CAAS Synergy

CAAS Welcomes TWO NEW Faculty Members!

Dr. Mia Kirby, LCSW-S
Assistant Professor in Practice,
Social Work Department and
Center for African American Studies

Dr. Frederick Engram Jr.
Assistant Professor of Instruction,
Criminology & Criminal Justice and
Center for African American Studies

Please help us welcome Dr. Frederick Engram and Dr. Mia Kirby to UT Arlington! Both of these very productive and highly-recommended professors were hired following national searches filled with impressive candidates.

CAAS greatly appreciates support from the Provost Office, Dean Elisabeth Cawthon in the College of Liberal Arts, and Dean Scott Ryan in the School of Social Work for helping to increase the number of African American faculty members on our campus.

October 2020

New CAAS Endowment

CAAS has received a $500,000 Endowment! Alumna Pat Brandenburg's ('49 A.S., Business Administration) gift will support UTA's Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) and CAAS, bringing her cumulative giving for the programs to more than $1 million.

"My passion at UTA has always been the Center for Mexican American Studies, which has made such a difference in my life," Brandenburg said. "I'm excited to now support the Center for African American Studies and all its remarkable work. I strongly believe in the missions of both programs, and I'm proud to support their students."

Though Brandenburg has supported CMAS for several years, she was inspired by recent social justice movements related to racial inequity to expand her philanthropy to include CAAS. This spring, Brandenburg contacted the University and asked what she could do to further those causes at her alma mater.

The gifts for both centers will provide student scholarships and may also go toward student research, guest speakers and student conference travel.

Brandenburg's endowment for CAAS is the first established for the center. Dr. Jason Shelton, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of CAAS, explained the impact of this transformational gift.

"Her generous support will aid our students in various ways for many years to come," Shelton said. "She will not only help young people advance their education through scholarships, but help CAAS prepare them for life after college as they aim to make their dreams become a reality."

Dr. Shelton Leads the Arlington Unity Council

Jason Shelton, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for African American Studies is leading the city of Arlington's new Unity Council as its chairman.

Created this summer by city officials, the council's goal is to increase equality in Arlington through community input and by examining equity strategies.

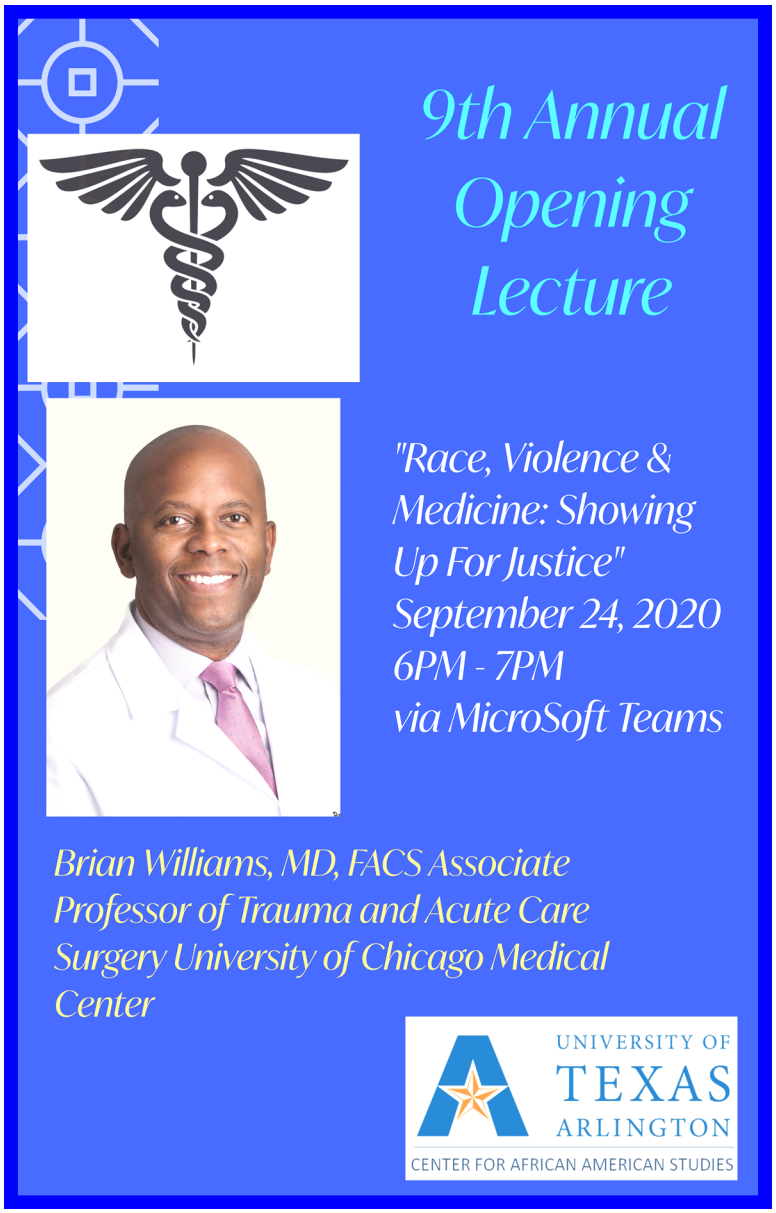
"I am honored to have been called to lead this council," Shelton said. "Arlington is a large and diverse city. We want to talk to the people in the community, with all kinds of backgrounds and experiences. We want to hear their stories and compare what we learn from them to numbers and data to determine the best policies on how we can make Arlington better."

