

Healthcare 5.0: Driving Precision Health and Education Through Immersive Technology and Artificial Intelligence

March 23-24, 2026

The University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education

Sponsored by

College of Pharmacy, College of Veterinary Medicine, Mary Frances Early College of Education, School of Medicine, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, College of Engineering, and Institute for Artificial Intelligence, Franklin College of Arts of Sciences, College of Public Health

[Register for the Conference Today](#)

Conference Schedule at a Glance (Tentative Agenda)

Monday, March 23, 2026

8:00am	9:00am	GA Center Registration and Breakfast	Hill Atrium
		Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos	
9:00am	9:15am	Welcome and Introduction Kelly Smith, Pharm.D., Dean of University of Georgia College of Pharmacy Benjamin Ayers, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost	Mahler Hall
9:15am	9:45am	Keynote Address Healthcare 5.0 and the Evolution of XAIR Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D., President of the University of Nebraska System	Mahler Hall
9:45am	10:30am	Research Session 1 Where We've Been and Where We are Going in Immersive Tech Walter Greenleaf, Ph.D., Research and Innovations Director for the Stanford Medical Mixed Reality Center Introduction by Anne Bailey, Pharm.D., Executive Director, Strategic Innovations Lab Lead, VA Immersive	Mahler Hall
10:30am	11:15am	Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos and Refreshment Break	Pecan Galleria

10:30am	12:00pm	<p>Student Design Workshop Part I: The Last 10 Feet of Healthcare</p> <p>Matt Schmidt, Ph.D., Mary Frances Early College of Education</p> <p>Keynote: Dr. Anita Patel</p>	Dogwood Hall
11:15am	11:45am	<p>Research Session 2 Designing Authentic Learning: What Matters, Not What's Cool</p> <p>Ikseon Choi, Ph.D., Professor, Assistant Dean of Education Systems Science, Woodruff School of Nursing, Emory University</p>	Mahler Hall
11:45am	1:00pm	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Keynote: Dr. Anita Patel</p>	Mahler Hall/ Hill Atrium
1:00pm	1:45pm	<p>Research Session 3 The Davis Global Center and iEXCEL at UNMC</p> <p>Dr. Pamela Boyers, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor, Clinical Simulation, iEXCEL, University of Nebraska Medical Center</p> <p>Michael Hollins, MBA, MPA, MA, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Creative Production & Emerging Technologies, iEXCEL, University of Nebraska Medical Center</p>	Mahler Hall
1:45pm	2:15pm	<p>Research Session 4 The Digital Standardized Patient: Reimagining Counseling Skills Training</p> <p>Devin Lavender Pharm.D., BCPS, BCACP, Clinical Assistant Professor, PGY2 Ambulatory Care Residency Program Director, University of Georgia</p> <p>Sarah Thompson Pharm.D., BCPS, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Georgia</p>	Mahler Hall
1:45pm	2:45pm	<p>Entrepreneurship Session</p> <p>Corey Acuff, Dan Geller, Boyce Clark</p>	Dogwood Hall
2:15pm	2:45pm	<p>Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos and Refreshment Break</p>	Hill Atrium, Pecan Tree Galleria

2:45pm	3:15pm	Research Session 5 Mixed Reality for Physical Activity and Collaboration	Dogwood Hall
		Neil Ni, Postdoctoral Researcher, Center for Advanced Computer-Human Ecosystems (CACHE)	
2:45pm	3:15pm	Research Session 6 AI and Machine Learning in Health Science Education	Mahler Hall
		Xiaoming Zhai, Ph.D., Director of the AI4STEM Education Center, The University of Georgia	
3:15pm	4:00pm	Research Session 7 Simulation in the Age of Rapidly Emerging Technology	Mahler Hall
		Caitlin Rawlins, MSN, RN, Director of Clinical Teach Innovation, US Department of Veterans Affairs	
		Shawn Braddock, M.Ed., Senior Instructional Systems Specialist for the VA National Simulation Center, SimLEARN	
4:00pm	4:30pm	Sponsor and Exhibitor Demo	Hill Atrium, Peacan Tree Galleria
4:30pm	5:15pm	Day One Closing Session	Mahler Hall
		Robert Fine, Founder and Executive Director of the International Virtual Reality and Healthcare Association	
		Mike Fulford, Assistant Dean for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives, UGA College of Pharmacy	

