

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

Fall 2017/September

MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM FUNDED!

Congratulations to Carolyn Cawthon, Director of USM's McNair Scholars Program, and the entire McNair team on their successful application for program renewal from the U.S. Department of Education. Funded for 5 years at a total of \$1.16 M, the program supports academic and research opportunities for first generation/low income and underrepresented undergraduate students. The program aims to equip Scholars for the challenges of graduate school with an eye toward their earning a doctorate. The McNair Program, first established in 2000 and serving nearly 425 students over 17 years, is administered in the Graduate School.



McNair Scholars visited Gulf Park, Stennis, and GCRL to experience research activities on those campuses during summer 2017 activities.

ANNOUNCING THE GRADUATE COMPETITIVE TRAVEL AWARDS (GCTA) PROGRAM

The Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice President for Research are happy to announce the jointly-sponsored Graduate Competitive Travel Awards (GCTA) program to assist graduate student travel to conferences, exhibitions, or other scholarly meetings to present original research or exhibit creative works.

Beginning academic year 2017-18 with an annual budget of \$20,000, GCTA will support travel to high impact, national or international meetings. Matching funds from departments or colleges will be expected. A call for proposals with instructions will be issued twice during the academic year, in early October 2017 (for spring and summer 2018 travel) and in late summer 2018 (for fall 2018 travel). Requests will be limited to \$500 for domestic travel and \$1000 for international travel. Eligible applicants must be regular-status, continuing master's, specialist, or doctoral students in good academic standing. The applicant must be enrolled during the semester the application is submitted and during the semester of travel (excluding summer). A funded student cannot receive the award if he/she graduates prior to the dates of travel. A student is limited to one application per funding period and may receive only one travel award per academic year. Proposals will be reviewed and funding decisions made by a faculty committee. More information and a call for proposals will be available on the Graduate School website in late September.

ANNOUNCING GRADUATE RECRUITING ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS AND DEPARTMENTS

The Graduate School is allocating up to \$20,000 per year to assist schools and departments with recruiting efforts through the Graduate Recruiting Assistance Grants (GRAGs) program. Schools and departments may request up to \$2000 per year through a competitive grants program to support recruiting efforts. Successful applications will describe the proposed recruiting activity, the potential for the activity to engage a diverse population of high-quality prospects, and a prospect outreach plan (using Radius) to encourage submitted applications and enrollment of admitted applicants. At the end of one year, a brief quantitative report on the effectiveness of the project will be required. Applications must be submitted through the department chair or school director. Only one application per school or department will be accepted. A call for GRAGs proposals will be available on the Graduate School website in early October. Applications will be due in early November.

GRADUATE SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING EVENTS

Effective Graduate Student Mentorship Lunch and Learn Workshop Coming in October

Faculty and advanced graduate students are invited to learn how to manage real life challenges faced by mentors and mentees at the fall 2017 Effective Graduate Student Mentorship Lunch and Learn Workshop to be held Friday, October 27 from noon – 2 pm in the Union Hall of Honors. Faculty and students will join experienced graduate faculty for a meal and roundtable discussions of case studies describing realistic problems that may arise during a student's degree program. Registration will be required. More information will be available soon on the Graduate School website and through USM Mailout. This workshop may be used to fulfill the graduate mentorship training requirement for graduate faculty status.

Three Minute Thesis® Scheduled for Early November



The Graduate School will sponsor the 4th Annual Three Minute Thesis® Competition November 1-3 in the Trent Lott Center beginning at 2 pm each day. On November 1 and 2, Master's/specialist and doctoral students will compete to become finalists in one of four categories: 1) arts and humanities; 2) life, health, and environmental sciences; 3) physical sciences and math; 4) social and educational sciences and business. Those 8 finalists will compete in the finals competition on Nov. 3. From the finalists a Grand Champion and Runner Up will be selected by the judges, and a

People's Choice winner will be selected by the audience. Prizes include the following: Finalists (\$250), Grand Champion (\$1000), Runner Up (\$750), People's Choice (\$500). Competition details and registration form are available on the Graduate School website at <https://www.usm.edu/graduate-school/events>.



