



**FALL NEWSLETTER  
OCTOBER 24, 2016**

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**“If you don’t go after what you want, you’ll never have it. If you don’t ask, the answer is always no. If you don’t step forward, you’re always in the same place.” -Nora Roberts**



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

# Exordium

by Cody Barnes

Advanced degree-seeking students comprise a significant proportion of the total Oklahoma State University enrollment (approximately 20%). Graduate students consistently contribute to university teaching and internationally renowned research. The purpose of the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA) is to enhance the education, health, finances, and professional development of OSU graduate students. The association serves as a liaison between the graduate student body and University administration. Further, GPSGA serves the graduate student body via scholarship, fellowship, and leadership opportunities.

Within GPSGA, an elected executive board and 104 appointed representatives serve as the Oklahoma State University graduate student constituents. As of Spring 2016, representatives from 46 departments and 12 graduate student societies attended the General Assembly meetings. GPSGA members have contributed to events showcasing the research of OSU graduate students, such as the 27<sup>th</sup> Research symposium (156 research papers and 97 posters) and Cowboy Graduate Student Research Gala. The association has also facilitated networking across graduate student organizations, through hosting socials on campus and Stillwater hotspots, such as Eskimo Joes.

GPSGA has empowered the graduate student body through recognition of scholarly achievement and dissemination of fiscal awards. At present, numerous awards are available either annually or each semester. The current annual awards are the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) award, outstanding faculty member, Phoenix award, Graduate Student Group Funds (GSGF), and research symposia awards. Awards currently offered on multiple bases throughout the year are travel grants, research material grants, and co-sponsorship funds.

In the recent term, GPSGA hosted a ceremony for the presentation of the Outstanding GTA, Outstanding Faculty, and the Phoenix awards. Although the vote on initiatives and eligibility for certain funding is restricted to GPSGA members, the association embraces input from the broader graduate student body. GPSGA is a unified voice for the graduate student entirety and has been a prominent advocate in advancement of issue resolution. For instance, GPSGA has achieved designated parking permissions from the Department of Transportation and Parking Services for graduate researchers on home football game days. Further, the GPSGA general assembly meetings are open to all graduate students and are an efficient outlet to voice concerns before the delegation.

The GPSGA takes pride in serving the greater Stillwater community. In the previous term, GPSGA hosted a charity event for the local Mission of Hope Homeless Shelter. We are sincerely grateful for the efforts and donations which made this event possible. The GPSGA officer board is currently proposing the adoption of another charity organization for the upcoming term and we look forward to continuing our service in the community.

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## Ex-President's note

by Catherine Haviland

2016 has proven to be an exciting year for GPSGA! We appreciate all of the extended support from the Graduate College, OSU Administration, Alumni, and Graduate Students! GPSGA was excited to invite graduate students from many departments from the OSU College of Health Sciences campus in Tulsa to join our meetings and events. We look forward to more students joining us in the future! During the spring semester, the executive board was very excited to partake in Research Week as well as volunteer with the Research Symposium! As president, I was excited to see the hard work and industry-leading research conducted by our graduate students here at OSU. I personally want to thank all volunteers and congratulate everyone that presented their research. Furthermore, to those who placed in their categories! The GPSGA Social Committee planned a very successful clothing drive for Mission of Hope during the Spring semester as well! We were very excited to drop off the variety of women's and men's clothing to the shelter, we greatly appreciated those who helped and donated their time or clothing!

In April, GPSGA hosted the Graduate Education Week with multiple great events for graduate students to blow off some steam! The week included an ice cream fundraiser for Mission of Hope, a wonderful afternoon with Pete's Posse, Phoenix Award presentations, and ended the week with a social! The Graduate Student Research Gala also took place in Graduate Education Week, the executive board was excited to host Dr. Kenneth Sewell and Dr. Glenn Zhang to share their research experiences and judge departmental research presentations. It was great to see the research and hard work from OSU's graduate departments and appreciate everyone that participated! At the end of the semester, GPSGA hoped to get the ball rolling by submitting a request for consideration of a change in Game Day parking for graduate student research purposes, which has resulted in accommodations being made Fall 2016. GPSGA also helped with getting individual graduate students new services available through the university as well as their departments. GPSGA is always excited to be able to help with graduate student conference presentation travel reimbursement, research funding, or departmental funding. Finally, we are always try to increase funding going to students. At the end of the spring semester, it was a little bittersweet, but exciting to elect the upcoming executive board for the upcoming year of GPSGA. Congratulations to all that won and good luck in the upcoming semesters!