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

8:00am	9:00am	GA Center Registration and Breakfast	Hill Atrium
		Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos	
8:00am	9:00am	Student Design Workshop: The Last 10 Feet of Healthcare Part II Breakfast, Reflection, and Day Two Plan	Dogwood Hall

9:00am 9:45am **Keynote Speaker**
How UGA's Institute for AI is Impacting Health Sciences Research, Practice, and Education Mahler Hall

Prashant Doshi, Ph.D., Executive Director, Institute for AI, UGA Foundation Distinguished Professor of Artificial Intelligence

9:45am 10:15am **Research Session 8**
Artificial General Intelligence for Biomedicine Mahler Hall

Tianming Liu, Ph.D., Distinguished Research Professor and UGA Athletic Association Professor, UGA School of Computing and Department of Linguistics

9:45am 10:15am **Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos and Refreshment Break** Hill/Pecan Galeria

10:15am 10:45am **Research Session 9**
BEAST: Broadening and Enlightening Analytic Structured Tradecraft Mahler Hall

Katie Kopren & William Elm
Resilient Cognitive Systems

10:15am 11:00am **Student Design Workshop: The Last 10 Feet of Healthcare Part III** Dogwood Hall

Students reconvene, discuss their ideas with others, and form teams. Guidance is provided on team formation, shaping ideas, and next steps.

11:00am 11:45am **Special Session**
Immersive Simulation, AI, and Healthcare: Research at NIH Mahler Hall

Dr. Susan Persky, Ph.D., Director of the Immersive Simulation Program (ISP), and Head of the Health Communication & Behavior Unit within the Social and Behavioral Research Branch, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

11:45am	1:30pm	<p>Tour of UGA Creative Engagement Wing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immersive Classroom • Maker Space • Presentation Collaboratory <p>Lunch on Your Own – List of Local Restaurants and On-Campus Options Available</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Student Working Lunch A working lunch to determine the idea pitch plan.</p>	<p>Miller Learning Center</p> <p>College of Pharmacy WP 362/PS 101</p>
1:30pm	2:00pm	<p>Research Session 10 Do you have your AI Sidekick? UGA and the Sidekick Wellness Pilot</p> <p>Mike Fulford, Ph.D., UGA College of Pharmacy</p> <p>Brendon Hale, Sidekick Wellness</p>	Mahler Hall
1:30pm	3:00pm	<p>Student Design Workshop: The Last 10 Feet of Healthcare Part IV</p> <p>Team pitches. Each team presents a concise, single-slide pitch describing: The healthcare moment they are addressing,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why it matters in the last 10 feet, and • How XR and/or AI could meaningfully shape that moment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitches will be reviewed by an expert panel, and selected teams will receive prizes. 	Dogwood Hall
2:00pm	2:30pm	Sponsor and Exhibitor Demos and Refreshment Break	Hill Atrium, Pecan Tree Galleria
2:30pm	3:00pm	<p>Research Session 11 Enhancing Patient Education through Immersive Technology (HouseCall VR)</p> <p>Linda Ciavarelli, DPM and Co-Founder of HouseCall VR</p> <p>Robin Southwood, PharmD, The University of Georgia</p> <p>Chelsea Keedy, PharmD, The University of Georgia</p>	Mahler Hall

3:00pm 3:45pm **Research Session 12
Integrating AI and HIA for Next-Generation
Health Professions Training** Mahler Hall

Richard Lamb, Ph.D., Director of the Neurocognition Science Laboratory and Associate Professor, UGA College of Veterinary Medicine and UGA College of Pharmacy

