OSU 3MT Thesis Held

Oklahoma State University Graduate College held its inaugural 3MT® competition July 2013. On April 10th, 2014, OSU held its second 3MT® competition sponsored by Haliburton as part of Graduate Education Week. Eleven finalists who won their college’s competition presented their research.

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition developed by The University of Queensland. The competition challenges research degree students to present a compelling oratory of their thesis or dissertation topic and its significance within three minutes. 3MT® develops research communication skills and aids in the development of research students’ capacity to effectively explain their research in language that is understandable to all.

Four awards were handed out. A panel of judges selected the winners, who received cash awards from $1,000 for first, $750 for second, $500 for third and $250 for a people’s choice award. The winners, their departments, and the title of their presentations are:

First place: Amanda Curtis, animal science, MS candidate, "Using innate immunity to Fight Off Infections Without the Use of Antibiotics"

Second place: Brittany Bolt, biomedical sciences, PhD candidate, “The Battle Against Chronic Pain”

Third place: Christian Tormos, chemical engineering, PhD candidate, “Regenerating Your Heart”

People’s Choice award: Courtney Cowley, agricultural economics, PhD candidate, “Green Milk and Ham: The Economics of Converting a ‘Waste’ into a Resource”

The finalists are featured on OSTATE.TV, and Ms. Curtis will be representing Oklahoma State University in the regional 3MT® competition.
Dear Graduate Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administration,

This year has been extremely gratifying and fruitful year for the Graduate and Professional Student Government Associations executive officer and members. This year feels like it has gone by really quickly (I didn’t even notice that it was the end already) and has come to a bitter-sweet end. Bitter because it was a lot of work for the Executive Committee and GPSGA representatives and liaison, but definitely sweet as well because I would never trade this experience for anything else in the whole world. This letter will attempt to recap all of the activities this past year organized by GPSGA, conferences that the Executive Committees attended to represent GPSGA and OSU, awards given to our wonderful graduate students, and my personal reflection as this GPSGA president for the 2013-2014 school year.

First, I would like to talk about the success of the annual Welcome Reception organized by the Executive Committee to welcome new graduate students and celebrate the current graduate students in OSU. We were able to talk about the importance of graduate education at OSU and show new graduate students that their voices are being heard on campus through their elected officials in GPSGA. We were lucky to have over 200 guests during our Welcome Reception and we hope to continue throwing successful social events for the graduate students.

GPSGA holds general assembly meetings every other week for all graduate and professional students to attend. Attendees participate in discussion of funding allocations and issues pertaining to graduate students. On average, 72 graduate students attended each meeting and gathered knowledge from guest speakers who shared information on health insurance, graduate policy changes, entrepreneurial start-up processes, and career options, plus many others. This year, we were lucky enough to have had a great treasurer and finance committee who’ve handled the money matters of GPSGA flawlessly. GPSGA was also given higher amount of money for domestic travel reimbursement and we were able to assist with group funding for GSO’s over the future academic year. This year we also voted on a new graduate student organization – Botany GSO – for “recognized” status with GPSGA! Welcome to all new Botany GSO members!

GPSGA was also able to represent OSU at the National Association of Graduate and Professional Students (NAGPS) national conference at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI. Yours truly and the Vice-President, Cynthia Dobbs were able to attend the national conference and showcase other universities about the different changes that have happened at OSU. We were also able to come back with a lot of different ideas. Montashirur Rahman—Rafi (Communications Director), Amoha Das (Communications Director-elect), and Tara L. Gradney (Intergovernmental Liaison-elect) attended the NAGPS regional conference at Baylor University in Waco, Texas this last March. Rafi and Tara presented about the activities of GPSGA this past year at OSU. Rafi and Tara were also elected as the new International Student Concerns Chair and Social Justice Chair, respectively during the regional conference.
GPSGA Presidents Letter...

The spring semester was a very action-packed time for graduate students on OSU campus! Not only were students making progress on research, completing qualifying exams, and trying to prepare for graduation, but also many were also very active in the 25th Annual OSU Research Symposium and Research Scholar Conference. The research week committee, headed by Yasaswi Vedula with the help of Dr. Clinkenbeard and Dr. Satterfield of the Graduate College, who were all very busy throughout the entire year preparing for this week-long event. The committee reviewed research abstract submissions, organized oral and poster presentations, recruited moderators and judges, and checked score sheets to determine placement of winners.