Shelton said the council will examine economic disparities, education, health, housing and policing. In the coming months, the 25-member council will gather community input, interview citizens, analyze survey data, research best practices and recommend strategies that the city of Arlington could implement to promote and encourage greater equality across the community.

"So many throughout our community have worked tirelessly over several decades to help make Arlington the rich, vibrant community it is today. We celebrate our cultural diversity in The American Dream City and we are proud to be an international city whose citizens represent more than 100 countries," Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams said.

"As residents of a city that is committed to equality, justice and inclusion for all people, we continue our work to eliminate systemic racism and discrimination in all forms and to ensure that all who live, work and learn here have equal opportunities to pursue the American Dream."

9th Annual Opening Lecture

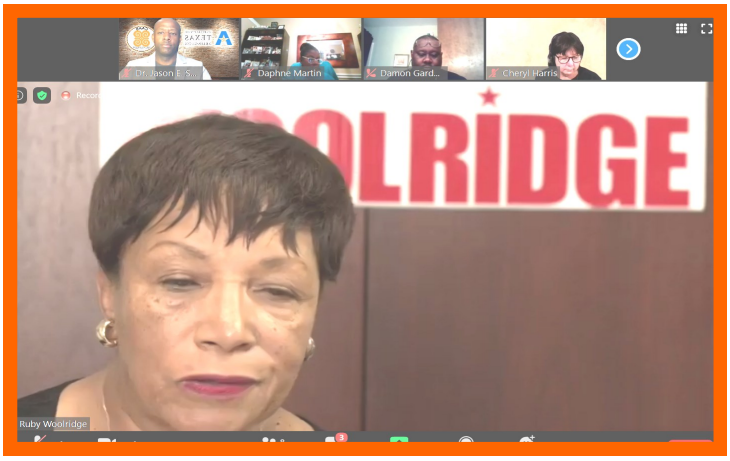


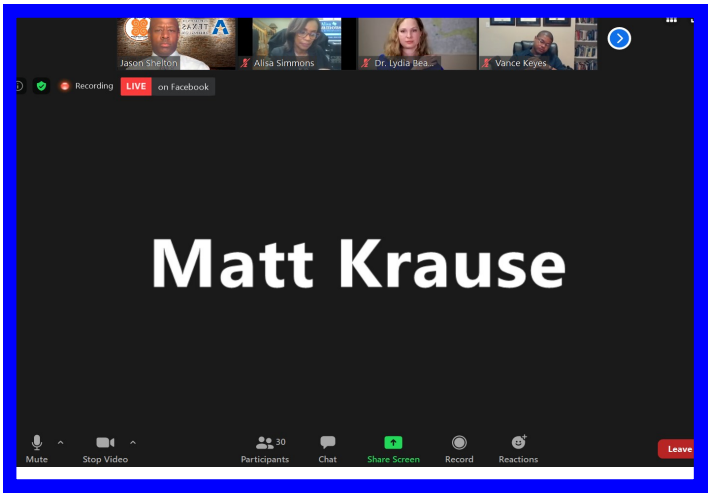
In mid-September, Dr. Brian Williams delivered CAAS' 9th Annual Opening Lecture. The title of his talk was "Race, Violence, and Showing Up for Justice."

