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

September 2018

DEVELOPMENTS AND RECENT EVENTS

Graduate School Welcomes New Staff Member

The Graduate School is pleased to announce that Michael Howell has joined the staff as Degree Auditor. Michael received his Master of Arts in English at USM and is currently pursuing a second Master's degree in History. He was a teaching assistant in the Computer Science program, where he edited accreditation reports and assisted in the Computers and Society course. Prior to his employment at the Graduate School, Michael worked at the USM Foundation, taught English at Sacred Heart, and was a freelance editor.

Michael Howell

Graduate Student Recruitment Summit Yields Best Practices

Approximately fifty deans, associate deans, graduate coordinators, and interested faculty joined the dean and staff of the Graduate School for the first Graduate Student Recruitment Summit on May 16. Round table discussions fostered discussion about each program's approaches, successes and failures regarding graduate recruitment. The outcome of the summit was a set of "best practices" which capture those ideas and practices proven effective in recruiting quality graduate prospects. These best practices are intended to inform and guide graduate recruitment efforts campus wide so valuable resources will be invested in practices most likely to expand the prospect funnel and achieve increased enrollment of high-quality students. It was acknowledged that in addition to applying these practices, substantial growth in graduate enrollment will also require the development of new and innovative programming to meet contemporary workforce needs. Those efforts must be a priority in the new academic year. Best practices for graduate recruitment include:

1. Establish an informative web presence.
   Recognizing that most prospects search for graduate programs via websites, programs should develop and maintain well-designed, informative, navigable webpages.
   a. While keeping within the common "look" that will be designed during the USM website upgrade, discipline-specific information must be included and accessible
   b. Contact information for key personnel should be clearly visible.

2. Emphasize personal connections with prospects and applicants.
   Unlike undergraduates, graduate students must establish a close relationship with an advisor who will likely mentor them throughout the degree program. Prospects who feel connected are more likely to apply, enroll if admitted, and make successful progress to degree, improving both first-time enrollment and retention.
   a. Develop effective electronic communications with prospects.
   b. Prioritize personal outreach to prospects and applicants by faculty and/or graduate coordinators by phone or email as an essential part of recruiting.
   c. Stay connected with admitted applicants to encourage their enrollment.
3. Educate our undergraduates about graduate school.
   USM's undergraduate programs should provide a pipeline of applicants to our graduate programs. Yet, undergraduates frequently have little or no understanding of the existence or expectations of graduate school and may not consider it as a post-baccalaureate option. Ideas:
   a. Develop senior seminar or capstone courses that introduce students to graduate school.
   b. Create programs for high-achieving undergraduate students that introduce them to the expectations of graduate school and the application process and provide GRE training.
   c. Include an introduction to graduate school in orientation programs for new majors.
   d. Promote undergraduate research.
   e. Host weekend workshops/boot camps to inform students about graduate programs and requirements of a successful graduate application.
4. Establish the practice of rolling admissions for each program.
   Decisioning applicants immediately after completed applications are pushed for review is likely to capture high-quality applicants who apply early. Holding applications to decision en masse is risky because the best applicants are likely to have multiple options.
   a. Review applications as they are completed and pushed to programs, and decision early. For most programs, holding applications for mass review should be discontinued.
   b. Assistantship offers and admission decisions should be separate. New admits can be told assistantship information will be forthcoming.
5. Ensure program relevance
   Many programs face stiff competition from programs at other institutions that may be less expensive or less rigorous. To compete our programs must be relevant, applicable to the field, and stand out from the competition.
   a. Ensure programs include desirable features that set them apart from the competition and meet the needs of targeted students.
   b. Establish programs that partner with business/industry to include practical internships as a part of the program requirements.

Graduate Competitive Travel Awards Support Fall Travel

Last summer, eighteen students were selected to receive Graduate Competitive Travel Awards (GCTA) from among thirty-six applicants. These awards will support the professional development of graduate students by providing funds to assist with travel to professional conferences to present research findings or workshops to learn new analytical methods during the fall 2018 semester. While attending conferences, students will take advantage of activities planned to enhance career development and build professional networks. The Graduate School and the Vice President for

Research help make these opportunities possible through joint contributions to the GCTA. Students chosen for the fall travel awards are listed below. Congratulations to all awardees! A call for applications for spring and summer 2019 travel will be issued later this fall.

