



DEVELOPMENT UPDATES



WELCOME, TED KIMBLE

The College of Health Professions is excited to welcome Ted Kimble, associate vice president of development for the WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement. A proud Shocker alum, Ted graduated from WSU with a bachelor's degree in political science and brings extensive experience in fundraising, including previous Development Director roles at the WSU Foundation and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. After nearly 30 years, Ted is thrilled to return to his alma mater and he looks forward to advancing healthcare education at WSU.

We also extend our gratitude to former Director of Development, Amy Tully, who has started a new position as the Senior Director of Principal Giving at the WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement. We congratulate Amy on her new position and are confident that Ted will continue providing exceptional support for the College of Health Professions.

Ted can be contacted at 316-978-3806 or ted.kimble@wichita.edu.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with alumni and friends of the WSU College of Health Professions. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on the quality of healthcare available to the people of our great state, ensuring a healthier future for all."
– Ted Kimble, **associate vice president of development, WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement**

COLLEGE FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

The WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement team is actively working to support the Wichita Biomedical Campus (WBC), with a focus on:

- ➊ Completing construction of the Evelyn Hendren Cassat Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic.
- ➋ Securing funding for educational and clinical programs within the WBC.

There are many opportunities for donors to support the programs and activities in the College for which they're passionate. Supporters have a chance to leave a lasting impact on the future of healthcare education.

Other key initiatives:

- ➌ **Kansas Center for the Advancement of Healthcare (KCAH):** Improving the health of Kansans through evidence-based research and data science.
- ➍ **Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistive Technology (IRMAT):** Establishing a cutting-edge research, development, and education hub dedicated to advancing rehabilitative medicine and developing assistive technology for patients with physical and cognitive disabilities.
- ➎ **Licensed Mental Health Technician Pathway:** Supporting a new pathway that will address the growing need for mental health care professionals in Kansas.
- ➏ **Dedicated Education Units (DEUs):** Expanding DEUs for nursing students to increase valuable, hands-on clinical training opportunities.

SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

The College of Health Professions greatly appreciates each and every one of our supporters. Every gift, large or small, plays a vital role in advancing our mission to improve the health of our communities. Here are some highlights of our generous donors.

Medical Laboratory Sciences student awarded Southcentral Pathology Scholarship

Medical Laboratory Sciences student Dori Lebron Malave was named the fall 2024 recipient of the annual endowed scholarship from Southcentral Pathology. The Southcentral Pathology Scholarship award was established in 2021 by Dr. Joel Alderson, president of Southcentral Pathology. This generous award provides full-ride scholarships to two outstanding students in the Medical Laboratory Sciences program each year.



Patterson Foundation invests in Physician Associate program

The Patterson Family Foundation has made a significant investment in the future of the Physician Associate (PA) program at Wichita State University. Their investment will provide \$500,000 in scholarships for students pursuing any health professions degree and \$332,000 to support the PA program in rural parts of Kansas.

This funding will:

- ➔ Support PA students completing clinical rotations in rural areas by covering stipends for lodging, travel, and living expenses.
- ➔ Provide resources for faculty, including travel costs and salaries for precepting and student support.
- ➔ Establish or sustain rural hubs that support PA students performing clinical rotations.

This remarkable gift helps strengthen our commitment to improving healthcare access in underserved and/or rural communities.

HAYLEY RODRIGUEZ | Dental Hygiene

Recipient of the Wichita Dental Hygienists Association Scholarship and Dr. Diane Huntley Scholarship

"I am deeply honored and grateful...these scholarships have been a tremendous financial help, allowing me to focus more on my studies and less on financial stress, as I continue my journey toward becoming a skilled dental hygienist...[Scholarships] serve a greater purpose, helping students like me advance in our field with the ultimate goal of providing quality, patient-centered care to the community."

