HAPS Central Regional Meeting
August 7th, 2026

Greetings conference attendees! Welcome to the Central Regional Conference in Chicago.

You are participating in one of the many unique opportunities that HAPS provides its members and non-members alike, the Regional Conference. Regional Conferences provide an opportunity for local (and sometimes not so local) colleagues to come together for a day of sharing, learning, and engaging around topics of Anatomy & Physiology. What makes it different than the Annual Conference is you all know your local needs and unique circumstances, which influences the experience and sessions.

The other aspect that makes Regional Conferences special is YOU! Without your support, giving of your time, and your willingness to show up, present, and share the HAPS Regional Conference just doesn't work. You, each of you, makes the regional experience what it is. It is the human investment of your time, talents, and passion that makes the regional conference a special time. I hope that you will embrace the messages of the update speakers. Seek out conversations and discussions with friends and new acquaintances alike. Laugh. And capture new ideas to bring back to your classrooms and labs from workshops and posters that will continue to inspire this generation of students.

Our members are the bedrock of HAPS, nothing happens without their willingness to show up, step up, serve, and lead. The possibility of a Regional Conference rests on HAPS member's willingness to host a Regional Conference. You are gathered today because a HAPS member said, "I think I want to host a Regional Conference". Thank you, Abbey Breckling, for your vision, passion, and leadership in organizing today's Regional Conference.

It takes more than just a host; the conference also needs a host institution. On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself, I want to extend a huge thank you to University of Illinois at Chicago and the administration for their support of our Regional Conference and making available the classrooms, parking, WIFI, and other meeting spaces for everyone to gather.

Be challenged. Be inspired. Be energized. Be in community. And lastly, in the midst of all of the HAPSy energy, be the professor your students need.

Sincerely,

Larry Young
HAPS President

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
CHICAGO PEORIA ROCKFORD URBANA

DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND CELL BIOLOGY
CHICAGO

Dear HAPS Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the University of Illinois Chicago College of Medicine and the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, it is our pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Human Anatomy & Physiology Society (HAPS) Central Regional Conference. We are honored to host anatomy and physiology educators, scholars, clinicians, and students from across the Midwest as we gather to share ideas, strengthen collaborations, and celebrate our shared commitment to excellence in anatomy and physiology education.

At UI College of Medicine, education is central to our mission. We are committed to preparing the next generation of physicians, scientists, and healthcare professionals through innovative teaching, discovery, and service. As one of the nation's leading public academic health centers, we recognize that developing tomorrow's healthcare workforce depends on strong partnerships across the educational continuum. We are proud of our longstanding collaborations with community colleges, universities, and allied health programs that create meaningful pathways for student success and strengthen healthcare education throughout our region.

These values closely align with the mission of HAPS. Anatomy and physiology educators provide the foundation upon which future healthcare professionals build their knowledge, skills, and compassion. Your dedication to teaching, mentoring, and innovation continues to shape the future of healthcare.

We encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities this conference provides to learn from one another, discover new teaching strategies, engage in meaningful conversations, and build lasting professional connections. We hope you leave inspired by new ideas, strengthened by the relationships you cultivate, and energized to continue advancing anatomy and physiology education within your own institutions.

Thank you for joining us and for the important work you do every day to educate, mentor, and inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals. We wish you an engaging, rewarding, and memorable conference experience.

Warm Regards,

Simon Alford, PhD
Sweeney Professor and Head
Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology

Roy Phitayakorn, MD
Vice Dean for Education
Professor of Surgery and Medical Education

Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology
808 S. Wood St., Room 578 (MC 512)
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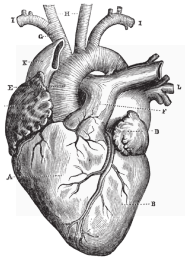
HAPS 2026 Central Regional Meeting Schedule
University of Illinois at Chicago
August 7th, 2026

Time	Event	Presenter/Staff	Location
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Exhibitor Set-Up Volunteers Arrive	Use the CMWT doors located on the corner of Polk and Wolcott to find registration/check-in.	CMWT 119 (Faculty Alumni Lounge)
7:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Registration & morning refreshments + Breakfast!	Use the CMWT doors located on the corner of Polk and Wolcott to find registration/check-in.	CMWT 119 (Faculty Alumni Lounge)
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Welcome Keynote Intro **Keynote 1:** *"Engaging the Past to Shape the Future: Using Critical, Strengths-Based Frameworks to Re-envision Undergraduate Science Education"*	Abbey Breckling Kathy Burleson (HAPS Central regional director) **Dr.Terrell Morton** Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago	CMWT 227
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Coffee/Tea Break	Explore Campus Gardens and outdoor seating areas!	
10:45 AM - 11:45 AM	Keynote Intro **Keynote 2:** *"From Evidence to Practice: Thoughtful Identity Representation in Anatomy and Physiology Education"*	Asha Eapen (HAPS Conference Committee Member) **Elizabeth Andreas** PhD candidate in Biological Sciences at Northern Illinois University	CMWT 527
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Lunch + Exhibitors	Explore Campus Gardens and outdoor seating areas!	CMWT 119 (Faculty Alumni Lounge)
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM	Breakout Sessions (**Workshops**)	"Regular and Substantive Interaction: Intent and Implementation" **Heather Armbruster**	CMWT 219
		"Microscopic Anatomy of E.P.I.H.C.	CMWT 222