Alidad Ghiassi, Chief Medical Officer and Co-Founder of HIA Technologies

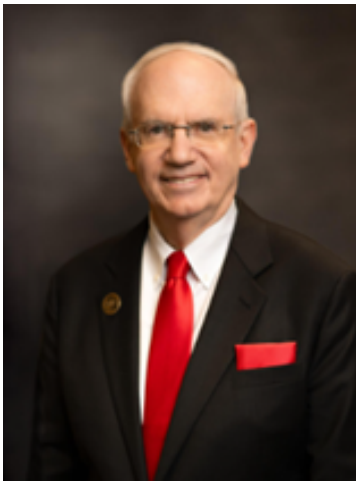
3:45pm 4:00pm **Advancing the Future of Healthcare
through Precision Health and Education** Mahler Hall

Erica Brownfield, M.D., M.B.A., FACP, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Internal Medicine, UGA School of Medicine

Mike Fulford, Ph.D., Assistant Dean for Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives, UGA College of Pharmacy

Major Speakers

Jeffrey P. Gold, MD., President of the University of Nebraska System



President Gold leads a four-campus university system that enrolls nearly 50,000 students and employs 16,000 faculty and staff on campuses in Lincoln, Omaha, and Kearney, plus academic divisions and research and extension centers across the state. He serves as chief spokesman and chief executive officer for the system, which operates on a \$3 billion annual budget and includes a flagship Big Ten institution, a world-renowned academic health sciences center, Division I athletics programs, and preeminent institutes focused on water and agriculture, national security and defense, infectious diseases and early childhood education. He is a nationally recognized higher education and health care leader and advocate. He was the chancellor of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UMC) and board chair for the Nebraska Medicine Health System from 2014 to 2024. As UNMC's chief operating officer, Dr. Gold was responsible for all aspects of campus leadership, program quality and operation— including 7 colleges, 37 institutes and centers, 5,429 faculty and staff and 4,700 health professions students.

Walter Greenleaf, Ph.D., Research and Innovations Director for the Stanford Medical Mixed Reality Center



Dr. Walter Greenleaf, Ph.D., is a neuroscientist and medical technology developer at Stanford University. With over 35 years of research and product development experience, he is considered a leading authority on AR/VR technology and digital healthcare applications.

Walter is the Research & Innovations Director for the Stanford Medical Mixed Reality Center. He also advises the Stanford Virtual Human Interaction Lab, the Stanford Wearable Electronics (eWear) Program, and the Stanford Virtual Reality & Immersive Technology (VR-IT) Clinic. He currently advises Interaxon as a Chief Science Officer and is the Board Chair for the International Virtual Reality Health Association (IVRHA). Walter has designed and developed numerous clinical systems over the last thirty-five years, including products in the fields of surgical simulation and training, 3D medical visualization, telerehabilitation, clinical informatics, clinical decision support, point-of-care clinical data collection, ergonomic evaluation technology, automatic sleep-staging systems, psychophysiological assessment, stroke and TBI rehabilitation, as well as digital applications to support behavioral medicine and mental healthcare. Previously, Walter was the Director of the Mind Division at the Stanford Center on Longevity, where he focused on age-related changes in cognition. He was also the founding Chief Science Officer of Pear Therapeutics, a pioneering company in SaMD, and the CEO of Virtually Better, a company that develops virtual environments for the treatment of phobias, anxiety disorders, and PTSD.

Caitlin Rawlins, MSN, RN, Director of Clinical Teach Innovation, US Department of Veterans Affairs



Caitlin Rawlins has been a Nurse since 2011 and with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since 2017. In her first year of VA practice, she initiated the first positive distraction-focused virtual reality program for pain and anxiety management in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Ms. Rawlins then co-led the development of the VHA Extended Reality Network and played an integral role in the creation of the VA Immersive Program. She now continues to aid in leading VHA innovation and immersive technology utilization as Director of Clinical Tech Innovation, Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning's Immersive Lead, Innovation Ecosystem Systems Design Lead, and co-lead of the Enabling Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning. Since 2017, she has directly supported the expansion of XR technology use from just a few sites to over 90% of VA Healthcare Systems and XR network engagement to more than 3,000 VA employees, including working as program manager, leading national pilots, facilitating data collection, and the developing healthcare integration resources in close collaboration with various VA Program Offices.