The executive board and myself would like to thank and appreciate anyone that helped or attended events this past semester! Hope everyone has a great and prosperous 2016! Go Pokes!

Cathy Haviland

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# Faculty Phoenix Award

by Taylor Gbur

Even brilliant minds, such as Albert Einstein, recognized the monumental impact that professors have on students. The relationship between the two is one of reciprocity; they inspire and teach each other in various ways. Out of this interaction blooms creativity, knowledge, achievement, determination, as well as many others. Teachers have a key role in the future, however, they are not always appreciated the way they should be. The Outstanding Faculty Member Award inspires OSU faculty members to work hard, reevaluate themselves, and strive to be better in order to provide more for their students.



On behalf of the Graduate College and the GPSGA, we proudly recognize and congratulate **Dr. Sheila M. Kennison** for her inspirational influence and hard work.

*"I was honored to be selected as a Phoenix finalist and then elated to win the award. Over my 16 years at OSU, I have had the pleasure to work with so many talented and enthusiastic students and be inspired by so many brilliant faculty. Training students in scientific research is my passion. To be recognized for it is truly humbling. I look forward to another 16 years at OSU or more."*

- Dr. Sheila M Kennison



*"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."  
- Albert Einstein*



# Outstanding Graduate Coordinator Award

by Taylor Gbur

Graduate coordinators and their support staff provide an invaluable service to the University and its community of students, faculty and staff. Outstanding Graduate Coordinator Award is one of the few awards provided by GPSGA to recognize the incredible contributions of Graduate Coordinators to graduate education. At Oklahoma State University, we celebrate the extraordinary work of our faculty members; especially those who take pride in the shaping of young minds. The Outstanding Graduate Coordinator Award inspires OSU Graduate Coordinators to motivate graduate students by advising and showing them the right path to successfully graduate on-time.

*"Serving as the graduate coordinator for our department provides me the opportunity to work with graduate students throughout their academic program, providing them with assistance as they develop into successful scientists. This is the aspect of graduate program coordinator that I enjoy. This award was extremely special for me as the nomination and letters of support were provided by current and previous graduate students across my department. Many colleagues overlook the contributions of departmental graduate program coordinators; it is very nice that the graduate college acknowledges our influence and time commitment."*

- Dr. Gail Wilson

On behalf of the Graduate College and the GPSGA, we proudly recognize and congratulate **Dr. Gail Wilson** for her outstanding performance in influencing graduate students at OSU.



## Outstanding GTA Award

by Josephine Akosa

The Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Award recognizes the contributions of graduate students to the teaching and learning at OSU. This tremendously important award honors exceptional GTAs and further reminds the campus that academic excellence through teaching is an essential part of the University's core goals. This inspires students to give increased attention to the educational process at OSU. The award consists of a \$350 cash prize and a certificate. To be eligible for the award, one must be a master's or doctoral student enrolled as a graduate student in the current academic year and have a minimum grade point average of 3.5.



*"I am incredibly honored to have received the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award from GPSGA. I am very passionate about teaching and mentoring students and I was excited to have the opportunity to hone my skills at OSU. It felt so affirming and empowering to be recognized for my efforts as a graduate teaching assistant. I am grateful for this recognition from GPSGA and I am excited that graduate students have such strong representation on our campus."*

- Douglas Knutson

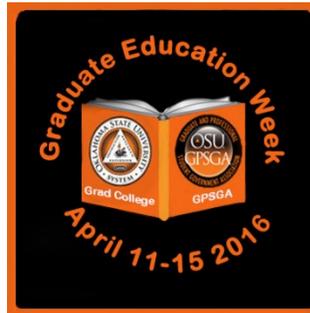
Congratulations, **Douglas Knutson** on receiving the 2015 Outstanding GTA Award!