HAPS 2026 Central Regional Meeting Schedule
University of Illinois at Chicago
August 7th, 2026

		Proportions: Educational Pathology Integration in a Histology Curriculum" **Edgar Meyer**	
		"The Fall 2026 Update: A Hands-On Design Lab for Clearer, More Relatable A&P Teaching Slides" **Tarun Balaji**	CMWT 224
		"Supporting Neurodivergent Learners in Anatomy and Physiology: Practical Strategies for Student Success" **Leslie Worrell**	CMWT 227
		"The Next Generation of Physiology Hardware: Introducing the New PowerLab Sensors" **Jessica Nguyen**	CMWT 429
		"Using Building Blocks to Build an Understanding of Excitation-Contraction Coupling" **Chris Donnelly**	CMWT 527
		"From Donor to Diagnostic Image: Exploring Cross-Sectional Anatomy" **Jeremy Grachan**	CMWT 703 (Anatomy labs)
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	Posters	Poster presenters set up by 1:15 PM in CMWT 119	CMWT 119 (Faculty Alumni Lounge)
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Introduction **Keynote 3:** *"AnatomyIsa Bridge to Collaboration"*	Rachel Hopp (HAPS Past President) **Dr. Alison Doubleday** **Dr. Laura Thorp** Professor and Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago	CMWT 227
4:30PM - 5:00PM	Closing Remarks & Door Prizes	Abbey Breckling C&I Committee Chair, Steering Chair, and Regional Conference Host	CMWT 227

We  Science

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HAPS Central Regional Meeting
Exhibitors

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Exhibitors

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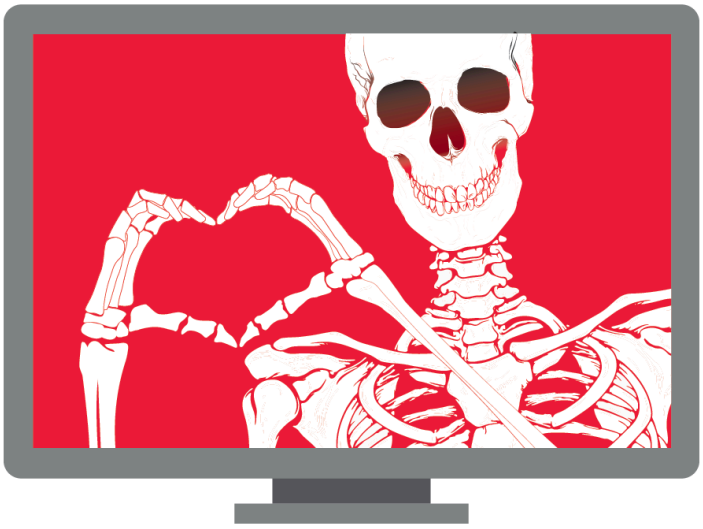


Early Bird Ends September 10th!

Join us for our 3rd HAPS Virtual Conference!

October 10-18, 2026

The event will be held in Canvas where you'll have streamlined access to all activities. We are especially excited to use a flipped format with our keynote speakers and workshops, which means you can watch recorded content on your own time, and then join synchronous (and moderated) Zoom discussions with your HAPSy colleagues.

Join Us for:
- **Three keynote talks hosted by amazing professionals in the field**
- **Panel discussion on Artificial Intelligence**
- **Flipped workshops**
- **Virtual posters (a great opportunity for faculty and student presenters!)**
- **Opportunities to engage with and learn more about the many HAPS Committees**
- **Social activities for making connections and building community**
- **Games and prizes! (It's true!)**

Keynote Speaker

Terrell R. Morton, Ph.D.

University of Illinois Chicago

Associate Professor

"Engaging the Past to Shape the Future: Using Critical, Strengths-Based Frameworks to Re-envision Undergraduate Science Education"

Friday, August 7, 2026

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

CMWT 227

Abstract: Critical, strengths-based frameworks, in educational research and practice, serve as guides for the various decisions a scholar or practitioner makes. It offers philosophical, conceptual, and practical boundaries for determining what to do, when to do it, why to do it, and how to do it. In this presentation, I will share insights into how I engage with frameworks, such as Community Cultural Wealth and Afrofuturism, to "build a new world" on a foundation that embraces cultural identities, cultivates creativity, and enables transcendent futures

Bio: Dr. Terrell R. Morton is an Associate Professor of Identity and Justice in STEM Education at the University of Illinois Chicago. He is an alumnus of North Carolina A&T State University (B.S. Chemistry), University of Miami (MS Neuroscience), and UNC Chapel Hill (Ph.D. Education - Learning Sciences and Psychological Studies). Dr. Morton identifies as a Scholar-Activist! His work strives to transform the positioning and understanding of Blackness in mainstream education, specifically STEM, seeking justice and joy for Black students. Through every endeavor, he strives to "walk it like he talks it."

