



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TEXAS**  
ARLINGTON

**SCHOOL of SOCIAL WORK**

*Social Justice & Community Partnerships  
Through Quality Education & Pioneering Research*

Spring 2016



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***School of Social Work Retains  
High Rankings for Best Graduate  
Program in United States***

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[The School of Social Work](#) continues to hold eminent rankings for one of the best social work programs in

the nation for graduate students seeking advanced degrees according to the [2016 U. S. News and World Report](#).

The [University of Texas at Arlington](#) (UTA) School of Social Work ranked No. 38 on the list of best social work graduate programs in the nation, a six point increase from last year. This latest ranking is a testament of the School of Social Work's growth and influence nationally and abroad.

In 2015, [GraduatePrograms.com](#) named the School of Social Work No. 10 on the list of the Top 25 Social Work Schools based on student ratings and reviews. In July of the same year, [Social Work Degree Guide.com](#) ranked UTA No. 12 on its list of the top 25 online Master of Social Work programs.

"We are so very proud of what our faculty and staff have accomplished. Through their dedication, they have created a nationally recognized program that benefits our students, community and profession," said Scott Ryan, dean of the UTA School of Social Work. "We are delighted by these rankings and endorsements from students. We care deeply about their success and it shows." Visit [UTA's news center](#) to read more about the rankings.



School of Social  
Work Graduates

### **UTA School of Social Work graduates 216 candidates at the Spring 2016 commencement**

The [School of Social Work](#) at [UTA](#) congratulates its six doctorate, 115 master's and 95 baccalaureate graduates who received degrees at the commencement exercise on May 13 at College Park Center. The commencement address was delivered by Heather Reynolds, 2002 UTA School of Social Work graduate and president of Catholic Charities of the Dioceses of Fort Worth.

The entire UTA class at the commencement exercise had more than 5,600 graduation candidates. The UTA Spring 2016 graduation class is 10 percent larger than the previous year. "We are incredibly proud of our...graduates for the hard work, dedication and accomplishment that each one has exhibited on the pathway to earning a degree," said UTA President Vistasp M. Karbhari.

The School of Social Work's faculty and staff wish all graduates the best in their professional and academic careers. Thank you for your dedication, service and research contributions to UTA, the School of Social Work, and the social work profession.

To learn more about UTA's Spring 2016 Commencement exercises, visit the university's [news center](#). The full commencement video can be viewed [here](#). Photos of UTA's social work commencement exercise are available on the School of Social Work's [Flickr page](#).



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## Faculty Notes & Highlights

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### **UTA Social Work research interdisciplinary partners receive recognition for new wireless device to measure anger, help prevent domestic violence**

[Dr. Anne Nordberg](#), social work assistant professor and research associate of the [Center for African American Studies](#), and [Dr. Peter Lehmann](#), social work professor, represent an interdisciplinary partnership to combat domestic violence. The partnership includes the [School of Social Work](#), [the College of Engineering](#), the [College of Education](#) and the [College of Science](#) at [UTA](#).

The research team built a wireless wearable device that is embedded into a hat that identifies brain signals related to anger. A person who is becoming angry receives an alerting signal from their smart phone or wrist watch to remind them to practice anger-management techniques learned in therapy sessions. The device creates a systematic method for helping individuals control anger responses.

The study includes a sample of 40 male student volunteers who will be examined to explore the electrocortical and electrical activity that takes place in the cerebral cortex and cardiovascular systems during anger and happiness stimuli.

"We hope that this will lay the groundwork for follow-up studies in pursuit of a way to detect and alert people that they are about to become angry," said Dr. Anne Nordberg.

Anh Phuong Nguyen, social work doctoral student, and Cecilia Mengo, Ph.D. 2016, were selected to assist with the study. The study has the potential to help individuals better understand human behavior as it relates to emotions, as well as develop recommendations and interventions for research, particularly intimate partner violence.

"Not only does this project and technology help offenders learn more about their own behavior when it comes to emotion, but it could help the people around them – their children, their spouses, their partners – potentially warning them," Nordberg said.





