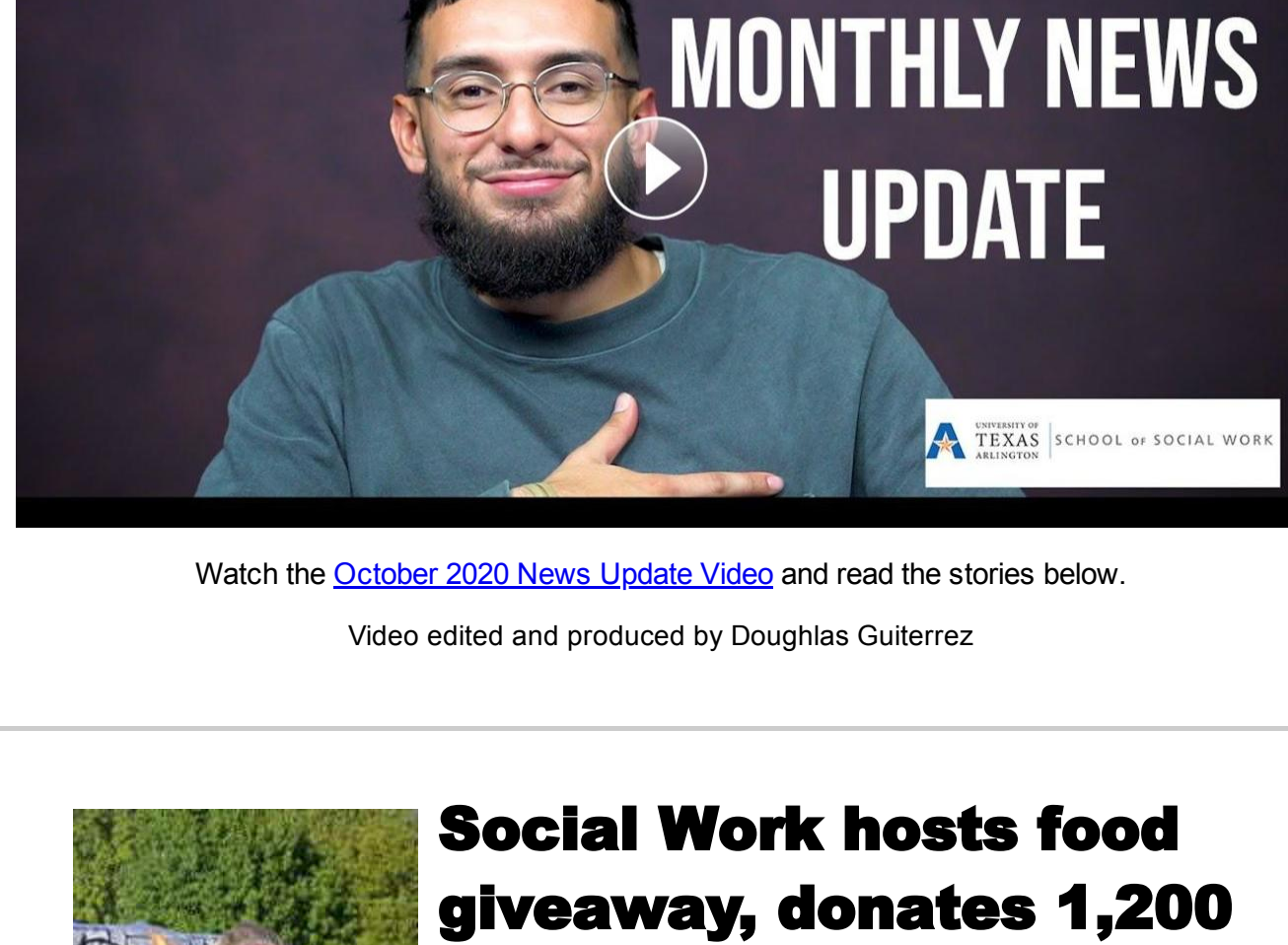
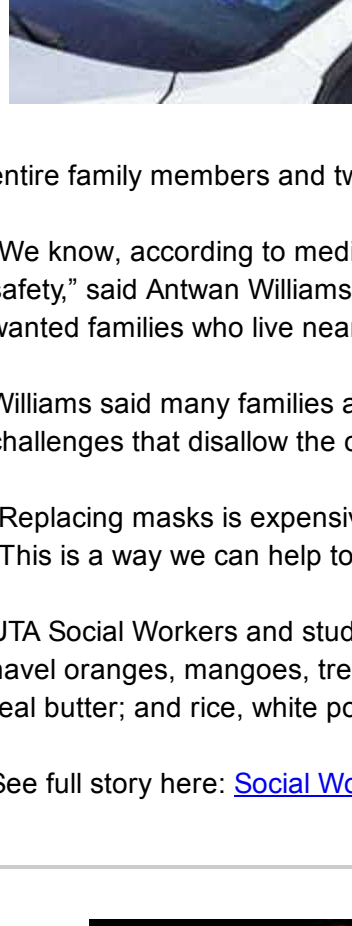