This year’s Research Symposium took place in the Student Union during the third week in February; Awards were given to 1st and 2nd place undergraduate and graduate student winners in 7 categories: Biological Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Education, Humanities, Diversity Issues, Physical Science and Technology, and Social Sciences. I would like to thank Yasaswi Vedula, Dr. Clinkenbeard, Dr. Satterfield, the Graduate College, and the Office of Research and Technology Transfer for all of their help with organizing and sponsoring awards for Research Week!

Graduate Education Week was held the first week in April of this year to align with the national celebration of Graduate Appreciation and Education. Grad Ed Week featured such events as the Phoenix Awards Ceremony, the Outstanding Graduate Coordinator & Supporting Staff Ice Cream Social, Pile Higher and Deeper Speaker Jorge Cham, GPSGA Movie Night, Graduate Education Week Breakfast, GPSGA Snack and Social Feat: Department of Music and Department of Human Sciences and Zoology, and GPSGA Lunch and Social. I would like to thank Amanda Curtis, GPSGA Social Chair for all of her hard work organizing all of the events during Grad Education Week. I would also like to thank the Department of Music for sharing their talents with us during Grad Ed Week. This week has definitely made me extremely proud of being a graduate student at OSU because of all that we can offer! A big “CONGRATULATIONS” goes out to the Phoenix Award winners Gabriela Orquera from Entomology and Plant Pathology (Masters), Daniel Asamoah from Management Sciences and Information Systems (PhD), and Dr. Sundararajan Madihally from Chemical Engineering (Faculty). I would also like to congratulate the outstanding Teaching Associate, Jodi Riek, from Human Development and Family Science for her outstanding work as a TA! And no graduate student would be successful without the help and support from their graduate coordinators and supporting administration and staff — this year there were many nominees for the outstanding Graduate Coordinator and Supporting Staff awards, but only one winner in each category could be selected — Congratulations to Dr. Julie Koch from Counseling Psychology and Ms. Debra Danley from Animal Science.

This year, the Executive Committee along with other members of GPSGA have taken our service responsibility seriously by raising money for the victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and collecting necessary supplies for food banks here in Stillwater. Last November, GPSGA was able to collect around $500 to be donated and another chance for raising money came to fruition during the Spring semester with the help of Student Association of Global Affairs (SAGA) and Sigma Iota Rho (SIR). GPSGA along with SAGA and SIR were able to collect another $1000 in the total of $1500 to be donated through Gawad Kalinga—a local 501 © 3 organization housed in the Philippines. For more information please visit http://www.gifworld.com/home.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow executive team – Cynthia Dobbs (VP), Shannon Mallory (Secretary), Chunmin Lang (treasurer), Robert Parrish (parliamentarian), Montashir Rahman-Rafi (communications director), Rachel Thornburg (intergovernmental liaison), and Amanda Curtis (social chair). I am very proud and lucky to have worked with you all! I know that this year has been challenging for us at times, but if you are like me – I’m sure you have learned a LOT about the interworking of a university system and have grown as an individual and leader. I have no doubt in my mind that all of you will go on to do great things! I would like to also thank the GPSGA members who elected me last year into this position, and the current GPSGA members who supported me during meetings and said “Yes” when I asked for your help and when I needed volunteers. I would also like to thank Dean Tucker, Rosslyn, Jodie, Dr. Van Delinder, Dr. Clinkenbeard and Dr. Satterfield in the Graduate College, Kent Sampson and Ruthie with Campus Life, and Kathy, Debbie, and Dr. Bird in the Office of Student Affairs for answering my MANY questions and for your personal support with resolving issues that arose at any moment. You are all wonderful, caring, and giving people! Thank you for this unforgettable opportunity to serve OSU and the Graduate Student body! I am confident that the newly-elected officers will be amazing next year and I am very happy to leave the organization in such capable hands.

Sincerely,

Catherine Molleno
Congratulation to GPSGA Advisor Dr. Sullivan

Congratulations to our very own Dr. Sullivan for winning the 2013-2014 Outstanding Student Organization Advisor on Wednesday, April 23rd during the President’s Leadership & Service Recognition Reception. Dr. Sullivan has been a great asset as an advisor of GPSGA for the Executive Committee and the General Assembly representatives/liaison.

She has helped us be great leaders this past year and we are thankful for everything she has done for the Executive Committee this year. Dr. Sullivan’s support has helped GPSGA follow our goals for this year and we know that she will be an amazing advisor for the newly elected officers.

We would like to congratulate Dr. Sullivan for this wonderful recognition and thank her for what she has done for graduate students through GPSGA, her department, and the graduate college. We are all lucky to have Dr. Sullivan as one of our biggest supporters as students here at OSU. The Graduate and Professional Student Government Association is definitely lucky to have her as our advisor! Congratulations once again!