Pamela Boyers, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical Simulation, The University of Nebraska Medical Center



Associate Vice Chancellor for Clinical Simulation and Assistant Professor, Surgery at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Dr. Boyers' professional interest is to ensure that healthcare professionals (at all levels of training) are highly prepared to provide the safest possible patient care. This interest includes paying close attention to the well-being of healthcare professionals—and how they learn to work efficiently and effectively in healthcare teams.

Robert Fine, Founder and Executive Director of the International Virtual Reality and Healthcare Association



In 2009, Robert started Cool Blue Media by organizing the first social media conference on the east coast of the United States, leading to the publication of the text book, "The Big Book of Social Media Case Studies, Stories and Perspectives" and shortly thereafter the only printed magazine covering social media, The Social Media Monthly. In May 2016, he launched VRVoice.co, a content vertical exploring virtual reality in the enterprise. In 2017, Robert started the largest annual conference on virtual reality and healthcare with events taking place both in the US and Europe.

Prior to 2009, Robert was the Senior Director of Global Strategy and Development of IT and Conservation International (CI). Robert joined CI in 2000 to take responsibility for connecting all of CI's forty field offices to the Internet and broadband connectivity. During his 10-year tenure, he built an international staff of 25 IT professionals.

Robert has over ten years of additional work experience as a systems and sales engineer with various companies including CMGI, Hughes Network Systems, ioWave and Raytheon. Robert has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Villanova University, a master's degree in environmental science and public policy from John Hopkins University and is ABD at George Mason University.

Xiaoming Zhai, Ph.D., Director of the AI4STEM Education Center, The University of Georgia



Dr. Xiaoming Zhai is an Associate Professor of Science Education and AI and a (courtesy) Professor of Computer Science and Statistics at the University of Georgia, as well as the Founding Director of the AI4STEM Education Center and Director of the National GENIUS Center. His research pioneers the use of AI and machine learning to transform science teaching, learning, and assessment, supported by major grants from NSF, IES, NIH, and the NAEEd/Spencer Foundation. He has published extensively in leading journals and premier AI and AI-in-Education venues, including *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *Computers & Education*, *AIED*, *LAK*, *AAAI*, *NeurIPS*, *KDD*, and *ICLR*. Dr. Zhai chaired the 2022 and 2025 International Conferences on AI in STEM education, leads NARST's RAISE group, and has edited four books and seven special issues. He was a high school physics teacher for nine years, winning numerous awards. His research has earned prestigious honors such as the AERA TACTL Early Career Award, a Humboldt Research Fellowship, and the NAEEd/Spencer Award, establishing him as a leading voice in shaping the future of AI in STEM education.

Linda Ciavarelli, D.P.M., Co-Founder and CEO of HouseCall VR



Dr. Ciavarelli is a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) and ABMSP board-certified specialist in Primary Podiatric Care. With over 20 years of clinical experience ranging from community care in private practice to facility-based care, she has honed her expertise in preventative, orthopedic, and dermatologic podiatric medicine. She is honored to have been chosen by her peers as a "Top Doc" in Delaware 2025.

In addition to her clinical background, Dr. Ciavarelli is the co-founder of HouseCall VR, an innovative startup dedicated to creating virtual reality patient education. HouseCall VR aims to improve health literacy and outcomes using immersive technology. Dr. Ciavarelli is a sought-after speaker, having presented at numerous state, national, and global conferences, scientific meetings, and symposia on topics such as Patient Education Using Immersive Technology, Immersive Technology in Healthcare, and Developing Impact-Driven Innovation in XR.

