Nakia Douglas has dedicated his career to mentoring youth and shaping future leaders in his hometown of Dallas. At UNT Dallas, Nakia designs and implements "holistic, nontraditional educational experiences for first-generation and historically disenfranchised students." Before starting at the southern Dallas campus three years ago, Nakia was the founding principal of the Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy, which opened in southern Dallas in 2011. He has received many professional honors including the 2015 Dallas Independent School District Magnet Principal of the Year, KERA American Graduate Champion and DISD Exemplary Principal. In June, Nakia delivered this impassioned interview for WFAA's moving video series, "While I have your attention."

Q&A
How long have you worked in UNT World and what do you do?
October officially marks my third year as a member of UNT World. In my role as executive director of TRIO and Pre-Collegiate Programs, I have the privilege of working with a diverse, innovative team. Our departmental mission is the "development of students’ academic, emotional, ethical, physical and social skills for transformational impact in life, school and leadership" – this is the North Star of our efforts with our participants.

What is your favorite aspect of your job?
The strategic process of design, creation and implementation of programs for students, families and communities is exciting. The greatest joy is witnessing our participants’ enjoyment of a new educational experience and/or students reflecting on the impact of their learning within our programs. These moments are the ultimate evaluation of the effectiveness of our work.

What employee benefit or activity would you like to see added to UNT World?
Employee academic scholarships.

What is your proudest work moment?
Building and developing our TRIO & Pre-Collegiate professional team, then witnessing their impact with the students within their individual programs at the university and our local community.

What is your proudest non-work moment?
The strengthening of my relationship with my family during the pandemic. While the reasons for our
time together are not enjoyable, the conversations, walks, meals and newly created family memories have been most enjoyable and heartwarming.

**What fact about you might surprise your colleagues?**
I own a PS4 and play Madden, NBA 2K, FIFA and The Incredibles with my kids, I have opened two new schools for Dallas ISD (Maynard H. Jackson Middle School and Barack Obama Male Leadership Academy) and I began my educational career as a kindergarten teacher.

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE...**

**Book?:** *Uncommon* by Tony Dungy

**Movie?:** *Black Panther, Love Jones, Invictus, Remember the Titans* and *Waiting for Superman*

**Place to Visit?:** West Africa, North Carolina and/or Caribbean Islands

**Song?:** "Love and Happiness" by Al Green

**Charitable cause?:** Friends of Barack Obama Men's Leadership Academy, Mayor's Star Council, City Square, For Oak Cliff, 826 Literary Project

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**HIGH FIVE: UNT Social Work Professor Dr. Hadidja Nyiransekuye Earns Statewide Honor**

With research interests that include forced migration, African indigenous healing practices, and issues of genocide and genocide prevention, UNT associate professor Dr. Hadidja Nyiransekuye was named Social Worker of the Year by the Texas chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The Social Worker of the Year demonstrates outstanding leadership, advocates for clients and takes risks to achieve outstanding results. A native of Rwanda, Dr. Nyiransekuye is a member of the Council on Global Social Issues and a member of the Refugee Congress, an initiative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. [READ MORE](#) about her award and [WATCH](#) Dr. Nyiransekuye's acceptance video.
Don't Get Hooked: Phishing Attempts Target Your Retirement Benefits

Many of our employees are receiving emails from companies with names like “relaxedretirements.com,” “yourretiring.com” and “appreciationnetwork.com.” These so-called companies seek to set up an appointment with you to discuss your retirement benefits, or to help “public” employees understand their retirement plans or benefits. IT Compliance has blocked several of these attempts. However, these emails keep coming with newly made-up company names. Remember, your HR Benefits Team is here to assist you with your benefits and retirement plans. Be alert to any email that does not come from HRBenefits@untsystem.edu or an HR professional with a untsystem.edu email address. If you are in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP) or Teacher Retirement System (TRS), please READ MORE to better understand who you should -- and should not -- expect emails from about your benefits.

Annual Cybersecurity Awareness Training Is Available Now, Complete by Nov. 13

Cybersecurity is of utmost importance, and this year we have partnered with the award-winning platform KnowBe4, which offers the world's largest library of awareness training content. The new training session is now available in the UNT World Learning platform. Faculty, staff and contractors will need to complete this training by Nov. 13. Newly hired faculty and staff will also be required to complete the training because of changing requirements by the state of Texas. For more information or questions, contact training@security.untsystem.edu.

Give to a Great Cause Through the State Employee Charitable Campaign

Now through Oct. 31, UNT System staff have a unique opportunity to make a collective difference in our community through the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC). This annual fundraising effort gives state employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life of tens of thousands in the North Texas region and throughout the state. To donate online, click here and follow the easy, step-by-step instructions. Please note that one of the SECC's included charities is the University of North Texas Foundation, which is searchable on the SECC website and has been assigned the code 286014. Follow UNT System social media accounts (@untsystem on Twitter/Facebook and LinkedIn) where our UNT System campaign leaders will share SECC events, announcements and stories of how each SECC gift makes a difference.

You Can Be The Difference: Suicide Prevention Awareness is Heightened During Pandemic
Mental health visits and substance use problems are escalating during the COVID-19 pandemic due to isolation and stress, among other causes. These issues can lead to suicide. You can play a critical role in saving the life of someone who is contemplating suicide. Family and friends are usually the first ones to see the warning signs, such as changes in behavior. More than ever it is important to pay attention to our loved ones and friends, and to recognize the associated risk factors like depression, anxiety, relationships or financial problems. To understand some of the common warning signs, how to take action and to access free resources, please READ MORE.


Gallup Q12 Engagement Survey is Headed to Your Inbox Soon
On Oct. 26, you will receive an email with the subject line: You're invited to Participate. The email will contain a link to the Gallup Q12 Engagement survey which allows you to have a voice in the direction of your campus or UNT System. You'll have from Oct. 26 through Nov. 6 to complete the 5-minute survey. Results of the survey will be released in early December. To learn more about the why UNT World partners with Gallup to make engagement a part of our culture, here are a few resources from Gallup that explain what it is and what it does. Our Gallup Engagement website has additional resources for team members to explore, such as FAQs, action planning, previous years' results and more.

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Get a Head Start: Retirement Savings  
October 16 at noon - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAILS

Communication in Early Stage Dementia  
October 20 at 11 a.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

What is Real Appeal?  
October 20 at 1 p.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

Suicide Prevention Webinar  
October 20 at 4 p.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

Building Resilience Through Self-Compassion  
October 22 at 10 a.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

Cyber-Bullying Awareness in the Workplace  
October 22 at 10 a.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

What Students Want You to Know About Mental Health  
October 22 at 2 p.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAILS

Virtual Family Friendly Gardening  
October 22 at 6 p.m. - CLICK FOR WEBINAR DETAIL

If you have an HR question or topic you’d like covered in the newsletter, please email HR@untsystem.edu.

Miss an issue of HR Highlights? CLICK HERE to catch up.