Congratulation to Outstanding Graduate Coordinator Dr. Julie Koch

Congratulations to Dr. Julie Koch for receiving the Outstanding Graduate Coordinator Award. This award recognizes the exemplary service of faculty who coordinate graduate programs. Dr. Koch serves as the Training Director for the Doctoral Program in Counseling Psychology in the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology. In this role she maintains strong relationships with the counseling psychology department, and works with both the students and their advisors to encourage success. Dr. Koch received several strong letters of support. One supporter stated, “Dr. Koch is an innovative educator and exhibits extraordinary initiatives as a leader for her program.” While another supporter stated, “Dr. Koch is a tireless student advocate who seeks out opportunities to support doctoral students at every stage in the Counseling Psychology program.” Once again the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA) would like to congratulate Dr. Koch and wish her continued success in her future here at Oklahoma State University.
Two officers from OSU GPSGA were elected on NAGPS south central regional board. Montashirur Rahman Rafi - Communications Director for GPSGA for the term 2013 - 2014 was the officer elect for the position of International Students Concern Chair. Tara Gradney - officer elect for the position of Intergovernmental Liaison for GPSGA for the term 2014 - 2015, was also elected for the position of Social Justice Chair. Amoha Das - officer elect for the position of Communications Director for GPSGA for the term 2014 – 2015 also attended the conference.

Baylor University in the town of Waco, Texas was the hosting partner for this year’s South Central Regional Conference for the National Association of Graduate Professional Students better known as ‘NAGPS’. The conference was held between the 28th and 30th of March and saw participation from a number of universities including Baylor, Oklahoma State University, University of Arkansas, University of Missouri, Arkansas University, University of North Texas, Missouri University of Science & Technology, Mississippi State and Texas Tech University.

The conference itinerary had participating universities talk about their respective student government organizations their achievements and challenges, interjected with keynote speakers touching on some very relevant as well informative topics like GradsHaveDebt2, Zotero workshop, Panel on University Administration, Women in the Academy and Ways to Nurture Leadership. The conference gave an opportunity to the SGA representatives from all the universities to mingle, share ideas and thoughts, learning from mistakes, challenges and achievements and also have an all-around good time. Key facilitators for the conference were Chris Bissex, President at Baylor University Graduate Student Association, Brandon Milonovich, NAGPS Vice President and Kirstofferson Culmer, NAGPS Director of Outreach.
On Tuesday, April 9th a large gathering of OSU graduate and undergraduate students, as well as many faculty members were treated to a thought provoking, yet humorous discussion on procrastination. Dr. Jorge Cham, the creator of the Piled Higher and Deeper comic strip (PhDcomics.com), gave a 45 minute presentation and 15 minute Q and A session on many of the perils of graduate school, along with some of the subtle and often overlooked advantages of occasional procrastination.

The event began with a brief history of his educational background in engineering and robotics at Stanford University that included a clip of a “cockroach like” robot he created. That clip, as he put it, “is really the only way that I can get anyone to look at my research.” He is, after all, much better known for his comics than for anything he has accomplished academically. He explained that the impetus for this talk and his current comic career, stemmed from the bouts of procrastination he experienced during his years in graduate school. Those bouts helped him discover his passion for writing comics.

Dr. Cham then proceeded to illustrate the Power of Procrastination. Aided by several of the strips and characters from his comics, he began to show that “procrastination is what you do when you’re doing what you want to be doing.” The problem with this, in life, but especially in academia, is that there is always something else that we should be doing. In response to this type of thinking, Dr. Cham quoted one of his Stanford professors, Dr. Bernie Roth, who said, “In life, there’s nothing you have to do …”

Now, while this quote perhaps shouldn’t be taken too literally, the implication is clear. At times it is okay to just relax a little and do something that we want rather than something we feel we should. No one truly makes us do this graduate work, we do it by choice. The moral of Dr. Cham’s story was that, sometimes the real graduate experience isn’t about the material we are learning in class, but more about the skills and personal discoveries we learn along the way.
Outstand Doctoral Student: Daniel Asamoah

Daniel Adomako Asamoah got Phoenix Awards as the “Most Outstanding Doctoral Student” at OSU. He completed his masters and doctoral degree at OSU from the department of Management Science and Information Systems. He has published three journal articles and presented in several conferences. He has shown outstanding excellence during his graduate study and also as a teaching assistant. His friend who was a former Vice-President in GPSGA and colleagues has recommended him as a skillful, hardworking and courteous person.

