

# UTA School of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

## DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



**Watch the December 2023 Monthly Video News Update and read the stories below.**

Video edited and produced by Doughlas Gutierrez

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Social Work Assistant Professor Dr. Genevieve Graaf places hood on PhD graduate Amanda Ryan Dec. 15 at Globe Life Field in Arlington.

## SSW celebrates 252 graduates

By Jaelon Jackson

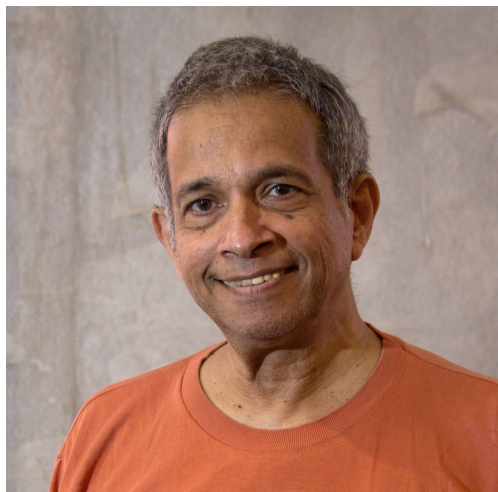
The University of Texas at Arlington's School of Social Work held its Fall Commencement Ceremony Friday, Dec. 15, graduating two PhD, 150 master and 100 bachelor students.

The ceremony, held at Globe Life Field in Arlington, was a testament to the dedication and hard work of these students as they stepped into the next chapter of their lives, equipped with the knowledge and skills gained during their time in the Bachelor of Science in Substance Use and Treatment, Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Social Work and PhD in Social Work programs.

[CLICK TO READ FULL STORY ABOUT GRADUATES](#)

[CLICK FOR FALL 2023 COMMENCEMENT PHOTOS](#)

[CLICK FOR VIDEO OF FALL 2023 COMMENCEMENT](#)



# Dr. Pillai appointed to National Council on Women's Issues

By Jaelon Jackson

University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work Professor, Dr. Vijayan Pillai has been appointed as a distinguished member of the National Council on Women's Issues, operating under the esteemed National Association of Social Workers.

This appointment recognizes Dr. Pillai's outstanding contributions to the field and underscores his dedication to advancing women's rights on a global scale.

"Women's rights are not just about addressing issues; it's about actively championing and safeguarding those rights," said Dr. Pillai, renowned for his extensive research contributions in the realm of reproductive rights.

His work has earned him a well-deserved reputation as a thought leader, delving deep into the multifaceted challenges surrounding women's issues.

[CLICK TO READ FULL STORY ABOUT DR. PILLAI](#)



Lei-Sea Sky, BSW Student

# Social Work student becomes UTA's first Deaf Student Mentor

By Jaelon Jackson

Lei-Sea Sky, a student pursuing majors in both social work and political science and three minors, Diversity Studies, Prelaw, and Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, and Translation at the University of Texas at Arlington and a Deaf individual herself, has made history by becoming the university's first-ever Deaf Student Mentor.

Lei-Sea Sky has not only excelled in her academic pursuits but is now breaking down barriers and paving the way for equal access at UTA. Her journey is not just a story of academic success but one of overcoming personal challenges while advocating for accessibility.

[CLICK TO READ FULL STORY ABOUT LEI-SEA SKY](#)



Social Work Assistant Professor Dr. Saltanat Childress

## Social Work professor changing lives one family at a time

By Neph Rivera

Before shifting her career to helping others in the field of social work, Assistant Professor Saltanat Childress was a trained concert pianist in her native Kyrgyzstan. But she was compelled to make a change after she saw firsthand how women and children were impacted during a time of turmoil for her country.

“The needs of women and children in my society became quite stark after the breakup of the Soviet Union,” she said. “Families experienced poverty, ethnic conflicts and a lack of social services necessary to support them during the transition to becoming an independent country.”

[CLICK TO READ FULL STORY ABOUT DR. CHILDRESS](#)





From the

**UTA**  School of Social Work  
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## Upcoming SSW Events:

- Fall Celebration of Excellence (Thursday, Dec. 14)
- UTA SSWR Reception (Friday, Jan. 12, Marriott Marquis Washington, D.C. at 8:15 p.m. in the Liberty Ballroom Salon IJ)
- Spring Regular Semester Classes Begin (Tuesday, Jan. 16)

## Other SSW News Products:

- [News Stories and News Releases](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

- [Monthly News Video Updates](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
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