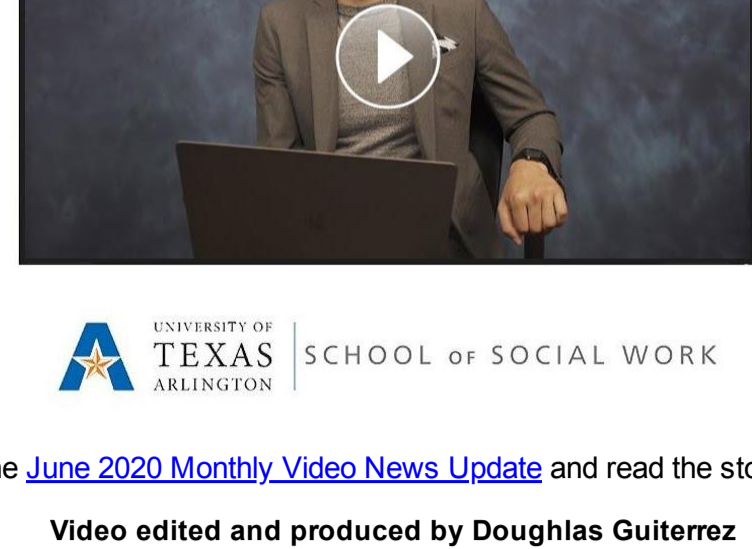


Summer 2020 News Update

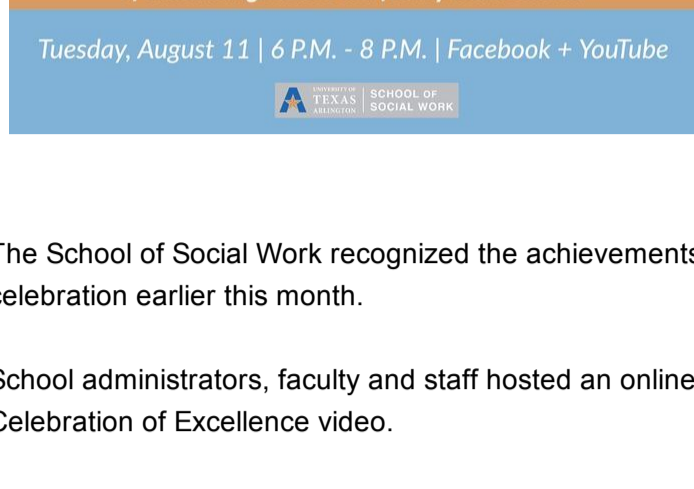
JUNE MONTHLY NEWS UPDATE - 2020



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARLINGTON | SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Watch the [June 2020 Monthly Video News Update](#) and read the stories below.

Video edited and produced by **Douglas Guterrez**



Social Work hosts virtual Celebration of Excellence

By Valerie Fields Hill

The School of Social Work recognized the achievements of dozens of students during a virtual celebration earlier this month.

School administrators, faculty and staff hosted an online “watch party” to view the 2020 Summer Celebration of Excellence video.

In the video, faculty members announced awards to graduate and undergraduate students for outstanding academic achievements, successfully completing field internships, receipt of scholarships and other milestones they reached this summer.

Diane Mitschke, associate dean for academic and student affairs, said the Social Work honorees were celebrated because they had made “positive impacts...in communities across the state of Texas through their field internships and volunteer work.”

The Celebration of Excellence event specifically honored students who reached the highest levels of classroom and leadership performance this summer. A similar event held in May recognized student achievements earned last spring.

Celebration of Excellence watch party was held from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 11, on the School’s Facebook page and YouTube channel.

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

Foundation donates \$100,000 to create internships

By Valerie Fields Hill



A Plano foundation has donated \$100,000 to the UTA School of Social Work so that its undergraduate and graduate students may offer crisis services to students who are affected by COVID-19.

The donation from the Kalman and Ida Wolens Foundation of Plano allows the School to create more than 200 internship positions for Social Work students to offer intervention and support services across the UTA campus. The students began offering the services in June and will continue doing so into the fall, said Dawnetta Smith, assistant dean of Field Education in the School of Social Work.

“We’re so grateful to the Wolen’s Foundation for this amazing gift,” Social Work Dean Scott Ryan said. “This allows our students – in a pandemic – to continue their educational studies and field experiences.”

Joe Milkes, chief executive officer at the Wolens Foundation, said the organization’s donation was aimed partially at helping students, many of whom saw their in-person internships canceled due to social service agency shutdowns amid rising coronavirus infection rates, to complete their internships and academically required field work.

“Dean Ryan...has indicated that there is an immediate need to sustain the students (working) in various agencies this summer,” Milkes wrote in a May 22 letter announcing the Foundation’s gift to the university.

Read the rest of the story: [Foundation Donates \\$100,000 to Create Internships](#)



Ima Hogg 2020 scholarship recipient

By Valerie Fields Hill

An Austin foundation has recognized a School of Social Work graduate student among its 2020 scholarship recipients.

Medina Serdarevic, who is pursuing a master’s degree in Social Work, is among 16 graduate students from across Texas to receive the Ima Hogg Scholarship from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health. Serdarevic’s scholarship is \$5,000.