## Student Phoenix Award

by Hitesh Gaur

Scholarships help students to lessen the impact of rising tuition costs and allow the students to have more time to focus on their studies. The Outstanding GTA Award recognizes exemplary achievement in leadership, scholarship, community and University service, and professional involvement; especially as it relates to involvement with graduate students. The Phoenix Award is given annually to one Master's student and one Doctoral student. The Phoenix Award is also given annually to one faculty member in recognition of excellence in mentoring graduate students. The student award winners each receive a \$350 award from the GPSGA and the Graduate College and all winners will receive formal recognition during an awards ceremony. And the winners will also have their names engraved on the Phoenix Awards plaque located outside the Graduate College offices in Whitehurst Hall.

The Phoenix awards are the highest recognition bestowed by GPSGA especially as it relates to the OSU graduate student body.



Congratulations **Meagan Scott** on receiving the prestigious Phoenix Award!

# GPSGA Events

by Laura Mino

This past February GPSGA saw the largest gathering of Oklahoma State University's best and brightest minds. Organized and executed by Dr. Ken Clinkenbeard, Dr. Satterfield of the Graduate College, and Research Symposium Committee Chair Prashanth Reddy; the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Symposium celebrated the advancements in research made by OSU students. Presenters and supporters filled the Student Union and Starlight Terrace to share ideas, form connections, and progress the body of human knowledge. Over the course of just two jam-packed days, OSU students presented cutting-edge innovations in technology and theory with 156 research papers and 97 posters. The event concluded with an award ceremony banquet to honor over a dozen awardees representing five different fields. Each year the Symposium is made possible by the efforts of volunteer moderators, with over 70 moderators responsible for the success of this year's event.

Temperatures outside began to thaw in April, but OSU's commitment to the research community did not. Graduate students across campus brushed off their professional attire and four dollar words for the Cowboy Graduate Student Research Gala on April 14<sup>th</sup>. GPSGA Social Chairman Kendall Scarlett and the Social Relations Committee created a relaxing and inviting atmosphere for this poster competition in the Starlight Terrace. Highlights of the event included inspiration from guest speakers Dr. Kenneth Sewell (Vice President for Research) and Dr. Glenn Zhang (Professor for the Department of Animal Sciences). At the end of the night, presenters were rewarded for their efforts with awards for Best Poster, People's Choice, and Most Creative Design.

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, the Graduate College held an award ceremony to celebrate academic excellence and leadership. This event was headed by former GPSGA President Catherine Haviland and Vice President Sarah Pons, with the help of Dr. Ken Clinkenbeard from the Graduate College. Recipients of scholarships, grants, and funds from rewards such as Outstanding GTA, Outstanding Faculty Member, and the Phoenix award met in Student Union Council Room 412.

A Spring fundraising event at the Marble Slab Creamery combined sweet treats with

philanthropy to benefit Stillwater's Mission of Hope homeless shelter. Every academic year, the GPSGA Officer Board adopts a charitable organization to devote their time, energy, and attention towards. Last year's selected charity was Mission of Hope, who strive to help homeless individuals become self-sufficient by providing supportive housing, food, comprehensive case management, transportation, and life skills training. Thank you to all the donors for their generosity! Charity nominations are accepted from GPSGA representatives and voted on during general assembly meetings; if you have a charitable organization that you would like to nominate, contact your GPSGA representative today!

Not all GPSGA events mean business cards, fancy clothes, and professional presentations. The Social Relations Committee, under the guidance of Chair Kendall Scarlet, was sure to include some casual get-togethers between the formal galas and networking events. Last semester, the first general assembly meeting of the GPSGA concluded with a rousing ice cream social funded by Dr. Sheryl Tucker. This tradition continued with pizza parties following each subsequent GPSGA event, as well as an Eskimo Joe's patio party on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. But do not worry if you missed out; the fun continues each semester with more social events that are open to all OSU graduate students. Stop by the next event – we would love to see you!

## Research Symposium Awards

by Shivaram Tabibu

The Research Symposium has been an integral part for OSU students to showcase the outstanding OSU research aptitude to the whole world. The symposiums have contributed to the most recent advancements in OSU research in every primary field representing the most cutting edge research of OSU. The Research Symposium Awards have been a great promoting factor to the students contributing to their overall research profile and also creating an awareness of the further innovative research being generated in the particular subfield.