Keynote Speaker

Elizabeth Andreas, MS

CMI Graduate Research Assistant at Northern Illinois University

Senior eLearning Developer at Medline Industries, LP

"From Evidence to Practice: Thoughtful Identity Representation in Anatomy and Physiology Education"

Friday, August 7, 2026

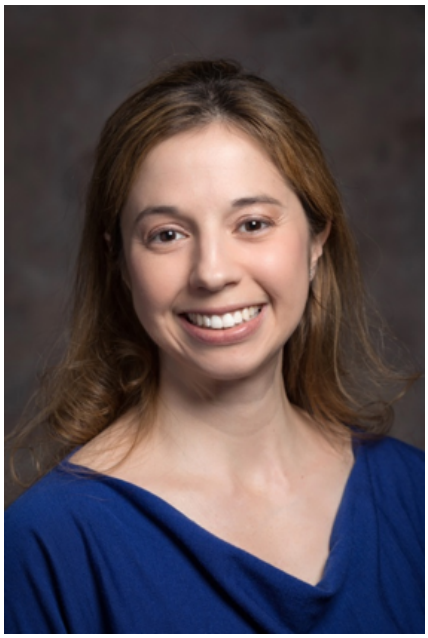
10:45 AM – 11:45 AM

CMWT 527

Abstract: Students notice who is and is not represented in A&P images, which seldom reflect the diversity of our students or their future patients. Yet increasing representation alone is not enough. How identities are portrayed matters, too. We'll review the current landscape of identity representation, identify what to look for and what to avoid, and share resources for selecting and using imagery. Participants are encouraged to bring instructional materials (e.g., lecture slides) to evaluate and revise. Attendees will leave with practical strategies and a personal goal to intentionally and authentically represent diverse identities in respectful, affirming ways in their course materials.

Bio: Elizabeth Andreas, a PhD candidate in Biological Sciences at Northern Illinois University, studies identity representation and imagery use in undergraduate anatomy and physiology education. She earned a MS in Biomedical Visualization from the University of Illinois at Chicago, is a certified medical illustrator, and has eight years of industry experience designing and developing eLearning courses for healthcare professionals.

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Laura Throp

Dr. Alison Doubleday

“Anatomy Is a Bridge to Collaboration”

