

UAMS News Bureau

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**New UAMS Biomedical Informatics
Program Has First Graduate**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) made history this spring with its first Master of Science graduate in biomedical informatics/translational bioinformatics.

Biomedical informatics professionals use computational tools to learn from medical and public health information to improve human health.

As one of the program's first enrollees, Dina Elsayed was aware she would be among the first graduates but didn't imagine she would be the first.

"Honestly, it was intimidating but exciting," she said. "It is a great feeling to be the first graduate of the biomedical informatics program at a great university like UAMS."

The new degree program is offered by the Department of Biomedical Informatics in the College of Medicine with support from the UAMS Translational Research Institute. Translational bioinformatics is one of four tracks developed by the Department of Biomedical Informatics offering both master's and doctorate degrees.

Other new tracks are:

- Clinical research informatics (first in the United States)
- Imaging informatics
- Clinical informatics

"Biomedical informatics is an emerging field in health care and precision medicine, making it possible to customize treatments for individual patients," said Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., executive vice chancellor of UAMS and dean of the College of Medicine. "I am proud of our biomedical informatics leadership because this program positions UAMS as a national leader in one of the fastest growing health research fields."

Because of its focus on human health, the UAMS biomedical informatics program is unique to Arkansas, addressing a critical workforce need in the field, said Fred Prior, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Biomedical Informatics.

“In addition to Dina’s degree, we had five certificate graduates and 22 students are currently enrolled,” Prior said. “We’re excited about the momentum we have for this new program and we look forward to its continued growth.”

Each of the four tracks are offered in the UAMS Graduate School as a 36-credit hour master’s degree with a Professional and a Master of Science option. Additionally, the doctoral program will take a minimum 55 credit hours that are inclusive of the master’s degree credit hours.

“These degrees have strengthened our curriculum and are already helping us compete for students nationally,” said Graduate School Dean Robert E. McGehee Jr., Ph.D.

Both master’s options can be completed in two years with full-time enrollment, and the Ph.D. can be completed in four years, though for most students it’s expected to take five years.

The Graduate Certificate consists of one core course, a practicum, and additional courses of the candidate’s choosing.

Elsayed earned a medical degree in Egypt and has that country’s board certification in dermatology. She hopes to use her new degree to pursue multiple research projects that use the science of genomics to help cancer patients.

“I found that the translational biomedical informatics track will allow me to learn about the most advanced research in treating cancer through studying the genetic abnormalities in cancer patients,” she said. “I chose this program with the hope that one day I would be able to participate in the discovery of new, effective cancer therapies.”

As part of her thesis, she studied new gene abnormalities in patients with multiple myeloma and its correlation with severity and prognosis of the disease.

“We identified about 20 genetic transcripts related to multiple myeloma, some of which are probably linked to severity and prognosis of the disease,” she said. “I hope this novel information will open the door for further research projects to achieve better outcomes for this dreadful cancer.”

The program is now accepting applications for fall 2019. The deadline for applying for fall 2019 is July 1. To apply or for additional information, please visit the link below.
<https://dbmi.uams.edu/education/graduate-programs/>.

More information about the degree program is at
<https://dbmi.uams.edu/education/graduate-programs/admission-information/>.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. It is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 2,727 students, 870 medical residents and five dental residents. It is the state’s largest

public employer with more than 10,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's Hospital, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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