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant: Jodie Riek

Jodie Riek has won the Best Graduate Teaching Assistant Award for the year 2013 – 2014. She is from the Department of Human Development and Family Science teaching Early Childhood Education Program. Jodie started her career as an Early Childhood Assistant in Australia and currently she is serving as Graduate Teaching Assistant for the Early Childhood Education Program since 2012. In addition to that, she is the advisor for the club of the same. She has been teaching and training students since 1992. Jodie strongly believes that learning should be actively engaging and hence she design her own learning experiences that are active, participatory and fun. Her vast knowledge and profound experience makes her deserving this award. We certainly appreciate Jodie for her efforts and hope she keeps up the good work to bring laurels to the institution and herself. We wish her all the very best in her future endeavors.
Outstanding Faculty Member:

Dr. Sundararajan V. Madihally

Dr. Sundararajan V. Madihally is the recipient of this year’s faculty Phoenix award which recognizes an exemplary achievement of the OSU faculty, especially related to graduate students. Dr. Madihally is an associate professor from school of chemical engineering at OSU, serving graduate students in multiple ways: graduate students’ research advisor, a departmental graduate coordinator, and a faculty advisor of chemical engineering graduate students association.

Dr. Madihally is a pioneer of biomedical option in chemical engineering. He has designed a biomedical research platform at departmental level. Dr. Madihally has authored few textbooks/book chapters, and is currently serving on the editorial board of many peer-reviewed journals as well as a manuscript reviewer. He has more than 60 peer reviewed journal publications, 30 proceedings, and presented more than 200 times.

Dr. Madihally has made significant improvements to chemical engineering graduate program at OSU, such as graduate students funding, recruitment of quality graduate student, easily accessible web content for graduate students, since he took over as a graduate coordinator in 2011. He helped establish Chemical engineering graduate students association (ChEGSA) at OSU three years back and is promoting it, thereafter, as a faculty advisor. ChEGSA organizes professional development as well as social activities for graduate students in the department.

Dr. Madihally is truly contributing to advance the graduate education at OSU. His students describe him as a selfless mentor and a shining example of excellence in academia, while he believes himself to be fortunate to mentor them. Dr. Madihally’s academic achievements undoubtedly make him a deserving candidate for Phoenix award which is a highest recognition by OSU GPSGA.
In 2014, the Phoenix award committee recognized Gabriella Orquera, a student of Entomology and Plant Pathology, as the outstanding masters student. Gabriella was described as a highly motivated individual with dynamic personality and a great team player by her colleagues, friends and advisor. Gabriella posses enough mettle to inspire graduate and undergrad students of any discipline.

Originally a native of Ecuador, Ms. Orquera is currently pursuing an MS in Entomology and Plant Pathology. She is a very diligent student at coursework and industrious researcher at the same time. She always maintained a GPA of 4.00 and in the last three years she has been an author or co-author on 10 abstracts and presentations with two publications. And her thesis work is expected to produce three more publications, which is truly outstanding. She presented her works at several symposium on-campus, including the Research Week Symposium and the BMDGSA symposium, as well as taken her work to the American Phytopathological Society meetings that occur around the country.

While continuing to be an active member of the scientific community, she is also involved with on-campus activities through GPSGA as a representative this year and has been a member of two committees. She was also involved in the Research Symposium Committee for the 2014 Research Week in OSU. She helped the chair and co-member to facilitate and organize the symposium.

In her own word, MS. Orquera described, “Hard work is the key. Besides that, balancing research and personal life is a challenge, yet it is a must to acquire the perfect balance.” She is expected to finish her MS degree in Spring 2014. After that she wants to start her PhD in Entomology and Plant Pathology in fall 2014 and continue her works as a research assistant. We, from the newsletter committee wish her the best wishes for her future.

Debra Danley is the 2013 winner of the Outstanding Graduate Support Staff Award. Ms. Danley has served the Animal Science Graduate program since August 2002 and assists with every aspect of the graduate program. Her dedication to student recruitment and careful attention to graduate student concerns speak to her invaluable contributions to the program and the graduate student body.

Ms. Danley has also contributed to the advancement of the Animal Science Graduate Program through her development of a thorough record for the program. Furthermore, this detailed attention played a significant role in the program’s contributions to the National Research Council’s Assessment of Research Doctorate Programs, which was listed as “Top 3 in the USA” in the 2010 NSF survey.

