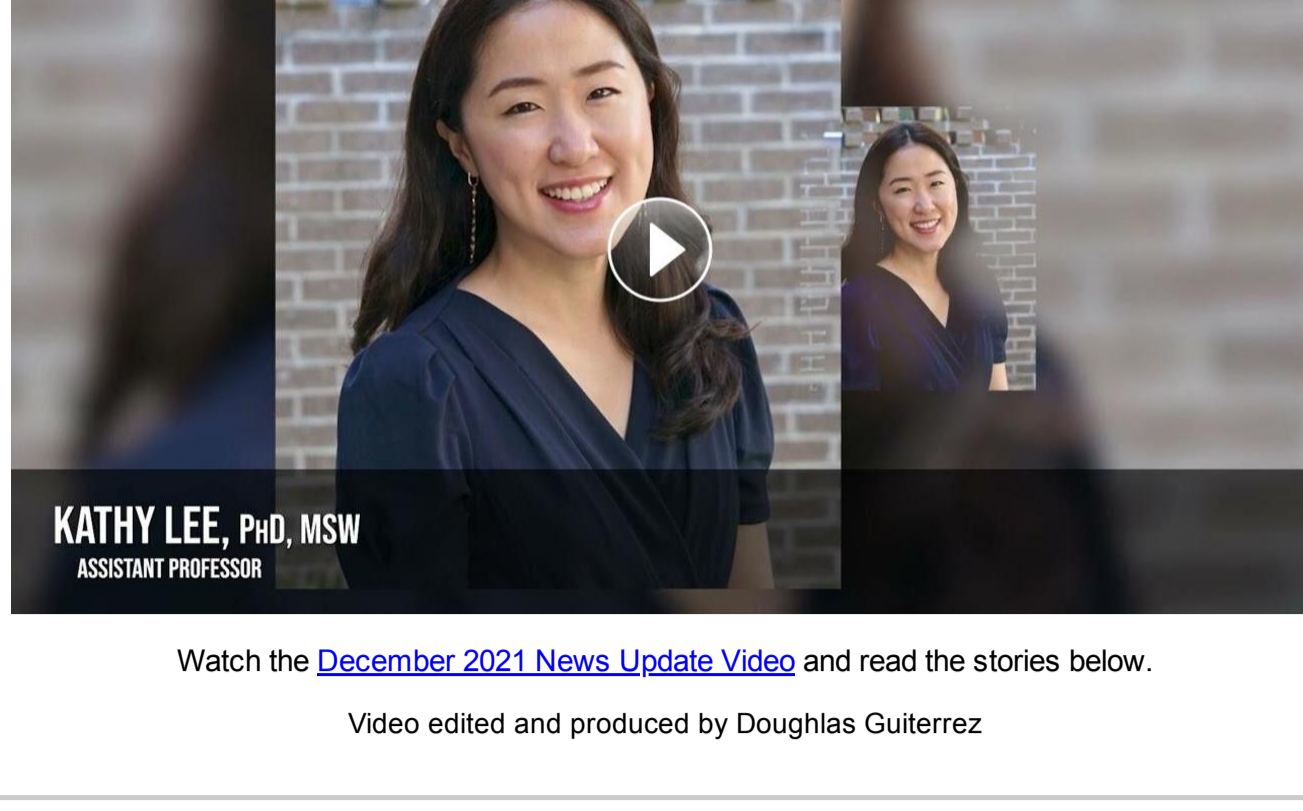


# Fall 2021 News Update



**KATHY LEE, PhD, MSW**  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Watch the [December 2021 News Update Video](#) and read the stories below.

Video edited and produced by Douglas Guterrez



Dr. Jandel Crutchfield  
Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## Asst. Professor named new Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

By Valerie Fields Hill

In direct response to the results of a strategic planning initiative within the UTA School of Social Work, Dean Scott Ryan has named Dr. Jandel Crutchfield as the school's first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

During the Spring of the 2020-2021 academic year the School of Social Work faculty and staff engaged in focus group discussions to inform their new strategic plan. One of the deliverables called for an individual to lead DEI efforts within the school, which will be Dr. Crutchfield's role with this appointment.

Dr. Crutchfield is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work where her research, teaching, and service primarily focuses on issues of racial justice in sectors including education, health, and economics.

Crutchfield also explores the impacts of intersectionality in the pursuit of social justice for marginalized populations. She has received federal funding to build trainings for workforce development on equity and facilitates trainings on cultural competence within the local community in addition to sharing her expertise with local DFW media.

She teaches Social Work in Schools and Diverse Populations courses, in addition to leading students in their own thesis and dissertation research.

At UTA, Dr. Crutchfield currently serves on the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion committee and recently joined the Diversity Certificate Advisory Committee to build a certificate program in diversity that will be offered to faculty and staff.