Ecaterina (Kate) Stepaniuc, 2016 Three Minute Thesis Grand Champion

First Friday Hosted Each Month

A crowd of graduate students from all across campus enjoyed donuts and coffee in McCain Library on Friday, September 1 at the first-ever “First Friday” networking event hosted by the Graduate School. Students had the opportunity to meet their degree auditors and other Graduate School staff, and discuss their research and personal experiences with their colleagues. First Friday will be held each month throughout the fall and spring semesters in the second floor breezeway of McCain Library. Graduate students and faculty are invited to attend.



Graduate students got to know each other over coffee and donuts at First Friday on September 1.

CHANGES IN GRADUATE SCHOOL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND IMPROVED OPERATIONS

The Graduate School Welcomes Michaela Donohue

In June 2017 the Graduate School welcomed Michaela Donahue to the staff as Graduate Communications and Documents Specialist. Michaela assists students with formatting theses, capstone projects, and dissertations. She is revising templates and template instructions to make them simpler and more user friendly. She is available to assist students either one-on-one or in workshop settings and has already spent time at Gulf Park, the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, and Stennis campuses to meet the needs of students on the coast along with Hattiesburg students. She has the website and the Graduate Bulletin in her sights as well, so an improved web presence is expected in the coming months and an easier-to-use Bulletin next academic year. Improvements in these resources will enhance Graduate School communications with the university community. Michaela earned an A.A. in English from Pearl River Community College (2013), a B.A. in English with a concentration in creative writing from Mississippi University for Women (2015), and an M.A. in English from Mississippi State University (2017). She was an editorial assistant for the Mississippi Quarterly while pursuing her master’s degree and a Writing Center tutor at both MSU and MUW. Michaela grew up in Hattiesburg and is excited to return to her hometown to begin her career.



Michaela Donohue



Elisabeth McBride

Elisabeth McBride Assumes Expanded Role in the Graduate School

Elisabeth McBride, Assistant Graduate Admissions and Enrollment Software Manager since April 2016, also became Graduate Enrollment Management Coordinator in August. Working alongside Tracy Barnhill in her former role, Elisabeth built and implemented the new Hobson's Radius portal for graduate applications and continues to assist departments with the software. Her expanded duties include developing comprehensive enrollment management strategies with the goal of increasing new graduate applications and readmission applications, and enrollment of new and continuing students using national, state, and local graduate enrollment data to inform decisions. She will work with departments to improve their communication plans to prospective students in Radius and assist Carolyn Cawthon with developing and implementing strategic recruiting initiatives.

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURE UPDATES

Degree Progress Reports Replace Plans of Study Forms for Newly-admitted Graduate Students

Effective for all fall 2017 newly-admitted graduate students and continuing forward, the Graduate School is utilizing degree progress reports (DPR's) to monitor progress to degree. Graduate degree auditors will not accept Plan of Study (POS) forms from these students. As the DPR's had to be built with an effective start date, students admitted prior to fall 2017 will continue to use POS forms through graduation, even if granted an extension to their time limit. Any coursework taken by any student (including fall 2017 admits) prior to January 1, 2015 will not be populated on the DPR. The Graduate School is no longer maintaining updates to POS forms on the website, and they will be removed from the website at the end of the fall 2017 semester. Continuing students enrolled prior to fall 2017 must submit POS forms to their degree auditor for preliminary and final degree audits, so departments should maintain updated POS forms for distribution to those students. The graduate DPR works identically to the undergraduate DPR which many faculty are familiar with using. If faculty are unfamiliar with DPRs and have questions, need assistance, or would like to be trained on how to use the DPR, they should contact Tracy Barnhill.

Approval Form for Dissertations, Nursing Capstone, and Theses Proposals Modified to Include Regulatory Compliance Statements

A student performing research involving human subjects or live vertebrates must obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively, prior to beginning the project. To ensure IRB or IACUC approval has been received, if applicable, the proposal (prospectus) approval form now requires acknowledgement of the regulatory compliance review and a copy of the letter of approval from the IRB or IACUC. As it did before, the form requires signatures of the committee chair, committee members, department chair, and student.

Taking You TO THE TOP!

Elevating you to a higher level of academic and professional achievement