

GRADUATE DEAN'S REPORT: INFORMATION AND UPDATES FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Spring 2018/April

GRADUATE SCHOOL AWARDS PRESENTED AT ANNUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Winners of the Graduate School's two most prestigious awards were announced at the Susan A. Siltanen Graduate Student Research Symposium Awards Luncheon on Thursday, March 26. Jessica Guzman, Ph.D. student in the Department of English with an emphasis in creative writing, was named the **2018 Graduate Assistant of the Year**. Jessica's major professor, Dr. Angela Ball, said Jessica is "the stand-out in a stellar group." In describing her creative work, Dr. Ball noted, "Her blazingly beautiful poems illuminate and record nature's resilience and



Dr. Sarah Morgan was recognized as the 2018 Graduate Mentor of the Year



Creative writing doctoral student, Jessica Guzman, is the 2018 GA of the Year

suffering, and those qualities in human beings as well." Jessica has won numerous prestigious awards in poetry, including the Tinhouse Workshop Scholarship, the American Literature Review's poetry award, and the Melton Kessler Memorial Prize for Poetry by Harpur Palate. In her role as teaching assistant, Jessica teaches many undergraduate students in her Composition I and II, Technical Writing, and World Literature courses and receives very high student evaluations, a testament to her

giftedness, compassion, and effectiveness as a teacher, as articulated by Dr. Luis Iglesias, chair of the department. Jessica's award included \$500 and a commemorative plaque.

The **2018 Graduate Mentor of the Year** is Dr. Sarah Morgan, Professor and Associate Director of the School of Polymers and High Performance Materials. She was selected by a panel of graduate coordinators from a group of outstanding faculty mentors nominated by their current students. Dr. Morgan's current and former students and director provided examples of her commitment to her students' intellectual, scholarly, personal, and professional development. Doctoral student April Fogel described her mentorship style as "action-oriented," and noted "Dr. Morgan is a champion of graduate student development," with "relentless dedication to providing scientific growth and career advancement opportunities." Former student Dr. Katrina Knauer, now a research scientist for BASF, appreciated her "hands on/hands off" approach to mentorship, meaning Dr. Morgan knows when to step in and provide direction and when to step out and let the student take the lead. Dr. Jeff Wiggins, Director, spoke of her commitment to student development and diversity in science education, citing her numerous funded projects aimed at K-12 and undergraduate science communication, education, and research. The award included a commemorative plaque and a \$1500 travel award to support Dr. Morgan's travel to research or professional conferences. As Graduate Mentor of the Year, Dr. Morgan will share her expertise in upcoming mentorship training workshops sponsored by the Graduate School and represent USM as nominee for the 2019 Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Outstanding Mentor competition. That award will be announced next spring.

2018 SUSAN A. SILTANEN GRADUATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM A SUCCESS



Winners of the Oral and Poster Presentation Prizes at the 2018 Graduate Student Research Symposium

Nearly 100 graduate students showcased their original research by giving oral or poster presentations on Thursday, March 26 during the annual Susan A. Siltanen Graduate Research Symposium. Students competed for best oral presentation and best poster prizes in four categories: Arts and Humanities; Life, Health, and Environmental Sciences; Physical Sciences and Mathematics; and Social and Educational Sciences and

Business. The winners were announced at the awards luncheon following the symposium. The winners in each category were:

Arts and Humanities

Oral: 1st Taylor Hanes 2nd Victoria Brown and Amanda Ladner (tie)

Poster: 1st Ecaterina Stepaniuc 2nd Braden Bagley

Life, Health, and Environmental Sciences

Oral: 1st Luke Pearson and Christopher Pellecchia (tie)

Poster: 1st Ryan Lehman 2nd Yetunde Adewunmi

Physical Sciences and Mathematics

Oral: 1st Matthew Patterson and Cassandra Reese (tie)

Poster: 1st Jeremy Weigand 2nd Alison Hart, Travis Palmer, Rahul Shankar (3-way tie)

Social and Educational Sciences and Business

Oral: 1st Malin Lilley 2nd Amy Ellefson

Poster: 1st Tamar Gregorian 2nd Hallie Jordan

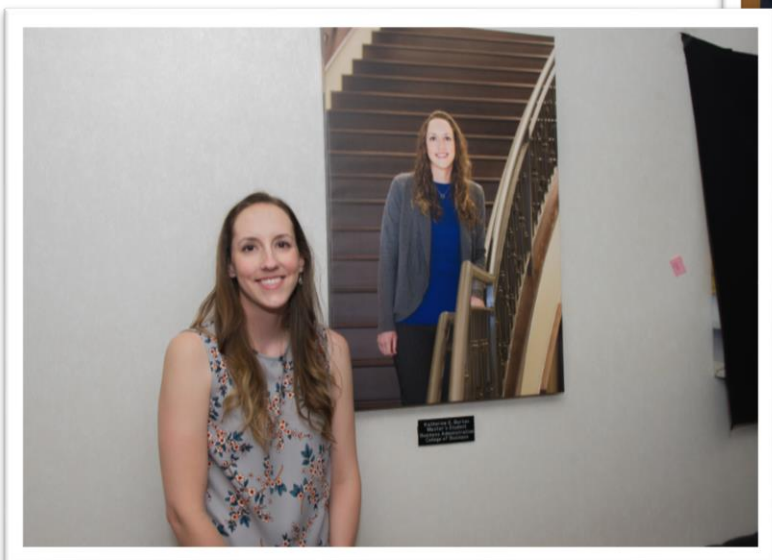
GRADUATE STUDENT HALL OF FAME FEATURES OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