Dr. Crutchfield serves as part of the national steering committee for the 13th Grand Challenge for Social Work eliminating racism, where she co-chairs the webinar committee in its delivery of webinars covering the impacts of racism on the other 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work.

Read the rest of the story [New Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

## Dean's statement on shooting at Timberview High School



By Dean Scott Ryan

Today, we faced the reality of yet another school shooting, this one in our own backyard.

This morning, local police responded to a shooting at Arlington's Timberview High School in the Mansfield Independent School District. One student and two adults are recovering at area hospitals from injuries sustained in the shooting. A fourth person was injured, but not seriously and declined medical attention. A second student, 18 years old, is believed to be the shooter and is now in custody at Ott Cribbs Public Safety Center, just two blocks up the street from our School of Social Work.

Today's shooting comes on the heels of an eerily similar one in Houston just four days ago. On Friday, a former student shot his way through locked glass doors into YES Prep Southwest Secondary School. He then shot the school principal in the back. The administrator survived the incident. The 25-year-old former student later was arrested and confessed to the shooting, according to Houston police.

Collectively, we are stunned. We are terribly saddened at the frequency of these school shootings and the lifelong impact that such tragic events exact on the mental health of student victims, their teachers, aides, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, crossing guards and all of their families.

Read the rest of the story [Shooting at Timberview High School](#)

## BSW Student: Symposium highlights effects of Rwandan Genocide on mental health

By Valerie Fields Hill

A Social Work undergraduate student is among a team of international scholars and social justice advocates who will speak during a national symposium this weekend on Rwanda and its refugees.



Photo Courtesy of Alice Muhindura

Alice Muhindura will facilitate a panel discussion and share her lived experiences escaping Rwanda during the 2021 Rwandan American Symposium. It will be held virtually on Saturday and Sunday.

This weekend marks the first time Muhindura will speak publicly about her family's experience being forced from their home in May 1994, crossing the border into The Democratic Republic of the Congo and, finally, being airlifted out of the region to safety.

"I don't really think I've talked about it," said, Muhindura, a senior Social Work major earning a minor in neuroscience. "I want to kind of share that with the world."

Thousands of Rwandans escaped the nation during 1993 and 1994. The country engaged in a civil war that saw an estimated 1.1 million ethnic Hutu, Tutsi and Twa people killed in what is widely viewed as one of the worst genocides in world history.

This weekend's symposium will offer attendees a history of Rwanda, a small nation in Central Africa bordered by the Congo, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda.

Organizers say the conference is being held to address injustices surrounding prosecutions of international war crimes. "We wanted to highlight or showcase the injustices that are still prevailing," said Muhindura, who plans to graduate in May.

Read the rest of the story [Rwandan Symposium](#)



Supporters at Justice for Ahmaud Protest

## Dean's statement regarding recent court verdicts

By Dean Scott Ryan

Today, all three White men accused in the fatal shooting of Ahmaud Arbery were found guilty of multiple counts of

felony murder. Travis McMichael, his father Gregory, and William Bryan, Jr. each rightly face sentences of up to life in prison for their roles in the fatal shooting of Arbery, an African American man who was jogging through a Georgia neighborhood.

We are thankful for these verdicts.

Other awful violent acts such as in the deaths of 12-year-old Tamir Rice playing with a toy gun in a park, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin walking home from a convenience store, and 17-year-old Jordan Davis for just being a country teenager and allegedly playing loud music at a gas station, demonstrate the deep fractures in our country and in the U.S. legal system.

This hateful and racist practice of law enforcement officers and vigilante citizens automatically assuming Blacks/African Americans and other People of Color are suspicious and guilty because of the color of their skin must end.

The not guilty verdict last week of Kyle Rittenhouse, who killed two White people and injured another one attending a Black Lives Matter protest, and the civil trial ending today with organizers of the Unite the Right Rally being found liable and now must pay \$26 million in damages to those injured and killed as a result of their hateful 2017 rally in Charlottesville, show we still have a long way to go.

Intimidation tactics of vigilante civilians carrying weapons and police responding forcefully to citizens protesting threaten the very heart of our First Amendment rights to peacefully assemble, freedom of speech, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