Dr. Williams presented new data on racial differences in death rates due to COVID-19, and discussed how adequate health care enhances social problems such as crime and violence. The most powerful part of Dr. Williams' lecture was his recounting the night of July 7th, 2016, when five Dallas police officers were killed and nine others were injured during an ambush. Many of them were taken to Parkland Hospital, where he was the leading physician in the Emergency Room .

Consequences of that sad and very difficult night inspired him to "speak truth to power" about the impact of racial inequalities in American medicine.

Arlington NAACP Political Forums





Dr. Shelton moderated two political forums for candidates running for various state and local offices. These important events were hosted by the Arlington chapter of the NAACP.

The first event featured Ruby Faye Woolridge (who is running for the Arlington City Council) and Vance Keyes (who is running for Tarrant County Sheriff). The second event featured various candidates running for seats in the Texas House such Lydia Bean, Matt Krause, Joe Drago, Jessica Pallett, and Alisa Simmons.

Remember:

A Voteless People is a Hopeless People!

Community Conversations - NBC5

Dr. Frederick Engram was invited to interview with our local Dallas/Fort Worth NBC affiliate. Each week, a reporter hosts "Community Conversations" with experts on topics concerning race and ethnicity.

Dr. Engram explained why many African American athletes (and their non-black supporters) "take a knee" during the national anthem in calling attention to racial disparities in policing and criminal justice. He also provided suggestions for policy changes that can be enacted at both local and national-levels in demonstrating that BLACK LIVES MATTER!

Give a Gift

Established in August 2012, the **Center for African American Studies (CAAS)** at the University of Texas at Arlington aims to cultivate an exceptional transdisciplinary experience through teaching, civic engagement, and community-based research focused on the diverse contextual conditions of Blacks in America and society at large. Our purpose is to foster the development of student, faculty, and community capacity to create progressive solutions that address social problems.

Endowed funding is being sought to support:

- Lectures, events, and conferences
- Student enrichment initiatives
- Undergraduate and graduate scholarships
- Faculty and student community-based research

To Give a Gift to CAAS:

1. Go to: https://giving.uta.edu/Give
2. Specify the amount
3. In the "Designation" box, please select "other"
4. In the "Comments" box, please type "Center for African American Studies"
5. Contact CAAS to let us know about your gift

Thank you for supporting CAAS!

For more information on how to support CAAS, please send and email to: caas@uta.edu

African American Studies Minor

Center for African American Studies

MINOR IN (AAST)

What can you do with an African American Studies Minor?

Careers in:

Business

Education

News Media

Literature

Medicine

History

Law/Politics

Social Work

& more

Requirements include: 6 classes - 2 mandatory in AAST

Intro to African American Studies
AND
African American History **OR**
Race & Ethnic Groups in U.S. **OR**
Diverse Populations **OR**
Contemporary Black Experience

Collaborations with units across campus including
ANTH, CRCJ, ECON, ENGL, LING, MANA, POLS, PSYC, SOCI, SOCW.

For more information about the Center for African American Studies (CAAS)
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www.uta.edu/caas

For more information about the AAST Minor contact CAAS at 817-272-9642 or caas@uta.edu

Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS:

9th Annual Opening Lecture
September 24th, 2020
(Dr. Brian Williams)
Via Microsoft Teams

Power Hour Lecture
October 7, 2020
(Alisa Simmons)
Via Microsoft Teams

Evening of Arts & Letters
December 1, 2020
Via Microsoft Teams