Dr. Anne Nordberg

## UTA testimonial project gives voice to victims, witnesses of police violence

A [University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work](#) researcher has launched The Black Voice Matters, a testimonial project highlighting the experiences of black people and their encounters with police.

The project comes nearly three years after the creation of The Black Lives Matter movement, which has brought international attention to violence toward black people due to police action or while in police custody. The movement also renewed a decades-long discussion about racial inequalities in the U.S. criminal justice system.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 13 percent of U.S. residents ages 16 to 17 and 24.9 percent of youth aged 18-24 years had contact with police in 2008.

“Teenagers and young adults are the most watched group of people in the United States, yet the experiences of black youth during encounters with police are very limited in research,” said [Dr. Anne Nordberg](#), assistant professor in UTA's School of Social Work, a research associate in the UTA [Center for African American Studies](#) (CAAS) and principal investigator for the project. “Through our project, we want to give UTA students and community members a platform to anonymously voice the impact of contemporary acts of violence in their lives.”

Nordberg said The Black Voices Matter project was motivated, in part, by the death of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager who was shot and killed Aug. 9, 2014 by Darren Wilson, a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri. The shooting prompted protests, fires, violence and looting. On Nov. 24, 2014, a grand jury decided not to indict Officer Wilson, and the announcement set off another wave of protests. Last month, the Justice Department called on Ferguson to overhaul its criminal justice system.

The Black Voice Matters research project was introduced last April during the CAAS Power Hour lecture series led by [Dr. Schnavia Hatcher](#), CAAS director and associate professor of social work.

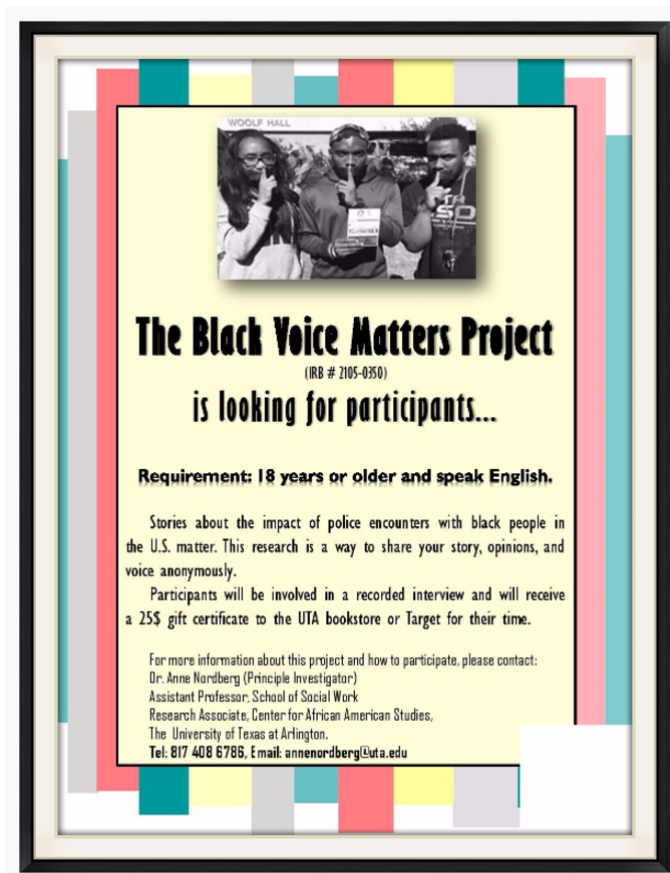
“People who offer their testimonies will help our research team increase and amplify voices of youth in research literature and archive stories for education, research and activism,” Hatcher said. “Eventually, those stories will be publicly available on a dedicated website.”

The first people to be interviewed for the project were Nordberg’s former students. So far, people from the Texas cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston, and the state of Arkansas have expressed interest in The Black Voices Matter and contributed their stories. Mark Stevens, BSW student and social work research assistant, has been crucial to recruitment efforts. The interviews are professionally transcribed, and Nordberg will present preliminary findings at the annual meeting of the National Organization of Forensic Social Work this summer.