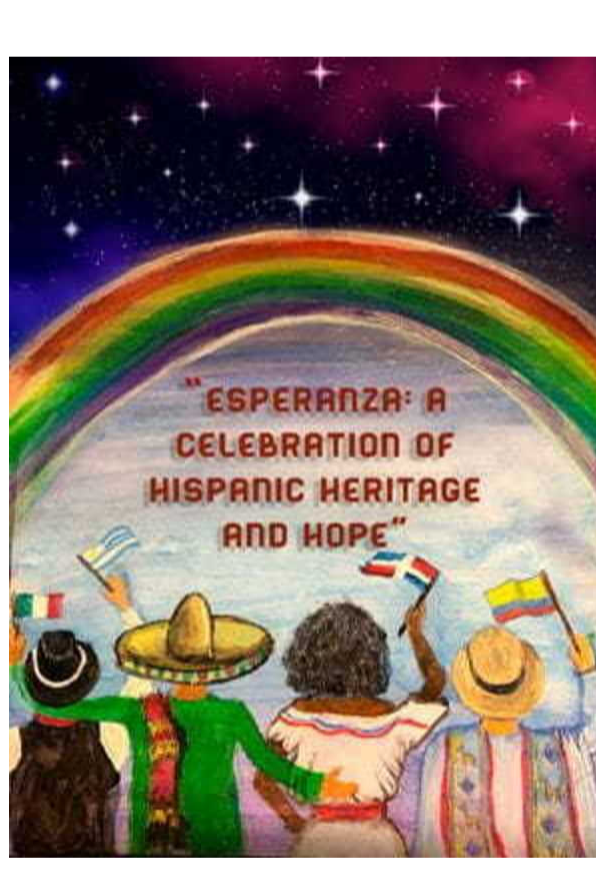
Social Workers must be aware, engaged, and vigilant in lifting the voices of marginalized people and calling out injustices, and work to address the structural inequities that get in the way of us all moving toward living in a more just and supportive society.

Read the rest of the Dean's statement on [recent court verdicts](#)

## Dean's statement on Hispanic Heritage Month

By Dean Scott Ryan

For sure, things are different this year than last for National Hispanic Heritage Month, which begins Sept. 15 and continues through Oct. 15.



As a country, we're moving beyond the massive shutdowns of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; but we're experiencing escalating hospital admissions among children due to viral infections.

Although more is needed in education and informing Hispanic and Latinx communities about the COVID-19 vaccines, there are fewer reports indicating they don't have access to the vaccines.

According to a recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, which researches public responses to health crises, Hispanic people are less likely than their White counterparts to have taken the vaccines.

Even so, there are many reasons to celebrate Hispanic and Latinx heritage month, which is set aside to celebrate the enormous contributions of these Americans to the economic, social and cultural growth and vitality of the United States.

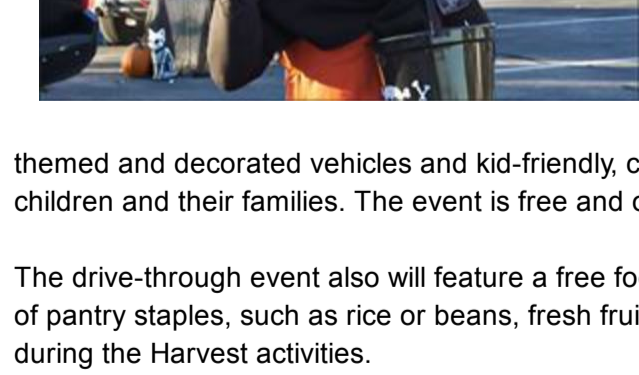
This year's theme is Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope. It encourages reflection, resilience and hope.

"This past year has been one unlike any in recent memory," says Victor Anthony Zertuche, an attorney at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency who created the theme.

"But despite how our world has changed, we've kept our eyes on the horizon; we've held onto our hope," he said in a release. "It provides us an opportunity to reflect on those who came before us and held onto hope to create a better tomorrow."

Read the rest of the story [Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

## Fall Trunk or Treat



By Valerie Fields Hill

The School of Social Work will host its annual Fall Harvest, Food Giveaway and Trunk or Treat event, which benefits hundreds of Arlington families who live near the campus, this weekend.

The Harvest event will feature nearly two dozen fall-themed and decorated vehicles and kid-friendly Halloween volunteers who hand out candy and treats to children and their families. The event is free and open to all.

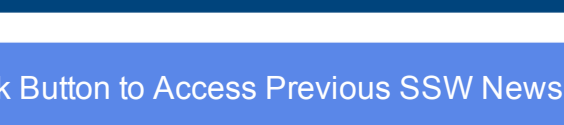
The drive-through event also will feature a free food giveaway. Families will receive 30 to 40 pounds of pantry staples, such as rice or beans, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products and meat during the Harvest activities.

Social Work administrators said the Trunk or Treat event comes as many of the university's neighboring families still are recovering from the financial effects of layoffs, reduced work hours and COVID-19 medical-related bills.

"This pandemic has been so unrelenting in its lingering effects on so many Arlington families," School of Social Work communications Manager Antwan C. Williams said. "Our Social Work students work in agencies in which they interact with children and families. They want to help, in any way, to relieve the burdens our neighbors are bearing."

Read the rest of the story: [Fall Trunk or Treat](#)

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