

The Nutrition Bench-to-Community Engaged Scholars in Texas (Nutrition BEST) Program

www.depts.ttu.edu/stem/usda_reeu/



GOAL



- Enhance student learning in research ethics, methods, and processes in nutrition, food science, and agriculture.
- Cultivate a highly skilled workforce through mentored research and experimental learning.

BENEFITS



- Boost your career with the Nutrition BEST Fellowship program.
- Get paid research and internship opportunities while improving your skills.
- Benefit from mentorship by experienced professionals in various fields.
- Access supportive environments for growth and development.

WHO QUALIFIES

- Full-time Sophomores and Juniors from TTU (SPC or community college transfers) who are **interested in research, graduate school, and/or careers** in nutrition, food science, or agriculture.
- Non-pre-med students who plan to pursue graduate school or work in nutrition/foods, agriculture, and/or Extension.
- Have a GPA of 3.0 or greater.
- Committed to a 1-year program and completing mandatory surveys and interviews about your experiences, including after leaving the program.

PARTNERS



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General Information



- Two full semesters of mentored research.
- Additional opportunities for peer mentoring.
- Summer Extension Internship with community engagement.
- Required participation in Responsible Conduct for Research, community engagement, and leadership seminars.

Contact for additional information: Alex.Scoggin@ttu.edu

PROJECT DIRECTOR (PD), RESEARCH MENTOR & PRIMARY CONTACT

Naïma Moustaid-Moussa
806-834-7946
naima.moustaid-moussa@ttu.edu

Executive Director, Institute for One Health Innovation
Founding Director, Obesity Research Institute
Texas Tech University (TTU) & TTU Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC)
Paul W. Horn Distinguished Professor, TTU Nutritional Sciences
Professor, TTUHSC Cell Biology & Biochemistry

CO-PROJECT DIRECTORS (CO-PDs) & COLLABORATORS

Molly Forman - Co-PD, Extension Internships
Regional Director, Family & Community Health,
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Karen Franck - Co-PD, Evaluation
Associate Professor, Family & Consumer Sciences,
University of Tennessee Extension

Jaclyn Cañas-Carrell - Co-PD, Recruitment
Chair & Professor; Environmental Toxicology,
TTU

Marianne Evola - Co-PD, RCR & Leadership Training
Director, Office of Responsible Research, Office of Research &
Innovation, TTU

Oak-Hee Park - Co-PD
Research Assistant Professor; College of Human Sciences, TTU

Chanaka Kahathuduwa - Co-PD
Resident Physician, Neurology / Clinical Assistant Professor,
Psychiatry, School of Medicine, TTUHSC

Jessica Spott - Collaborator, Recruitment
Director, STEM CORE; Office of Research & Innovation,
TTU

Levi Johnson - Collaborator, Recruitment
Director, Center for Transformative Undergraduate
Experiences (TrUE), TTU

EXTENSION MENTORS / TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

Cory Edwards – Lubbock County Extension Agent, Family and Community Health
Christina Reid – Lubbock County Extension Agent, Horticulture
Amber Bozeman – Lubbock County Extension Agent, Urban Youth Development
Sonja Stueart-Davis – Harris County Extension Agent, Family and Community Health
Luz Waters – El Paso County Extension Agent, Expanded Food and Nutrition (EFNEP)

RESEARCH MENTORS

Kembra Albracht-Schulte (lifestyle interventions)
Assistant Professor, Kinesiology & Sports Management, TTU

Halima Bensmail (machine learning biostats/bioinformatics)
Principal Scientist, Qatar Computing Research Institute and
Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Jannette Dufour (basic science-diabetes)
University Distinguished Professor & Chair, Department of Cell
Biology & Biochemistry, Associate Director of ORI, School of
Medicine, TTU

Chanaka Kahathuduwa (literature/ data analyses)
Resident Physician, Neurology / Clinical Assistant Professor,
Psychiatry, School of Medicine, TTUHSC

Jerrad Legako (meat science, animal nutrition)
Associate Professor, Animal & Food Science, TTU

Hanna Moussa (imaging & modeling)
Associate Professor of Practice, Physics, TTU

Naïma Moustaid-Moussa (basic science/metabolic diseases)
TTU & TTUHSC

Oak-Hee Park (Community Nutrition)
Research Assistant Professor; College of Human Sciences, TTU

Catherine Simpson (plant sciences, phytochemicals)
Assistant Professor, Plant & Soil Science, TTU

Anastasia Stellato (companion animal behavior)
Assistant Professor, Animal & Food Sciences, TTU

Clarissa Strieder-Barboza (metabolic disease prevention)
Assistant Professor, Veterinary Sciences, TTU

Leslie Thompson (food science & safety)
Professor, Animal & Food Science, TTU

Grant M. Tinsley (body composition assessment, energy
balance, sports nutrition and exercise performance)
Associate Professor, Kinesiology & Sports Management, TTU

Yujiao Zu (diet-gene interactions in obesity)
Research Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences, TTU