Scott Ryan, dean of the [School of Social Work](#), said projects like this help to bring about better understanding of societal concerns. He said the research also aligns with studies of health and the human condition, a core principle of UTA’s [Strategic Plan 2020: Bold Solutions | Global Impact](#).

For more information on The Black Voice Matters, contact Dr. Anne Nordberg at [annenorberg@uta.edu](mailto:annenorberg@uta.edu) or 817-408-6786. Interviewed participants will receive a \$25 gift certificate to UTA's bookstore or Target.

Visit the [School of Social Work's news and events](#) page, to learn more.



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## Faculty Awards, Accolades and Appointments

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### UTA Social Work professor named Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health in the UK

[Dr. Vijayan Pillai](#), professor of social work and internationally recognized expert in women's rights and reproductive health in developing countries, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health in the United Kingdom.

Dr. Pillai, who joined the [School of Social Work](#) in 1999, has focused his research on examining social welfare services necessary to protect women's reproductive health in conflict zones in developing countries.

The organization specifically recognized Pillai for his career commitment to improvements in public health. The Royal Society for Public Health represents 6,500 public health educators and professionals in the fields of health promotion, environmental health, medicine, and food safety trainers.

To learn more, visit UTA's [news center](#).



Dr. Vijayan Pillai

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### UTA Social Work professor earns distinguished scholar award

[Dr. Maria Scannapieco](#), social work professor and director of the [Center for Child Welfare](#), has been selected as a member of UTA's Academy of Distinguished Scholars for recognition of her outstanding scholarly achievements and contributions to UTA, the field of social work and to vulnerable children and families.



Dr. Maria  
Scannapieco

The mission of the Academy of Distinguished Scholars is to advocate the importance of research and creative activity, to create an appropriate reward structure for scholars, to promote a sense of community among scholars, to serve as role model, to foster research and creative activity, and to advise the institution on research policies and practices.

All members of the Academy have previously won either the Distinguished Record of Research, Creative Activity Award, the Outstanding Research Achievement or Creative Accomplishment Award.

Members of the Academy of Distinguished Scholars were recognized at the Faculty Awards Ceremony on April 28th in E. H. Hereford University Center's Rio Grande Ballroom.

To learn more, visit the School of Social Work's [news and events](#) page.

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[Dr. Eusebius Small](#), UTA social work assistant professor, was honored with the 2016 Professor of the Year award from the Arlington Sunrise Rotary Club for his work with the Global Social Work Group and with international students.

Small also has been named Fulbright Scholar, a program sponsored by the U.S. State Department that offers faculty, administrators and professionals residing in the United States grants to lecture, teach and conduct research in a variety of academic and professional fields, as well as participate in seminars.

Small will use his grant to support epidemiologic research on women's health literacy and sexual behavior among unmarried women in Sierra Leone in West Africa from September 2016 to June 2017.

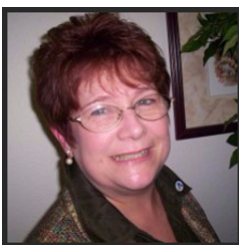
Small's grant will assist with the funding of his research project called "*Understanding Cultural Norms, Health Practices and HIV Knowledge Among Young Adult Women in Sierra Leone*." The study's objectives are to examine health literacy among women in Sierra Leone during premarital and preconception stages, investigate their knowledge of domestic violence and sexually transmitted diseases and identify sources of health information impacting literacy.

To learn more about Dr. Small, visit his [faculty profile](#). To learn more about Dr. Small's Fulbright Scholar Award, visit UTA's [news center](#).

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Dr. Eusebius Small



Dr. Smith-Osborne

[Dr. Alexa Smith-Osborne](#), social work associate professor and director of the [Center for Clinical Social Work](#) at UTA, was promoted to full professor, effective September 1, 2016. Smith-Osborne also was recently appointed to the editorial board for the *Journal of Behavior*. She engages in resilience research with communities and persons across the lifespan, including military, veteran health and mental health issues. Smith-Osborne was recently named a Fellow of the Society for Social Work and Research, a non-profit and professional membership organization that supports the advancement of social work research. To learn more about Dr. Smith-Osborne, visit her [faculty profile](#).

