

UTA School of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER

Thrive Here, Thrive Forever!



MARCH



MONTHLY NEWS UPDATE 2025

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON
School of Social Work



Watch the March 2025 Monthly News Video Update and read the stories below.

Video edited and produced by Douglas Gutierrez

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Photo of Dean Kirk Foster speaking at 2025 Alumni Breakfast

President Cowley speaks at social work alumni breakfast

By Jaelon Jackson

The University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work hosted its annual Alumni Breakfast March 20, bringing together more than 100 alumni and community members to celebrate Social Work Month and share in the school's achievements and upcoming initiatives.

The event was emceed by award-winning speaker, poet, and UTA alumnus Michael Guinn, who energized the crowd with his storytelling and poetry.

"It's more than a breakfast — it's a reunion of purpose," Guinn said. "Social workers are the unsung heroes of our communities and today was about honoring that passion and legacy."

UTA President Jennifer Cowley welcomed guests with remarks emphasizing the essential role of social workers and the impact of UTA graduates.

[CLICK TO READ MORE ABOUT THE BREAKFAST](#)

Dean's March Pep Talk to Students





And let's not forget



Dr. Donna Schuman, Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work

UTA uses VR to train rural health workers in veteran suicide prevention

By Brian Lopez

With a significant shortage of mental health professionals across Texas—246 of the state’s 254 counties are designated as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas by the Texas Department of State Health Services—veterans living in rural areas face heightened risks of suicide, particularly through the use of firearms.

Nationally, 73.5% of veteran suicides involve firearms, a highly lethal method, compared to just over half among non-veterans, said Donna Schuman, an assistant professor in the School of Social Work.

To tackle these challenges, researchers at The University of Texas at Arlington are developing a virtual reality (VR) training simulation to enhance rural health workers’ ability to care for veterans experiencing suicidal thoughts. This innovative program focuses on teaching health care providers how to talk to veterans about how they store items (like firearms, medications, or sharp objects) to reduce the risk of harm, especially in situations involving mental health crises or suicidal thoughts.

[CLICK TO READ MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT](#)



Photo of Serena Connelly and her husband

MSW students receive new Serena Connelly Fellowships

By Jaelon Jackson

Four Master of Social Work students from The University of Texas at Arlington's School of Social Work have been selected to be the first recipients of the Serena Connelly Memorial Endowed Graduate Fellowship based on their academic achievement and interest in advocacy and policy work.

Kelly Coleman, Beth Kohlmetz, Destiny Proulx-Kier and Morgan Horan were named recipients of the fellowship, with each receiving a \$5,000 award to support their educational and professional development.

[CLICK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP](#)



From left: Dr. Pamela Fox, Alumna and Retired Faculty; Dr. Jandel Crutchfield, Associate Professor; Dr. Debra Woody,

UTA Social Work Leaders Recognized at NASW/TX Awards Banquet

By Jaelon Jackson

The National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter - North Central Texas—Fort Worth Branch hosted its 2025 Social Work Month Awards Banquet on Tuesday, March 25, at the Kathryn Wilemon Lake House Event Center, honoring outstanding leaders and changemakers in the field of social work.

The National Association of Social Workers, founded in 1955, is the world's largest organization of professional social workers. Its Texas Chapter, with nearly 6,000 members, is the state's leading professional social work association. NASW/TX advocates for the profession, advances social justice policy, and supports members across practice areas including healthcare, education, government, and private practice.

The banquet, themed "Compassion + Action," brought together educators, students, alumni and professionals to recognize those advancing social justice, community leadership and professional excellence across North Texas. It also celebrated the power of social work to transform lives and inspire resilience in the face of adversity.

[CLICK TO READ MORE ABOUT THE NASW RECOGNITIONS](#)

Upcoming SSW Events:

- **Mar. 4:** Social Work Month Block Party
- **Mar. 20:** Social Work Alumni Breakfast
- **Mar. 24:** 2nd International Social Work Student Virtual Conference
- **Apr. 5:** "A Day in the Life" - Interprofessional Education Simulation
- **Apr. 5:** Phi Alpha Induction
- **Apr. 11:** Advocacy Day
- **Apr. 22:** MavsDay of Giving - [SSW CARE Fund](#)
- **Apr. 22:** Earth Day
- **Apr. 24:** Celebration of Research
- **Apr 29:** Last Day of Classes
- **May 8:** Celebration of Excellence
- **May 9:** Commencement Ceremony at 2 p.m.

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