



Spring 2017 News Update



UTA School of Social Work program named one of the best in the nation

By Antwan C. Williams

The University of Texas at Arlington Master of Social Work program is among the best in the nation, according to the rankings released Tuesday by College Choice.

The School of Social Work, with more than 2,000 students and one of the largest MSW programs in the nation, ranks No. 29 on the list.

“This ranking affirms the hard work being done by our talented faculty, staff and students,” said UTA School of Social Work Dean Scott D. Ryan.

“Through our cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, internationally recognized faculty, and diverse program offerings, the school enjoys an excellent reputation for producing social work leaders dedicated to community service and life-long learning.”

College Choice based the school’s ranking on academic reputation, student satisfaction, affordability and average annual salary of graduates from the MSW program.

According to the online published list, College Choice collects data from the school’s website and other publicly available sources, including U.S. News & World Report, the National Center for Education Statistics and Payscale.com.

In the ranking, College Choice noted the school’s many dual degree options and diversity of specialty offerings.

UTA’s social work graduate program offers students two professional concentration options and four specialty areas. Students can choose to focus on macro-social work and study community and administrative practice or micro-social work and specialize in one of four major areas: aging, health, children and family or mental health and substance abuse.

Students can take classes online or face-to-face in Arlington and Fort Worth.

See full story here: [UTA School of Social Work program named one of the best in the nation](#)



Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies helps pregnant opioid-dependent moms get recovery

By Monica S. Nagy

Pregnant mothers who are addicted to opioids often avoid getting the pregnancy care they need due to fear of losing their children.

Opioid addiction remains a major issue in the U.S., and social workers from UTA are helping to reduce the stigma and make the world safer for moms and their babies.

Interns with the Dallas-based Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies (CARS) via UTA's School of Social Work go to homeless shelters and high-risk areas and hand out Narcan, which helps prevent narcotic overdoses, and pregnancy tests.

More than six out of ten drug-induced deaths involve opioids, with more than half a million people dying from overdoses from 2000-2015, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Many women delay prenatal care and treatment for substance use disorders because they fear being viewed as a "bad" mother and that seeking treatment will result in their children being removed from their care," according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Read the rest of the story: [Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies helps pregnant opioid-dependent moms](#)

Landmark Donaldson Adoption Institute study with UTA reveals financial difficulties, social pressures, lack of support

By Monica S. Nagy

The Donaldson Adoption Institute released Understanding Options Counseling Experiences in Adoption: A Qualitative Analysis of First/Birth Parents and Professionals.

This is the second phase of its research to better understand the experiences of women who relinquished their parental rights to adoption and the professionals who work with them.

This seminal research was conducted by Scott Ryan, Dean and Jenkins Garrett Professor at the School of Social Work at The University of Texas of Arlington, Marcus Crawford, doctoral candidate at The University of Texas of Arlington, Elissa Madden, assistant professor at the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work at Baylor University, and Donna Aguiniga, associate professor at the School of Social Work of the University of Alaska-Anchorage.

Both the quantitative and qualitative analyses explored the decision-making experiences of women who have relinquished their parental rights to adoption within the past 25 years, as well as the context in which options surrounding unintended pregnancies are discussed with expectant parents by adoption professionals.

This new study builds on the quantitative work released in November 2016 and includes the qualitative narratives of first/birth parents and adoption professionals.

In-depth interviews with 28 first/birth mothers and 20 adoption professionals provided insight into experiences that have been rarely studied and therefore understood.

"This was a very important phase of the research where we documented the experiences of first/birth mothers and adoption professionals and were then able to provide recommendations," said Scott Ryan, Dean and Jenkins Garrett Professor UTA's School of Social Work.

Read the rest of the story [Study with UTA Reveals Financial Difficulties](#)

Service learning provides unmatched experience

By Chanel Sassoon, *The Shorthorn*

Psychology senior Nona Perry had no idea how much a service learning project would mean to her.

Perry, who is in the process of transferring to the School of Social Work, is in one of two introduction to social work sections. The class implements service learning with The Salvation Army. Students split into groups and help different residents.

The process of breaking up into groups began during the second week of the class. Perry said she knew working with women is what she always wanted, especially women facing domestic violence.

So, she made a group called Empowering Women with two other classmates. They focus on subjects such as self-care and journaling. She said journaling especially helps her group get a stronger sense of what they are thinking.

“It kind of gives them a hope when they see the journey they are taking,” she said.

Incorporating service learning is part of the university’s Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan aims to enhance students’ learning, especially during their undergraduate career.

Perry said she thinks of how she’d have to live her life in a shelter when she comes up with ideas.

“I think of how it must feel as a woman to not cook in, and prepare food in, a kitchen for your own family,” she said.

