

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UH Law Center's Criminal Justice Institute undergoes change in leadership

HOUSTON - Aug. 18, 2021 – Professor Sandra Guerra Thompson is stepping down as director of the University of Houston Law Center's Criminal Justice Institute. Guerra Thompson has been succeeded by Associate Professor of Law and Political Science Zachary D. Kaufman and Associate Professor David Kwok, who serve as co-directors.

"I thank Professor Guerra Thompson for her leadership and 18 years of service as director of the Institute," said Dean Leonard M. Baynes. "Her hard work and efforts elevated the Institute to its high level of prominence today.

"Under Professor Kwok and Professor Kaufman's leadership and building on Professor Guerra Thompson's accomplishments, I am confident that the UH Law Center Criminal Justice Institute will reach additional levels of prominence and gravitas."

Guerra Thompson, the Newell H. Blakely Professor of Law, teaches Criminal Evidence, Criminal Law, Evidence, and Hot Topics in Criminal Law and Procedure. Her research on crime labs culminated in a 2015 book, "Cops in Lab Coats: Curbing Wrongful Convictions through Independent Forensic Laboratories." The book was referenced in September 2016 by the President's Council on Advisors on Science and Technology, an advisory council established by then-President Barack Obama. In 2017, she testified at a Congressional hearing on the future of forensic science.

Guerra Thompson also served as a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Houston Forensic Science Center from 2012 to 2019. The Houston Forensic Science Center, established by the city of Houston in 2014 to replace the Houston Police Department Crime Lab, instituted a vast blind proficiency testing program, earning the lab worldwide recognition for its quality assurance program. The lab is also unique in having been removed from the control of a police department. Under new direction, the lab implemented more efficient processes that have eliminated backlogs in DNA work on sexual assault kits.

Since 2019, Guerra Thompson has been an elected council member for the International Association of Evidence Science. In October 2020, she was the recipient of the Mayor's Hispanic Heritage Education in the Community Award, and Mayor Sylvester Turner proclaimed Sept. 15, 2020, as Sandra Guerra Thompson Day. Guerra Thompson is also the deputy monitor for the federal consent decree in the O'Donnell v. Harris County settlement, which has transformed Harris County's misdemeanor bail system. She is also the monitor for the Lomas v. Harris County consent decree regarding the integrity of the criminal charging process.

"For so long, the Criminal Justice Institute has brought national attention to the UH Law Center through outstanding criminal law conferences, symposia, and clinics," Guerra Thompson said. "Now Professors Kaufman and Kwok, two nationally-recognized scholars, will bring fresh perspectives from their specializations in international criminal law and white-collar crime,

respectively. I couldn't be happier to leave the CJI in their capable hands as we begin the next chapter of the Institute's history."

Kaufman joined the Law Center's faculty in 2019. He writes and teaches in the areas of criminal law, international law, and international justice and atrocities. He is a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves as both co-chair of the American Society of International Law's Human Rights Interest Group and secretary (and future chair) of the Association of American Law Schools' International Human Rights Section. In addition, he serves on Genocide Watch's Advisory Board and is a member of both the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the International Network of Genocide Scholars.

Kaufman's extensive experience in domestic and international criminal justice includes working on criminal law issues while serving as a U.S. Supreme Court Fellow, specializing in criminal law issues while clerking for a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, serving in the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division, working for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee on international criminal justice issues, serving at three international criminal tribunals (including as the first American to serve at the International Criminal Court), and working pro bono on a death penalty case while practicing at a law firm.

Kwok, who holds the George Butler Research Professorship, teaches and writes in the areas of white collar crime, whistleblowers, public policy, and law and the social sciences. He joined the Law Center faculty in 2013.

"I am honored to be the new co-director of the Criminal Justice Institute," Kaufman said. "It is a testament to Professor Guerra Thompson's expertise and effectiveness that it takes two people to follow in her big, bold footsteps. I very much look forward to partnering with Professor Kwok to build on Professor Guerra Thompson's visionary work as we further enhance the practice of criminal law at the local, national, and international levels."

"It is a privilege to take on this new role with the Criminal Justice Institute," added Kwok. "Under Professor Guerra Thompson's leadership, CJI has helped deploy academic expertise throughout Houston and beyond. I hope to continue this legacy of compassion, fairness, and excellence in pursuing these ideals of criminal justice."

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About the University of Houston Law Center

The University of Houston Law Center (UHLC) is a dynamic, top tier law school located in the nation's 4th largest city. UHLC's Health Law, Intellectual Property Law rank in the U.S. News Top 10. It awards Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees, through its academic branch, the College of Law. The Law Center is more than just a law school. It is a

powerful hub of intellectual activity with more than 11 centers and institutes which fuel its educational mission and national reputation. UHLC is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.

About the University of Houston

The University of Houston is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for excellence in undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse regions in the country, UH is a federally designated Hispanic- and Asian-American-Serving institution with enrollment of more than 47,000 students.