THE SIXTH ANNUAL GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL AWARD CEREMONY

2020

PROGRAM

The Graduate School
The Graduate Professional Council
The MU Postdoctoral Association
Contents

Letter from the Dean  Page 3

Graduate Professional Council Awards
From GPC  Page 4
Gold Chalk  Page 5
Award for Academic Excellence  Page 7
Excellence in Student Leadership  Page 8
International Student Award  Page 9
Outstanding GPC General Assembly Member Award  Page 9
Graduate Support Staff Award

Graduate School Awards
MU Distinguished Dissertation  Page 10
Distinguished Discipline Dissertation Award  Page 11
MU Distinguished Master's Thesis  Page 12
Donald K. Anderson Graduate Research Assistant Award  Page 13
Donald K. Anderson Graduate Teaching Assistant Award  Page 16
Postdoctoral Research Award  Page 17
Postdoctoral Teaching Award  Page 17
Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS)  Page 19
2020 Excellence in Teaching Award  Page 19
MU Graduate Faculty Mentor Award  Page 20
Sandra K. Abell Science Education Award  Page 20
Mary Elizabeth Gutermuth Award for Community Engagement  Page 20
Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation's Robert N. Epsten Scholarship for International Studies  Page 21
Outstanding Departmental Contribution Award

Mizzou 18
From MU Postdoctoral Association  Page 18
Letter from the Vice Provost for Student Affairs  Page 19
Colleagues,

To take time to honor and recognize the outstanding achievements of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, and those faculty and staff who provide unwavering support and mentorship to them, is a privilege. As you will discover throughout this program, those who are part of our graduate and postdoctoral communities are critical to our success as a university and to our teaching, scholarship, and engagement missions.

This event would not be possible without the time and commitment of many individuals. I would like to thank the Graduate Faculty Senate and its Awards Committee and the faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars who reviewed award nominations. They had to make very difficult decisions because of the quality of the nominees. I would also like to thank the graduate student leaders in GPC and the postdoctoral leaders in MUPA, who advocate for their constituencies on a daily basis and who find time to single out individuals who have made a difference at Mizzou.

I would be remiss if I did not pause to acknowledge the disruptions we have experienced as a community this semester. We did not want the disruptions to our lives to take away from celebrating those recognized as part of this “ceremony.” It is even more important now to take a moment to express gratitude, joy, and pride for the successes achieved. To accomplish so much while taking remote classes for the first time, for teaching remote classes for the first time, for redesigning research and creative activities to meet the restrictions imposed upon us by a pandemic, for home schooling our children, for sheltering-in-place away from our families and friends, and for all the other firsts and unexpected challenges is nothing short of remarkable.

Congratulations!

Jeni Hart
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies
Hello, everyone. My name is Al Willsey, and I am finishing my second term as president of the graduate professional council. I'm a fifth year PhD candidate in the philosophy department.

At this moment we are living through a time of unprecedented change. While we continue to be socially distanced, the individuals who make up the University have not stopped being amazing students, instructors, researchers, and mentors. As students, we have continued to study and engage with our colleagues. As instructors, we have continued teaching online, perhaps in formats which were foreign to us only a few months ago. As researchers we have continued to push our fields forward despite having to conduct this research in socially-distant and perhaps quite creative ways. Mentorship continues to be important to us, perhaps now more than ever. I want to take this moment to reflect on the achievements that you have accomplished this semester as it comes to a close. Each of you should be proud for doing all that you can in your roles of student, instructor, researcher, mentor, during these trying times.

Al Willsey, President of the Graduate Professional Council

2019 - 2020 Executive Board and Executive Team

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<td>Al Willsey</td>
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<td>Asst. Director of International Student Affairs</td>
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<td>Ann Obadan</td>
<td>Asst. Director of Fundraising</td>
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<td>Grace Robinson</td>
<td>Asst. Director of Professional Development</td>
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<td>Molly Frank</td>
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2020 - 2021 Executive Board

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Al Willsey, President of the Graduate Professional Council

PAGE 4
Gold Chalk Award

The Gold Chalk Award recognizes University of Missouri faculty who have made significant contributions to the education and training of graduate and professional students. For the past 32 years, GPC has recognized over 200 outstanding and well-deserving faculty. Each year this award is given to four faculty members across varying fields of study who demonstrate not only excellence in teaching, but who also exhibit compassion and a commitment to the education and wellbeing of graduate and professional students.