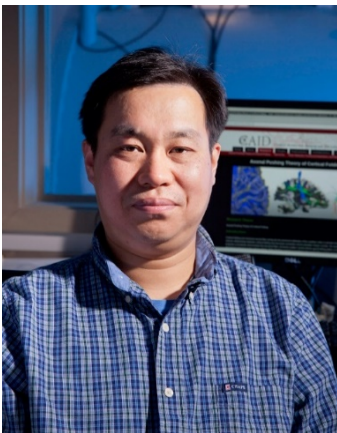
Dr. Ciavarelli is committed to the medical profession, her patients, and the greater community. She has the honor to serve her professional and local community through various director and leadership positions in government and non-profit sectors.

Ikseon Choi, Ph.D., Professor, Assistant Dean of Education Systems Science, Neil Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing



Ike Choi is the Charles F. and Peggy Evans Endowed Chair in Simulation and Innovation, Professor, and Assistant Dean of Education Systems Science at Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, where he founded the CHOICE (Changing Health Outcomes through Intelligence, Computation, and Education) Research Group, co-directs the PhD program in Nursing, and serves as a faculty member of the Center for Data Science. His research integrates learning science, data science, and advanced technologies—including virtual reality, simulation, machine learning, and biosensing—to develop innovative solutions that enhance human learning, performance, and well-being. Choi's two-decade scholarship centers on understanding the roles of authentic experiences and reflective thinking in learning, particularly in developing human expertise for uncertain, ill-defined real-world problems. Before joining Emory in 2023, he was Professor of Learning, Design, and Technology at the University of Georgia, where he founded the SAVE (Situation-based Authentic Virtual Environments) Research Group, formerly known as the Case-based e-Learning Research Group, and the Research And Innovation in Learning (RAIL) lab, mentoring over 30 graduate students. Through interdisciplinary collaborations across health sciences, engineering, natural sciences, and education, he developed and validated learning models and principles. At Emory, guided by a vision of “education science for health outcomes,” his work spans health professions education, public health education, and patient education.

Dr. Tianming Liu, Distinguished Research Professor and UGA Athletic Association Professor, University of Georgia School of Computing and Department of Linguistics



Dr. Tianming Liu is a Distinguished Research Professor and UGA Athletic Association Professor at UGA School of Computing and Department of Linguistics. Dr. Liu's research interests are humanities, brain, brain-inspired AI, artificial general intelligence, and quantum AI. Dr. Liu has published 400+ research papers on these topics, his Google citations are 26,000+, and his H-index is 82. Dr. Liu is the recipient of NIH Career Award and NSF CAREER Award. Dr. Liu is a Fellow of AIMBE (American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering).

Dr. Susan Persky, Associate Investigator, Director of the Immersive Simulation Program (ISP), and head of the Health Communication & Behavior Unit within the Social and Behavioral Research Branch, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH)



Dr. Susan Persky is an associate investigator, director of the Immersive Simulation Program (ISP), and head of the Health Communication & Behavior Unit within the Social and Behavioral Research Branch, National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institutes of Health (NIH). She earned a Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she studied as the Research Center for Virtual Environments and Behavior. Dr. Persky arrived at NIH in 2005 to build the immersive virtual reality-based experimental research lab that is now the central hub of the ISP. She has presented on immersive technologies in venues such as the Smithsonian Institution and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, as well as giving keynotes and invited presentations at many international meetings. She has provided scientific leadership through service on bodies such as the World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Virtual and Augmented Reality, the Veteran's Administration Immersive Executive Round Table. She serves on the editorial board of *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, and as a senior associate editor at the *Journal of Medical Extended Reality*.