Each year the Graduate School showcases two outstanding graduate students from each academic college selected by their dean for accomplishments in research/creativity, excellence in scholarship, academic achievement, and exemplary character and integrity. These students are photographed in their research or creative setting, and canvas portraits are hung in the second floor hallway of the McCain Library. The portraits for the 2018 Graduate Student Hall



of Fame were unveiled on Tuesday, April 3 in a ceremony attended by each featured student’s family, friends, major professor, and dean. Provost Steven Moser assisted Dean Coats in unveiling each portrait.

Left: MBA student Katherine Burton is featured with her portrait. Above: Inductee Haley Dozier looks on as Provost Moser and Dean Coats unveil her portrait.



The 2018 Graduate Student Hall of Fame includes the following students:

College of Arts & Letters:

Julian Pernet Castillo, Master of Music (piano), School of Music
Aaron Joshua Bennett, Master of Arts in the Teaching of Spanish and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

College of Business:

Katherine G. Burton, Master of Business Administration
Nina Bellipanni, Master of Professional Accountancy, School of Accountancy

College of Education & Psychology:

Brianna Werner, Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology, Department of Psychology
Lacey A. Bagley, Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy, Department of Child and Family Studies

College of Health:

Lindsey Hardin, Master of Social Work, School of Social Work
Stephen Williams, Doctor of Audiology, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

College of Nursing:

Dr. Tran Ngoc Bao King, certified registered nurse anesthetist and doctor of nursing practice, School of Leadership and Advanced Practice Nursing
Dr. Sheree Conley-Donaldson, Doctor of Nursing Practice, School of Leadership and Advanced Practice Nursing, and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner certificate program

College of Science & Technology

Haley Dozier, Ph.D. in Computational Science (Mathematics), Department of Mathematics
Pratikshya Adhikari, Ph.D. in Biological Sciences (Molecular Biology), Department of Biological Sciences

Graduate School:

Jessica Guzman, Ph.D. in English (Creative Writing), Department of English, 2018 Graduate Assistant of the Year
Rahul Shankar, Ph.D. in Polymer Science and Engineering, School of Polymers and High Performance Materials, 2017 Three Minute Thesis Grand Champion

GRADUATE SCHOOL EVENTS

GRE Boot Camps Continue

The GRE is commonly required as a component of graduate applications because it provides an objective measure of an applicant's potential for success in graduate-level study. A key to a strong GRE score is preparation for the exam. To assist with GRE preparation, the Graduate School is hosting a series of GRE boot camps throughout 2018. Supported in part by a grant from the Southern Miss Fund and taught by doctoral students in mathematics and English, the boot camps focus on verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE. Each boot camp consists of two, four-hour sessions. The first boot camp was held on Saturday, March 24th and 31st from 8 a.m. to noon. Boot camp 2 began Tuesday, April 10th from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and the second half will be held Tuesday, April 17th. Participation for the two sessions was available to students on the coast via IVN to the Gulf Park campus. Both boot camps were at near capacity (20 students), and feedback from

participants was overwhelmingly positive. Boot camp 3 will be held on the Gulf Park campus only on Saturday, April 21st and 28th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A complete schedule of upcoming GRE boot camps and a link to registration is accessible on the Graduate School website at <https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/gre-prep-classes>. Registration must be accompanied by a \$50 non-refundable fee.

McNair Open House

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House will officially celebrate completion of the McNair Scholars space on the first floor of McCain Library on Wednesday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m. The space was renovated during academic year 2017-18 to create classroom, office, and gathering space to support USM's Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. The program, named in honor of the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D., physicist and Space Shuttle Challenger astronaut who died when the Challenger exploded early into flight on January 28, 1986, is supported by the U.S. Department of Education. The program aims to increase the number of first generation/low income and under-represented individuals completing doctoral programs and entering academia. USM's program engages upper-level undergraduate students meeting those demographic requirements in mentored research, assists them in developing poster and oral presentation skills and writing statements of purpose for graduate applications, and prepares them for the GRE. The USM McNair Scholars Program began in 1999 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Current funding, a \$1.16 million renewal awarded last fall, will support the program through September 2021. Currently, twenty-five students are actively-engaged McNair Scholars. The USM McNair Scholars Program is led by Director Carolyn Cawthon and Assistant Director Kimbaya Brown. Any USM faculty member, staff, or student who played a role in the USM McNair Scholars Program at any time as a scholar, mentor, instructor, or administrator is invited to attend.