Medina Serdarevic
Ima Hogg Scholarship Recipient

“Pursuing a career in social work will allow me to work with people and help them gain access to mental health services, which is something I am very passionate about,” Serdarevic said in a Hogg Foundation news release announcing the scholarship.

The Hogg Foundation is an Austin-based organization dedicated to improving access to mental health services across Texas.

By awarding scholarships, foundation leaders hope to encourage greater numbers of students to pursue careers in mental health, thus creating a larger pool of professionals to service the state’s residents.

“An investment in their post graduate careers is an investment in improving the quality of mental health services across Texas, where the mental health workforce is in critical condition,” Hogg Foundation officials said in the release.

Fifteen other graduate students from across Texas also won \$5,000 scholarships, the release said.

Read the rest of the story [Ima Hogg 2020 Scholarship Recipient](#)

Dean's Statement on Juneteenth

By Dean Scott Ryan

Juneteenth is a special day of observance and celebration of freedom.

Juneteenth, also known as Freedom Day, is the oldest celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States, specifically in the Confederate states.

Juneteenth recognizes June 19, 1865, the date Major General Gordon Granger and his Union soldiers landed in Galveston – two years, six months and 18 days after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation - with news that slavery had ended in those states controlled by the Union.

But, had slavery really ended? Had the freedom bell really rung for human beings brought in chains to North America’s shores to be enslaved?

Indeed not.

Much that would follow the Emancipation of slaves in America would include a new bondage - a more modern form of institutional, systemic and legalized chains of oppression.

There would come decades of lynchings across the Southern states, theft of land and property, enactment of Jim Crow laws, discrimination in lending, housing and education, separate but unequal facilities, redlining and, yes, police violence.

This year, particularly, there is an urgency in the wake of the video-taped killing of George Floyd – and of the shootings of hundreds of other black Americans by police - to address the incomplete Emancipation of African Americans.

Read the rest of the Dean’s statement on [Juneteenth](#).

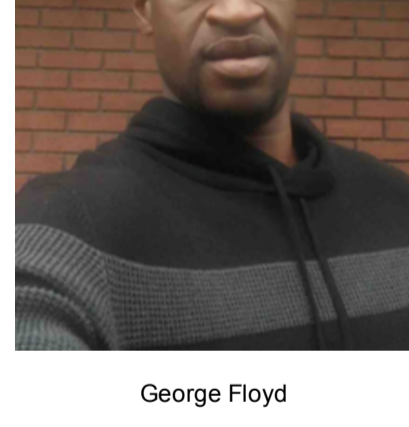


Dean's Statement on George Floyd

By Dean Scott Ryan

Dear Students, Alumni, Faculty and Staff,

Last week, our nation witnessed, yet again, the tragic murder of another unarmed African American citizen by a police officer. George Floyd is another victim of the senseless police brutality experienced in communities of color.



George Floyd

His death has sparked protests from Americans of diverse backgrounds and people all around the world. His death followed other recent tragedies of Sean Reed and Breonna Taylor, both dying by the hands of those who are sworn to serve and protect. Like many of you, we are angry and grieve with their loved ones and people across our nation.

We recognize the pain, fear, anger and sense of hopelessness students, alumni and many in our SSW community and family are experiencing right now. As Social Workers, we are in a position to demand and influence change. We must stand strongly against racism, hatred, bigotry and all forms of injustice.

We are at our best when we come together to engage respectfully across the political spectrum, and support those who feel marginalized, disadvantaged or threatened.

We know there are systemic issues in our criminal justice system, within law enforcement and in our political and educational institutions. You have a right to demand reform of policing and fundamentally change how law enforcement and the criminal justice systems are structured.

More than any other profession, we recognize the importance and strength of diversity and inclusion. We understand the importance of standing up against hatred and bigotry.

Racism, discrimination, white nationalism, white supremacy, micro-aggressions, neo-Nazism, violence and hate in any form is unacceptable behavior and must be immediately and strongly denounced.

Read the rest of the Dean’s statement on [George Floyd incident](#).



UT Regents names professor as outstanding teacher

By Dean Scott Ryan

A School of Social Work professor has won the University of Texas System’s highest award for excellence in instruction and commitment to students.

Ericka Robinson-Freeman, an associate professor in practice, is among two UTA professors and 27 faculty members in the UT System to win the 2020 Board of Regents Outstanding Teaching Award. Stephanie Rasmussen, associate professor of accounting in the UTA

College of Business, also won the award.

“Ericka and Stephanie are exemplary members of the UT Arlington faculty because they always put our students first and are dedicated to the university’s true mission: the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence,” said Teik C. Lim, UTA interim president. “Their commitment to student success makes UTA a better place and makes me proud to work with them.”

The 2020 Outstanding Teaching Award recipients were recognized with a video shown during the Board of Regents meeting on August 20. Each awardee also is given a certificate, medallion and \$25,000 in recognition of their impact on students and their institutions.

“These awards demonstrate the Board’s appreciation for exceptional educators at each of the 14 UT institutions,” Board of Regents Chairman Kevin P. Eltife said.

The Outstanding Teaching Awards were established in 2008. They are given annually to educators at UT System campuses who best exemplify excellence, innovation and a commitment to student success.

Read the rest of the story: [UT Regents name professor as outstanding teacher](#)

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