Read the rest of the story: [Service learning provides unmatched experience](#)



Jim Langford, LCSW

Social Work Assistant Professor of Practice

UTA hosts a community conversation on youth mental health and substance use

By Monica S. Nagy

Half of all mental health issues start by age 14, and 75 percent are diagnosed by age 24, yet mental health remains a taboo in the public even though suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10- to- 24- year olds.

Because of this, UTA’s School of Social Work, Tarrant County MHMR and a Texas Health and Human Services statewide public awareness initiative, Speak Your Mind Texas, are collaborating to host a public forum on the importance of early intervention for mental health.

“This needs to change. We wouldn’t hesitate to seek treatment for stomach pain or a heart problem,” said Sherry Bryson, coordinator to the School of Social Work’s Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies. “We need to celebrate the lived experience of those in recovery and living with chronic illness, and offer encouragement and hope to those still in pain.”

About 1.5 million Americans aged 18 and older with serious mental illnesses misused opioids during 2015, according to a new spotlight report by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

“Everyone has experienced, on some level, the impact of living with a mental health or substance use disorder. Whether it is a personal experience or the experience of a friend or family member, we have seen the struggles,” Bryson said. “Even though science and research has provided us with evidence of the disease process and improved treatments, many suffer in shame because of the stigma.”

Read the rest of the story: [UTA hosts a community conversation on Youth Mental Health and Substance Use](#)

Social Work sees enrollment increase for 5th consecutive year

By Chanel Sassoon, *The Shorthorn*

For the fifth straight year, the School of Social Work has increased in student enrollment during the spring semester, according to preliminary enrollment data.

The School of Social Work has a spring 2017 enrollment of 1,894 students, according to the data.

Antwan C. Williams, coordinator of Social Work communications, admissions and community outreach, said he attributes this increase to a combination of things, among which are reputation and affordability.

UTA is ranked as one of the top schools in the country when it comes to veteran-friendliness, Williams said.

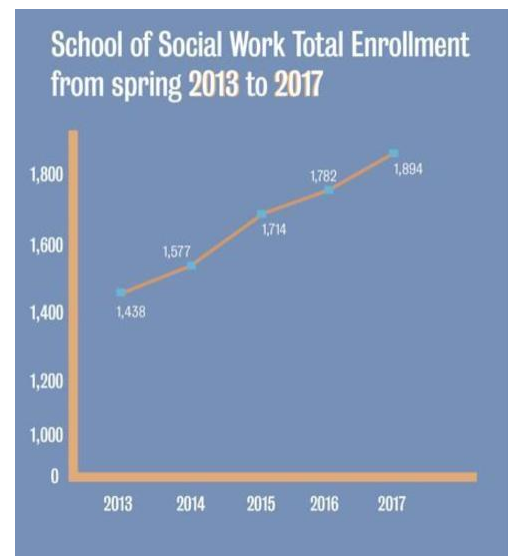
The school is seeing military spouses along with active duty and reserved veterans enroll as students, he said.

Empathy is a facet of the social work field, something more people want to take part in, he said.

“I think this generation is truly trying to make a difference,” Williams said. “People are seeing they can make a difference through social work.”

Another aspect of the school’s continued enrollment increase is student enrollment in the master’s in social work program, which doesn’t require an undergraduate degree in social work. Since the master’s degree program is open to anyone with a bachelor’s degree, Williams said people from different academic backgrounds can become a part of the school.

Read the rest of the story: [Social Work sees enrollment increase](#)





Attendees listen to DeRay McKesson speak at the Center for African American Studies conference Feb. 25 in the Rosebud Theater. Photo by Bridget Craig

Black Lives Matter activist speaks at CAAS event co-sponsored by School of Social Work

By Monica S. Nagy

Prominent Black Lives Matter activist DeRay McKesson, who has spoken with former President Barack Obama at the White House and has made guest appearances on cable TV, spoke at UTA Feb. 25 on the legacy of racism in the U.S.

UTA's School of Social Work co-sponsored McKesson's closing keynote address Feb. 25 as a part of UTA's Center for African American Studies' fifth annual conference on "Critical Issues in the Black Community: Examining Civil Rights and Liberties."

After the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri, police officer on Aug. 9, 2014, McKesson left his job in school administration and actively participated in protests in Ferguson. He later founded and became the co-editor of the Ferguson Protestor Newsletter.

"Resistance is not just a set of actions, resistance is a mindset," McKesson told the crowd. "When we think about the legacy of racism in this country, the impacts are real."

McKesson appeared alongside Johnetta Elzie for the 11th spot on Fortune's World's Greatest Leaders List in 2015.

Alongside Elzie and other notable activists, McKesson started Campaign Zero, a public policy campaign with specific proposals for police reform. McKesson has appeared on CNN, “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” and “The Daily Show with Trevor Noah.”

Read the rest of the story: [Black Lives Matter activist speaks](#)

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