Fall 2020 News Update



Watch the [October 2020 News Update Video](#) and read the stories below.
Video edited and produced by Douglas Guterrez



Social Work hosts food giveaway, donates 1,200 masks to local families

By Valerie Fields Hill

The UTA School of Social Work's faculty, staff and students addressed two major concerns recently amidst a rising spike in COVID-19 infections: health and safety and food insecurity.

The School distributed 250 packages of masks – or 1,250 individual masks – and more than 500 bottles of hand sanitizer to families who live in Central Arlington during the School's first drive-through Fall Trunk or Treat and Food Box Giveaway.

The masks are 100 percent cotton, washable facial masks. Each car that drove through the event was given five masks for their entire family members and two bottles of liquid, 75 percent alcohol hand sanitizer.

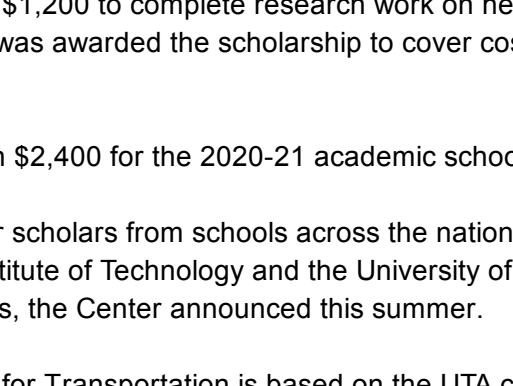
"We know, according to medical science, that wearing a mask is critical to individual's personal safety," said Antwan Williams, communications manager for the School of Social Work. "We wanted families who live near the university to be as safe as possible."

Williams said many families are suffering job layoffs, cutbacks in work hours and other financial challenges that disallow the continual purchase of facial masks.

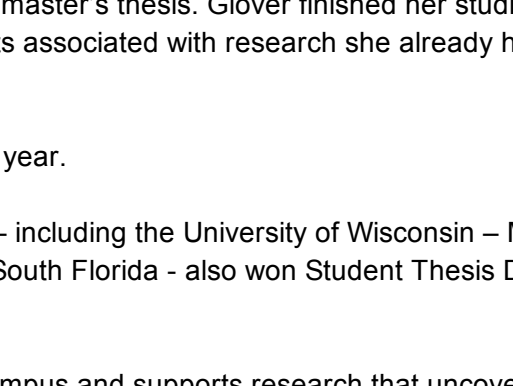
"Replacing masks is expensive. Kids lose them. Parents have to buy them continuously," he said. "This is a way we can help to reduce families' costs."

UTA Social Workers and students also distributed more than 10,000 pounds of fresh apples, navel oranges, mangoes, tree-ripened pears; Borden milk, eggs, shredded cheddar cheese and real butter; and rice, white potatoes, breakfast sausages and other food items.

See full story here: [Social Work Donates 1,200 Masks](#)



Joanna Glover
MSW Student



Erin Murphy
Social Work PhD Student

Social Work students earn scholarships for transportation-related research

By UTA School of Social Work

Joanna Glover, who earned a masters degree with an emphasis on aging in August, and Erin Murphy, who is pursuing a doctoral degree in Social Work, each won a Student Thesis Dissertation Scholarship from the Center for Transportation Equity, Decisions and Dollars.

Glover won \$1,200 to complete research work on her master's thesis. Glover finished her studies last month, but was awarded the scholarship to cover costs associated with research she already had completed.

Murphy won \$2,400 for the 2020-21 academic school year.

Seven other scholars from schools across the nation – including the University of Wisconsin – Madison, Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of South Florida – also won Student Thesis Dissertation Scholarships, the Center announced this summer.

