



**PRE- UBRISE EVENTS April 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>**

**April 6, 2026**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

**MIDFULNESS SESSION WITH NURSING, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS AND MASTERS  
IN PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

**10:30 am –11:00 am**

**Heckman Center/2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Wahlstrom Library**

**Panelists:**

**Meredith Gaffney** has over 25 years of experience in the primary and public health fields. Director Gaffney first earned her BA in International Relations from Ohio State University and her Master's in Public Health (MPH) from Tulane University- School of Public Health & Tropical Medicine. Later, she pursued postgraduate studies abroad in Medical Parasitology at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and the Psychosocial Experiences and Needs of Refugees at Oxford University. She joined the UB's faculty in 2020 and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Health Sciences Program.

Director Gaffney's career is a testament to her hands-on approach in the global healthcare sector. She has successfully planned projects and managed grants with renowned organizations like UNICEF and USAID. Her impactful work extends to the grassroots level, where she has made a difference by contributing to organizations such as Planned Parenthood and Save the Children.

In her spare time, she has volunteered her expertise to various organizations, from the United States Peace Corps, the Branford Land Trust, the Branford Board of Education, and the Girls Scouts of America.

**Dr. Courtney Davis ('20), DMSc, PA-C**, is a Assistant Professor at PAI at UB. She earned her Doctor of Medical Science degree from the University of Lynchburg in 2024 and her Master of Physician Assistant Studies from UB in 2015. She has over a decade of experience in clinical practice and has held leadership roles in provider training and education.

Her scholarly work focuses on lifestyle medicine, clinician burnout, and sustainable care delivery strategies in healthcare. She is particularly interested in addressing the impact of chronic stress and healthcare system demands on provider well-being and patient care outcomes.

At UB, Dr. Davis teaches within the PA curriculum and is actively involved in both didactic and clinical years of PA studies. She has a strong focus on integrating lifestyle medicine and whole-person care into medical education. Her work aims to prepare future clinicians to deliver effective care while maintaining their own health and longevity in practice.

**Majeda Basilio, DNP** is an Assistant Professor of Nursing at UB and a nurse leader within Yale New Haven Health System. Dr. Basillio earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Connecticut, her Master of Science in Nursing in Nursing Education from the University of Hartford, and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Basilio's clinical background includes emergency medicine, medical-surgical nursing, and heart and vascular care. Throughout her career at Yale New Haven Health System, she has served in clinical, educational, and leadership roles, focusing on nurse education, workforce development, and healthcare program management.

At the UB, Dr. Basilio teaches in the Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program, including Fundamentals of Nursing, Medical-Surgical Nursing, and Leadership. Her doctoral work focused on enhancing resilience in nursing students through mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), and her scholarly interests include student well-being, resilience, and integrating mindfulness strategies into nursing education.

**Dora Lendvai, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Nursing at UB. Dr. Lendvai earned her Master's Entry Clinical Nurse (MECN) degree from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and her PhD from the Yale School of Nursing. Dr. Lendvai began her career as a bedside nurse at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and later worked as a research nurse within the Veterans Health Administration, where she has remained involved in various clinical and research roles.

Her scholarly work focuses on Veterans' health, metabolic health, and integrative approaches to care. During her doctoral training and subsequent postdoctoral fellowship at VA Connecticut, she conducted research related to metabolic abnormalities in post-9/11 Veterans and women's health. She is also a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner and has established Healing Touch clinics within the VA Connecticut Healthcare System to support the well-being of Veterans.

At the UB, Dr. Lendvai teaches Fundamentals of Nursing and Community & Public Health. Her work integrates principles of holistic health, mindfulness, and biofield therapies, with the goal of advancing integrative nursing practice through education and research

## RESEARCH: SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING & THE ERNEST C. TREFZ SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

### UB ASEE RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

12:20 pm - 1:20 pm

TECH 121 (Engineering Conference Room)

<https://bridgeport.zoom.us/j/98709461974>

**Overview:** UB faculty and students attended the 2026 American Society for Engineering Education's Northeast Section Conference on March 27-28 at Southern New Hampshire University. Come learn about some of their posters and presentations.

**Moderator:** Navarun Gupta, PhD, Professor Electrical Engineering

**Dr. Gupta** received his doctorate from Florida International University in Miami. He has two master's degrees – one in Physics from Georgia State University and another in Electrical Engineering from Mercer University. Dr. Gupta's research interests lie in signal processing, and its applications in audio and bio signals.