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[LaShaunn Bold](#), social work assistant professor in practice, was awarded UTA's President's Award for Excellence in Distance Education Teaching. The award recognizes an individual who is an outstanding instructor in the area of web-based distance education. Recipients receive the award for demonstrating excellence in distance education teaching, creating quality interaction and showing exemplary responsiveness to digital learners at UTA.

Bold was presented with the award April 28 in E.H. Hereford University Center's Rio Grande Ballroom.

To learn more about LaShaunn Bold, visit her [faculty profile](#).



LaShaunn Bold

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### UTA Social Work Faculty Awarded for Exceptional Teaching

Several [UTA School of Social Work](#) faculty members and affiliates were recognized for outstanding teaching and academic excellence at the school's commencement luncheon at the Norris Center in Fort Worth on May 13. The School of Social Work congratulates all award recipients for going above and beyond in their teaching efforts and scholarly research. The award recipients are listed below.

- [Dr. Norman Cobb](#), UTA social work associate professor, received the Torgerson Award. The Torgerson Award is endowed to faculty members for teaching excellence and is named after Dr. Fernando G. Torgerson, UTA social work emeritus founding dean from 1967 to 1977. Award recipients of the Torgerson Award are chosen by graduate students. Cobb is also a member of UTA's Academy of Distinguished Teachers. He has taught in UTA's School of Social Work since 1989. [Learn more about Dr. Cobb here](#).
- [Ericka Robinson-Freeman](#), LMSW and UTA social work assistant professor in practice, received the BSW Teaching Award. She joined UTA's School of Social Work in 2011 and is a licensed master social worker who has experience in child welfare, pediatric social work, mental health and hospice care.
- [Theresa Davis](#), LCSW and UTA social work adjunct professor, is the recipient of the Outstanding Adjunct Instructor Award. She began her service at UTA's School of Social Work in 2004. Davis' teaching emphasis is in direct social work practice and field instruction.
- [Rosalind Evans](#), UTA social work doctoral student, received the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Instructor Award. She is a graduate teaching assistant at UTA's School of Social Work. Evans is in her third year of graduate studies at UTA.
- Patricia Cheong, UTA social work field instructor, received the Outstanding Field Instructor Award. She is the vice president of community development at United Way of Tarrant County. Cheong has worked in the social work field for 35 years.



Ericka Robinson-Freeman (left)  
and Dr. Debra Woody



Theresa Davis (left)  
and Dr. Debra Woody



Rosalind Evans (left)  
and Dr. Debra Woody





Patricia Cheong (left)  
and Dr. Debra Woody



Dr. Norman Cobb

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[Dr. Schnavia Hatcher](#), director of [UTA's Center for African American Studies](#) and associate professor of social work, criminology and criminal justice at the [University of Texas at Arlington](#), was appointed inaugural director of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte).

Hatcher will begin her position with UNC Charlotte in August 2016. As the inaugural director of the School of Social Work at UNC Charlotte, Hatcher will lead and advise faculty, coordinate strategic planning, promote research and scholarly activities, as well as become a member of the college's Administrative Council.

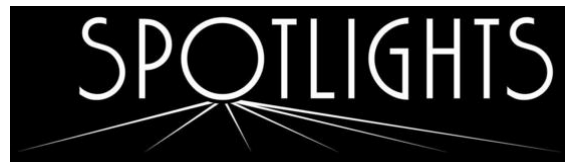


Dr. Schnavia  
Hatcher

[Read more here.](#)

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## Student Notes



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## Award Honorees and Organizational Inductions



Michael Lummus

### UTA Social Work scholar receives award for student of the year

The [School of Social Work](#) congratulates Michael Lummus, MSW student, for receiving an award from the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) North Central Texas-Fort Worth Chapter](#). The NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers.

