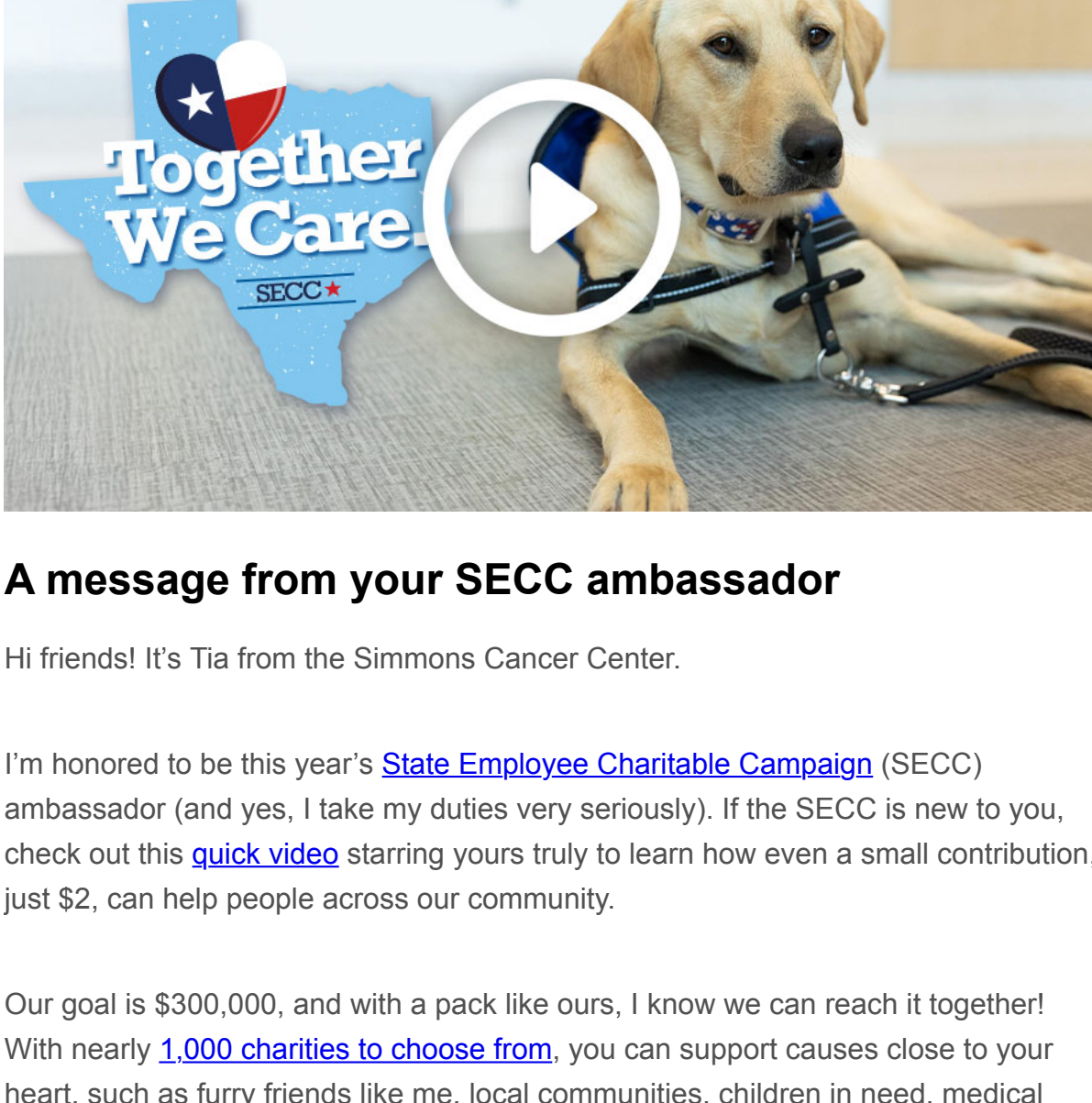




A message from your SECC ambassador

Hi friends! It's Tia from the Simmons Cancer Center.