#### Panelists:

**Xingguo Xiong, PhD** received his BS degree in Physics from Wuhan University, China, in 1994, his first PhD in Electrical Engineering from the Shanghai Institute of Microsystem and Information Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, in 1999, and his second PhD in Computer Engineering from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2005. His research interests include Microelectromechanical Systems (MEMS), Nanoelectronics, Artificial Intelligence and its applications. His work includes the design, fabrication, testing of various MEMS sensors and actuators, [2]rotaxane-based molecular and nanoscale electronic devices, AI-driven computer vision for environmental monitoring, as well as digital system design using ASIC and FPGA technologies.

**Peter Cavanaugh, EdD** received his Doctorate in Education at the University of Pennsylvania in 2015. He received two masters - a MSME from University of Connecticut and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and his BS in Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University. He presents and lectures in multiple industry and academic settings. He has a passion on how the integration of multiple learning modalities can drive transformation of individual performance and culture. He also has a strong interest in how learning environments affect the efficacy of transformational learning.

**Dan Tenney ('20), PhD** received his doctorate in Technology Management from UB, a MBA Operations Management from RPI and a BA in Environmental Earth Science from Eastern CT State University. He has published strategic management articles at various prestigious conferences and journals and focused his dissertation research on developing a strategic management model to assist small to medium sized nonprofit organizations.

**Student Poster Authors:**

[AI RESILIENCE & COGNITIVE DEPTH: Exploring Learning in AI-Integrated College Classrooms Through Bloom's Taxonomy](#) by **Bushra Rayyan Quadri**

[Detection of ECG Irregularities Using Various AI Tools](#) by **Lipika Konena Argrahara Chandrakanth**

[COMSOL Design and Simulation of a Saliva-Based Lab-on-a-Chip For Multiplexed Electrochemical Detection of Cancer Biomarkers](#) by **Isaac Izanowe**

[STEEP-Integrated Autonomous Strategic Road Mapping for Grid Cut-Over Decision Making](#) by **Charles Adeyanju**

**2026 CLIMATE CHALLENGE ENTREPRENEURIAL PITCH EVENT**

**1:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

**Carlson Hall Rm. 153**

**Zoom Link – click [here](#) (Passcode: UBRISE26)**

**Overview:** *Entrepreneurship Foundation* is sponsoring this Climate Prize where eligible HS Students, Community College Students, and Non-Students (Entrepreneurs, Innovators, Small Businesses) will present their ideas. University of Bridgeport School of Engineering, Ernest C. Trefz School of Business, Innovation Center judges (or their designees representing the investment and climate industries) will select the winners of the in-kind prototype awards.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
FOUNDATION**

**Moderators: Sherri Dente, Esq., Director of the Innovation Center at Bauer Hall  
Mike Roer ('08), President, Entrepreneurship Foundation**

**Judging Panel:**

**Khaled Elleithy, PhD**, is a Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Fellow of the African Academy of Sciences. Dr. Elleithy has worked in academia for the past 30 years in various administrative and teaching roles, including PhD Program Director, Online MS Program Advisor, Associate Dean for Engineering, Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, Associate Dean of the College of Engineering, Business, and Education (EBE), and currently serves as Dean of EBE. He has published over 400 research papers in national and international journals and conferences, with more than 6,700 Google Scholar citations. His

recent research focuses on cybersecurity, wireless communication security, microstrip antenna design, steganography, mobile collaborative learning environments, QoS routing protocols in wireless multimedia sensor networks, disaster recovery processes over wireless sensor networks, and quantum cryptography, all making significant contributions to science and technology.

**Tim Raynor, DBA**, Executive Director & Associate Professor, Ernest C. Trefz School of Business received his doctorate from Wilmington University, MBA from Sacred Heart University, and BA from Albertus Magnus College. His academic focus is Strategic Management, International Business, Business Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

**Dan Tenney ('20), PhD** received his doctorate in Technology Management from UB, a MBA Operations Management from RPI and a BA in Environmental Earth Science from Eastern CT State University. He has published strategic management articles at various prestigious conferences and journals and focused his dissertation research on developing a strategic management model to assist small to medium sized nonprofit organizations.

**Peter Divone, Sr** is an accomplished Chemical Process Engineer with over 40 years of experience working with several multinational companies including Colgate-Palmolive, RJR Nabisco and Unilever. In his 25+ years at Unilever R&D, Mr. Divone held positions as Director of Global R&D Process Skin Care and Cleansing Process Engineering and Director of Site Operations, Tech Services and Environment, Health and Safety. Mr. Divone's patented batch and semi-continuous personal care liquids manufacturing designs can be found in 20 factories in 12 countries around the world. Mr. Divone is the president of Plante Solutions, LLC. In addition to serving as an EIR, he is also a member of UB's Bauer Hall Innovation Center and Ernest C. Trefz School of Business Advisory Boards. He was appointed to 3DX Industries' Board of Directors.