DORI LEBRON MALAVE | Medical Laboratory Sciences

Recipient of the Southcentral Pathology Endowed Scholarship

"I can't put into exact words how grateful I feel by receiving the scholarship. It will definitely bring me the peace of solely focusing on my academics and pursuing my Medical Laboratory degree. Ever since I came into the program, everything felt right, and this award proves it to be real. I would like to thank the faculty, my classmates and Dr. Alderson for being part of this special moment that has given me the reassurance that I'm right where I need to be."

For more information about supporting our students through scholarship donations, please contact the WSU Foundation at 316-978-3806 or visit foundation.wichita.edu/give/.

PATIENT SERVING CLINICS

IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES

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Our three patient-serving clinics provide high quality, affordable health care to our community. All clinics are open to the general public and faculty, staff and students at Wichita State.

EVELYN HENDREN CASSAT SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING CLINIC

The Cassat Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic provides services to people across the lifespan who have communication difficulties, including speaking, hearing, swallowing, and spoken and written language impairments. wichita.edu/SLHclinic

- 4,042 appointments in 2024
- The clinic offers area-specific programs and support groups for aphasia, autism, fluency, literacy and more. The Clinic also offers programs for children, including Fluency and Literacy summer camps.
- The clinic repairs and services most hearing aids, regardless of where they were purchased. The Clinic also offers replacement batteries for hearing aids from a variety of hearing aid brands.



DELTA DENTAL OF KANSAS FOUNDATION DENTAL HYGIENE CLINIC

The Dental Hygiene Clinic offers a wide range of low-cost preventative, therapeutic and educational services. wichita.edu/DHclinic

- 4,733 appointments in 2024
- Services include cleanings, dental sealants, X-rays, individualized oral health instruction, and more.
- The clinic serves multiple communities, including children and underserved populations. The cost of clinical care is scaled to serve underserved populations.



WSU GENERAL DENTISTRY PRACTICE

The WSU dental clinic provides a full range of services including cleanings, whitening, fillings and implants, along with in-house specialists for periodontics, endodontics, oral surgery and prosthetics. wichita.edu/WSUdentalclinic

- 4,161 appointments in 2024
- The dental clinic offers a dental discount program for WSU students and their spouses and children. This discount applies to all dental services, including cleanings, fillings, teeth whitening, dental implants and more.
- The dental clinic uses cutting-edge technology, including digital X-rays to reduce exposure to radiation and same-day dental crowns using 3-D printing.



"...My experience has been very positive and I really notice and appreciate the blend of professional skill and empathetic care from the dentists and their dental staff. I was also impressed by the collaborative interaction [among the dentists] on procedural questions or those moments when two dentists working together were required. Overall, great staff and a great facility!" – Jeanne Degrasse, WSU General Dentistry patient

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

KAREN BLACKBURN | Physician Associate

Karen Blackburn grew up in Emporia, Kansas and earned degrees in Human Nutrition and Kinesiology from Kansas State University. She later completed the PA program at Wichita State in 2006, becoming part of the first class to graduate with a Master's degree.

Karen's path to becoming a PA was inspired by her love of helping people and a family recommendation that sparked her interest.

Reflecting on her time in PA school, Karen describes it as "a story of two different years." The first year was a rigorous academic experience filled with lectures, studying, and exams, while the second year brought hands-on learning in clinical settings. "The highlights for me were delivering babies and watching open-heart surgery," she recalls.

Karen began her career in urgent care in Topeka, later transitioning to family medicine in Newton before joining Ascension-Via Christi pediatrics in 2011. She loves working with kids, and her favorite part is watching her young patients grow up—some even returning years later with their own children.

Beyond patient care, Karen is a dedicated preceptor who enjoys mentoring PA students. Her passion for teaching has turned her workplace into a thriving classroom, fostering growth and curiosity. What began with a single student in 2017 has grown into training future PAs for all nine rotations.

"The longer I have done it, the more I enjoy it. I foster an environment where no question is off limits and encourage students to "think out loud" so we can talk through their thought process. I'm proud to mentor so many PA students while continuing to provide quality care to my patients—it's really the best of both worlds."

Karen encourages aspiring PAs to embrace every opportunity: Shadow different PAs to explore the profession, make the most of clinical rotations, even if it means traveling; and balance hard work with self-care, making time for yourself and your family.