I'm honored to be this year's [State Employee Charitable Campaign](#) (SECC) ambassador (and yes, I take my duties very seriously). If the SECC is new to you, check out this [quick video](#) starring yours truly to learn how even a small contribution, just \$2, can help people across our community.

Our goal is \$300,000, and with a pack like ours, I know we can reach it together! With nearly [1,000 charities to choose from](#), you can support causes close to your heart, such as furry friends like me, local communities, children in need, medical research, and more.

Now through Oct. 31, giving is easy:

- Donate with a credit/debit card with [Converge Pay](#) or set up a monthly payroll deduction using [PeopleSoft](#).
- Visit [employee pop-up events](#) to make a donation and grab some swag. (I'll be making a few appearances; belly rubs are not required, but welcome!)

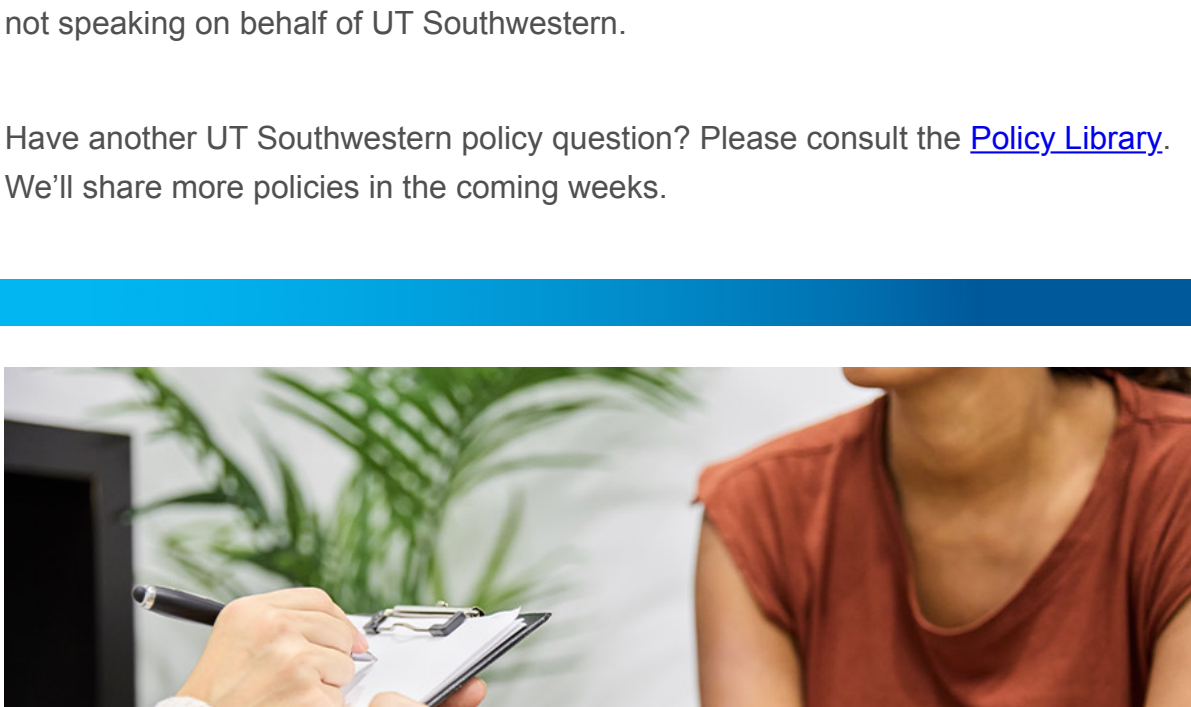
Plus, your generosity could fetch you [prizes](#) like a special Dallas Mavericks fan experience, State Fair tickets, gift baskets and more – all generously donated.

Let's put our best paw forward for a great cause.

