

Graduate Student Senate Annual Report 2013 – 2014



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Kent State Graduate Student Senate 

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A Message from the Executive Chair,

The earliest records of Kent State University's Graduate Student Senate (GSS) date to 1977. Since this time, GSS has been concerned with the professional advancement, mentoring, and support provided to graduate students at Kent State. Through funds provided by the Center for Student Involvement and Division of Graduate Studies/Research and Sponsored Programming, we allocate monies to graduate students for domestic and international travel as well as provide assistance to student-focused research endeavors. Through an annual Graduate Research Symposium, we encourage collaborative research and draw attention to the diverse scholarship being conducted by graduate students at Kent State. Monthly events called GradFest enable students to meet, share stories, and network with other graduate students from across campus. Past events have been held at local parks and local establishments (e.g. 157 Lounge, Dominick's, Zephyr). Community support has been received from Guys Pizza and other businesses to provide food discounts and door prizes.

In the last several years, Graduate Student Senate has increased graduate presence on University committees, grown to host the largest collegiate research event in northeast Ohio, and funded thousands of students in conference travel and research experiences. In 2012, we introduced a black squirrel logo which is now used across campus to represent GSS.

This 1st Annual Report highlights the accomplishments of the Graduate Student Senate during the 2013- 2014 academic year. As the first edition of this report, this document also considers the broader achievements of the Senate in the context of our purpose and importance to graduate students at Kent State University. For more information about Graduate Student Senate and resources available to graduate students, please follow Kent State Graduate Student Senate on Facebook© or visit our website (<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss>).



Michael J. Allen
Ph.D. Candidate, Geography
Executive Chair
2012 – 2014

I. Executive Board



Left to right: Dr. Kate McAnulty, Deb Lamm, Alex Lesak, Michael Allen, Lindsey Westermann Ayers, Krysia Kornecki, Natalie Fox, Larrie King

Michael Allen
Executive Chair
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Geography

Krysia Kornecki
Advocacy Chair
Master's Student
Department of Geology

Larrie King (2014)
Information Services Chair
Master's Student
Visual Communication & Design

Lindsey Westermann Ayers
Executive Vice Chair
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Sociology

Natalie Fox
Research Symposium Chair
Master's Student
Higher Education & Personnel

Deb Lamm
Administrative Assistant Chair
Master's Student
Higher Education & Personnel

Alex Lesak
Finance Chair
Master's Student
College of Public Health

Adam Cinderich (2013)
Information Services Chair
Ph.D. Student
Department of Geography

Dr. Kate McAnulty
Division of Graduate Studies, Advisor
Director, Ph.D.
Graduate Student Services

II. Executive Chair Summary

Over the years, Graduate Student Senate (GSS) has become recognized throughout the University community for our commitment to graduate students at Kent State University. We have become an instrumental component of welcoming students to campus through our involvement in Graduate Student Orientation (GSO). Through our commitment to service, many members have served on diverse committees focused on accessibility, educational policy, and higher administrative searches. Some positions permit graduate students to vote, while on other committees graduate representatives serve in an observer role, providing insight into the inner workings of an institute of higher education. This spring, graduate students were given the opportunity to talk with President-Elect Dr. Beverly Warren about graduate education at Kent State University.



After meeting with graduate students, President-Elect Dr. Beverly Warren received an honorary GSS black squirrel.

Our mission is to afford graduate students with the necessary information to make their experience at Kent enjoyable and worthwhile. This mission includes dissemination of University policies, providing financial support for professional development and research, and giving graduate students a voice at the second largest university in Ohio. Our financial stability enables students to apply and participate in competitive award processes by writing and reviewing proposals. Through conference travel and professional development, graduate students at Kent State are better prepared for achievement moving forward in academic or non-academic careers. Funds are distributed to hundreds of students each year for our 3 award categories. Our annual Graduate Research Symposium has been a staple at Kent for nearly 30 years and has experienced significant growth over the last 5 years. This event provides faculty, students, and staff the opportunity to participate and witness the broad range of scholarship being conducted at Kent State. Our involvement in the community is also an important pillar of success for Graduate Student Senate. Volunteering in local shelters, collecting food and supplies for women of domestic abuse, and raising money for hurricane victims are just some examples of what we have been a part of in recent years. At monthly gatherings called Gradfest, graduate students are given the opportunity to network with each other. In all, the Graduate Student Senate provides graduate students an opportunity to be a part of Kent State University- to connect with one another, mentor incoming students, and offer a voice for graduate students.



