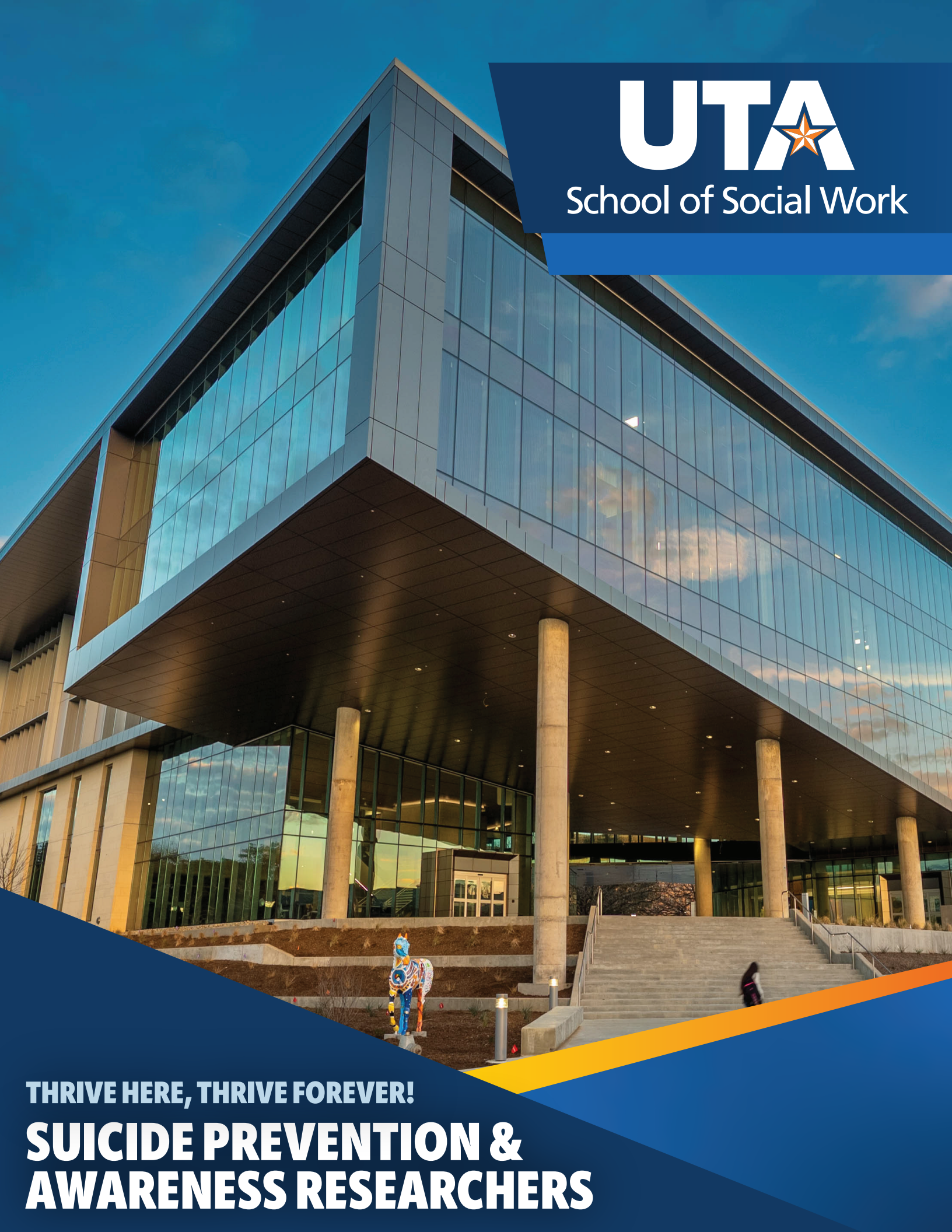


UTA
School of Social Work

THRIVE HERE, THRIVE FOREVER!

SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS RESEARCHERS

SUICIDE PREVENTION & AWARENESS

FACULTY BIOS

PHILIP BAIDEN PHD



Dr. Baiden is dedicated to preventing suicide and promoting mental health among children and adolescents. His research examines the role of adverse childhood experiences and other social determinants in shaping youth well-being. He develops evidence-based approaches that encourage early identification, reduce stigma, and expand access to care. Through his scholarship and partnerships, Dr. Baiden works to strengthen resilience and improve long-term outcomes for young people.

TONYA HANSEL PHD, MSW



Dr. Tonya Hansel is a researcher and practitioner dedicated to advancing suicide prevention. Her work focuses on firearm suicide risk among adolescents, emphasizing population health strategies to identify risks and improve outcomes for youth. She also develops training programs and tools for healthcare providers to strengthen their ability to recognize warning signs, intervene effectively, and reduce stigma in care settings. Together, these efforts reflect Dr. Hansel's commitment to bridging research, practice, and policy to save lives and foster resilience.

JACLYN KIRSCH PHD, MSW, MPH



Dr. Kirsch is dedicated to advancing global suicide prevention efforts. Her research examines cultural and systemic factors influencing suicidal behavior and creates cross-cultural strategies to reduce risk and build resilience. She collaborates with international partners to develop interventions, increase access to mental health services, and reduce stigma. Her work strengthens community capacity for suicide prevention worldwide.