Once again *heartiest congratulations to all the Research Symposium Award winners on*

*behalf of Graduate College & GPSGA. We wish grand success in every step of their life and hope they maintain the OSU research spirit. Go Pokes!*



*"I was, and still am, honored to have been awarded 1st place for my oral presentation during OSU's Research Week 2016. All participants gave excellent, charismatic and informative presentations to be frank, I was pleasantly shocked when my name was announced. I really appreciate the effort that GPSGA and other organizers put into Research Week and am grateful for the opportunity to tell others about my research."*

- Lynne Beaty

*"I am honored and grateful to have been selected as one of the 1st place recipients, amidst a high caliber of researchers. Receiving this award has allowed me to disseminate my research to a broader audience, and I could not be more thankful for the experience."*

- Kristine Chua

*"Hello Readers, I am Jessica Schnaiter-Brasche. I am in my third year of Ph.D. work in Health and Human Performance. My research interest centers around the intersection of women's studies and sport performance at the 27th Annual OSU Research Symposium I had the honor of presenting some of my data on differences in fatigue in women and men. Winning first place in the College of Education category has given me more confidence when presenting my research on bigger stages and I am extremely grateful to Oklahoma State University for their support of researchers!"*

- Jessica Schnaiter

# Graduate Student Group Funds

by Chao Liu

Graduate Student Group Funds (GSGF) from GPSGA are awarded to student groups for them to conduct or promote student welfare activities at OSU. In the Spring semester of 2016, six student groups which are recognized or registered by GPSGA were awarded with this fund:

- English GSA
- Agricultural Economics GSA
- Biochemistry & Molecular Biology GSA
- Psychology GSA
- Student Association for Global Affairs.
- Agricultural Education Communication & Leadership GSA

A total of \$5,000 was awarded for all the groups mentioned above in the last Spring semester based on their good standing with GPSGA, for both the past Fall and Spring semesters. In the past, GSGF has greatly benefitted many graduate student associations in OSU. Each awarded graduate student association used those funds to conduct student welfare activities at OSU. These student welfare activities positively influenced graduate student studies, leadership skills, and communication skills. The goal of GSGF is to help our graduate students best prepare for their future career development.

## QUICK FACTS

# 100%

All the recognized student groups, which are in good standing for two successive semesters with GPSGA and applied for Graduate Student Group Funds received funding!

# 100%

All the student groups who requested a Co-Sponsorship fund and are in good standing with GPSGA received GSGF group funds from GPSGA.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

All the guidelines and forms to apply for these funds are posted on our website at [gpsga.okstate.edu](http://gpsga.okstate.edu). Please do visit our website for more information.



# Student Group Co-Sponsorship Funds

by Forough Nasirpour

One of the outstanding purposes of GPSGA is to try to decrease the financial burdens of student organizations. In this regard, GPSGA provides co-sponsorship funds for those organizations that are recognized student organizations at Oklahoma State University. Graduate or non-graduate student organizations can apply for funds for events or welfare activities each semester, according to GPSGA Co-Sponsorship Fund Procedure & Application Guidelines. In order to receive funding, applicants must be part of a department or organization that has active representation at the GPSGA general assembly meetings. There is also one deadline for each semester.

Here is the list of five student groups and the amount of co-sponsorship funds which were awarded in the spring 2016:

- Art History - \$1,435
- Chemical Engineering - \$346
- English GSO - \$346
- Nutritional Science Club - \$50
- Zoology - \$385

In total more than \$2,500 was spent on co-sponsorship awards last semester. These groups were sponsored by GPSGA for different activities such as exhibitions, talks, and workshops to promote student welfare activities at OSU. These activities strongly impact the student's studies, leadership skills. This is an invaluable opportunity for international students to develop communication skills. GPSGA helps groups by promoting students to be more involved in campus life. GPSGA wants to let these groups focus more on student welfare and less on budgets. so do not be concerned about the budget. Plan your events, and we will support you.

GPSGA makes  
your student life  
memorable!