With tail wags and gratitude,

Tia 🐾

[Donate today](#)



Reminder of UTSW policies on communicating with the media

As we enter the first weeks of the new academic year, we want to remind you of various UT Southwestern policies.

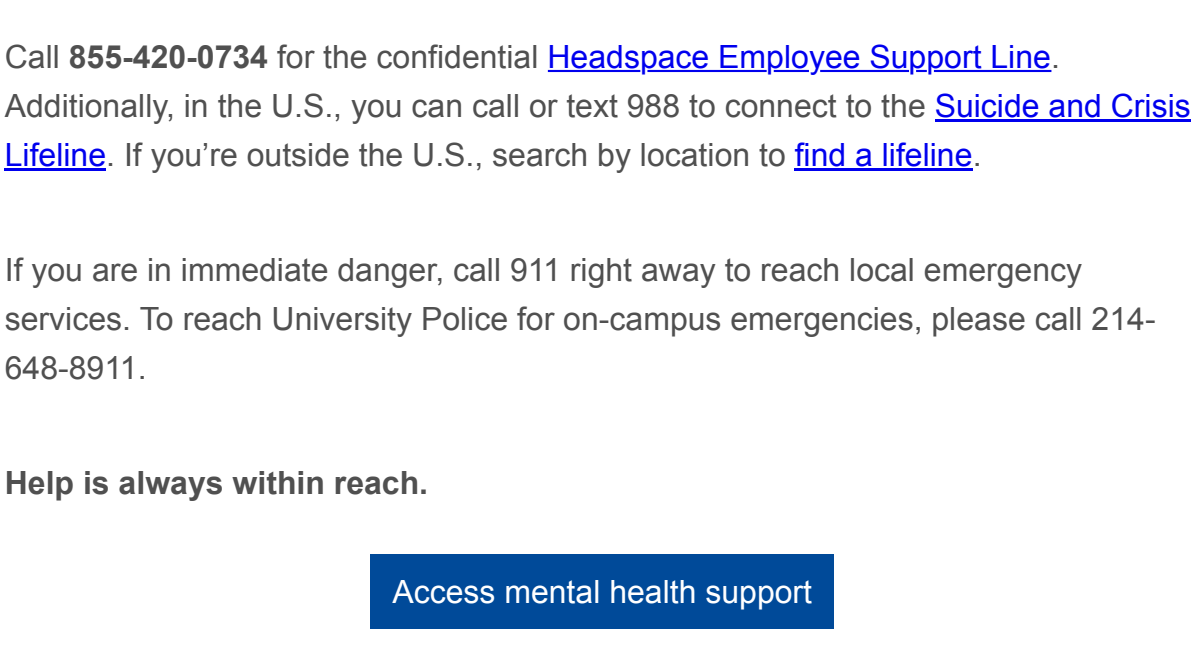
Per [ADM-301 Communication with the Media](#), any member of the UT Southwestern community who is contacted by a media representative about UT Southwestern programs or personnel must refrain from responding, unless specifically authorized by the President or the President's designee to do so.

This includes, but is not limited to, responses through publicly or privately available video, broadcasts, print materials, or website content, including social media platforms, videos or films, and company-sponsored and third-party video or press releases, including requests from affiliated institutions and their media relations representatives.

Individuals must immediately refer all such media contacts to the Office of Communications, Marketing, and Public Affairs (CMPA) at news@utsouthwestern.edu, which, as appropriate, will work with the Office of the President and the Office of Legal Affairs to handle the request.

Additionally, individuals communicating personal opinions as private citizens with the media who wish to disclose an affiliation with UTSW must first obtain [approval from CMPA](#) and must clearly indicate they are expressing a personal opinion and not speaking on behalf of UT Southwestern.

Have another UT Southwestern policy question? Please consult the [Policy Library](#). We'll share more policies in the coming weeks.