The Animal Science Graduate Program’s appreciate of Ms. Danley’s departmental contributions is evident through her strong nomination for this award. Her helpful attitude, friendly demeanor, and attention to everything from personal problems to academic concerns show how Ms. Danley embodies the spirit of the Outstanding Graduate Support Staff Award.
The Malaysian Student Society hosted a Malaysian Cultural Night in the Student Union Ballroom on March 7, hoping to locate Malaysia on the map for the guests. Through an evening of dance, music, food, and fun, more than 300 attendees from Stillwater, Tulsa, Edmond, and even as far as Wichita, experienced the rich cultural heritage of Malaysia right here in Stillwater.

OSU’s very own Malaysian 24 Seasons Drum troupe opened the event with a grand number. Then, in accordance with the theme “Malaysia Warisanku: A Celebration of Heritage,” the programs for the evening traced the history of Malaysia and told the story of how various cultures came to converge in this small tropical peninsular nestled in the heart of Southeast Asia. Malaysian students from University of Tulsa and the University of Central Oklahoma also participated in the event and performed two traditional dances: the Dikir Barat and the Chinese Fan Dance.

Throughout the night, guests had the opportunity to take part in various interactive activities, including a batik design competition and raffle draws. Of course, they also got to sample exotic Malaysian delicacy, ranging from coconut milk rice to fruit salad served with shrimp paste.

While the evening began with a blast of energy, it ended with a snapshot of the colorful cultures that define Malaysia. The fashion show that showcased the different traditional outfits of the various ethnic groups in Malaysia is followed by a choir that combined a traditional folksong, “Rasa Sayang,” with modern rap, thus uniting tradition and modernity.

More than locating Malaysia on the map, the event took the guests on a historical and cultural tour of Malaysia, giving them a glimpse of this rich and diverse cultural gem hidden in Southeast Asia.
Third installment of the annual student water conference was held in OSU Stillwater campus on April 10th and 11th. This conference is organized by Professor Dr. Garey Fox, the Orville L. and Helen L. Buchanan Chair of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department. The Conference is supported by the Orville L. and Helen L. Buchanan family trust and USDA-NIFA National integrated water quality project. The conference featured participation from thirty eight graduate and ten undergraduate students from eleven different universities across the nation. The participants presented their research on various issues concerning water resources through posters and oral presentation. The conference was attended by a large number of faculty and students from different departments in the OSU.

The conference opened with a roundtable discussion on different issues relating to water use. This roundtable discussion was facilitated by Chris Stoner of USDA NRCS, Chris Neel of Oklahoma water resources board and Greg Kloxin of OCC. In the roundtable discussion the facilitators shared their experiences on present status of water resources in state of Oklahoma.

The Buchanan lecture was one of the major highlights of the conference. This lecture was provided by Dr. Russell Persyn who is the watershed Engineering manager of San Antonio River Authority. Dr. Persyn provided valuable insights into stream and watershed conservation projects and shared his experiences on working in industry, academia and private sector. Dr. Persyn also provided helpful tips to graduate students on forwarding their careers after graduation.

The conference also featured an interactive talk from Rachel Felice, a recent OSU graduate from the Biosystems and Engineering department. Ms. Felice currently works for the US Army corps of Engineers. In her talk, MS Felice and her husband Robert Felice talked about their experiences as graduate students and their transition into workforce.

The conference was concluded with an award reception in which outstanding poster and oral presenters were awarded. This conference provides graduate as well as undergraduate students with a unique opportunity to showcase their research, build a network and learn about the state of research on water resources.
OSU Automation Day: 7th March, 2014

The OSU Automation society proudly hosted its successful 4th Automation Day on March 7th (Friday). The day was kick-started by Dr. Russ Rhinehart’s presentation on “Automation Opportunities and its Ways”, which was attended by students from OSU and Tulsa Univ. Later Rakshit Allamraju, and Sarvesh Gore, introduced the Automation contest, “Path Planning of a Quadrotor in an Obstacle Environment,” followed by lunch.

The contest was kicked off right after the lunch and teams of students and guests from industry participated enthusiastically. Julie Schaad a visiting student from France won the first prize in the contest. A total of 9 posters were presented in various automation and control categories by students from OSU. We had 4 judges from industry Mr. Marc Trammel (OG&E), Dr. Anand Vennavelli (FRI), Mr. Mike Resatarits (FRI), and Dr. Tony Cai (FRI). Heni Fitriani from civil engineering won first place for her poster titled comparative study of predictive emission models.

After the Poster Presentation competition, Mr. Marc Trammel from OG&E gave a keynote presentation about industrial applications of control in a power plant which was followed by dinner during which the OSUAS newsletter...
Communications and Publications Committee Spring 2014

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