DANIELLE HARRELL (NÉE EUGENE) PHD, LCSW



Dr. Harrell investigates how school and community environments influence depression, suicide risk, and protective factors among youth. Her research focuses on developing culturally responsive models for K–12 schools for minoritized students. She emphasizes the vital role of school social workers in identifying at-risk students and creating safe, supportive learning environments. Her work seeks to reduce disparities and improve suicide prevention in educational settings.

CATHERINE LABRENZ PHD, LMSW



Dr. LaBrenz's research focuses on child welfare, especially on family resilience and preventing suicide. She explores how adversity and system involvement increase suicide risk, while identifying protective supports that encourage healing. Her work helps families and communities break harmful cycles of maltreatment and improve well-being. She combines practical experience with research to improve prevention and intervention strategies.



YANGJIN PARK
PHD, MSW



Dr. Park's research focuses on suicide prevention by examining social and cultural influences. He studies adolescent and young adult groups to understand how community, family, and cultural factors influence suicidal behaviors. His interventions highlight protective factors, resilience, and access to care in various communities. Through research and practice, Dr. Park creates strategies to lower suicide risk and promote mental health equity. He is dedicated to building stronger, healthier communities.

JENNIFER O'BRIEN
PHD, MSW



Dr. O'Brien specializes in addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and its intersection with mental health and suicide risk. She studies systemic and individual factors that put youth at risk and assesses strategies to support survivors. Her work promotes trauma-informed interventions that lower suicide risk, build resilience, and improve long-term outcomes. She is currently funded by the National Institute of Justice and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

DONNA SCHUMAN
PHD, LCSW, LPC



Dr. Schuman specializes in suicide prevention among Veterans and people living in rural areas. Her work highlights unique challenges—such as stigma, social isolation, and barriers to services—that raise the risk of suicide in these populations. She develops and assesses interventions that increase access to mental health care and strengthen community support systems. Her research enhances care systems where resources are most scarce. She is committed to saving the lives of veterans.

REGINA PRAETORIUS
PHD, LMSW-AP



Dr. Praetorius is dedicated to suicide prevention and promoting college student mental health. She researches risk and protective factors at different developmental stages, ensuring that interventions are culturally relevant and accessible. Her collaborative efforts with universities, providers, and communities build systems of care that support early intervention and resilience. She is recognized for advancing practices that reduce stigma, improve college student well-being, and promote healing during and after suicide bereavement.

MICKI WASHBURN
PHD, LMSW, MA, LPC-S



Dr. Washburn advances suicide prevention through technology-driven approaches. She creates culturally rooted interventions using virtual reality (VR) and telehealth to help individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance use concerns. Her projects include a customizable VR digital therapeutic designed for suicide and substance use reduction. She also leads efforts to adapt large-scale care systems to better support vulnerable populations.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

The School of Social Work, ranked among the top 13% of 319 social work graduate programs by U.S. News & World Report, upholds the highest standards of integrity and excellence in research, teaching, and service. Our mission is to create a transformative future founded on justice, fairness, and social responsibility, aiming to develop individuals and communities that foster well-being for a just society.

With more than 2,300 students enrolled in our BSW, MSW, and PhD programs, we have a significant community impact through partnerships with over 400 agencies, where our students contribute more than 540,000 hours of community service annually. Our strong community connections enable us to provide innovative, experiential learning opportunities for our students. With the launch of our DSW program in 2026, our students and alumni will be able to create an even greater positive impact in communities and classrooms worldwide.

Faculty at the UTA School of Social Work publish over 200 articles annually in top academic and scientific journals—placing the School in the top 6% for research productivity among social work programs nationwide. This dedication to advancing knowledge is bolstered by various research centers, learning labs, and other major community initiatives that keep faculty actively engaged in their areas of expertise.

SSW's centers and labs include the Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies (CARS), the Center for Child Welfare Research, the Studying Alcohol and Related Risks (STARR) Lab, the Emotional Robotics Living Lab, and the Social Networks for Social Good Lab, with additional centers planned for 2026. We are proud to showcase our new, state-of-the-art building, which opened in Spring 2023.

Our Students & Community Involvement:

2,300 Students

400 Agency partners for student internships with research & Community impact.

540K Hours of community service annually

$17 M Yearly economic Impact

Our professors:

200+ Academic and Scientific articles published in journals annually

TOP 6% **Percentile** for Social Work research production.

63 Full-Time Faculty

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON



Located in the heart of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, The University of Texas at Arlington is a comprehensive teaching, research, and public service institution dedicated to advancing knowledge through scholarship and creative work. With an enrollment of approximately 41,000 students, UT Arlington is the second-largest institution in the UT System.

Celebrating its 130th anniversary in 2025, The University of Texas at Arlington is a growing public research university located in the heart of the thriving Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. With a student body of over 41,000, UTA is the second-largest institution in the University of Texas System, offering more than 180 undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Recognized as a Carnegie R-1 university, UTA stands among the nation's top 5% of institutions for research activity. UTA and its 280,000 alumni generate an annual economic impact of $28.8 billion for the state. The University has received the Innovation and Economic Prosperity designation from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and has earned recognition for its focus on student access and success, considered key drivers to economic growth and social progress for North Texas and beyond.

LEARN MORE ABOUT US

The University of Texas at Arlington
School of Social Work & SMART Hospital
Box 19129, 501 W. Mitchell Street
Arlington, TX 76019-0129
Phone: 817-272-3181