Outside of work, Karen is active in her church and enjoys volunteering with the Down Syndrome Society of Wichita and at her kids' school. She has been married to her husband, Tyson, for 23 years, and they have two children, Hayden and Taylor.

In her free time, she loves cheering for her kids in sports. She is a fan of college sports and stays active through working out, running (she has completed two half-marathons), and gravel biking (she has finished the Unbound Gravel 100-mile course twice and the 50-mile course three times). She also loves to cook and bake; she even treats her PA students to a dessert of their choice on their last clinical day.



AMBUR MILLER | Dental Hygiene

Ambur Miller, a third-generation Kansan and Wichitan, has built a distinguished career in healthcare leadership, innovation, and community engagement. As a graduate of Wichita State's Dental Hygiene program in 2006, her journey spans from providing patient care as a dental hygienist to her current role as Executive Vice President at Delta Dental of Kansas.

Under her leadership, Delta Dental of Kansas has expanded access to affordable healthcare by expanding provider networks, increasing accessibility in underserved areas, and spearheading innovative solutions to improve patient care. These efforts have earned national accolades, such as Innovator of the Year, National Company of the Year for Insurance, Ingrams Best Companies to Work For, and Top 100 Healthiest Employers in the U.S. She has also been recognized individually through the "Excellence in Healthcare Award" and "Women in Business Award" from the Wichita Business Journal and Leadership Kansas.

Ambur says she has always been passionate about dentistry and helping others.

"Oral health plays a vital role in essential aspects of life—eating, speaking, confidence, and more...I value making a positive difference in the lives of the community I serve."

Her transition from a clinical dental hygienist to her role at Delta Dental of Kansas allowed her to broaden her impact in the dental community by supporting initiatives that expand access to care, influence policy, support providers and enhance healthcare outcomes on a larger scale. As a female executive, she champions leadership opportunities for women through mentorship, training, and development programs.

Giving back to the profession has remained a core part of Ambur's values. She sponsors a scholarship to support dental hygiene students at WSU who are driven, hardworking, and passionate about making a difference.

"I was once told, 'Whenever you have the opportunity to give back, do so—always strive to pay it forward,' and that stuck with me. The dental hygiene program had such a positive impact on my life, and I wanted to create an opportunity to support future healthcare professionals."

Ambur is currently pursuing her MBA and has returned to WSU as a professor in the College of Health Professions—a full-circle moment that she describes as one of the most fulfilling aspects of her career.

Ambur also serves on the Dean's Advisory Council for the College of Health Professions and is a member of the Society of 1895 at WSU. She is passionate about causes focused on children's well-being, education, health, and economic development.

In her spare time, Ambur is a traveler and sports enthusiast—an avid supporter of WSU athletics. She also enjoys golf, cycling, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.



DEAN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

The College of Health Professions Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) is a distinguished group of local and national academic, community and industry leaders. Their collective expertise, perspective and strategic counsel are instrumental in shaping the future of the College of Health Professions as we realize our vision of "Leading Change in High-Quality Healthcare Education."

The DAC met in the spring and fall of 2024. Members engaged in strategic planning for the College and received updates on enrollment/retention management, fundraising efforts, the Wichita Biomedical Campus, and the Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine and Assistive Technology. The meetings also featured presentations from the School of Nursing and Department of Physical Therapy, highlighting key developments in both programs.

NEW MEMBERS



Jeff Fluhr
President, Greater Wichita Partnership

In 2008, a group of local leaders recruited Jeff Fluhr from Baton Rouge to Wichita to serve as the president of the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation, now Downtown Wichita. Fluhr's responsibilities expanded to assist in creating the Greater Wichita Partnership, an economic

development organization focused on developing a unique, holistic approach to community growth from downtown to the ten-county region. The Partnership is designed to align and focus efforts to ensure the Wichita region remains competitive through three strategic priorities – Jobs, Talent and Quality of Place. Under Fluhr's leadership, Wichita and the surrounding region has experienced an unprecedented surge of progress, driven by a strategic and cohesive vision.