Professional School

Inspiring, supporting, motivating, and enriching students are many of the hallmarks of Dr. Gu's philosophy towards the education and mentorship of students. His dedication and willingness to spend long hours to support his students is but one example of his selflessness. He does not shy away from challenges, especially ones his students face. He embraces those challenges with his students and in doing so aids in their academic development. His patience and guidance has been invaluable to his students, and his ability to help students learn and become comfortable with their courses are just examples of his commitment to Mizzou's core values.

Humanities and Fine Arts

Dr. Thomas has been described as 'an invisible force doing what he can for mental health, support, and rights of graduate students". His selflessness in his style of teaching, educating, mentoring, and supporting graduate students far exceeds what is expected. His attitude towards the betterment of his students has been pivotal in their feeling of self-worth and acceptance. His continued efforts to advice and guide students long after they have graduated is just another example of his dedication to education and academic development. Dr. Thomas is considered a research partner by many of his students who admire his level of commitment and respect for those he works with.
Gold Chalk Award

Natural and Mathematical Science

Dr. Baker is a true example of dedicated faculty. His commitment to his students goes above and beyond in his pursuit to instruct, engage, and support his students. He has been quoted as saying, "one should do what they believe in the most". Such words inspire his students to pursue research that interests them, and his support helps cement their passion and development as independent researchers. He often comes to his students' aid in times of despair to help them tackle the hurdles of scientific research. Dr. Baker is an exemplar of discovery and excellence, two of Mizzou's core values.

Gary Baker, PhD
CHEMISTRY

Social and Behavioral Science

Having mentored and advised over 45 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, Dr. Landor’s primary goal is to help prepare her advisees by giving them the opportunities to learn, collaborate, and conduct full-cycle research projects. She is committed to aiding students in the pursuit of their careers by writing numerous letters of recommendation while simultaneously working to promote diversity and inclusion through her own teaching, mentorship, and service. Dr. Landor has served as an Executive Board Member of the MU Black Faculty and Staff Organization (BFSO) and her actions of inclusion have provided for a safe environment for not only students but also faculty members. Dr. Landor is selfless and engaging of students, and is a core pillar of her program.

Antoinette Landor, PhD
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SCIENCE
Ransford serves as the inaugural graduate research assistant for the Teaching for Learning Center. His leadership and service to the wider community has been expansive; from advocating for graduate student voices on the Task Force to Enhance Learning and Teaching to helping develop of new cloud-based software. Ransford volunteers as an instructor for the MU STEM Cubs program, providing opportunities for students from underrepresented and low-income backgrounds in the STEM fields.

Lauren is continuously praised as an inspirational, motivational instructor, researcher, and colleague who exudes an atmosphere of passionate pursuit for academic excellence. She is selfless in her dedication to her students and colleagues, and is describe as the model of professional behavior. Her finely-honed teaching style has resulted in a transformation in the learning and understanding of her students, leading to a lasting impact on their education.

Nathan is dedicated and hard working, demonstrating a level of excellence that often goes beyond what is expected. He is often found helping his fellow colleagues grasp the intricacies of their own academic work. He holds joint appointments in Information Experience Lab and as a research assistant. His leadership style allows him to tackle multiple responsibilities and aids in his communication with his peers. Additionally, Nathan is highly motivated, serving on numerous student groups including the Learning Technology Graduate Student Association and the Graduate Student Advisory Council of the College of Education.
Student Leadership Award

Excellent leader, excellent colleague, and an excellent friend. These are qualities that describe Lauren. Her passion for personal discovery has lead her develop a high level of respect, compassion, and empathy for others. Her work ethic and drive has lead her to be the center of multiple initiatives to improve student life in her department. Her passion and dedication make her an invaluable part of her program.

Lauren Johnsen
COMMUNICATION

Described as the embodiment of a student leader, Jessica has served on numerous board positions where she has organized and help planned a variety of social and recruitment events. Her passion for mentorship and communication has had a deep impact on both graduate and undergraduate student. Not only does she do extensive outreach for the community, Jessica also remains committed to assisting her fellow colleagues.

Jessica Kansman
DIVISION OF PLANT SCIENCES

International Student Award

Wenmin Zhao joins us from China. She began in 2015 to study mathematics education and received Mizzou Dissertation Fellowship for her own research on mathematical modeling in secondary classrooms. In addition to her scholarly achievement, she served as the President of Mathematics Education Research and Doctoral Studies (MERDS) and a leader of Mathematics Education Chinese Students (MECS). Wenmin’s leadership inspires faculty, staff, and fellow students to see our differences not as a barrier to overcome, but as an opportunity to embrace the diversity through mutual understanding and cooperation.