Friday, August 7, 2026

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

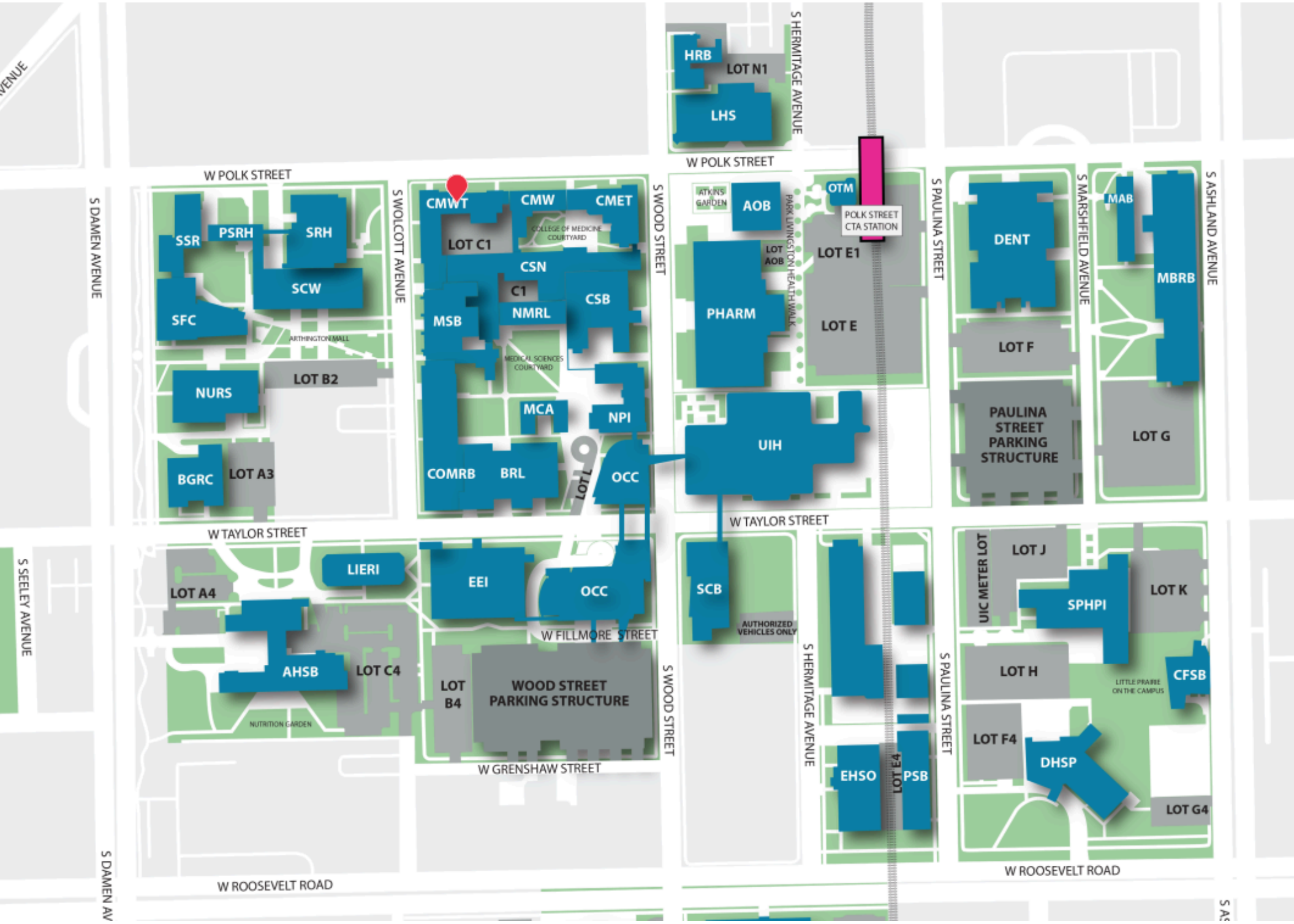
CMWT 227

Abstract: The study of human anatomy is a foundational component of coursework at the undergraduate and graduate level for students in a variety of majors and degree programs. As such, it provides an opportunity for students and faculty alike to foster collaborations, broaden their perspectives about anatomic knowledge, and develop the beginnings of both professional and interprofessional identity.

This keynote talk will use the model of an interprofessional dissection lab for Doctor of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Dental Medicine students to highlight how the gross anatomy lab is a bridge for collaboration in education.

Bio: Laura Thorp, MPT, PhD, is a Clinical Associate Professor and the course director for gross anatomy and neuroanatomy in the Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) program at the University of Illinois in Chicago (UIC). She also teaches biannual clinical anatomy continuing education courses for practicing physical therapists and educators. She received her PhD in anatomy from Rush University, Chicago, IL in 2006 and her Master of Physical Therapy from the University of Scranton, Scranton, PA in 2000. Dr. Thorp served on faculty at Rush University from 2006 until 2015, during which time she taught human gross anatomy and neuroanatomy in a variety of degree programs including medicine, nurse anesthesia, physician assistant, and speech and language pathology. Dr. Thorp has received multiple awards for her teaching including the Brainard Award for excellence in teaching from Rush University Medical College and the Rush University Physician Assistant Studies Program Academic Training Excellence Award. Since beginning at UIC in 2015, she has been awarded the Excalibur Award for Teaching Excellence from UIC's College of Applied Health Sciences three times, as well as the Susan K Campbell Award for Academic Teaching Excellence all for her work with students in the DPT program at UIC. In addition, Dr. Thorp's teaching has been recognized at the university level with UIC's Teaching Recognition Award in 2019. Her current research interests focus on formative assessment in anatomical sciences education and how student mindset influences student perceptions of experiences in the anatomy coursework.

Bio: Alison F. Doubleday, PhD is Professor in the Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences and Director of Faculty Development at the University of Illinois Chicago, College of Dentistry, where she teaches human gross anatomy and embryology to first-year dental students. She also holds a courtesy appointment as Clinical Professor in the Department of Medical Education within the UIC College of Medicine. An anthropologist by training, Dr. Doubleday received two Masters degrees and a PhD in Anthropology from Indiana University. She has experience teaching anatomy to pre-health professions students and medical students, as well as dental students and graduate students. In her role as Director of Faculty Development, Dr. Doubleday co-leads an interprofessional faculty development program and co-teaches a graduate level course in curriculum development and program evaluation. Dr. Doubleday conducts educational research, focusing primarily on collaborative learning. She is the creator and co-director of the Dental Education Exchange, a collaborative, online, multi-institutional journal club and discussion group for faculty in dental education institutions.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Workshop Presentations
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

Workshop Room: CMWT 219

Regular and Substantive Interaction: Intent and Implementation

Heather Armbruster, Southern Union State Community College, harmbruster@suscc.edu

Regular, substantive interaction (RSI) is required to differentiate distance education from correspondence courses. There are conflicting guidelines on what constitutes interaction and how frequently we should interact. Join me for a discussion on the definition and guidelines of RSI. We will reflect on the goals of RSI and brainstorm how to accomplish RSI effectively and efficiently. I hope to address the question, "Can crocheting a sweater be a starting point for RSI in an online class?"