Lummus was recognized as Social Work Student of the Year on March 13 at the chapter's awards banquet at the Dee J. Kelly Alumni and Visitors Center on Texas Christian University's campus. He was one of several individuals receiving recognition for outstanding leadership, contributions to education, research and the social work profession.

Lummus' concentration of study at UTA's School of Social Work is community and administrative practice. His professional goal following graduation is to work for an organization that creates equal and



just opportunities for disenfranchised populations.

As President-Emeritus of the [Student Veterans Organization](#) at UTA, Lummus supports the organization's mission of enhancing the collegiate experience for veteran students by providing resources and networking opportunities to help veterans achieve academic success.

Lummus credits his education and professional success to UTA's diverse faculty, staff and student population, which fosters an environment where individuals can learn from each other, teach, and guide without fear of discrimination.

[Read more here.](#)

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### **Doctoral graduate receives the Women's and Gender Studies Student Excellence Award at ACES**

[Jeyle Ortiz-Gonzales](#), social work spring 2016 graduate, received the Women's and Gender Studies Student Excellence Award at UTA's Annual Celebration of Excellence by Students on March 23 in the Central Library on campus.



Jeyle Ortiz-Gonzales

The ceremony celebrates academic excellence for students, faculty and staff across all colleges at the [University of Texas at Arlington](#).

Ortiz-Gonzales was recognized for her dissertation titled "*Differences in Levels of Support for Gender Equality Between Working and Nonworking Women in Mexico.*"

[Dr. Vijayan Pillai](#), UTA social work professor and internationally recognized expert in women's rights and reproductive health in developing countries, chaired her dissertation.

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### **Phi Alpha Honor Society inducts UTA social work students**

On Dec. 4, 2015, 46 social work BSW and MSW students were inducted into UTA's Iota Omega Chapter of [Phi Alpha National Honor Society](#), a national honorary organization for social work students, faculty and local practitioners that promotes humanitarian goals and ideas. The induction included students from the distance education program, UTA and Fort Worth campuses.

[Read more.](#)



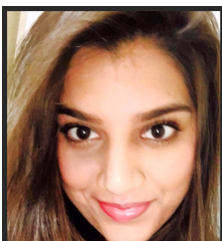
UTA Social Work BSW Students



UTA Social Work MSW Students

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### **UTA Social Work student advocates for positive change in Haiti**



The [School of Social Work](#) has amazing and outstanding students who are dedicated to academic excellence and creating a just society for all individuals nationally and abroad. Advocates like Nausheen Habib, MSW student, make the School of Social Work proud to train, educate, and prepare students to help vulnerable individuals and their families enhance and restore their ability to function in society, as well as support communities in need.

Nausheen Habib    Habib traveled to Haiti in March 2016 and visited Port-au-Prince, Fonds-Parisien, Balan, and Jacmel for 10 days to learn about human development and behavior in social, economic and cultural institutions through community based participatory research methods.

“The media does not show us what is going on around the world in underdeveloped countries like Haiti. I wanted a cultural experience to learn from and live among. I saw firsthand the country’s beauty and witnessed the resilience of the Haitian people,” said Habib.

Through this cultural learning experience, Habib gained insight on how social, cultural, political and historical factors impact Haiti and the economic conditions of the country.

[Read more.](#)

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## Scholarship Recipients

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Serena Dunbar  
(center) pictured  
with Joyce  
Rosenfield (left) and  
Caren Edelstein

**Serena Dunbar**, UTA MSW student, was awarded the [Reba Wadel Scholarship](#) from the National Council of Jewish Women Greater Dallas Section. The award is presented to social work students who are in their second year of the master's program and plan to work in the area of child welfare, child development, teen pregnancy or family violence.

"I hope to work with immigrants and other globally mobile persons as they transition physically, socio-emotional, spiritually, and cognitively between cultures. I desire all the training possible in order to help children not only survive a transition, but to thrive through it," said Dunbar.



