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## UT Southwestern faculty receive honors

DALLAS – March 5, 2011 – Faculty members from UT Southwestern Medical Center recently were recognized for achievements in their fields.

**Dr. Matthias Peltz**, assistant professor of cardiovascular and thoracic surgery at UT Southwestern Medical Center, recently was awarded the prestigious Alfred Blalock Research Scholarship, given by the American Association for Thoracic Surgery. Established in 1985, the association's research scholarship program provides opportunities for investigations, training and experience for North American surgeons who are pursuing careers in academic medicine and cardiothoracic surgery. Dr. Peltz will use the funds – \$160,000 over two years – to study metabolic strategies for preserving heart and lung tissue for transplant surgery. Organ preservation strategy is a major focus for improving the success of transplants and extending the time between obtaining an organ and surgical implantation.

**Lona Sandon**, assistant professor of clinical nutrition at UT Southwestern Medical Center, recently received an Innovation in Practice and Education award from the American Dietetic Association. The association bestowed the award for Ms. Sandon's "communication and collaboration skills using current technology for enhancing education of dietetics students." She was one of three registered dietitians selected by ADA members to receive the award, which is designed to promote innovations in education and training of clinical nutrition students and practitioners. Ms. Sandon joined the UT Southwestern faculty in 1997.

**Mehreen Kouser**, a student research assistant at UT Southwestern Medical Center, has been named a 2010 Dennis Weatherstone Pre-Doctoral Fellow by leaders of Autism Speaks, North America's largest autism science and advocacy organization. Ms. Kouser is one of eight recipients of the \$56,000, two-year award, which recognizes promising young scientists with exceptional research training opportunities related to autism spectrum disorders. Her work centers on a genetic animal model of autism based on human mutations in a gene called *Shank3*, a major organizer of the molecules that respond to neurotransmitters at connections between nerve cells in the brain. The Weatherstone pre-doctoral fellowship is made possible by a grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation named in honor of former J.P. Morgan CEO Sir Dennis Weatherstone. Dr. Craig Powell, assistant professor of neurology and neurotherapeutics and psychiatry, is Ms. Kouser's faculty mentor at UT Southwestern.

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