Dr. Richard Lamb, Director - Neurocognition Science Laboratory, Associate Professor, Department of Physiology and Pharmacology and the Department of Clinical and Administrative Pharmacy in the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy, The University of Georgia



Richard Lamb, Ph.D. is a member of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology and the Department of Clinical and Administrative Pharmacy in the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy. He is currently the director of the Neurocognition Science Laboratory at the University of Georgia. He earned his Ph.D. from Georgia Mason University, College of Education and Human Development in 2013 in Science Education and Measurement. His research focuses on the identification of cognitive markers of learning, increasing efficacy and performance of neural processing and cognition during learning using novel technologies in educational environments. A second area of related research is in the use of psychophysiological measurement tools and virtual and synthetic environments to provide access to learning opportunities and assessment of mental status and socioemotional health interventions for students at all levels of the P-20 continuum.

Dr. Matthew Schmidt, Professor, Workforce Education and Instructional Technology and the College of Pharmacy, University of Georgia



Dr. Schmidt's research sits at the intersection of AI, educational technology, and learning experience design (LXD), with a strong focus on health and inclusion. He designs and studies innovative technologies such as AI-powered learning tools and chronic medical conditions, including autism, traumatic brain injury, and diabetes. Working across education and the health professions, Dr. Schmidt leads federally funded projects (NSF, NIH, DoD) that use AI, XR, and eHealth platforms to create more accessible, personalized, and engaging learning experiences. He's especially interested in how emerging technologies can be used ethically and effectively to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Dr. Robin Southwood, Pharm.D., BCPS, Clinical Associate Professor, University of Georgia College of Pharmacy



Dr. Southwood is a clinical associate professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy since 2006. He holds BC-ADM and CDCES credentials in addition to his Bachelor of Science and Doctor of Pharmacy degrees. Dr. Southwood provides diabetes related content in the College of Pharmacy curriculum. He also practices as a diabetes education specialist at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens, GA. Dr. Southwood conducts research on the use of artificial intelligence in the education of patients living with diabetes and Doctor of Pharmacy students.

Dr. Chelsea Keedy, PharmD, BCACP, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Georgia College of Pharmacy



Chelsea Keedy is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. She is a board-certified ambulatory care pharmacist who specializes in chronic disease management and the advancement of pharmacy services. She sees and treats patients for hepatitis C and various chronic diseases in the uninsured primary care setting, where she is piloting diabetes medication education virtual reality modules.

Michael Hollins, MBA, MPA, MA, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Creative Production & Emerging Technology, Assistant Professor, College of Allied Health Professions, University of Nebraska Medical Center



Michael Hollins is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Creative Production & Emerging Technology for the iEXCEL program at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Previously, he served as Chief Creative Officer for community and arts organizations such as KANEKO and Pottawattamie Arts, Culture & Entertainment (PACE). Michael holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in Anthropology, Philosophy, and Film Studies; Master of Arts in Cinema & Media Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); Masters in Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO); and a Master of Business Administration from UNL. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Health Practice and Medical Education Research at UNMC for which he intends to apply his professional experience, academic interests and personal passion for storytelling, technology and community. Michael has kept his connection with the arts and culture sector through past Board of Director positions with the Nebraska Writers Collective and tbd. Dance Collective, as well as volunteer service with Omaha Public Schools, Autism Action Partnership and Film Streams.

Brendon Hale, Ph.D. - Chief Science and Product Officer Sidekick Wellness, Inc.



Brendon is an executive who has professional experience, which includes tenures at corporations UnitedHealth Group and Penumbra, and with universities, which include Indiana University and Mississippi State University. During his career, he has utilized his academic training in Human Performance and Neuroscience to lead the science-based development of national and international health and wellness programs, the evaluation of digital therapeutic (DTx) and immersive healthcare solutions, and the commercial scale implementation of DTx and immersive healthcare solutions.