Suicide prevention resources

September is Suicide Prevention Month, a time to reflect on the importance of mental health and ways we can support one another. Suicide affects people of all ages and backgrounds, including our colleagues, friends, and family. According to the World Health Organization, more than 700,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year, making it a global public health concern.

By fostering a safe, supportive environment, we can help others feel less alone and more empowered to seek support without fear of judgment.

Here's how you can make a difference:

- Reduce stigma by normalizing conversations about mental health.
- Check in with co-workers and loved ones who may be struggling.
- Open the door for honesty by asking directly if they are thinking about suicide.
- Listen with empathy.
- Share available resources and encourage professional help.

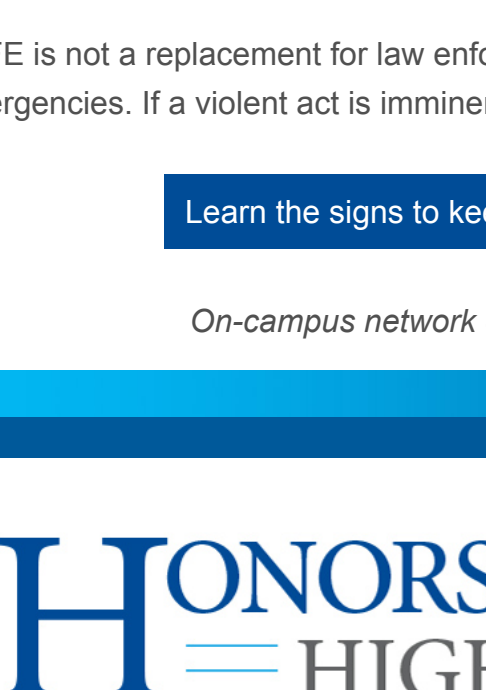
Support is available 24/7.

Call **855-420-0734** for the confidential [Headspace Employee Support Line](#). Additionally, in the U.S., you can call or text 988 to connect to the [Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). If you're outside the U.S., search by location to [find a lifeline](#).

If you are in immediate danger, call 911 right away to reach local emergency services. To reach University Police for on-campus emergencies, please call 214-648-8911.

Help is always within reach.

[Access mental health support](#)



SAFE

Behavioral Intervention Team

Do you know about SAFE?

As part of **National Campus Safety Month**, we want to make sure you're aware of **SAFE**, an important resource at UT Southwestern designed to improve security and safety on campus. It provides confidential ways to report concerning or violent behavior exhibited by staff, faculty, learners, trainees, contractors, or vendors.

The reporting tool allows for proactive, compassionate intervention by a specially trained, multidisciplinary unit comprised of mental health professionals, University Police, administrative leaders, and others skilled in providing social support and community resources to individuals in need.

The [SAFE webpage](#) (on-campus network connection or VPN required) walks you through signs to watch for, including aggression; confusion or disorientation; excessive agitation; threats; and more. It also provides three ways to reach out – again, confidentially – if something you observe or hear doesn't seem right. You can raise a concern via online form, email, or phone.

SAFE is not a replacement for law enforcement and should not be used for emergencies. If a violent act is imminent, call University Police at 214-648-8911.

[Learn the signs to keep yourself and others SAFE](#)

On-campus network connection or VPN required.

HONORS & AWARDS

HIGHLIGHTS

Spotlight on excellence

From prestigious honors to standout achievements, our UT Southwestern community continues to shine. We're thrilled to celebrate the incredible achievements of our colleagues who are making waves in science, medicine, and innovation. Here are a few recent highlights:

[Odobescu becomes UTSW's first ASRM Godina Traveling Fellow](#)

Andrei Odobescu, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Plastic Surgery, has been named the 2025 Godina Traveling Fellow by the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery, an international distinction that highlights leadership and innovation in microsurgery.

[Chook receives Protein Society's Daly Award](#)

Yuh Min Chook, Ph.D., Professor of Pharmacology and Biophysics, has been selected to receive The Protein Society's 2025 Marie Maynard Daly Award, celebrating her groundbreaking research in nucleocytoplasmic transport that contributed to the development and FDA approval of a first-in-class cancer drug.