The Center for Transportation is based on the UTA campus and supports research that uncovers ways to make travel systems fair and equitable. The organization's goal is to transform the nation's travel policies to better meet the needs of commuters.

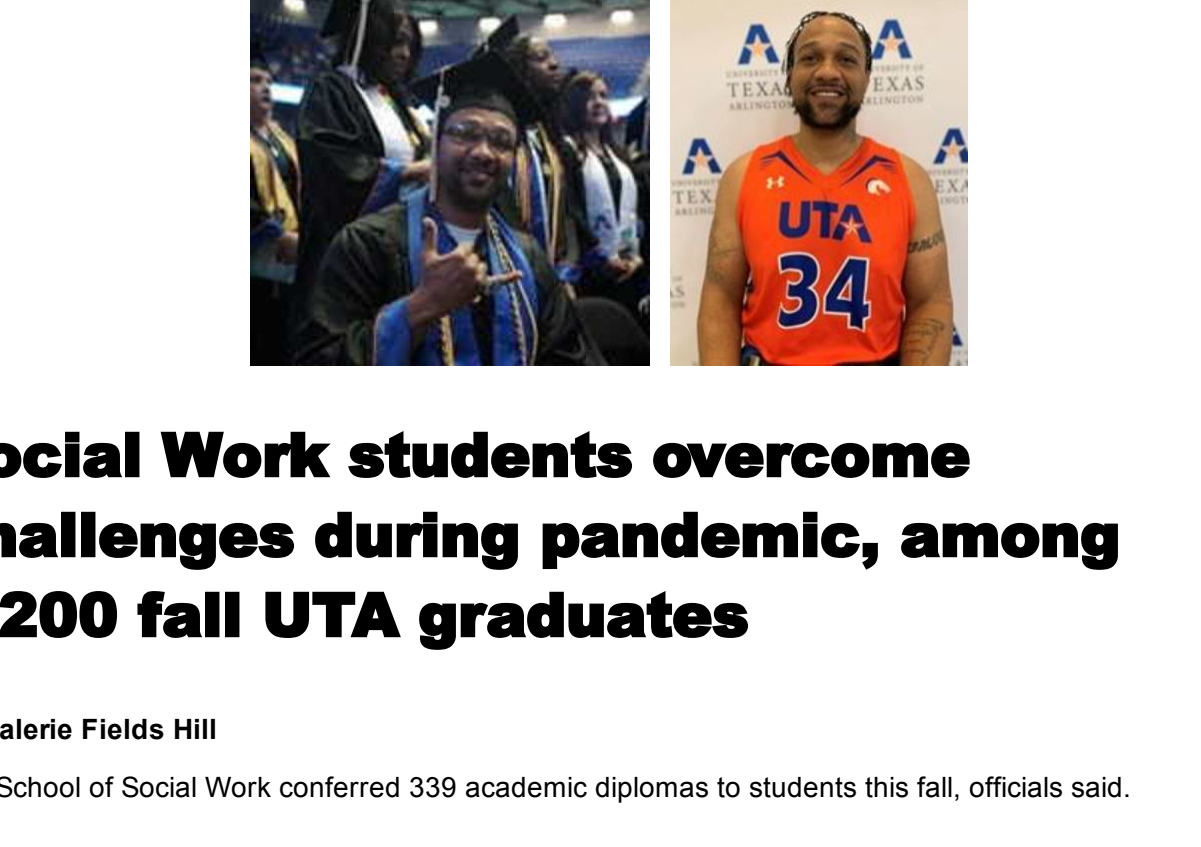
In her final months at UTA, Glover studied how aging adults are affected – and sometimes limited – by wheelchair and other travel access.

For example, earlier this spring, Glover and a team of UTA student engineers researched and created an app, similar to the Uber app, that allows aging adults to hail a wheelchair at the nation's airports.

The UTA group is a finalist in a Federal Aviation Administration competition designed to encourage college students across the nation to create solutions to real world problems affecting U.S. air travel.

Read the rest of the story: [Social Work Students Earn Scholarships for Transportation-Related Research](#)

FALL CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE



By Valerie Fields Hill

More than 150 undergraduate and graduate students were honored this week for outstanding academic achievement, social advocacy and leadership during the School of Social Work's fall awards program.

The School's administration, faculty members and advisors recognized the high performing students during a virtual streaming of "Fall 2020 Celebration of Excellence." The video was created by the School's Communications and Marketing staff to honor the students.