Students socialize at the monthly event organized by GSS called Gradfest.

III. Executive Vice Chair Summary

Kent State University graduate students serve as representatives on a number of university committees instrumental to the planning and operation of the institution. The primary charge of Graduate Student Senate (GSS) Executive Vice Chair (EVC) is to ensure graduate student representation on all committees that require it and/or request a graduate student representative. This includes temporary and permanent committees throughout the Kent State University campus and community. At the start of each academic year, the EVC puts out a call to all graduate students, through GSS Senators, soliciting volunteers to serve as committee representatives. The EVC then coordinates representatives' involvement and the committee reports that representatives submit after attending each committee meeting. At each GSS General Meeting, representatives may choose to present their committee reports to the Senators or they may instead choose to have the EVC present their reports to the senate body. During the 2013-2014 academic year, graduate student representatives served on the thirteen active university committees (listed below). Two of the thirteen committees have been newly added relative to the others: the University Diversity Action Council (UDAC) welcomed graduate student representation beginning in the Fall of 2012, and the Accessibility Committee welcomed graduate student representation during the current academic year. GSS was able to identify representatives to serve on each of the thirteen university committees. As a result, representatives were able to inform all graduate students, through GSS Senators, about a diverse array of university events and issues, including the university's reaffirmation of accreditation process, the approval of new courses and budgets, and initiatives to enhance technological resources and transportation.

Committee Representation

- Accessibility Committee
- Advisory Committee for Academic Assessment
- Educational Policies Council – Graduate Council
- Faculty Senate
- Faculty Senate Budget Advisory Committee
- Intercollegiate Athletics Committee
- University Council on Technology
- Student Media Policy Committee
- University Diversity Action Council (UDAC)
- University Teaching Council
- Public Safety Advisory Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- University Libraries Advisory Committee

IV. Finance Chair Summary

The primary charge of the Graduate Student Senate Finance Chair (FC) is to manage the budget, allocate funds, and coordinate the award categories with other board members. With oversight from the Division of Graduate Studies, our resources are allocated by panels of graduate students.

A. Domestic Travel Award

Description: A non-competitive travel award that supports research and the professional development of Kent State University graduate students. This award funds 50% (up to \$350) of student-incurred travel expenses to the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The Domestic Travel Award is offered fall, spring, and summer semesters of each academic year. Full- and part-time graduate students whose departments are in good standing with GSS are eligible for the Domestic Travel Award once per academic year.

2013 – 2014 Awards (as of April 20, 2014)

Total Amount Awarded = \$147,873.14

Total Awards: 471

B. International Travel Award

Description: The purpose of this award is to promote the professional development of Kent State University's graduate student community, to support diversity by allowing students the opportunity to immerse themselves in foreign cultures, and to extend Kent State University's recognition on an international level by providing financial assistance for international networking, research, and professional development. This award funds up to \$1,500 of student-incurred travel expenses outside the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The International Travel Award is offered fall, spring, and summer of each academic year. Full- and part-time graduate students whose departments are in good standing with GSS are eligible for the International Travel Award. See Research Symposium Chair section for specific information on this award.

C. Research Award

Description: A competitive award that supports research endeavors of Kent State University graduate students. This award funds up to \$2,000 of research related expenses. The Research Award is offered fall and spring of each academic year. Full- and part-time graduate students whose departments are in good standing with GSS are eligible for the Research Award. The Research Award can be used for data collection, analysis, and equipment. It cannot be used for travel to conferences, as other award categories fulfill that need. See Advocacy Chair section for specific information on this award.