Workshop Room: CMWT 227

Supporting Neurodivergent Learners in Anatomy and Physiology: Practical Strategies for Student Success

Leslie Worrell, Chamberlain University, lworrell@chamberlain.edu

Anatomy and physiology (A&P) courses present significant challenges due to large amounts of content, specialized terminology, and demanding laboratory and examination requirements. These challenges may be especially difficult for neurodivergent learners, including students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, and other learning differences. As awareness of neurodiversity grows in higher education, instructors are seeking practical ways to support student success while maintaining academic standards. This workshop will explore common challenges neurodivergent students experience in A&P courses and provide immediately applicable teaching strategies through case studies and small-group activities focused on engagement, retention, and exam preparation.

Workshop Room: CMWT 222

Microscopic Anatomy of E.P.I.H.C. Proportions: Educational Pathology Integration in a Histology Curriculum

Edgar Meyer, University of Mississippi Medical Center, emeyer@umc.edu

Histology is traditionally an unfavored course among student learners. Given subtle differences in stain color, microscopic feature shape, and navigation difficulty in specimen slices, histology is challenging to learn and teach. As histology curricula have evolved into more virtual lab experiences, fostering self-directed learning for students becomes increasingly more challenging. This session describes the development of guided question activities aligned with virtual systemic labs to motivate students' on-task virtual lab time and to instill relevance through incorporation of several pathological cases. Attendees will observe examples of guided questions and pathological cases and discuss pathological case implementation in their own curricula.

Workshop Room: CMWT 529

Using Building Blocks to Build an Understanding of Excitation-Contraction Coupling

Chris Donnelly, Loyola University Chicago, cdonnelly4@luc.edu

Co-Presenter: Meghan Schrementi, Assistant Clinical Professor, mschrementi@luc.edu

Are you looking for an interactive hands-on activity you can do in your course to help students understand Excitation-Contraction coupling? This interactive workshop will introduce a hands-on Lego-based activity that works in both the lab and lecture setting. You will use building blocks to see how your students will use this activity to build the axon terminal, T-tubules filaments and more, at a low cost and learn practical strategies for implementation, with updated blocks for better interaction This engaging approach promotes visual-spatial understanding and kinesthetic learning, for both the attendees and their future students.

Workshop Room: CMWT 224

The Fall 2026 Update: A Hands-On Design Lab for Clearer, More Relatable A&P Teaching Slides

Tarun Balaji, University of Minnesota Medical School, balaj062@umn.edu

Many A&P instructors are teaching from slide decks that have grown over years of course updates, inherited materials, textbook figures, and last minute additions. In this hands-on workshop, participants will bring 5 to 7 slides from one existing topic segment and rework them to better support student connection, visual clarity, and active learning. Rather than treating slide design as decoration, we will examine how layout, spacing, images, language, and prompts can make difficult anatomical and physiological concepts more approachable. Participants will leave with a revised slide sequence and a repeatable framework for upgrading future decks.

Workshop Room: CMWT 703 (Anatomy Labs)

From Donor to Diagnostic Image: Exploring Cross-Sectional Anatomy

Jeremy Grachan, Rutgers University, jg1916@njms.rutgers.edu

Explore the connection between gross anatomy and medical imaging in this human donor radiology workshop. Participants will examine cross-sectional anatomy of the head, neck, thorax, and abdomen while directly comparing donor specimens with corresponding radiologic images. Guided by anatomy experts from the HAPS Anatomical Donor Stewardship Committee, attendees will strengthen their understanding of three-dimensional anatomical relationships, identify clinically significant structures, and discuss relevant clinical correlations throughout the session. This workshop is designed to enhance anatomical knowledge and improve interpretation of cross-sectional imaging for anatomy and allied health educators.

Workshop Room: CMWT 429

The Next Generation of Physiology Hardware: Introducing the New PowerLab Sensors

Jessica Nguyen

Sponsored by ADI

Providing students with high-quality, real-time physiological data is essential for mastering complex concepts. This hands-on workshop introduces the new PowerLab Sensors, demonstrating their application in undergraduate laboratories. We will discuss pedagogical strategies for using these sensors to reduce technical troubleshooting, allowing students to focus on data analysis and physiological mechanisms. Attendees will gain practical experience in setup and data acquisition, leaving with innovative ideas to modernize their physiology curricula and improve student learning outcomes.

