

# CENTRAL

Community-ENGaged  
Texas Research ALLiance

***Revolutionizing how we learn and share knowledge*** about individuals, families, and communities is our grand challenge.

The CENTRAL organizing committee has been very active this year. Following acceptance of our development plan, we got right to work. People have met, gathered, conversed, and had a lot of fun sharing knowledge and ideas about how to make The University of Texas at Austin's second grand challenge a reality.

[Read more about CENTRAL](#)

## **CENTRAL Graduate Student Scholars-in-Residence Program: Summer 2018**

We awarded summer fellowships to five graduate students as part of a "Scholars in Residence" program. This was a competitive application process. Congratulations to the following students for their terrific ideas, and we look forward to seeing their projects develop.

- Ana Aguilar (Communications Studies): "Am I better, yet? How Time Pressure Influences Resilience"
- Joshua Cone (Kinesiology and Health Education): "Secondary Data Source Identification, Access, and Inventory"
- Michael Mullarkey (Psychology): "Applying Systematic Distillation to Community Engagement Research"
- Hongwan Li (Civil, Architectural & Environmental Engineering): "A Novel Rapid Needle Trap Device for Sampling and Analysis of Semi-volatile Organic Compounds in Indoor Air"
- Olusegun Owotomo & Latrice Sales (Kinesiology and Health Education and Curriculum and Instruction): "Austin Youth Voice: A Participatory

Below are summaries of some of the events and activities that CENTRAL has organized since January. We are looking forward to hosting additional productive and fun events in the months ahead. [Contact us](#) if you wish to be involved.

**Afternoon coffee break: What are critical community issues on which CENTRAL should focus here in Central Texas?**

Respond at **PollEv.com/utcentral** Text **UTCENTRAL** to **37607** once to join, then text your message

 Answers to this poll are anonymous



## Fostering Resilience in Families and Communities — March 23

Earlier this spring, CENTRAL hosted a symposium with more than 160 participants from UT and the greater Austin community in attendance.

The day-long symposium featured an exciting [agenda](#) of talks and panels by national and local experts who provided an overview of the pathways from early life adversity to long-term development and health outcomes. They highlighted both individual processes as well as community-level resilience factors that help vulnerable members “bounce forward” in the face of adversity. Another key theme was how sensor data can contribute to a more precise understanding of the dynamic interactions among individuals and their contexts, and how community members can act as “citizen scientists” to shine a light on the issues that concern them most.

A panel with Austin residents featured moving personal narratives about how hardship impacts health and well-being, and Austin community leaders from the

Mayor's Office, Communities in Schools, and the Austin Independent School District shared current initiatives each uses to bolster individual and community resilience. Throughout the day, CENTRAL polled attendees for their perspectives on the speakers' talks, additional areas for future inquiry, and the key concerns that they believe face Central Texas communities. The speakers, panelists, and audience members shared insights and information that have helped to refine CENTRAL's next steps — stay tuned.



## UNCONFERENCE: Technology for Fostering Resilience — April 5

The Measures, Analysis, Data Transfer, and Storage (MADS) team organized an “unconference” to bring together tech-focused individuals to brainstorm ways to reinvent and accelerate cohort studies to better assess environmental, social, behavior, and health metrics for communities. The event, which took place at the new Engineering Education and Research Center on campus, successfully assembled more than 40 participants for a free-form brainstorming event.

The initial brainstorming session allowed participants to decide which topics to pursue. Four onsite breakout discussions developed around the topics they identified: Smart Building Environments, Big Data, Mobile and Wearable Devices, and Ambulatory Sensing. After the breakout sessions, the discussion groups reconvened and summarized their findings. Finally, the participants discussed how the MADS group should establish the technological framework needed for CENTRAL and identified a number of potential pilot projects.



## **Creating Meaningful Change through Data Visualization — April 20**

Last month, the Information Utilization and Feedback (IUF) team organized a workshop to highlight best practices and thinking in health and visual communication. The intent was to brainstorm how to develop a community-oriented dashboard that will help community members access, understand, and take action on CENTRAL-generated data to improve their health.

Keynote presenter Allison Lazard, Ph.D., discussed the importance of visual communication approaches that can be used to create more engaging user experiences. A panel of faculty members and community leaders from the Texas Department of State Health Services, Children's Optimal Health, and Community Advancement Network spoke about current data visualization techniques utilized in our community, barriers, and future goals. The IUF team



will build on the lessons shared at this workshop with a working meeting on June 26 to establish design goals for the CENTRAL dashboard.



## **A Grand CENTRAL Place: Community Day 1 — May 12**

The Community Engagement Core Team was excited to host the first community day this month. Members of the organizing committee, the community strategy team, and other CENTRAL committee members came together to learn about and explore Austin. Community Day 1 was an opportunity to expand our knowledge about the history of Austin’s structural inequalities, build relationships within the team, begin generating scientific hypotheses, and set a foundation for long term reflection.

Non-profit leaders, city departments, and community members led tours of the historic Hyde Park neighborhood, the Blackland Community Development Corporation, the Central Texas Food Bank, the Dove Springs Recreation Center, and the original location of Anderson High School in the Rosewood neighborhood. This will be the first of several Community Days aimed at continuously learning from and growing with our community.

## Upcoming Events

### June 1: Challenges and Innovative Practices in Recruiting Vulnerable Research Populations

The Community Engagement Core Team (CECT) will host a workshop focused on:

1. Defining challenges in recruiting diverse and vulnerable populations to participate in research studies;
2. Sharing recruitment successes and best practices;
3. Brainstorming new and innovative recruitment strategies.

National experts will lead presentations, which will be followed by roundtable discussions with UT researchers so we can share our challenges, solutions, and ideas. See the full agenda [HERE](#).

[Registration](#) is open through May 28. Space is limited, so register soon.

## Stay Connected



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