[Wu selected for CRI Lloyd J. Old STARS program](#)

Tuoqi Wu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Immunology, has been named a 2025 CRI Lloyd J. Old STAR, becoming the first UT Southwestern faculty member to receive this prestigious recognition for bold, high-impact research in cancer immunotherapy.

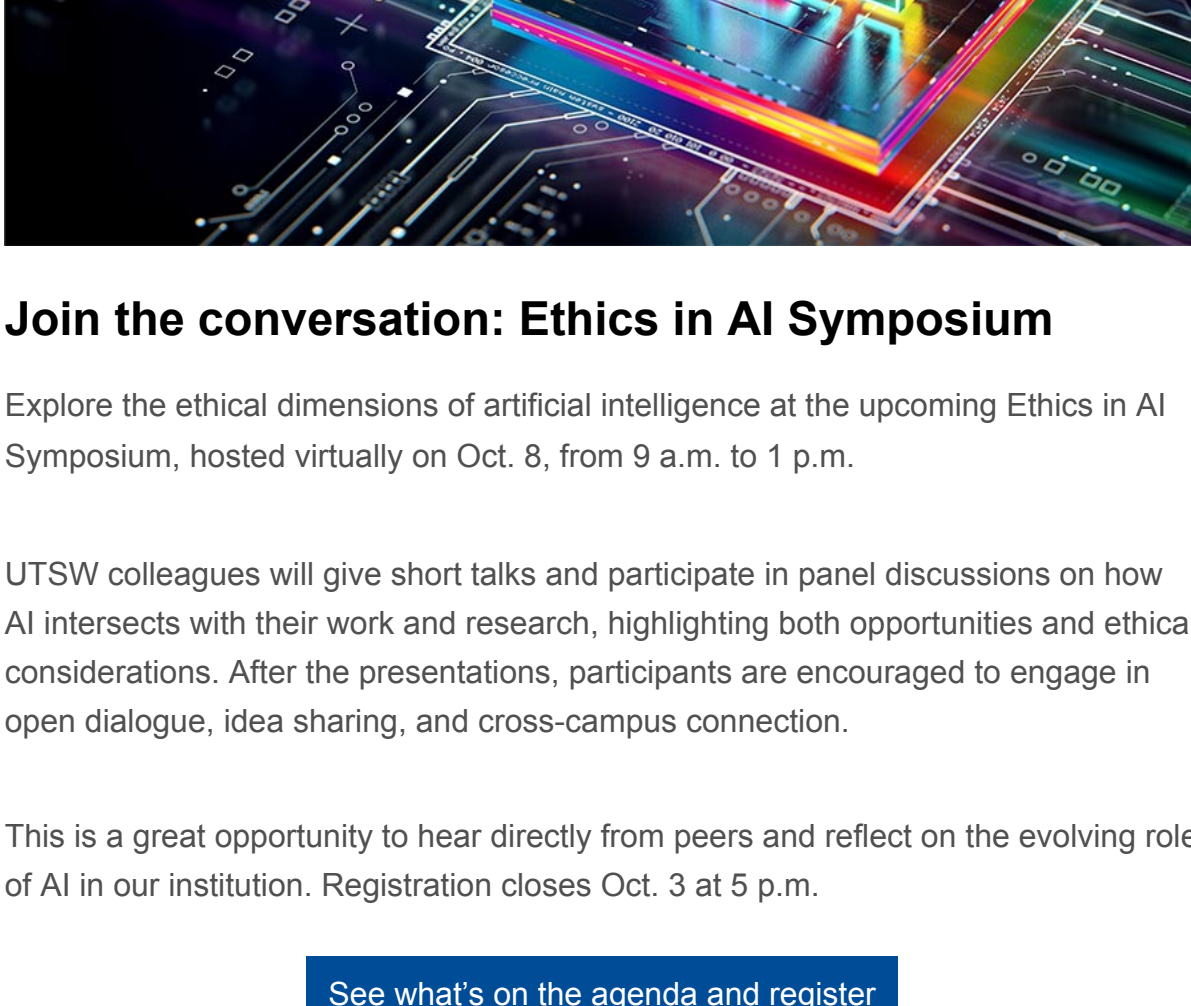
[Levine honored with space science, wilderness medicine awards](#)