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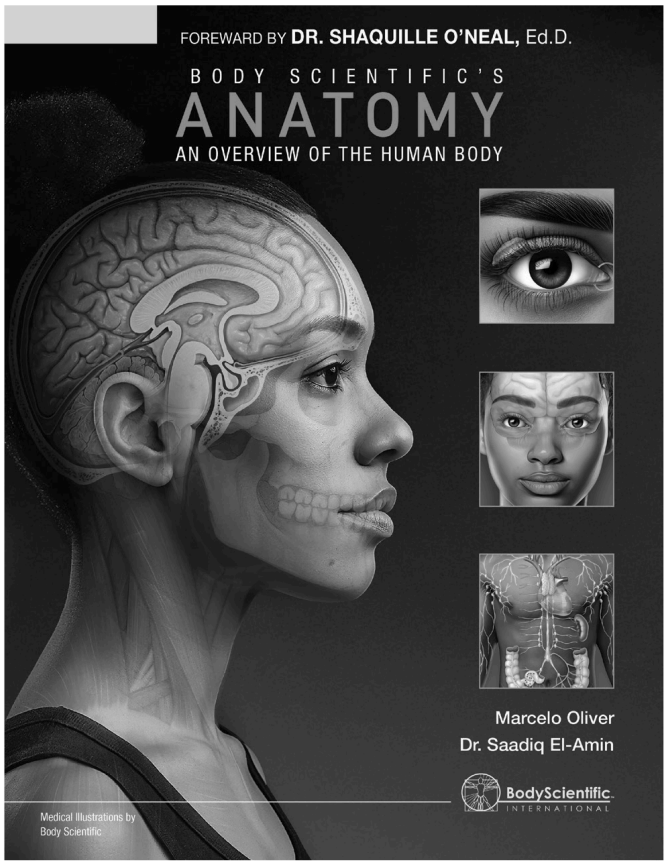

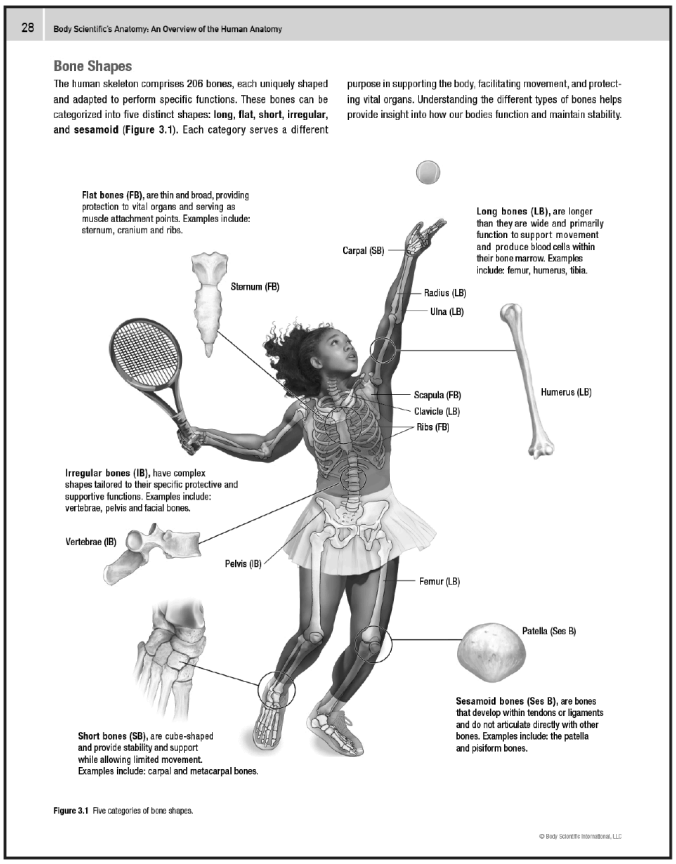

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Poster Presentations
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Plastinate Plus Virtual Reality Blueprints

Lindsay Dresang, The Chicago School, Illinois College of Osteopathic Medicine, ldresang@thechicagoschool.edu
Co-Authors: Kara Coffman-Rea, The Chicago School Illinois College of Osteopathic Medicine, KCoffmanrea@TheChicagoSchool.edu, Richard Gonzalez, The Chicago School Illinois College of Osteopathic Medicine, RGonzalez8@TheChicagoSchool.edu

Dissection of human remains in medical education emphasizes anatomic variation, pathology, and spatial relationships. However, donor availability is limited, chemical exposure risk mitigation is complex, and navigating students' aversions toward dissection is challenging. The Chicago School's new Illinois College of Osteopathic Medicine program will implement a curriculum utilizing bespoke, plastinated human specimens augmented with virtual reality platforms and acrylic models. This blueprint captures the benefits of studying human remains, bypassing these challenges. Interested students will have dissection-based elective opportunities coordinated with partnering universities. The efficacy of this educational approach will be assessed using student survey data.

