

A professional headshot of Niti Vyas, a woman with dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a black blazer over a white top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and grey.

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Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Class of
2016 (PhD 2020)
Hometown: League City, Texas

SPOTLIGHT QUESTIONS

What advice do you have to someone who is interested in this program or someone who is just starting out in this program?

UTMB offers a very diverse enriching environment with multiple volunteering and learning opportunities. I would advise all the current SHP students to make the most of all the opportunities they are surrounded with, including grants & scholarships, volunteering and enhancing hands-on experience, and learning by being involved in the IPE activities. Thrive with all the wonderful resources that UTMB has to offer and always reach out to your faculty when need be.

How did your education at UTMB prepare you for what you are doing now? Required to answer. The education at UTMB enabled me to pursue a career that I had always dreamt of. It landed me an opportunity to work for an accredited institution like UTMB and be a faculty in the CLS department where I earned my Bachelor's and Doctorate degrees.

It prepared me not only to work with students by being a part of Academia but also provided me the capacity to work on the clinical side of the lab world by being actively involved in the Diagnostic Management Team at UTMB. It prepared me with a strong academic background to be able to impart knowledge to future laboratorians. It enabled me to work not only with students at the undergrad level but also at the graduate level.

Describe a typical day in your field.

Typically my day starts with making a "TO DO" list and checking emails. Then I start working/preparing/reviewing a lecture or lab materials. There are some days when a lot of time goes into grading or just reviewing the Project work of the Master's or Doctorate students who I chair. I also dedicate some of my afternoon time to research for the Diagnostic Management Team that I am currently involved in. In between there are meetings and being a part of the admissions committee recently I have also been out in the field recruiting.

What challenges do you currently face in your profession? How can future graduates make an impact?

Despite Covid-19 Pandemic, there is still not enough awareness about the Clinical Laboratory Science profession. The career and educational opportunities in this field are often overlooked by people interested in biosciences. There is an increase in the need for professionals in the CLS field more than ever before. Future graduates can support the dire need of the workforce in healthcare and help reduce stress and burnout. There are a lot of underserved communities where future graduates and make a deep impact.

SPOTLIGHT QUESTIONS

Please describe your career path.

Having a Bachelor's in Microbiology from Mumbai University, India in 1996, my career goal was always to be involved in the Medical Laboratory field. I started my lab career in 2014 at the Houston Methodist Hospital as a Medical Lab Technologist after earning my Associate's in Medical Lab Technology from San Jacinto College as the BS from India was not equivalent to a U.S. degree. From 2016 to 2020, I worked as a Medical Lab Scientist at the same place after earning my BS in CLS from UTMB. In 2020, when I earned my Doctorate in CLS from UTMB - I landed an opportunity to work as an Assistant Professor in the CLS department at UTMB. I look forward to happily retiring from UTMB after many many years from now and in the meantime I envision myself flourishing in this profession and wearing multiple hats.

Why did you choose UTMB?

UTMB offered a LEAP program for students who had an associate in Medical Lab Technology, this gave me the opportunity to work part-time and get credit for my courses from San Jacinto MLT program. The other main reason for me to choose UTMB was the CLIMBS grant that made it possible to further my education and meet the life goals of a student like me who was at an economic disadvantage. UTMB's reputation with 100% job placement confirmed my decision to choose UTMB.