Benjamin Levine, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine and founding Director of the Institute for Exercise and Environmental Medicine, has received both the American Astronautical Society's 2024 Space Life Sciences Award and the Wilderness Medical Society's 2025 Founders Award, recognizing his pioneering research on human health in extreme environments.

[Chung receives SUS Lifetime Achievement Award](#)

Dai Chung, M.D., Professor of Surgery, has been selected to receive the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of University Surgeons, the highest distinction from the organization – a first for UT Southwestern. Dr. Chung earned the recognition for his decades of leadership, research, and mentorship in academic pediatric surgery.

[More Honors & Awards stories on Center Times Plus](#)



Join the conversation: Ethics in AI Symposium

Explore the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence at the upcoming Ethics in AI Symposium, hosted virtually on Oct. 8, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

UTSW colleagues will give short talks and participate in panel discussions on how AI intersects with their work and research, highlighting both opportunities and ethical considerations. After the presentations, participants are encouraged to engage in open dialogue, idea sharing, and cross-campus connection.

This is a great opportunity to hear directly from peers and reflect on the evolving role of AI in our institution. Registration closes Oct. 3 at 5 p.m.

[See what's on the agenda and register](#)

Insider Guide



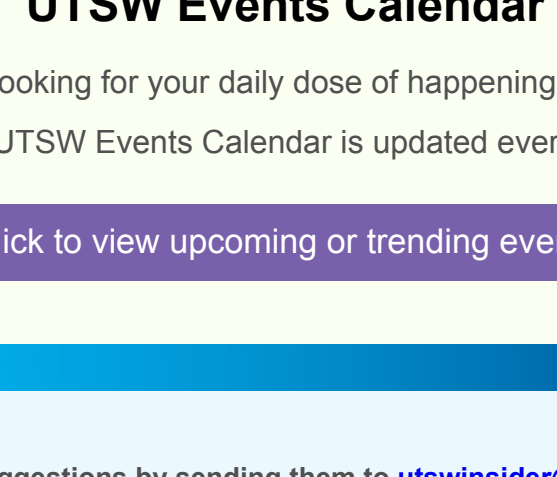
National Academy Members Panel

1-2 p.m., Sept. 19

T. Boone Pickens Medical Education & Conference Center (NG3.112)

As part of National Postdoc Appreciation Week, hear from UTSW's distinguished National Academy scientists as they reflect on their postdoctoral journeys and share insights into the evolving role of postdocs in today's research landscape. Afterward, explore the poster session and art fair highlighting postdoc creativity and scholarship.

[Get the details](#)



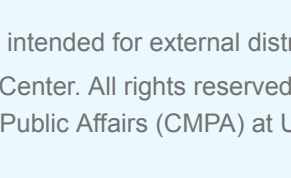
Closing the Gap: Cancer Prevention and Empowerment in Our Communities

Noon-1 p.m., Sept. 25

Virtual event

The UTSW African American Alliance Business Resource Group is hosting a lunch-and-learn session featuring **Lynn N. Ihekwe-Agunanna, Ph.D., M.P.H.**, from the Department of Social & Behavioral Services in the Peter O'Donnell Jr. School of Public Health. She'll share eye-opening insights on the disparities that exist in cancer prevention and practical steps we can take to help our communities.

[Register to attend](#)



UTSW Events Calendar

Looking for your daily dose of happenings?

The UTSW Events Calendar is updated every day.

[Click to view upcoming or trending events](#)