Prior to coming to Wichita, Fluhr served as the assistant executive director of the Baton Rouge Downtown Development District. He holds a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in landscape architecture from Louisiana State University, with an emphasis in urban planning and business.



Jason Ladner
Business Development Executive, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

Jason Ladner grew up in Dodge City, KS, and graduated with a degree in Healthcare Services Organization and Policy from Wichita State. Jason began his professional journey at Wamego Hospital and Wesley Medical Center before transitioning into medical sales for Covidien, Johnson & Johnson, and other top medical device companies. He was then recruited to IMA Wealth to be VP of Customer Relationships. His expertise in business development, strategy and relationship building led him to his current role as a Business Development Executive at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Kansas' only local health insurance company. In this role, Jason is dedicated to making healthcare more affordable and improving the quality of life for Kansas residents.

Jason has remained actively engaged with his alma mater, advocating for and championing Wichita State. He has worked on various projects and proposals, acting as a conduit between philanthropic developments and talent pipeline efficiencies. Jason serves on the board for the Kansas Insurance & Financial Services Education Foundation) and is a member of the board of advisors for Coming Together For A Cure.

2024 MEMBERSHIP

Joel Alderson

President, Southcentral Pathology

Pamela Clancy Ammar

Attorney, President of the Board-Kansas Humane Society, Chair of the CHP Dean's Advisory Council

Chad Austin

CEO, Kansas Hospital Association

Susan Butler

Global Head, Corporate Development and Strategy, Astrix Technology Group

Tim Church

Physician and scientist, Chief Medical and Strategy Officer-Naturally Slim, Cofounder and Board Member-Catapult Health

Christine Faulk

Associate Chief of Staff for Research, Dole VA Medical Center

Claudio Ferraro

Chief Operating Officer, Ascension Medical Group Via Christi, P.A.

Mark Finucane

Managing Director, Alvarez & Marsal Healthcare Industry Group, New York City

Jeff Fluhr

President, Greater Wichita Partnership

Chad Hanson

Senior Vice President, Emprise Bank

Darin Kater

Vice President of Development, WSU Foundation/Alumni Engagement

Robert Kenagy

President and CEO, Stormont Vail Health

Laurie Labarca

Hospital President, Ascension Via Christi St. Francis, St. Teresa and Rehabilitation Hospitals

Jason Ladner

Business Development Executive, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

David Leslie

Chief Nursing Officer, Wesley Healthcare

Adam Lukens

Private practice dentist, Wichita-Sedgwick County Oral Health Coalition, Board of Trustees for the Kansas Dental Association

Tiffany Masson

President and Chief Executive Officer, Kansas Health Science Center

Ambur Miller

Vice President of Professional Relations, Delta Dental of Kansas

Jay Moskowitz

James Buchanan Duke SmartState Chairman Emeritus for Healthcare

David Ramos

Emergency Medicine physician for Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System in Salinas, CA

Arthur Ross

Pediatric surgeon, former campus executive or Dean for four university based medical schools, academic medicine consultant

Marq Sams

Periodontist, Implant and Perio Center of Kansas

Dan Soliday

President and CEO, Heartspring

James Stepien

Chief Development Officer, Wesley Healthcare

**Dan Soliday**
President and CEO, Heartspring

Throughout his career, Dan Soliday has focused on youth development/mentoring, global poverty, HIV/AIDS prevention, and providing services for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In December 2022 he began his tenure as president and chief executive officer of Heartspring.

Previously, Dan was the CEO of the Woodhaven Learning Center in Missouri.

Before that, he was the CEO of Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, where he served on the national federation as a member of its governing body and the National Leadership Council as chair of the Organizational Sustainability Committee. He was also elected as the chair of BBBS's Large Agency Alliance. He's been a member of the downtown Rotary Club, and on Team Justice—Sedgwick County's Department of Corrections Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board. Dan obtained his bachelor's degree and master's of divinity from MidAmerica Nazarene University and an MBA from the University of Missouri Kansas City.