# Research Material Grants

by Babajide Ojo

Research is an integral part of most graduate students' path to a successful degree. GPSGA provides an opportunity, which offers support to qualifying students. This support aids in the purchase of supply materials and essential equipment for student's research. This opportunity falls in the category of the Research Material Grant which is available to students every Fall and Spring. In Spring 2016, five applicants were approved as beneficiaries of this award to enhance their research activities. Interestingly, eligibility for the Research Material Grant is easily achievable.

To be eligible, the applicant's department must be in good standing with GPSGA, the application must provide a brief description of the research, accompanied with the advisor's signature and contact information. Furthermore, since the award comes as a one-time reimbursement, receipts of expenses for supplies purchased are required with the application. All eligible students are encouraged to submit an application before 5 p.m. December 4, for Fall 2016 and April 29, for Spring 2017.

The majority of the OSU graduate students

# Travel Reimbursement Grants

by Anton Avramov

present their own research at different regional/national or even international scientific meetings, such as conferences or workshops. Unfortunately, not all graduate students have sufficient funding to cover expenses associated with travel tickets, living and registration.

In order to help OSU students to travel, GPSGA provides a chance to get a Travel Award to cover these costs. During the 2016 spring semester, more than 60 OSU graduate students received a travel

reimbursement totaling more than \$22,000. Almost half of the Travel Awards were given to the international students. The most significant part of the

Travel Awards were given to students presenting their papers at national conferences, however three students were reimbursed for international conferences.

*"I am a Ph.D student in the department of geography. I attended the annual meeting of American Association of Geographers (AAG) in San Francisco April 2016 and presented my dissertation work. Thanks to the active participation of FoGG (Forum of Geography Graduate student) in GPSGA, I am eligible to apply for travel reimbursement. GPSGA offers to offset my conference expenses. The application process was smooth: Enyue (Phoenix) Huang, who was the treasurer of GPSGA at that time, sent out multiple emails to keep me informed of my application status. I ended up getting \$500 through my bursar account, which covered the majority of my expenses. I highly recommend every graduate student to take advantage of this precious opportunity."*

-Zhao Yun

*"My name is Amanda Weber and I am a PhD student in the Department of Geography. In the spring of 2016, I presented my research and co-organized a panel on historic spatial epidemiology at the American Association of Geographers annual conference. The travel grant I received from the GPSGA substantially offset the costs to attend the conference; without those funds it would have been difficult. The process to apply for funding is simple which is greatly appreciated, as this was the second time I have applied and received funding. I look forward to applying for the travel grant for Spring 2017 and have had a wonderful experience with GPSGA."*

- Amanda Weber

The importance of the scientific meetings should not be underestimated because students have a chance to collaborate with the top level scientists and gain new knowledge and a unique experience. GPSGA Travel Awards are a great opportunity for OSU graduate students to present their own scientific achievements at higher level scientific meeting all over the world.

## QUICK FACTS

# \$22,063

Total amount GPSGA granted to graduate students who presented their research on the national and international conferences in the Spring 2016 (Quarter III & Quarter IV).

## Quarter III

Thirty eight students received travel reimbursements; three students presented their research papers at the international conferences and the remaining presented their research in national conferences. Out of 38 students, 17 of them are international students.

## Quarter IV

Twenty eight students received travel reimbursements and presented their papers at national conferences. Out of 28 students 11 of them are international students.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

All the guidelines and forms to apply for these funds are posted on our website at [gpsga.okstate.edu](http://gpsga.okstate.edu). Please visit our website for more information.





## GPSGA EXECUTIVE TEAM 2016-17

President – Solmaz Bastani

Vice-President – Kendall Scarlett

Treasurer – Engyue Huang

Secretary – Jessica Schnaiter

Parliamentarian – William Mimbs

Intergovernmental Liaison – Milad Mohebbali

Social Chair – Alisa Wei

Communications Director – Prashanth Reddy

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### Communication & Publications Committee – Fall 2016

Chair: Prashanth Reddy, Communications Director

Anton Avramov

Babajide Ojo

Chao Liu

Cody Barnes

Courtney Hurt

Forough Nasirpour

Hitesh Gaur

Josephine Akosa

Kortney Rist

Laura Mino

Lindsey Allenbach

Sarah Schobert

Shivaram Tabibu

Taylor Gbur

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