

# NOTEWORTHY

*Dean's Update*

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

GRADUATE COLLEGE of SOCIAL WORK

## Explore the *Possibilities*

Happy Social Work Month! At the GCSW, March has been a time of celebratory moments, inspiration, reflection, and plans for the future to ensure social workers take a leading role in standing up to achieve social, racial, economic, and political justice.

It is both a challenging and an incredible time to be a social worker. At our Scholarship Luncheon, keynote speaker, and Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair Dr. Brené Brown addressed the difficult times we are facing as a nation. She reminded us of the power of social work and the unique abilities of social workers to lead efforts to repair divisions and move forward together.

And lead we must. At the College, we are dedicated to preparing diverse leaders who are equipped to address the complex challenges facing our future. I am excited to share the GCSW's 2017-2021 strategic plan, which highlights our vision and outlines how we will educate and empower the next generation of social workers.

In the spirit of this month, I'm thrilled to celebrate social work by sharing news from our faculty, students, and alumni plus upcoming events including our 2017 commencement where CSWE President and CEO Darla Spence Coffey will provide our commencement address.

I hope you have enjoyed this month and found time to reflect and celebrate social work. But I also hope that you have been inspired to take action. It is in times like these that social workers are needed more than ever. As social work month comes to a close, may we all be committed to standing up and demonstrating the difference we can make, not only during this month, but beyond.





**TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL, RACIAL, ECONOMIC,  
AND POLITICAL JUSTICE, LOCAL TO GLOBAL.**

## **GCSW Strategic Plan: A Vision for the Future**

Using a collaborative process, the GCSW authored a strategic plan that purposefully charts our course for the next five years. We are proud that this living document represents a true community effort that engaged our stakeholders to think deeply about who we are and to dream big for our future.

The GCSW Strategic Plan is a reflection of the talents of our dedicated faculty, students, staff, alumni, donors, community partners, and friends. It is a plan that will bring us ever closer to the vision that guides us each day. We invite your feedback on the content, which is designed to outline to our community who we are, where we are, and where we are going.

[VIEW the GCSW Strategic 2017-2021 plan.](#)



## Social Work Rising Strong!

***"We have to find a way back together. And I don't know a profession that can lead us there better than social workers...to find a way back to each other will require us, social workers, to stand up."*** - Dr. [Brené Brown](#), [Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair](#)

Over 350 attendees generously donated over \$200,000 for social work students at the GCSW's 2017 Spring Scholarship Luncheon. We honored the work of Terry Huffington (*Bobbi & Vic Samuels Spirit of Social Work Award*) and GCSW alumna Elizabeth McIngvale, PhD (*Social Work Excellence Award*) who both represent a dedication to social work values and significant contributions to the profession.

A very special thank you to this year's Co-Chairs, Karen Winston, LCSW, and Trini Mendenhall, and Honorary Chair, Tiffany Smith for a beautiful and inspiring event! [VIEW Photos.](#)

*Pictured left to right: Elizabeth McIngvale, Dean Alan Dettlaff, Brené Brown, Terry Huffington*



## Social Work Awards Breakfast

***"Social Workers: We are empowered to impact change wherever we land. Our training equips us to take on advocacy roles and to show how real people are being impacted."*** -Cynthia N. Colbert, MSW, President and CEO, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Our annual celebration of social workers highlighted the leadership in Houston's social work community and featured a keynote address on how social workers can serve as advocates within the current political climate through the lens of working with refugees.

GCSW was well represented among the honorees including awards from the NASW



Houston Branch for GCSW alumnae Josephine Tittsworth (MSW '08) for *Lifetime Achievement*, and Maranda Harris (MSW, '16) *Student of the Year* and our very own Dean Alan Dettlaff, *Social Worker of the Year*.

Congratulations to all of the honorees, including GCSW alumni Stephanie Jones, Larry Micheletti, and Linda Coleman, who demonstrate every day what it means to lead.

[VIEW all award winners and more photos from the event.](#)



## Faculty Achievement



[Dr. Jodi Berger Cardoso](#) has been accepted to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) 2017 [NIDA Diversity Scholars Network](#), a "rigorous and comprehensive mentorship program aimed at improving the funding of outstanding underrepresented early stage investigators in substance abuse research." Also, she has been selected as a member of the first cohort for the University of Houston's inaugural [HEALTH Research Institute](#) Mentoring Program. Congratulations, Dr. Berger Cardoso!

[Dr. Robin Gearing](#) was inducted into the 2017 [Class of Fellows for the Society for Social Work and Research](#), joining a select group of outstanding scholars. He joins Dean Alan Dettlaff and Dr. Allen

Rubin as GCSW faculty members who are also SSWR fellows. Congratulations, Dr. Gearing on this distinguished honor!



[Dr. Sheara Williams Jennings](#) has been named to the founding Executive Committee of Black Administrators, Researchers, and Scholars (BARS). BARS is designed to help emerging African American scholars succeed and flourish in academia. Kudos!