The video streamed on Facebook late Tuesday and was viewed by 1,500 honorees, fellow UTA students, faculty, staff, parents, friends and alumni.

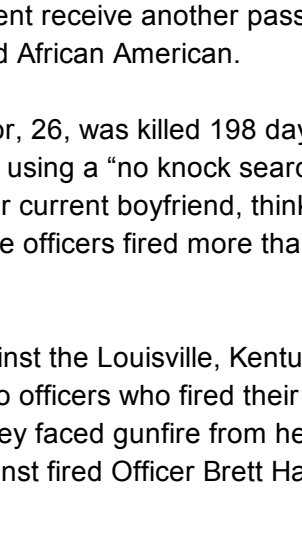
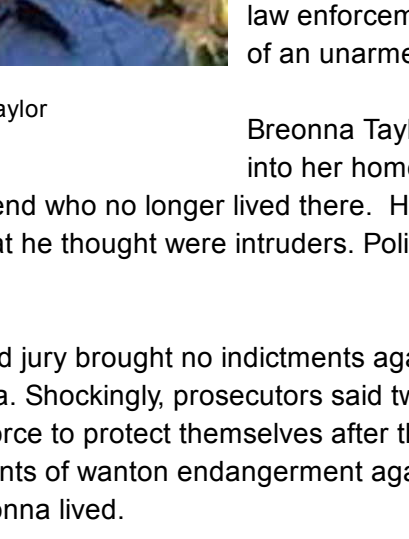
The Celebration of Excellence featured 11 students who will graduate with a Bachelor's degree and 66 students who will complete the Masters program in December who all earned a perfect 4.0 grade point average. The students earned spots on the BSW Directors and MSW Directors lists, respectively.

"Awesome job, everyone," Debbie Gomez wrote in the Facebook chat after those students' names were announced during Tuesday's broadcast.

Among other honorees were Lady Sarah Joseph, who was recognized three times, and Sruthi Sundar, who was recognized twice. Joseph won Outstanding Student Activist, Outstanding BSW Research Assistant and was recognized for serving as historian of the student-led Social Work Council.

Sundar, like Joseph, received recognition as Outstanding BSW Research Assistant and for her work as an Undergraduate Student Leader.

Read the rest of the story: [Fall Celebration of Excellence](#)



Social Work students overcome challenges during pandemic, among 5,200 fall UTA graduates

By Valerie Fields Hill

The School of Social Work conferred 339 academic diplomas to students this fall, officials said.

Most of the students, 245 of them, earned master's degrees in Social Work while the remaining 94 earned bachelor's degrees.

The December graduates were among 5,200 graduates in the UTA Fall Class of 2020. The class was honored during a virtual celebration "Cheers to the Class of 2020" streamed at 7:05 p.m. Dec. 17 on the UTA website and its Facebook page.

Thursday, Interim University President Teik Lim commended the fall graduates - who continued their studies through the COVID-19 pandemic and national health crisis - saying they gave him hope.

"When I consider all that our Maverick students have been able to accomplish in 2020 and throughout their time here, I am filled with optimism for what lies ahead," Dr. Lim said in a statement the university released. "Our students have shown their resilience and their ability to pivot at a moment's notice."

"Their dedication, grit and commitment to reaching this significant educational milestone proves they are prepared and ready for what comes next in their careers," he said.

Dean of the School of Social Work Scott Ryan commended the students who rose to the challenges of this year and completed their studies.

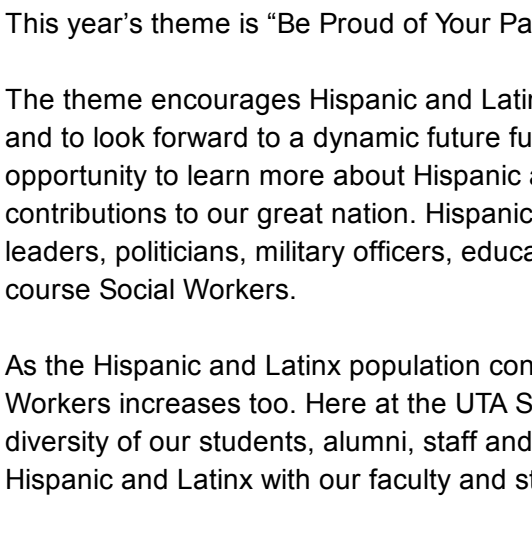
"It's been a tough year for our students, but I'm proud of how well they persevered and pushed through to completion," Ryan said. "Social Workers, such as those working in hospitals, clinics, schools, hospice facilities, and juvenile, mental health and substance use treatment centers are considered COVID-19 front-line workers and our students who are graduating this semester have proven they are ready to join their colleagues."