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## Alumni Notes



### UTA Social Work alumna receives doctoral award for dissertation research

Dr. [Arati Maleku](#), Ph.D. 2015, received honorable mention by the [Society for Social Work and Research](#) in Fall 2015 for her dissertation research. Her dissertation, entitled “*The Social Determinants of Immigrant Well-Being in the United States: A Gendered Perspective*,” is significant for expanding theoretical and methodological research for health equality. Maleku's dissertation examines the overlapping effects of structural vulnerabilities that arise from an immigrant's

Dr. Arati Maleku

position in a society characterized by race, ethnicity, gender, age, marital, and socioeconomic status in the United States.

In January, Maleku was presented with the Outstanding Social Work Doctoral Award at the SSWR annual conference in Washington, D.C.



Lakeisha Hicks

### Lakeisha Hicks provides social work practice, training abroad

Graduates from the UTA [School of Social Work](#) move forward to accomplish great things and make a positive difference in the lives of others in social work and research nationally and abroad.

Lakeisha Hicks, MSSW 2008, is no exception and is becoming a trailblazer in her own right as she positions newly appointed social workers for a successful and promising career in helping people solve and cope with problems in their everyday lives.

Hicks currently is an independent consultant and practice educator supervising social workers in their first year of employment with local authorities in London. She assesses their readiness for practice under the Knowledge and Skills Statements and Professional Capabilities Framework that will be implemented sometime this year. This new framework is a licensed scaffold developed by the Social Work Reform Board to educate social workers, provide them with a framework to plan their careers and professional development.

In Hick's role as a practice assessor, she is affiliated with the Assessed and Support Year in Employment Program in London. The goal of the program is to ensure that newly qualified social workers begin their professional lives in structured and supported environments that foster learning and support continuous professional development opportunities.

[Read more.](#)



#### Thursday and Friday, June 9--10

**Preparation Workshop for the LMSW, LCSW and AP Exams** Dr. Norman Cobb, UTA social work associate professor, presents a two-day seminar preparing individuals for the Licensed Master Social Worker, Advanced Clinical, and Advanced Generalist Practice exams. 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., School of Social Work Complex, Room A104. [Register here.](#)

#### Friday, June 10

**Adoption and Foster Care: The Lifelong Impact on Individuals and Interventions in Clinical Settings** Katy Perkins with Medical City Dallas Hospital and Krista Woods will present information on how social workers can support individuals and families impacted by family-origin separation. Information on adoption, foster care reform, and techniques to use for supporting clients dealing with the two processes will be presented. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., School of Social Work Complex, Room A104. [Register here.](#)

**Friday, June 17**

**Rape and Sexual Psychopath: Behavioral Motivations of Sexual Sadists and Lust Murder** Dr.

Thomas Tiefenwerth will host a seminar examining the various types of sexual psychopaths, the impact of different kinds of psychopathology of sadistic rapist, and how an individual develops deviant sexual arousal and sadistic behavioral motivations. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., School of Social Work Complex, Room A104.

[Register here.](#)

**Thursday and Friday, June 30--July 1**

**Preparation Workshop for the LMSW, LCSW and AP Exams** Dr. Norman Cobb, UTA social work associate professor, presents a two-day seminar preparing individuals for the Licensed Master Social Worker, Advanced Clinical, and Advanced Generalist Practice exams. 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., School of Social Work Complex, Room A104. [Register here.](#)

**University of Texas at Arlington Admission Deadlines**

Although the University's admission deadlines for the Fall Semester, undergraduate June 1 and graduate June 15, are fast approaching, the [UTA](#) School of Social Work will admit well-qualified applicants after the deadlines and prior to actual class start dates. Contact the UTA School of Social Work recruiting department [here](#) and begin the application process. Join our family and be a part of the upcoming UTA School of Social Work's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Read more about the University's admission deadlines [here](#) and [click here](#) for the [School of Social Work's](#) BSW admission requirements and [here](#) for traditional and online MSW requirements.

Also [click here](#) for more information about licensed clinical social workers and the Texas Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals. [Click here](#) for more information about the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

**How to donate to the UTA School of Social Work**

For information on how to donate online to UTA's School of Social Work, [click here](#). For instructions on how to mail monetary donations, [click here](#).

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## Connect with Us





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