#### **Prize Winners:**

**Stephen Walton**, Walton altEnergy  
**Jaydee Cruz De Los Santos**, Stamford High School  
**Godwin Agyei-Owusu**, Ednasonaa, Inc.  
**Emily Gun**, PurePlate  
**Jeffrey Safo-Darko**

#### **In-Kind Awardees:**

**Delvin Addo**, FloodGuard - Prototype creation by School of Engineering  
**Constantin Tomoiu**, Tomoiu Advanced Fusion Energy Corp - Provisional patent filing legal support from Menlo Park Patents  
**Godwin Agyei-Owusu**, Ednasonaa, Inc. - Patent Search by Menlo Park Patents & Provisional Patent filing legal support from UB Innovation Center  
**Emily Gun**, PurePlate - Marketing Support Award from Mags & Marrelli Advertising Agency  
**Jeffrey Safo-Darko**, Prototype creation by School of Engineering

**April 7, 2026**

**INNOVATION: COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

**LASER IN HEALTH SCIENCES**

**12:00 pm -1:00 pm**

**Mandeville 104**

**<https://bridgeport.zoom.us/j/99662358596>**

**Moderator: Robert Coté, DC, DACBR**

**Dr. Coté** is an Associate Professor teaching in UBSC's radiology curriculum and the Associate Director of Clinical Education overseeing the chiropractic clinic. He is a graduate of Northeast College of Health Sciences (formerly New York Chiropractic College, DC – 2013, DACBR – 2017) and the son of Dr. Matthew Coté (DC, NECHS 1980) a retired Professor and former Senior Clinician at NECHS. He holds Master's degrees in Clinical Nutrition and Diagnostic Imaging and is a Diplomate of the American Chiropractic Board of Radiology.

**Panelists:**

**Sahib Kalra, DAChM** is a practicing chiropractor and adjunct professor of clinical sciences at UB and also has a Doctorate in Acupuncture with Chinese Herbal Medicine (DAChM). A student of Far Eastern disciplines for most of his life, Dr. Kalra holds a black belt in *Shaolin Kempo* and *Isshin-Ryu Karate*, and is a martial arts instructor. He hopes to inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals to integrate natural healing methods as an option for patient care.

**Meghan Gonick, ND, MSAcu** is a licensed Naturopathic Physician and Acupuncturist who teaches at the UB's Acupuncture Institute. Dr. Gonick's interests include botanical medicine, especially American and East Asian herbal medicine and integration of traditional medicines to improve care and patient involvement.

**Jacqueline Isabella, AS Dental Hygiene, BS Biology** has been a dental hygienist for 10 years. She joined UB in 2022 as an adjunct instructor for the Fones School of Dental Hygiene. In 2023, she became a full-time faculty member and currently serves as the Second Year Clinical Coordinator. She is currently working towards an MS in Nutrition.

**Paige Schechter, DHS** is a second-year dental hygiene student at UB. She previously attended community college and completed her prerequisite courses before being accepted to the Fones School of Dental Hygiene. She involved in the student chapter of the American Dental Hygiene Association (SADHA), serving as the President for two consecutive years. Post-graduation, she plans on working in a general dental office in Connecticut, providing the optimal level of oral health care and education for patients.

## DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENT POSTER SHOWCASE

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Health Science Center Lobby

(60 Lafayette Street, Bridgeport)

Dental Hygiene - Gift Raffle

Students from the Fones School of Dental Hygiene will present posters which reflect the topic of their comprehensive Literature Review for their Dental Hygiene Research class, in partial fulfillment for a Bachelor's Degree in Dental Hygiene.

**"The Life Stages of Women and the Effect on Oral Health: Puberty, Pregnancy, Post-Partum, and Menopause,"** *Lailah Abrahams, Samantha Nokes, Paige Schechter*

**"Early Childhood Caries: Understanding the Scope of the Problem and Preventive Solutions,"** *Angelica Buevas, Jesse-Rose Dadzie, Daina Mildort, Katianna Morales*

**"Dental Hygiene Under Strain: Occupational Risk and Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders,"** *Hydeia Irving, Aminata Konate, Leslye Quizhpi*

**"From Burnout to Balance: Mental Health Strategies for Dental Professionals and Students,"** *Cheyenne Cunningham, Tamia Palmer, Sanjae Walters*

**"Pioneering a New Era: University of Bridgeport Launches CT's First Expanded Functions Dental Assisting (EFDA) Program,"** Jennifer Boyce, DMD and Judith Benjamin, DMD