Social Work program directors Regina Praetorius and Karen Magruder congratulated the School's graduates in separate newsletters emailed last week to all undergraduate and graduate Social Work students.

"We are so proud of your accomplishment," Magruder wrote to undergraduates. "We wish you the best in your Social Work career, and we hope to see you back as (graduate) students one day!"

UTA conferred more than 5,200 diplomas this fall, the Office of University Communications said. The December graduates join more than 240,000 UTA alumni. The University graduated more students in calendar year 2020 than it did a year earlier, UTA officials projected.

Read the rest of the story: [Social Work students overcome challenges](#)



Breonna Taylor

Message from the Dean about Breonna Taylor and racial injustice

By Valerie Fields Hill

Unfortunately, yet again, we see the criminal justice system and law enforcement receive another pass with the innocent killing of an unarmed African American.

Breonna Taylor, 26, was killed 198 days ago when police burst into her home using a "no knock search warrant" reportedly looking for an ex-boyfriend who no longer lived there. Her current boyfriend, thinking they were being burglarized, fired at what he thought were intruders. Police officers fired more than 30 rounds with six hitting Breonna.

Earlier this week a grand jury brought no indictments against the Louisville, Kentucky white police officers for the death of Breonna. Shockingly, prosecutors said two officers who fired their weapons at Breonna were justified in using force to protect themselves after they faced gunfire from her boyfriend. The only charges were three counts of wanton endangerment against fired Officer Brett Hankison for shooting into a home next to where Breonna lived.

Over-policing of communities of color and the trampling of civil rights and due process must end. We see these practices played out nationally and even locally by law enforcement and other institutions.

Breonna was murdered in her apartment and it was the result of officers firing their weapons. Yet, there continues to be no real accountability for these injustices. Systemic racism must end, and law enforcement and other government institutions must be held accountable for these repeated civil rights violations.

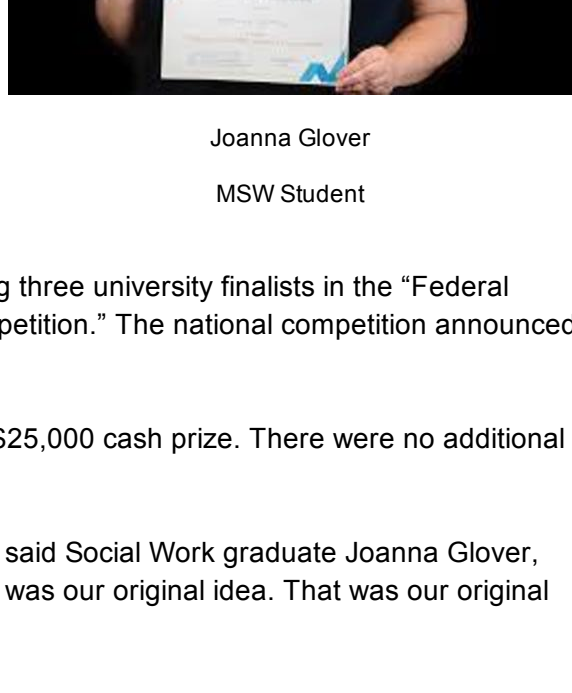
Social Workers are obligated to speak out against all forms of racism (systemic and structural) within our communities and institutions. As I stated in my message back in June, we know there are systemic issues in our criminal justice system, within law enforcement and in our political and educational institutions. We have a right to demand reform of policing and fundamentally change how law enforcement, the criminal justice system and other institutions are structured.

Read the rest of the story: [Breonna Taylor and racial injustice](#)

Social Work, business, engineering students receive FAA recognition for app

By Valerie Fields Hill

A UTA team of Social Work, engineering and business students who designed an app to help wheelchair users at airports has been advised to take their invention to the reality TV show Shark Tank to secure venture capital.



Joanna Glover
MSW Student

The UTA team and their app, called the WheelTrip, was among three university finalists in the "Federal Aviation Administration Challenge: Smart Airport Student Competition." The national competition announced its winning college team on Dec. 1.

