



## 2025 UT Southwestern Pinnacle Award recipients

May 2, 2025

To the UT Southwestern Community:

The strength of our institution lies in the talent, dedication, and character of the people who make up the UT Southwestern community. This afternoon, I am pleased to announce the recipients of the inaugural UT Southwestern Pinnacle Awards. These outstanding colleagues embody the highest standards of excellence, innovation, teamwork, and compassion, making a meaningful impact across all areas of our mission: education, research, and clinical care.

The Pinnacle Awards recognize excellence in six categories, listed below alongside the names of this year's honorees. I invite you to join me in celebrating their achievements at an awards ceremony on **June 17 at 4:30 p.m. in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium**, followed by a reception on McDermott Plaza.

Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations – more than 300 in total. A special thanks also goes to the Pinnacle Awards Selection Committee for their thoughtful and thorough work in helping us recognize the exceptional contributions of our colleagues.

Congratulations to our 2025 award recipients. We look forward to celebrating you and featuring your stories in upcoming print and digital editions of *Center Times*.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.  
President  
UT Southwestern Medical Center

### 2025 UT Southwestern Pinnacle Awards Recipients

#### **Distinguished Service Award**

Honors an outstanding individual who has built a distinguished track record of success throughout their career at UTSW by consistently going above and beyond to further our mission to educate, discover, and heal by living out the UT Southwestern core values in their everyday work.

**Hugo Pons**, Supervisor, Television Maintenance Engineer

Information Resources Strategy and Engagement – IR Media Tech and Audio Visual

**Spirit of UT Southwestern Award**

Recognizes an employee who serves as a role model and brand ambassador for UT Southwestern through their loyalty, advocacy, service, mentorship, enthusiasm, and camaraderie, both within the UTSW internal community and beyond.

**Lauren Smith**, Senior Organizational Development Consultant  
Talent Development – Human Resources

**Pinnacle Award for Excellence**

Recognizes an employee who most contributes to UT Southwestern’s commitment to the highest standards of clinical excellence, educational distinction, research integrity, or administrative quality in all they do. They are unequivocal in their commitment to ongoing improvement through a project or initiative that has a positive and significant impact on their function, department, or the institution overall.

**Thuong Trizzy Bui**, Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Technical Supervisor  
University Hospital Imaging Services

**Pinnacle Award for Innovation**

Recognizes an employee or team who created or contributed to development of a new technology or scientific discovery, launched or improved products or services, simplified complex tasks and processes, or creatively solved problems in service of our mission.

**Amber Gemmell, M.S.**, Senior Genetic Counselor, Cancer Genetics Program  
Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Adjunct Instructor, School of Health Professions

**Pinnacle Award for Teamwork**

Recognizes an employee or team who works collaboratively and promotes teamwork to gather input from colleagues and stakeholders across functions and groups to solve problems, improve processes, and provide excellent service.

**Jose Rene Macias**, Clinical Staff Assistant II  
Ambulatory Services – UT Southwestern Primary Care and Family Medicine at Texas Health Dallas

**Pinnacle Award for Compassion**

Recognizes an employee who embodies the values of UT Southwestern and has gone above and beyond to foster an environment of exemplary service in which internal colleagues or patients are treated with respect, dignity, and kindness in every encounter, every day.

**Kaylee Suarez**, Risk and Insurance Specialist  
Safety and Business Continuity