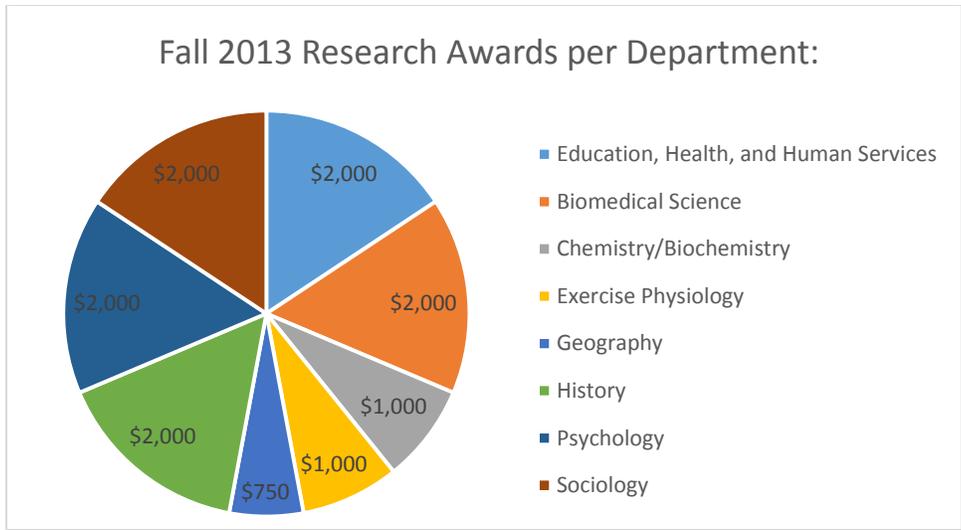
V. Advocacy Chair Summary

The primary charge of the Graduate Student Senate Advocacy Chair (AC) is to organize philanthropic events which are generally held in the fall semester. Past events have included volunteering at local animal shelters, organizing clothing drives for women shelters, and collaborating with other campus organizations (Greek Life; Sociology) to collect food or money to be used in our community. The second duty of the AC is to coordinate the Research Award. The Research Award is a competitive award that supports research endeavors of Kent State University graduate students (See Finance Chair section for description).

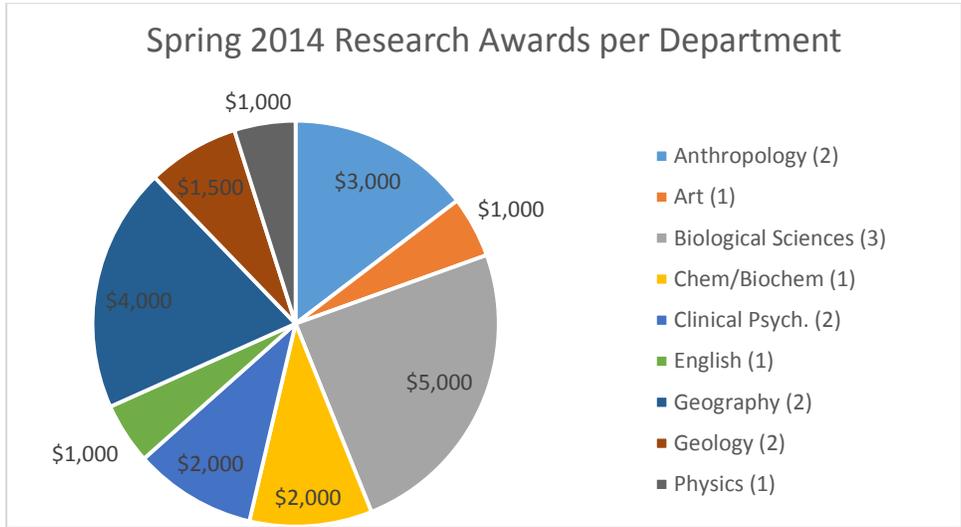
A. Research Award

In the past year, many improvements have been made to the Research Award process:

- New, clear instructions and guidelines were made available online
- Clear rubrics were made available online prior to the application deadline
- Complete online system: One letter of recommendation (email) and application submission
- Restructured the vocabulary in the application to be inclusive of the arts



Research Award Awards per department for Fall 2013. Each department is represented by a single student awardee.



Research Award Awards per department for Spring 2014. Number beside each department represents the total awardees.