Purdue University of Indiana won the FAA Challenge and the \$25,000 cash prize. There were no additional awards.

"Purdue had a very nice presentation. It was really well done," said Social Work graduate Joanna Glover, who was a member of the UTA team. "Purdue presented what was our original idea. That was our original idea and they ended up actually winning."

Still, the UTA team's entry was a favorite - at least with one of the challenge's seven judges. During a question-and-answer session about the app, that judge didn't withhold his admiration.

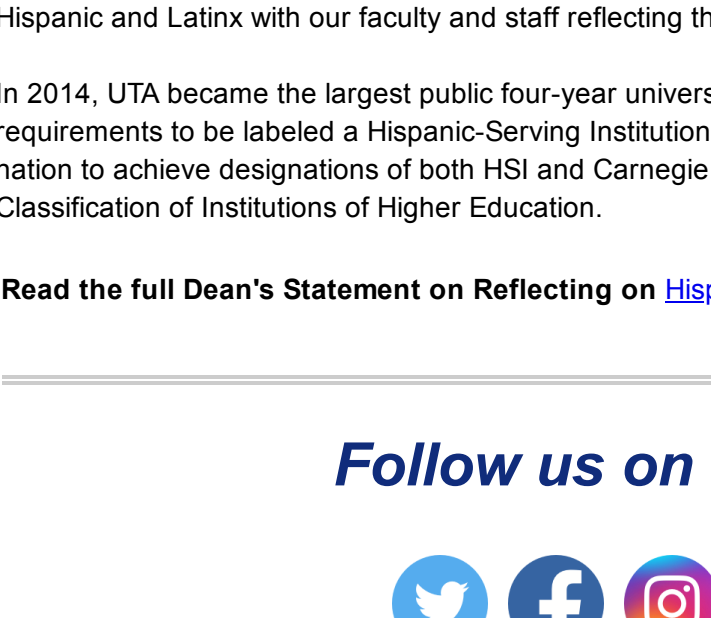
"All that judge said, when it came to his turn, is 'Y'all need to go on Shark Tank,'" said Glover, who graduated with a Master of Social Work degree in August but continued competing as a member of the UTA team. "That was amazing! Just to hear that from a judge, that was really amazing."

"He was actually very serious about it," she said.

Glover's team will not be appeal to the "sharks" on the Emmy-Award winning, entrepreneurial-themed, ABC television show. The WheelTrip is not 100 percent ready for prime time, she said.

But the team did find an alternative means to heed the judge's advice.

Read the rest of the story: [FAA Competition Results](#)



Dean's statement reflecting on Hispanic Heritage Month

By Dean Scott Ryan

As we near the end of celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month, I would like to recognize the important contributions of Hispanic and Latinx Americans.

This national recognition first started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week. On August 17, 1988, it was enacted into law and is now celebrated every year from September 15 to October 15.

This year's theme is "Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future."

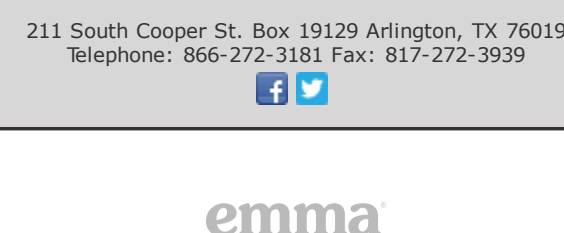
The theme encourages Hispanic and Latinx Americans to be proud of their history, lineage and contributions and to look forward to a dynamic future full of hope and promise. This month also gives all Americans the opportunity to learn more about Hispanic and Latinx Americans' rich culture, vibrant history, service and contributions to our great nation. Hispanic and Latinx Americans serve in many roles, such as civil rights leaders, politicians, military officers, educators, doctors, lawyers, science pioneers, first responders, and of course Social Workers.

As the Hispanic and Latinx population continues to grow, the demand for culturally competent Social Workers increases too. Here at the UTA School of Social Work we pride ourselves on the rich culture and diversity of our students, alumni, staff and faculty. Nearly one-third of our Social Work students identify as Hispanic and Latinx with our faculty and staff reflecting the same diversity.

In 2014, UTA became the largest public four-year university in Texas to meet U.S. Department of Education requirements to be labeled a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). UTA is one of only 14 universities in the nation to achieve designations of both HSI and Carnegie R-1: "Very High Research" in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Read the full Dean's Statement on Reflecting on [Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

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