Wenmin Zhao
MATHEMATICS EDUCATION
Outstanding GA Member Award

Every year GPC continues its mission to bring together graduate and professional students from across to work together to promote and advocate for the graduate and professional student community. The work that we do could not be done without the those graduate and professional students serving as student Representatives to the General Assembly. Each year the Executive Board recognizes three outstanding Representatives, who not only dedicate their time, but also demonstrate a high level of service and commitment to the graduate and professional student population.

Ann Obadan
TRUMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joseph Jones
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Wm. Bryan Paul
COMMUNICATION

Graduate Support Staff Award

Emma is described as being highly reliable, having a wealth of knowledge and tremendous patience. She is vital in the coordination of student practicum sites, and helps to coordinate new graduate student orientation. She continuously works to improve not only herself but the program in its continued mission to support students.

Emma Keicher
THOMPSON CENTER FOR AUTISM & NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS
MU Distinguished Dissertation Award

Dr. Lisa Groshong is being honored for her dissertation titled “Looking Broadly and Deeply into Perceptions of Local Climate Change Impacts Among Visitors to Missouri State Parks.” This work was supervised by Dr. Sonja Wilhelm Stanis, Associate Professor of Natural Resources. The results of Lisa’s research suggest opportunities for state park managers to take action toward locally oriented climate change mitigation, education, and communication. Lisa is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Natural Sciences at the University of Missouri.

MU Distinguished Dissertation Award - Discipline Winner

In the areas of the physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, and social sciences.

Dr. Lisa Groshong is being honored for her dissertation titled “Looking Broadly and Deeply into Perceptions of Local Climate Change Impacts Among Visitors to Missouri State Parks.” This work was supervised by Dr. Sonja Wilhelm Stanis, Associate Professor of Natural Resources. The results of Lisa’s research suggest opportunities for state park managers to take action toward locally oriented climate change mitigation, education, and communication. Lisa is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Natural Sciences at the University of Missouri.

MU Distinguished Master's Thesis Award

Kelly’s thesis is titled “Examining Perceptual Load Capacity in Autism Spectrum Disorders And Trait Anxiety” and was supervised by Dr. Shawn E. Christ in the Department of Psychological Sciences. Kelly investigated if high anxiety contributed to the original findings of the earlier Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) studies. The results of Kelly’s study revealed that higher anxiety (in both individuals with and without ASD) was associated with better task performance at higher perceptual loads. It supports the assertion that anxiety (and its relationship to perceptual capacity) are likely contributed to previous ASD findings. Her faculty advisors have high praise for Kelly as a researcher. Since completing her degree, Kelly has presented her work at the International Society for Autism Research in Montréal and has submitted her work for publication.
Donald K. Anderson Awards

Research Assistant Award

Jorge Martins is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychological Sciences and has worked as a research assistant with Dr. Bartholow on an NIH-funded study examining heavy drinking risk factors in emerging adults. Jorge has published 10 papers, including three first-author papers; many of these appear in top journals in his field during his time as a graduate student. Faculty recognize him as among the very best in terms of his research skills. Dr. Cooper states, "Jorge has a promising career trajectory which is further attested to by the fact that he just earned a prestigious postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University" to further his studies.

Teaching Assistant Award

Milla Titova, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Psychological Sciences, has consistently earned outstanding teaching evaluations and emerged as a notable teacher in her department. Milla has taught Cross-Cultural Psychology, Positive Psychology, Social Psychology, and a Human Relationships Capstone course. Upon completing her degree, Milla will begin a faculty position at Elon University in the fall. We are pleased to recognize Milla’s passion and dedication to teaching with this distinguished Award today.
Postdoctoral Research Award

Dr. Man Huynh's developed an artificial diet to address the impact of northern corn rootworm. This pest is devastating to maize crops across North America. This research led to multiple first-authored publications, external funding, and a commercially-available diet in partnership with Frontier Agricultural Sciences. His advisor, Dr. Finke, shared this sentiment in her nomination letter: “emphasized that "Dr. Huynh is a selfless researcher who takes the time to teach and train others, including colleagues from industry or other academic institutions.”

Man Huynh, PhD
PLANT SCIENCES

Postdoctoral Teaching Award

Dr. David Aguayo has taught undergraduate and graduate-level courses in-person and online, receiving exceptional student evaluations and glowing recommendations. In his teaching philosophy statement, an excerpt stands out, "In my courses, I imbed an ethic of care assisting students to re-envision themselves as equitable and inclusive professionals. I offer learning spaces where dominant and non-dominant students can re-imagine each other's' lived experiences to build community with one another." His students describe his classroom as innovative, inclusive, and creative. They regard him as a mentor in addition to an instructor.