Visualizing the Obturator Muscles Together: Creation of a 3-Dimensional Model

Emma Schmidt, University of Illinois Chicago, eschm35@uic.edu
Co-Author: Abbey Breckling, UIC Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, abreck2@uic.edu

Despite similar origin on the obturator membrane, the obturator internus and obturator externus muscles are rarely visualized together and are commonly taught in separate anatomical study units. When dissecting human donors, it is extremely difficult to view both muscles in their entirety due to depth and orientation. With consideration for the range of student spatial understanding, this student-driven project aims to create a 3-dimensional pelvic model of obturator muscles that can be viewed digitally in static and dynamic formats. This model will serve to clarify the relationships among the obturator muscles for gross anatomy students in a human dissection laboratory.

Silencing and Stigmatizing: Identity Representation and Connotation in Anatomy and Physiology Textbooks

Elizabeth Andreas, Northern Illinois University, eandreas@niu.edu
Co-Authors: Karen E. Samonds, Northern Illinois University, Department of Biological Sciences, ksamonds@niu.edu, Heather E. Bergan-Roller, Northern Illinois University, Department of Biological Sciences, hroller@niu.edu

Anatomy and physiology (A&P) courses are foundational health science prerequisites. Yet A&P imagery does not fully represent human variation, potentially influencing students' sense of belonging. Across seven undergraduate A&P textbooks, 3,425 depictions were coded for assigned sex, body size, disability, gender expression, race and ethnicity, skin tone, sexuality, image type, and connotation. Abled, light skin tones, White, and smaller bodies appeared most frequently. Intersex, transgender, larger bodies, dark skin tones, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics or Latines were nearly absent. Multinomial regression showed body size, disability, gender expression, and race and ethnicity significantly affected connotation.

Multiple Opportunities for Mastery: Tracking Student Choice and Concept Learning in Anatomy and Physiology Assessment

Lisa Jurgens, Milwaukee School of Engineering, jurgens@msoe.edu

Traditional assessment often offers a single opportunity for students to demonstrate understanding, which may not fully capture learning in content-rich courses. This poster presents an assessment model that pairs student agency with concept-level performance tracking to support learning over time in undergraduate anatomy and physiology. Student choices and concept-level performance inform targeted feedback and next steps. Concepts falling below performance thresholds may be incorporated into extra credit quizzes, the cumulative assessment, or other instructional activities. This approach maintains high expectations while supporting conceptual understanding over time and informing instructional decisions.

Learning Assistants in Community College Anatomy and Physiology: Enhancing Engagement, Metacognitive Awareness, and Academic Performance

Janel Venegas, Waubonsee Community College, simonee77@yahoo.com
Co-Authors: Eric Meuer, Waubonsee Community College, emeuer@waubonsee.edu, Desiree Olivio, Waubonsee Community College, dolivo@student.waubonsee.edu

High rates of failure and withdrawal in community college A&P courses pose significant barriers to health professions pathways (Trip et al., 2024). Peer-assisted learning improves student outcomes (Ellison et al., 2023; Wilson et al., 2024), and metacognitive awareness is associated with improved STEM performance (Stanton et al., 2021). At Waubonsee Community College, Learning Assistants (LAs) are integrated into A&P instruction as an academic support strategy. This pilot study investigates how LA integration influences metacognitive awareness, study strategies, and academic performance. Preliminary findings from four semesters of student surveys and course grades suggest that LAs may enhance engagement and academic achievement.

Ultrasound Versus Prosection: A Comparative Teaching Approach to Renal Physiology

Steven Newman, Hanover College, newmans@hanover.edu

Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) has grown as a form of active learning in medical education, but limited research examines ultrasound (US) integration into undergraduate physiology. This study compared two modalities, renal ultrasound imaging and cadaveric kidney prosection on undergraduate students' (n=53) understanding of renal anatomy and physiology. Using a randomized crossover design over a three-week period in a Human Physiology course, students completed a pretest (T0), experienced one modality followed by a test (T1), then switched modalities with a final post-test (T2). Student content scores increased significantly over time, but the modality had no significant effect on content scores.

Type II Retro Aortic Left Renal Vein Identified During Cadaveric Dissection: An Anatomical Case Report

Reece Elowe, Rush Medical College, reece_elowe@rush.edu
Co-Authors: Randy Bravo, Rush Medical College, Randy_J_Bravo@rush.edu, Christopher Ferrigno, Rush Medical College, Christopher_Ferrigno@rush.edu

This case report characterizes the finding of a type II retro aortic left renal vein (RLRV) during routine dissection of a formalin-embalmed 87-year-old female donor. The LRV coursed inferomedial and posterior to the abdominal aorta (AA) and terminated in the inferior vena cava at L4-L5, approximately 5 cm above the iliac confluence. Type II RLRV has a reported incidence of 0.4-0.9%. Symptomatic cases may present with posterior nutcracker syndrome from compression of the LRV between the AA and the vertebral column. Recognition of RLRV variants is essential in retroperitoneal surgery, renal transplantation, and radiology to prevent misdiagnosis and intraoperative complications.