**James Stepien**
Chief Development Officer, Wesley Healthcare

A native Wichitan, James Stepien began his career with Wesley Healthcare in 2005, when he joined the company's Physician Relations and Outreach team. In that position, he developed key relationships with rural hospitals and providers in his efforts to grow Wesley's presence across the State of Kansas. In 2017, James was

promoted to Vice President of Business Development. During his tenure in that position, Wesley continued to grow its market share in Wichita and across Kansas. James provided leadership to a number of growth initiatives, while also taking on operational responsibilities for several clinical service lines. In September 2024, James was named Chief Development Officer in recognition of his continued efforts to grow the Wesley brand. James attended Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School and graduated from Friends University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Health Care Leadership.

NOTABLE AWARDS

In 2024, our exceptional faculty and staff received numerous accolades that highlight their dedication and contributions. Here are just a few of the well-deserved awards they earned throughout the year.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS' AWARDS



**Rodenberg Faculty
Excellence in Teaching Award**
Aisha Waite
Medical Laboratory Sciences



**Hodson Outstanding Research
Faculty Award**
BJ Lehecka
Physical Therapy

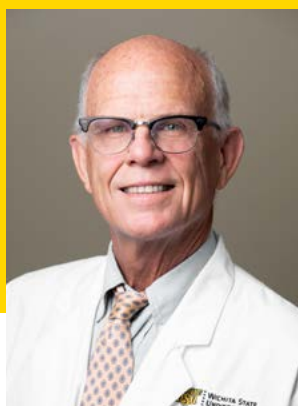


**Outstanding Staff
Support Award**
Amanda Conner
Advanced Education in
General Dentistry

NOTABLE AWARDS



**2024 Speech-Language
Pathologist of the Year,
Kansas Speech-Hearing
Association**
Brian Ray
Communication Sciences
and Disorders



**2024 Dentist of the Year,
Kansas Dental Association**
Dean Elledge
Advanced Education in
General Dentistry



**Wichita Business
Journal's 2024 Health
Care Heroes Awards**
Gregory Hand
Dean's Office



**Wichita Business
Journal's 2024 Health
Care Heroes Awards**
Voncella McCleary-Jones
Dean's Office

SO FAR IN 2025

2025 has been an exciting year so far in the College of Health Professions. As we look ahead, there's even more to come—new events, collaborative opportunities, and groundbreaking advancements in healthcare education.



COLLEGE ANNOUNCES CERTIFICATE OF HUMAN ANATOMY

The College of Health Professions has launched a new certificate of human anatomy. The certificate provides a comprehensive education in human anatomy, progressing from foundational knowledge to clinical-level expertise. Students will engage with high-tech simulation technology, anatomical models and real human cadavers, which are vital tools for deepening their understanding of human anatomy. Courses will be taught in the College of Health Professions' state-of-the-art Gross Anatomy and Human Simulation laboratories. The certificate is particularly beneficial for individuals interested in learning in depth about human anatomy or those planning to apply to a health care-specific graduate program. It also serves as a valuable credential for anyone seeking to enhance their qualifications in the field of health care.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS SHOWCASED IN "THE COLLEGE TOUR"

Wichita State is featured in the Amazon Prime series, "The College Tour," and the College of Health Professions is proudly represented. Special recognition goes to nursing student Madi McClain for her outstanding representation of the College, and to nursing student Kadrian Ayarza, who is featured in the Student Success segment. Watch the full episode at wichita.edu/thecolletour.

BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF KANSAS GIFT \$2.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT WICHITA BIOMEDICAL CAMPUS AND NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is investing \$2.5 million in Wichita State University, with \$1.8 million earmarked as the lead gift to the Wichita Biomedical Campus. The remaining \$700,000 will create endowed Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas nursing scholarships in the WSU College of Health Professions. We are thrilled and deeply grateful for this investment in the future of healthcare education. Read more at wsu.news/bkbsks2025.



WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF **HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

1845 Fairmount Street
Wichita, KS 67260-0044



COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS AT WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

1845 Fairmount Street, Wichita, KS 67260-0043

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