Devin Lavender, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCACP, Clinical Assistant Professor, PGY2 Ambulatory Care Residency Program Director, University of Georgia



Devin Lavender, Pharm.D., BCPS, BCACP is currently a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy with a practice site at the Athens Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Athens, Georgia that is affiliated with VA (Veteran Affairs) Augusta Health Care in Augusta, Georgia. Additionally, he is the Director of Clinical Pharmacy at the Cognitive Aging Research and Education Center located in Athens, Georgia, and the Residency Program Director for the PGY-2 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Residency Program at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. Within these roles, he is involved in the didactic curriculum and experiential education for Doctor of Pharmacy Students, PGY-1 Pharmacy Residents, and PGY-2 Ambulatory Care Residents.

After receiving his Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Georgia in 2017, he went on to complete two years of residency training. He completed the ASHP-accredited VA Medical Center Memphis PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency in 2018 and the ASHP-accredited Ambulatory Care PGY-2 Pharmacy Residency at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy in 2019. Prior to returning to UGA in 2020, he lived in Asheville, North Carolina and worked at the Charles George VA Medical Center as a Clinical Pharmacy Specialist in Primary Care. He is a Board-Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist and a Board-Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacist.

Devin is a member of the Ambulatory Care Collaborative (AC2) at the College of Pharmacy. This group focuses on advancing access to healthcare resources, especially in rural areas, by advocating for expanded scope of practice for pharmacists in the state of Georgia and beyond. This research area led to his partnership with Public Service and Outreach at UGA, specifically the Archway Partnership, which has been instrumental in these research efforts' success.

Sarah Thompson, Pharm.D. BCPS, Clinical Assistant Professor, College of Pharmacy, University of Georgia



Dr. Sarah Thompson, PharmD, BCPS, is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy. She earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Texas at Tyler College of Pharmacy in 2023. Following graduation, she completed a PGY-1 Pharmacy Residency at Baylor Scott & White Health and subsequently a PGY-2 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Residency at the University of Georgia College of Pharmacy, which she completed in 2025. Dr. Thompson is a Board-Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS) and practices in the ambulatory setting at Piedmont Oconee Health Campus in Watkinsville, Georgia.

Dr. Thompson is a member of the Ambulatory Care Collaborative (AC2) at the College of Pharmacy, a group dedicated to advancing access to healthcare resources by advocating for an expanded scope of practice for pharmacists in Georgia and beyond. Her additional areas of interest include the integration of artificial intelligence into healthcare practice and education. In this work, Dr. Thompson evaluates the impact these tools have on patient outcomes and on the preparedness of student pharmacists to deliver high-quality, patient-centered care, with a focus on ensuring their intentional and evidence-based implementation.

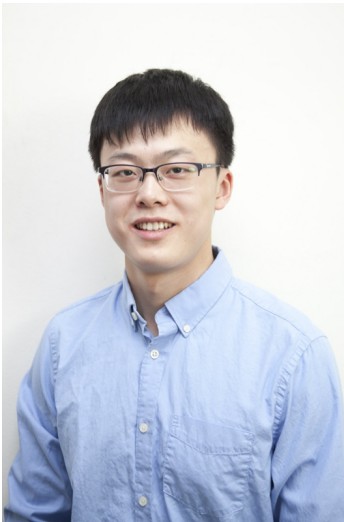
Jie “Jennifer” Lu, Ph.d., Assistant Professor, Workforce Education and Instructional Technology, University of Georgia



Jie "Jennifer" Lu, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of the Workforce Education and Instructional Technology at the University of Georgia. She is also a faculty fellow of the Institute of Artificial Intelligence.

Dr. Lu's research focuses on the design and evaluation of intelligent learning technologies for health professions education. Her work integrates immersive technologies and generative AI to create scalable, evidence-informed training systems that aim to strengthen communication, empathy, and team-based care competencies. She collaborates with faculty in the University of Georgia's College of Pharmacy and School of Medicine, as well as partners at Auburn University's Harrison College of Pharmacy, to develop and implement AI-driven immersive simulations that operationalize therapeutic communication into measurable learning experiences.