**APRIL 8, 2026**

**SCHOLARSHIP: COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

**“GROUNDSWELL 2026” LAUNCH PARTY**

**UB STUDENTS DISCUSS PROSE POETRY, & ART**

**4:30 pm - 5:30 pm**

**John J. Cox Social Room**

*Join a panel of student writers for an interactive discussion about the power of self-expression in the Groundswell 2026 which can be found at <https://bridgeport.libguides.com/groundswell/2026>.*

**Moderator:** Dr. Randy Laist, PhD

**Panelists:**

**Michelle Calero ('14)**, former editor of [Groundswell Spring 2014](#)

**Emily Ortiz ('26)**, Editor-in-Chief of Groundswell 2026

**Groundswell contributors:**

- **Tayshaun Bookall ('27)** is a Health Sciences major from Brooklyn, NY.
- **Angelise Melendez ('27)** is a Criminal Justice major from Brooklyn, NY.
- **Nyla Blackmon ('26)** is a Mechanical Engineering major from Bridgeport, CT.
- **Hailey Tirado**

**UBAA BEST HOUR WITH ALUMNI**

**6:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

**John J. Cox Social Room**

**Overview:** Dr. Bhumika Shah ('19) will be speaking on “Building an AI-Powered Career: Tools, Skills, and Mindsets”

**Moderator:** [Ajay Shrestha](#) '02, '06, '19, PhD

**Dr. Shrestha's** doctorate is in Machine Learning (AI) with nearly two decades of experience in engineering leadership, AI, and cloud systems. A UB alum, he currently works at a healthcare tech startup developing AI-driven diagnostic platforms to improve health outcomes. He serves on the UB Alumni Association Board.

**Speaker:** [Bhumika Shah](#) '19, PhD

**Dr. Shah** is a Data Solution Engineer, AI researcher, and PhD scholar with extensive experience driving data engineering and AI initiatives across multiple industries. A UB alum, she builds scalable data platforms and leads research on how AI adoption is reshaping data team culture, workflows, and decision-making at scale.

*NOTE: Attendees may win one of two \$25 gift cards.*

**April 9, 2026**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**BUILDING TOMORROW'S EDUCATORS: AI, INNOVATION AND IMPACT**

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Carlson 253**

**<https://bridgeport.zoom.us/j/96416673637>**

**Overview:** Celebrate the success stories from the School of Education this past year. From groundbreaking research articles to program innovations changing the way we prepare educators. We will highlight some of the accomplishments of our faculty and students. Learn about new opportunities in our teacher preparation programs and new graduate certificates and doctoral degrees being offered. Find out how we are leading the way in infusing artificial intelligence into our programs to ensure we are developing educators to lead the way in an AI-driven world, without forgetting equity and humanity in learning.

**John Chick ('23), EdD** is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Director of UB's Doctorate in Educational Leadership Program. A Navy veteran who served aboard multiple submarines, he is currently Director of CABEL through the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) and an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Military Learning*. Author of *The AI Learning Curve: What Every Educator Needs to Know* (2025) and developer of the HumanAI Symbiotic Theory framework, his scholarship includes educational equity for non-traditional students and artificial intelligence. He received his EdD in Educational Leadership, MBA in Human Resource Management, MPS in Design Management and MS in Education from UB. He graduated from the University of Connecticut with a BA in American Studies.

**April 10, 2026**

**UB RAISE: CELEBRATING THE ARTS AT THE ARNOLD BERNHARD**

**12:30 pm - 1:30 pm**

**Arnold Bernhard Arts & Humanities Center's**

**Schelfhauadt Gallery**

**500 University Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604**

Join Dean of the College of Science and Society, Amy Nawrocki, and Curator Peter Schelfhauadt for a review of the new art installation *Immigrant Song*. Announcements of the UB RISE Poster Finalists will take place directly after the gallery presentation.

**Overview:** *Immigrant Song* is a hymn to the immigrants in our country. This exhibition seeks to depict the immigrant experience here in the US and to celebrate our brothers, sisters, and neighbors who made this country their home.

The show is on view April 2nd through May 17th. The opening reception is Thursday April 2nd 5:30-7:30. An artists talk is scheduled for Sunday April 12th.

For more information visit <https://www.bridgeport.edu/schelfhauadt-art-gallery/Links to an external site>.

**DOCTORAL, MASTERS, UNDERGRADUATE AND HIGH SCHOOL LIGHTNING  
ROUND FINALISTS ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Lightning Round Finalists will be posted by 5:00 pm at <https://rise.bridgeport.edu/>. The top **three** finalists will be invited to speak about their posters and answer questions from our panelists on Friday, April 17 from 10:30-11:30.