Total Amount Awarded: \$33,250

Fall: \$12,750

Spring: \$20,500

Total Awards: 23

Fall: 8

Spring: 15

Fall Awardees

Maiko Xiong
Yong Sukseo
Melissa Edler
Joe Lynch
Tawfik Khattab
Marius Paulikas
Meghan Novisky
Dwight Myer

Spring Awardees

Savina Sirik
Jonathon Gray
Piotr Popov
Matthew Harding
Mark Rhodes
Andrew Gerwitz
Sony Pandey
Varun Kumar
Gina Cirino
Ross Tangedal
Joe KarloEVC
Gail Williams
Gayan Mirihana Arachchilage
Morgan Chaney
Patrick Rich

B. Advocating for Graduate Students

For the 2013 - 2014 academic year, several advocacy issues related to graduate students at Kent State University were addressed.

- Health Insurance payment plans regarding dependents
- Language clarification in school delay and cancelation notifications
- Exercise physiology program availability to graduate students

Graduate Student Senate Service Initiative:

Paws and Prayers Goods Drive: November 5th through December 6th, 2013

Through the University, GSS is a 501c3 organization. Senators promoted a goods drive across the University to benefit various shelters and organizations. Students collected and donated dog and cat food, toys, beds, and treats, among other goods.

About Paws and Prayers: The group is made up of dedicated foster homes that care for orphaned dogs and cats until forever homes can be found. Their mission is to rescue, rehabilitate, and re-home unwanted dogs and cats; to prevent overpopulation through spay/neuter; to restore dignity, trust, and quality of life for neglected, abused, and homeless dogs and cats; to find the best home for each dog and cat in their care; to educate adopters and the community on pet care, spaying/neutering, training, and suitable animal selection for their lifestyle; and to provide a network of resources, volunteers, and fosters for animals, animal shelters/pounds, and the community.

VI. Research Symposium Chair Summary

The primary charge of the Graduate Student Senate Research Symposium Chair (RSC) is to organize the annual Graduate Research Symposium, which is held each spring at Kent State University. The purpose of the Graduate Research Symposium is to display, recognize, and celebrate research and scholarship across all disciplines. This event is a wonderful opportunity for both graduate and undergraduate students to gain experience presenting in an academic setting, receive interdisciplinary feedback regarding their work, network with faculty and peers, and earn a mark of distinction for their resume or curriculum vitae. The Research Symposium includes oral and poster presentations as well as an Awards Luncheon with monetary prizes given to the best presentations in each category. The second task of the RSC is to coordinate the International Travel Award (See Finance Chair section for description).

A. International Travel Award

In the past year, many improvements have been made to the International Travel Award process:

- New, clear instructions and guidelines were made available online
- Clear rubrics were made available online prior to the application deadline
- Complete online system: One letter of recommendation (email) and application submission
- Restructured the vocabulary in the application to be inclusive of the arts

Total Amount Awarded: \$18,250

Total Awards: 14

Fall 2013	
Chemical Physics	\$1,500
Physics	\$1,500
Curriculum & Instruction	\$1,500
Applied Linguistics	\$1,500
Geography	\$500
Art History	\$1,500
Evaluation & Measurement	\$1,500
Total Fall 2013 Awarded	\$9,500