David Aguayo, PhD
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) Excellence in Teaching Award

The Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools allows each member institution to submit one nomination for the graduate student Excellence in Teaching Award. This year, Doug Valentine was selected as the nominee for our campus through an open competition process. Doug teaches in not only his home department of Sociology but also Religious Studies and Mizzou Online. He is a beloved teacher in the Honors College and dedicated the last eight years to the Missouri Scholars Academy. In fact, in 2019, he was chosen for the Outstanding Honors Faculty Award, the first graduate student to ever receive this recognition. Students provide rave reviews of Doug’s teaching, and he continues to receive recognition for his innovative pedagogy. As his recommenders explained, Doug’s “ability to really see his students combined with a fresh delivery of the material without sacrificing his high standards and expectations make him an ideal teacher.”

MU Graduate Faculty Mentor Award

The quality of Colleen’s mentoring accomplishments is unparalleled for someone of her career stage. In addition to her advising, she stepped into the role of Director of Graduate Studies early on, where she created a professional development seminar course. Colleen has a seemingly natural ability to motivate her advisees to overcome insecurities and see the best in themselves. Many of Colleen’s advisees describe her as an ideal advisor who takes time to truly connect with students as individuals, and that her support continues long after they leave MU. One writer said, “the more experience I have in academia, the more I realize that advisors like Dr. Colaner are a rare gift.”
Sandra K. Abell Science Education Award

The Sandra K. Abell Award is given to recognize the outstanding achievements of a graduate student pursuing Ph.D. studies in a life or physical science who has demonstrated a commitment to science and college science teaching, as well as scholarly excellence. This Award is given in honor of Sandi Abell, who dedicated her career to promoting science education. This year we honor two outstanding graduate students.

Levi Storks is a doctoral student in Biological Sciences and is advised by Dr. Manuel Leal. His advisor shares that under LEVI's guidance, “MU's Science on Wheels program has become a flagship of our campus's commitment to give back to the state, particularly in STEM education with the public. Levi has pushed the envelope, taking science to every corner of the state and motivating other graduate students to join the program.” Another nominator calls Mr. Storks a leader among graduate students and a strong advocate for the importance of science engagement. She suggests that “During his time at MU, Levi has already made a lasting impact on the university that will continue long after he graduates.”

Katherine (Katy) Guthrie is a doctoral student in Biological Sciences and is advised by Dr. Paula McSteen. Her advisor shares that Katy is a skilled researcher who is as adept at mastering the complexities of the genetic pathways that control paired spikelet development in maize, as she is in mentoring undergraduate students working in a research environment for the first time. In her application, Katy wrote, “the best part of teaching is watching my students work through the process of learning concepts and coming to the realization that they can "do" science. Every student has the potential to be a scientist, and it is up to us as educators to find the best way to develop that potential in our courses.”
Gutermuth Award for Community Engagement

Professor Gutermuth was a French language scholar and MU Ph.D. who taught for many years at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Her endowment gift to the Graduate School recognizes students who have demonstrated excellence in service to the community through engaged scholarship.

Amnee Elkhalid is a doctoral student in the Department of Communication Studies, advised by Dr. Colleen Colaner. Amnee is being honored for her notable community service, which, in Dr. Colaner’s words, “Combines her communication research and volunteer work to give voice to marginalized groups, while also helping the family communication field to think about engaged scholarship in new critical ways.” Garrett Pearson, Executive Director of City of Refuge, a Columbia-based not-for-profit, lauds Amnee’s commitment to "ground level" refugee care, and her communication expertise and insights in support of the thousands of refugees who call Columbia home.

We honor Levi for his dedication to sharing his passion for science with diverse audiences across this nation. Extension County Engagement Specialist Pat Snodgrass reflects that Levi epitomizes UM public engagement. Discussing Science on Wheels’ success, Snodgrass writes that Lev and his team "Promoted a positive perception of science with engaging presentations and interaction, showing that anyone can be a scientist. In my rural counties, the local schools and libraries were eager to partner with and promote these successful events.”