Pedagogical Utility of YouTube Videos (YTVs) Related to Human Development

Joydeep Chaudhuri, Central Michigan University, chaud1j@cmich.edu

Curricular modifications in healthcare education have curtailed teaching in human development. Hence students are exploring videos available on the YouTube channel (YTVs) to learn about this essential component of healthcare education. The aim of this study was to analyze the pedagogical utility of YTVs in learning human development. Relevant YTVs were located using the search terms “human development” and “embryology”. Results indicated that though majority (78.91%) of the YTVs were of moderate aesthetic quality, only (20.26%) had pedogeological utility in learning human development. Therefore, YTVs should be judiciously developed to leverage this teaching modality to adequately prepare healthcare students.

From Models to Dissection: Exploring Different Techniques for Learning Human Heart Anatomy -A High School Student’s Perspective

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Learning human heart anatomy can be challenging when relying on a single study method. This poster explores several best practice learning techniques, including anatomical models, diagrams, textbooks, and hands-on heart dissection, from a high school student's perspective. Among the learning methods evaluated, heart dissection offered a unique and effective opportunity to examine real cardiac structures and their three-dimensional anatomical relationships, thereby deepening understanding of the connection between anatomy and physiology. This experience demonstrates that hands-on heart dissection can improve anatomical understanding, increase student engagement, and inspire interest in healthcare careers.

Creating an kinestetic activity to help students learn Muscle Excitation-Contraction Coupling

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Kinesthetic learning can help to put conceptual concepts together with a visual and hands on learning approach. We created an activity to use in the lab or lecture to help students learn through building with Lego blocks to represent the events of muscle excitation-contraction coupling.

Analyzing Differences Between Pre- and Post-COVID Quiz and Exam Performance

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Prior to the COVID pandemic (Fall 2016-Spring 2019, n=107) post-lab quizzes demonstrated a positive correlation to exam scores for our one semester in-person BI255 Human Physiology Lab (Nursing/Allied Health), providing assessment of the understanding of the physiological concepts. Post-COVID assessments no longer demonstrate a correlation between online quizzes and in-class exam scores based on data from two instructor’s labs. We suspect this is the result ofincreased reliance on outside resources to complete quizzes. To assess this, we implemented online and in person quizzes (2025-2026; n=103). Analysis shows in-person quizzes demonstrate apositive correlation to exam scores.

The HAPS 41st Annual Conference will be held in Houston, Texas on May 26 through May 30, 2027. The Update Seminar portion of the meeting (May 26-28) will be held at the Marriott Marquis and the Workshop portion of the meeting (May 29-30) will be held at the University of Houston.

Registration Coming Soon!

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Dear HAPS Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the HAPS Central Regional Conference Planning Committee, thank you for joining us and spending an August Friday in Chicago! We are thrilled to welcome you to a day of inspiring keynote presentations, engaging workshops, and outstanding poster presentations, all centered on advancing A&P education. Of course, summer in Chicago is hard to beat, so, if you are visiting from out of town I encourage you to take some time to enjoy everything our city has to offer after the conference. Whether you leave with new teaching strategies, innovative classroom ideas, hands-on activities to share with your students, or simply a few new colleagues and friends, I hope you leave with wonderful memories.

Hosting this conference has truly been a collaborative effort. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to theHAPS Planning Committee for their preparation, thoughtful guidance, and unwavering commitment to creating a meaningful and welcoming experience for everyone. Thank you to:

Alex Daemicke-Hansen – UIC, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Department of Biological Sciences
Asha Eapen – UIC, College of Dentistry, Department of Oral Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences
Ben Karger – UIC, College of Medicine, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology
Christa Wellman - UIC, College of Medicine, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology
Denitsa Savakova - UIC, College of Medicine, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology
Natalie Braunzuzian – Roosevelt University, College of Science, Health & Pharmacy Department of Biological, Physical & Health Sciences
Sheela Vemu – Waubonsee Community College, Department of Biology

I would also like to express my appreciation to the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine for its support throughout the planning process. A very special thank you to the faculty/staff of the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, whose organization, attention to detail, and willingness to help in every way imaginable have been instrumental in bringing this conference to life. Thank you to: Aggeliki Gikas, Sydelle Martinez, Tony Donatelli, and Charity Caldwell.

Finally, if you happen to see a name badge with a gold star, that is one of our incredible student volunteers. This amazing group has generously given their time to keep the conference running smoothly. Whether that is helping you find your session, answering questions, or perhaps most importantly, pointing you toward the nearest restroom! We couldn't have done this without them, and I hope you'll join me in thanking them throughout the day.

Thank you for joining us in Chicago and for contributing to the vibrant community that makes HAPS so special. May today's conversations, shared experiences, and discoveries remind us that our greatest resource is one another.

Warmly,
Abbey Kowynia
Conference Host
2026 HAPS Central Regional Conference

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