[Dr. Sarah Narendorf](#) was the lead author on a study contracted by the [Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs](#) (TDHCA) to analyze data on homeless youth in Texas. The information was used to estimate the number of homeless youth, examine their needs and develop a strategic plan to reduce youth homelessness. [READ more.](#)



## Faculty In the News

Dr. McClain Sampson, director for the GCSW's [Center for Latina Maternal & Family Health Research](#) was a guest on Viva Houston where she discussed the Center's research and community partnerships. [WATCH the segment.](#) [READ more about the Center.](#)



## Student Success

*"I'm pursuing a PhD in Social Work to fulfill a dream of investigating how social bonds and generosity improve lives. Receiving this award feels like a validation that not only can my research improve individual lives, but it can also answer some of our society's big questions."*

-Rebecca L. Mauldin, Doctoral Student



Rebecca has received a National Science Foundation Award to support her dissertation research, "Social Support and physical and cognitive functioning of older adults in assisted living facilities." The project is under the direction of GCSW Faculty Member, Dr. Sarah C. Narendorf. Congratulations!



GCSW doctoral student **Flor Avellaneda** is the recent recipient of a Scholarship from the Association of Latino and Latina Social Work Educators (ALLSWE) whose mission is to support the advancement of social work education especially among the Latino population. Congratulations!





## GCSW Interns at the 85th Texas Legislature Session

*"I do not think the state legislature can afford another person who has lost heart. The holistic perspective and critical thinking skills that social workers are taught act as valuable tools when seeking solutions to complex issues. After observing the game from the sidelines, I am ever more convinced that there is no better time in our country for social workers to be knee-deep in the political process."*

-Tiffany Teate Williams, Austin Legislative Program Intern

When students in our Austin Legislative Internship Program are not busy working as full-time staffers in the Legislature, either as policy analysts with the Texas Legislative Study Group, a caucus of the Texas House of Representatives, or in legislators' offices, they are blogging. [READ more](#) about their experiences learning policy and viewing the process from the lens of a social work perspective.

## Alumni in the News

*"Surround yourself with other people who believe."*

-Melanie Pang (MSW '12)

At a recent GCSW panel discussion on activism, Melanie shared her thoughts on how to stay inspired and engaged. Co-chair of Mayor Turner's LGBTQ Advisory board, she recently launched [PreparingforAction.org](http://PreparingforAction.org) a clearinghouse of volunteer and advocacy



opportunities for a variety of causes. The site includes a comprehensive list of lobby days for the 85th Texas legislative session. Her own recent testimony on the controversial SB6 bill has been shared widely across social media.

[WATCH: Melanie's testimony.](#)



***"So long as poverty and inequity in access to education, health care, housing and nutrition, and insufficient responses to violence, abuse, conflict and disaster exist, so will trafficking of persons who are subject to those injustices."***

-Melissa I.M. Torres (MSW '09, PhD '15)

In a recent op-ed for the Dallas Morning News, Dr. Torres, GCSW alumna and director of the human trafficking research portfolio in the School of Social Work at the University of Texas Austin, challenges popular notions of human trafficking and invites readers to consider the roots of the problem.

[READ the Op-ed.](#) She has presented both locally and nationally on the issue, including a presentation at [The Hague in 2015.](#)

[WATCH: Dr. Torres discuss her work as a GCSW doctoral student.](#)

***"We want you to think about these policy issues and the implications of them, but we want you to see it in a real person,"***

-Dawn McCarty (MSW '95, PhD '02)

In a recent profile in the Houston Chronicle, Dr. McCarty discusses living her social work as a part time resident at [Casa Juan Diego](#), which provides shelter and services for immigrants and refugees, and how public policy impacts those communities. She also discusses her work as director of the BSW program at the University of Houston Downtown.

[READ more.](#)

[WATCH: Dr. McCarty discuss her work and time at the GCSW.](#)



Photo: Jon Shapley, Houston Chronicle





## Upcoming Events

Join us on Saturday, April 29, 2017, for [Amplify Your Voice: Beyond the First 100 Days](#) for an Analysis of the New Presidential Administration Policies, Discussions on Immigrant/Refugee Rights, Healthcare, Human & Civil Rights, Environmental Protection, Economic Justice.

We will examine the first 100 days of the new administration with a focus on the policies that impact social work and social workers. Then, we'll look forward with workshops on advocacy and organizing with a goal of sharing resources and information for social workers and the activist community.

Questions? Email: [gcswinfo@uh.edu](mailto:gcswinfo@uh.edu) or call 713-743-8075

# Speaking

of SOCIAL JUSTICE

MACONDA BROWN O'CONNOR | DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

*"If poverty persists in America, it is not for lack of resources."* Matthew Desmond

Join us on Wednesday May 10, 2017 for the inaugural **Speaking of Social Justice, Maconda**

**Brown O'Connor Distinguished Lecture** featuring Matthew Desmond, author of [Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City.](#)

Each year incoming MSW students are given a summer reading assignment to introduce them to social justice issues and help them begin their journey of critical thinking. The lecture is the first in a series that will feature the author of the selected book read by the GCSW community.

Questions? Contact Renia S. Butler at [rsbutler@uh.edu](mailto:rsbutler@uh.edu) or 713-743-8475



## GCSW Commencement 2017

*"Step up to leadership."* - CSWE President and CEO Darla Spence Coffey

We are excited to announce Darla Spence Coffey as our 2017 commencement speaker. As the head of the national association of social work education we are looking forward to what is sure to be a timely message for our graduates and GCSW community.

[READ her Social Work Month message.](#)

What a month we've had! Thank you for your interest in the GCSW as we share our continued growth and progress. We invite you to stay connected. I am always excited to share our news as it represents the continued strides by all of us in the profession. Social Work Stand Up!

Warm regards,

***[Alan J. Dettlaff](#)***

**STAY CONNECTED!**



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