Levi Storks
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation's Robert N. Epsten Scholarship for International Studies

President Harry S. Truman was a firm supporter of higher education and, in particular, international educational exchange programs. In 1946, President Truman and Congress created the Fulbright Act, which established an international exchange program for students, teachers, college professors, and research scholars. To honor President Truman and perpetuate his support of higher education on a domestic and international basis, the Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation sponsors seven scholarships across the nation. These awards support students pursuing studies of an international or public service nature, including foreign literature and languages, and related studies in the humanities. Each of the scholarships has been established in honor of individuals who were strong supporters of Harry S. Truman and the Truman Foundation.

Michael is a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science. His advisor, Dr. Jake Haselswerdt, states that Michael's research interests are perfectly aligned with the goals of the Scholarship program. He combines a commitment to core principles of public affairs (policy analysis and evaluation) with a focus on diplomacy and global issues. Michael's dissertation will explore the politics of evaluation for foreign policy relative to domestic policy. And assess the potential implications of evaluating foreign policy in the same way we evaluate domestic policy.
Outstanding Departmental Contribution Award

Each year, one outstanding faculty member who serves as the Director of Graduate Studies for their graduate program is honored with this Award for their contributions to graduate education.

This year’s Award goes to Dr. Manuel Leal, from the Division of Biological Sciences. Dr. Leal is passionate about excellence in science, and he conveys this passion to his graduate students, which inspires them to pursue outstanding research and learning opportunities. Dr. Leal is a strong advocate for graduate students and has been a great partner to the Graduate School working to improve opportunities for underrepresented graduate students. He is always willing to offer up his help and is persistent in pursuing pathways that will enhance graduate education at Mizzou.
Mizzou 18

The Mizzou 18 Award is given to graduate and professional students in the last year of their degree. These students are chosen for their world-class research, collaboration with faculty and staff, and demonstration of leadership with undergraduates.

2020

Lida Aflatoony  Textile & Apparel Management
Megan Anderson  Medical School
Quana Atkins  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Dionte Boyd  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Shishi Chen  Civil & Environmental Engineering
Rory Cunningham  Exercise Physiology
Jason Entsminger  Agricultural & Applied Economics
Kristen Kalz  Sociology
Jozef Lukey  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Kasey Lynch  Theatre
Jessica Osaze  Social Work
Osasu Osaze  Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering
Colbey Ricklefs  Medical School
Colleen Spurlock  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Victoria Trost  Occupational Therapy
Huong Truong  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Tyler Tucker  Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis
Alek Willsey  Philosophy
Dear Postdocs, your contributions to teaching and research are vital to the MU community, the development of MU students, and our success as an interdisciplinary research institution. In these uncertain times, we thank you for your continued contributions to MU and our Columbia community. We want you to know that the MU Postdoctoral Association will continue to represent you and work to provide the resources you need as we navigate this transition together. On behalf of the entire MUPA board, thank you for all that you do!

Kimberly Jasmer
MUPA Board Chair

2019 - 2020 Board

Kimberly Jasmer Chair
Fiorella Carlos Chavez Professional Development Chair
Harriet Fitzgerald Finance Chair
Bree Baker GPC Representative
Anna Hardin Communications & Marketing Chair
Ryan Knigge Travel Awards Chair
Bhupinder Singh Social Events Chair
Kimberly Laffey Interest Group Chair
Dear students,

I am sad that we can’t be together today to celebrate your hard work and accomplishments. I am so proud of you and so excited to help honor and recognize your achievements. You all make Mizzou better because of who you are and what you contribute to the university.

As some of you might know, I was a graduate student at Mizzou. I received my master’s degree in parks and recreation administration in 1982. I want you to know that I recognize and appreciate your journey. Our graduate students, professional students and postdoctoral scholars play a vital role for our university.

This semester did not turn out the way we would have wanted it, yet I am in constant awe of your resilience. Not only have you moved your learning online but you also transitioned your research, teaching and professional responsibilities to remote contexts.

Many of you are doing so while taking care of your families’ needs as well. Postdoctoral scholars have done all this while playing their vital roles in teaching and research.

I see you. I see your accomplishments and I see how you continue to be excellent representatives of Mizzou. Thank you to all of you who have worked together to make this event a reality.

As vice provost for student affairs, I work closely with the student leaders in the Graduate Professional Council, who have been tireless advocates for all graduate and professional students at Mizzou. They, along with faculty members and postdoctoral leaders in the MU Postdoctoral Association, have gone above and beyond to make sure that individual achievements were still recognized, despite the disruption of the semester.

I would also like to thank my colleague and partner in supporting student success, Dean Jeni Hart, for her work ensuring that you all have the resources and support you need to succeed.

Congratulations and Fight Tiger!

Bill Stackman
Vice Provost for Student Affairs