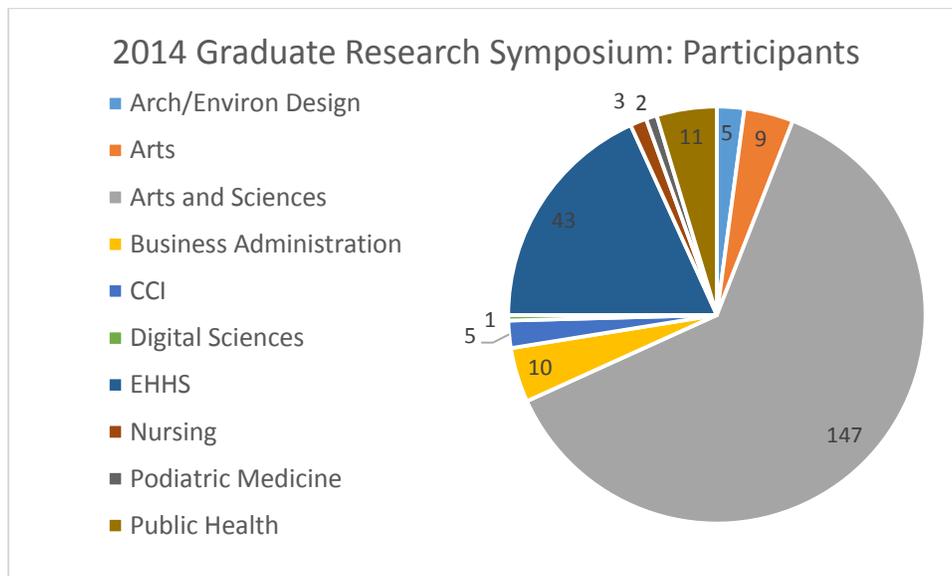
Spring 2014	
Modern and Classical Language Studies	\$1,500
English	\$750
Translation Studies	\$1,250
Art History	\$1,500
Mathematics	\$750
Latin Literature	\$1,500
Geology	\$1,500
Total Spring 2014 Awarded	\$8,750

B. Graduate Research Symposium

Graduate Student Senate’s 29th Annual Graduate Research Symposium was held on Friday, April 11, 2014. It was the largest Symposium to date, with a total of 236 presentations and nearly 70 faculty and staff members serving as judges and volunteers. This year’s theme was *Sharing the Vision: A Community of Research*, and the Awards Luncheon speaker was Dr. Melody Tankersley, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs at Kent State University. The 30th Annual Graduate Research Symposium will be held on Friday, April 3, 2015.

Recent Symposium growth

Year	Total participants	Oral	Poster	Masters	Doctoral
2010	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2011	73	29	44	20	47
2012	104	57	47	51	70
2013	175	87	88	76	90
2014	236	108	128	65	162



Students representing the academic colleges at Kent State in the 2014 Graduate Research Symposium.



Attendees at the Awards Luncheon await Dr. Tankersley's presentation.



Graduate students explain their poster presentations.

VII. Information Services Chair Summary

The primary charge of the Information Services Chair (ISC) is to manage the GSS website, social media presence, and keep records. Records include a comprehensive list of Senators and Department/Unit stakeholders such as chairs, business managers, and graduate coordinators. In addition, meeting minutes and reports are written by the ISC and archived online for convenience. GSS enables departments (units) to elect Senators to serve on the General Senate. Each Senator is responsible for providing pertinent information to their colleagues and serving as a voice for their constituents. GSS meetings are held once per month and attendance is required for GSS funding support. Below are the names of the represented academic units and respective Senators for the 2013 -2014 academic year. More information about Senators responsibilities may be obtained from our Bylaws. All KSU graduate students are represented by one of the following Senators.

2013 – 2014 GSS Senators

Anthropology: Matt Hamilton
Applied Engineering, Sustainability and Technology: Lauren Woolum
Architecture: Kiley Maas
Art: Roger Boggs
Biological Sciences: Jennifer Remus
Biomedical Sciences: Lori Showalter
Business Administration: Geoffrey Hill
Chemistry & Biochemistry: Randall Breckon
Computer Science: Mazen Al Zyoud
Digital Science: Raza Shahzad
Economics: Bruce Pucci
English: Jessica Heffner
Foundations, Leadership, and Administration: Hallie Mast
Geography: Mark Rhodes
Geology: Inoka Widanagamage
Health Sciences: Keith Burns
History: Mallory Neil
Journalism & Mass Communication: Andrea Meluch
Library and Information Science: Amber Rodriguez
Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences: Robin Eastman
Liquid Crystal Institute: Leah Bergquist
Mathematics: Marina Terzi
Modern and Classical Language Studies: Christopher Merkel
Music: Jaclyn Kurtz
Nursing: Sureeporn Suwannaosod
Philosophy: Ryan Ausperk
Physics: Lewis Sharpnack
Political Science: Joshua Testa
Psychology: Scout McCully
Public Health: Krystel Tossone
Sociology: Fritz Yarrison
Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum: Vanessa Klein
Theater and Dance: Ryan Patterson
Visual Communication Design: N/A (Previously, Larrie King)