Neil (Yuqian) Ni, Ph.d., Postdoctoral Researcher, Center for Advanced Computer-Human Ecosystems (CACHE)



Dr. Neil (Yuqian) Ni is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Center for Advanced Computer-Human Ecosystems (CACHE) at the University of Georgia. He received his dual-major Ph.D. in Cognitive Science and Communication Science from Indiana University Bloomington, where his research examined the neural and behavioral mechanisms of motivation and emotion in dynamic, interactive environments. At CACHE, Dr. Ni studies how human-agent interactions in mixed reality can motivate children to engage in physical activity. His work also explores collaborative spaces in mixed reality and the use of virtual collaboration technologies in healthcare and medical research. The research at CACHE addresses a range of health-related challenges through immersive technologies. Projects include using virtual and mixed reality to promote vaccine uptake, support asthma management, and improve community health in coastal regions.

Shawn Braddock, MEd., Senior Instructional Systems Specialist for the Veterans Affairs National Simulation Center, SimLEARN



Shawn Braddock, MEd., is a senior instructional systems specialist for the Veterans Affairs National Simulation Center, SimLEARN. She has worked across K12, higher education, industry, government, and healthcare. She has approximately 20 years' experience in leading educational and technology initiatives as well as authoring policies that support performance improvement, efficiency in learning and development, and exceeding outcomes for mission success. She currently serves as the senior level advisor/subject matter expert to the Associate Director of Training, SimLEARN, as a national authority in educational program/project planning and development on a national scale at over 150 remote training locations



A student design workshop and pitch activity focused on XR and AI in healthcare

Developed by Dr. Matt Schmidt, Mary Frances Early College of Education and the R.C. Wilson College of Pharmacy

Introduction to Workshop

When people leave the doctor's office, pharmacy, and clinic, care becomes something they have to manage on their own. This is where care often breaks down. This is the last 10 feet of healthcare.

It is the stretch after a plan is made and before it actually works in someone's life, when instructions, tools, and recommendations stop being supported by systems and start colliding with everyday reality.

Consider these real-world examples:

Laetitia leaves the appointment with a stack of papers and a new migraine prescription. By the time she gets home, her head is already throbbing again. The instructions sit on the kitchen counter while she decides whether to lie down, take the medication, or push through the rest of the day. The plan is there. But so is the pain.

Ramon closes the door and calls out to his dad. No response. Since the dementia diagnosis, his dad speaks less each week. The discharge instructions assume a steady schedule and a reliable car. When you are working two shifts, you improvise. Ramon just hopes he is making the right calls.

These moments aren't rare. They can happen after the visit, after discharge, after the chart is closed, when care has to fit into real people's lives and the messiness of the real world. Your task is to work in this space. You will examine moments like Laetitia's and Ramon's and explore how extended reality (XR) and artificial intelligence (AI), together referred to as XAIR, could support people in the last 10 feet, where plans have to be made to work in real life.

Activity Description

The "Last 10 Feet of Healthcare" is a student-centered design workshop and pitch activity embedded within the Healthcare 5.0 conference. It is an ongoing activity throughout the conference that focuses on the moment when healthcare plans, technologies, and recommendations exit controlled healthcare systems and meet the realities of the real-world.

Students work in teams to find a real healthcare moment where a good plan or tool doesn't work the way it was intended when it meets the realities of the real-world. These moments can involve patients, caregivers, clinicians, or care teams trying to make sense of information, coordinate next steps, or follow through on a plan. Teams then imagine how XR and AI could help people understand what's happening, adjust as needed, and take action in that moment.

The activity takes place over two days. On the first day, students are introduced to the theme, form teams, and choose a healthcare moment to focus on. They continue working on their ideas throughout the conference, drawing inspiration from talks, conversations, and what they see from researchers and industry. On the second day, teams pull their ideas together and give a short pitch that shows the healthcare moment they are addressing and how XR or AI could help.

The activity concludes with teams presenting a short pitch deck focused on their chosen last-10-feet healthcare moment and how XR and AI could shape it. Pitches are reviewed by an expert panel, and selected teams receive prizes.