College of Arts & Sciences:
   Piyawan Charoensap, PhD in Communication Studies, School of Communication
   Sean Fourney, PhD in Communication Studies, School of Communication
   Haley Dozier, PhD in Computational Science, School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
   Nathaniel Jermain, MS in Coastal Sciences, School of Ocean Science and Engineering
   Joseph Nelson, MS in Biological Sciences, School of Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences
   Megumi Oshima, PhD in Fisheries Management, School of Ocean Science and Engineering
   Krishna Sapkota, PhD in Biochemistry, School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
   Kelli Stockmal, PhD in Polymer Science, School of Polymer Science and Engineering
   Joshua Tropp, PhD in Polymer Science, School of Polymer Science and Engineering
   Carlos Varela, MM in Piano, School of Music
College of Education and Human Sciences:
   Brian Bauer, PhD in Clinical Psychology, School of Psychology
   Samantha Daruwala, PhD in Clinical Psychology, School of Psychology
   Matthew Gretz, PhD, Brain and Behavior, School of Psychology
   Hallie Jordan, MA in Psychology, School of Psychology
   Rachel Martin, MA in Psychology, School of Psychology
   Olivia Preston, MA in Psychology, School of Psychology
   Darcie Yount, PhD in Biomechanics, School of Kinesiology
   Maria Zapetis, PhD in Brain and Behavior, School of Psychology

Teaching Assistant Workshop

Graduate assistants serving in the role of teaching assistant (TA) play an essential role in the educational mission of our institution by teaching many sections of undergraduate lecture and lab courses or assisting faculty with course responsibilities. To help new TA's understand their ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities, and to prepare them to face the challenges of the classroom or lab, the Graduate School held the first New Teaching Assistant Workshop on Friday, August 24 in the auditorium of Scianna Hall. Teaching assistants assuming teaching responsibilities during the fall 2018 semester were required to attend unless comparable training is provided by the student's program or school. Nearly 150 students attended the daylong workshop, which included presentations by USM faculty and staff who shared their expertise on legal issues, policies, and practices essential to the role of TA along with strategies for success in and out of the classroom. Dean Coats expresses her gratitude for their willingness to share their knowledge to help prepare effective TA's. Attendees were required to complete a post-assessment quiz through Canvas successfully to meet all requirements of the workshop. The topics presented in the workshop were:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Greg Pierce, Registrar
- Title IX, Dr. Rebecca W. Malley, Title IX Coordinator
- Campus Action Referral and Evaluation System (CARES, Deena Crawford, Director, Student Counseling Services
- Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA), Scott Dossett, Director
- Managing Emergency Situations and Safety, Rusty Keyes, Assistant Chief of Police, University Police Department
- Academic Integrity, Dr. Cindy Blackwell, Assistant Teaching Professor, School of Communication, Academic Integrity Officer
- Using SOAR from the Instructor's Perspective, Marlissa Northrop, PeopleSoft Trainer Post-workshop assessment instructions, Elisabeth McBride, Graduate Enrollment Management Coordinator, Graduate School
- Effective Teaching: Strategies for Engaging Students and Assessing Performance, Dr. Hugh Broome, Assistant Teaching Professor, School of Mathematics and Natural Science
- Creating a Syllabus, Dr. Mark Miller, Professor, School of Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences
- Professional Behavior in Your Role as TA, Dr. Jennifer Regan, Associate Teaching Professor, School of Biological, Environmental, and Earth Sciences
- Center for Faculty Development, Dr. Kelly Lester, Director, Center for Faculty Development, Associate Professor, School of Performing and Visual Arts

OPPORTUNITIES IN GRADUATE EDUCATION

McNair Scholars Program

The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program) is accepting applications for the 2018-19 program until **Friday, October 5**. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the McNair Scholars Program aims to equip students from populations who are either underrepresented in graduate school or first generation and low income for the transition from undergraduate to graduate programs and to encourage them to pursue PhDs in a STEM, social science, or humanities field. The

Scholars clear waste from a shed destroyed by a tornado months before.

program helps Scholars develop research proficiency through mentored projects, followed by oral or poster presentations at research symposia. They participate in professional development activities, educational and cultural field trips, and campus visits. Collectively, these activities, plus seminars, boot camps, and courses, help the Scholars build résumés that will strengthen graduate school applications while also building transferable skills, such as business and dining etiquette. The broader impact of this federal program is a greater number of college professors from underrepresented or first-generation backgrounds serving as role models for the next generation. To prepare for a busy fall semester, McNair Scholars began the summer with teambuilding activities and community service. In early summer, a storm scattered debris and damaged local homes and properties. Kimbaya Brown, assistant director of the McNair Scholars Program, working with United Way, located people in the area affected by the storm. Scholars spent the day working together with graduate assistants and staff from the Graduate School. The group cleared loose branches from lawns and removed damaged materials from destroyed buildings. For complete information about applying for the program, visit online here.

Professionals in Preparation Engages New Cohort

The Graduate School is excited to welcome twenty-one graduate students, including master's and doctoral students from a variety of disciplines across campus, in the 2018-19 Professionals in Preparation (PIP) program. This professional development program immerses students in a series of seminars, workshops, and special activities with the goal of helping them develop transferable skills important to career advancement. The program includes a focus on communication, leadership, interviewing, business and dining etiquette, publishing and peer review, and more. Faculty, staff, and community members graciously lead seminars and workshops to share their experiences with students. A get-acquainted luncheon on Friday, August 31, kicked off this year's program series. The first workshop, "Effective Voice and Speech Strategies for the Classroom Using the Lessac Voice and Training Work," will be led by Robin Aronson, MFA, Professor of Theatre in the School of Performing and Visual Arts, on September 14. PIP sessions are held approximately twice monthly, on Friday afternoons from 12 to 1 pm.

Three-Minute Thesis Competition Approaching

The annual Three Minute Thesis Competition is right around the corner. The competition requires graduate students to present the importance of their research project to a general audience in three minutes or less using only a single PowerPoint slide as a visual aid. Master's, specialist, and doctoral students may choose to present in one of four categories: 1) arts and humanities; 2) life, health, and environmental sciences; 3) physical sciences and mathematics; or 4) social and educational sciences and business. Preliminary competitions will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, November 7 and 8 beginning at 2 pm. A master's/specialist and doctoral finalist will be selected from each category and receive a $250 award. The eight finalists will compete on Friday, November 9 at 2 pm for the title Grand Champion. The Grand Champion will

receive $1000. Additional awards will be Runner-Up ($750) and People's Choice ($500). All events will be held in the Trent Lott Center Rooms A-D. The Grand Champion will represent USM at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools 3MT competition in Knoxville, Tennessee in February. For more information and to register to compete, visit https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/three-minute-thesis-competition.

Digital Badges at USM

During its final meeting of the 2017-18 academic year, Graduate Council paved the way for the development of digital badge programs at USM by unanimously approving a concept proposal presented by the policies and procedures subcommittee. USM digital badges will recognize the attainment of specialized skillsets learned through accomplishing the requirements of each program. The badge is a visual image linked to data housed online that provides information about the achievements required to earn the badge and the skill is denotes. Increasingly used by universities and industry, badges are a credential that can be affixed to

Image proofs of Foundational and Proficiency badges designed by graphic designer Kat VanSkiver, University Communications. These proofs were affirmed by the policies and procedures subcommittee of Graduate Council. The skill represented by the badge will be inserted in the white box.

vitas, resumés, and social media accounts to strengthen the bearer's professional portfolio. Digital badges are easier to verify and possess greater visibility than physical certificates and meet a wider range of needs for USM's diverse student population. Two types of digital badges will be developed at USM. "Foundational Badges" will be awarded upon completion of non-credit workshops, seminars, and training sessions developed to improve practical and transferable skills, but not credited courses. These badges will not appear on transcripts, but will be available for professional documents and social platforms. "Proficiency Badges" will be awarded for completion of designated coursework with a final grade of "B" or better, and indicate a student's expertise in skills within a discipline. While the specified coursework completed for a badge may be applied to certificate or degree programs, separate applications will be required for badge programs, which are distinct from and meant to complement degree programs.

For more information contact Desira Bailey at (601) 266-4262 or desira.l.bailey@usm.edu or visit the Graduate School website at https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school.