



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE
ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE ANNUAL REPORT | 2014-2015

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GSS
— est. 1977 —

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@KSUGSS



The 2014–2015 academic year was a remarkable one for the Graduate Student Senate, full of outstanding achievements and incredible growth. From the number of graduate students attending GradFest, to the number of applications for each of the travel and research awards, we have seen exponential increases this past year.

We also celebrated the 30th Annual Graduate Research Symposium with nearly 300 presentations of research from graduate students in over 30 academic units! This was our largest Graduate Research Symposium yet and we are very much looking forward to future symposia!

As a university, we began a new era of leadership, with President Beverly Warren completing her first academic year and Dean Mary Ann Stephens retiring from a successful career in higher education. Dean Stephens has played an integral role in graduate education at Kent State University. From being a mentor and leader to creating opportunities to support underrepresented students, she has truly made a positive impact for many at the university.

From the beginning, President Warren initiated conversations around graduate education at Kent State University through student focus groups. She has also demonstrated her support through reaching out to include the Graduate Student Senate as part of her Listening Tour as well as addressing graduate students as the keynote speaker during the 30th Annual Graduate Research Symposium.

The Graduate Student Senate has also undergone changes this past academic year, with respect to new Senators and Executive Board members, as well as revised award guidelines and processes. We are constantly looking to improve our organization to better meet the needs of a diverse graduate student body. While evaluating award processes this past year, we incorporated student-based focus groups and surveys to allow for a more holistic review of challenges within the current system.

This is our second year publishing an Annual Report, which focuses on highlighting the many ways that Graduate Student Senate strives to represent and support graduate students at Kent State University. I hope you will take the time to read the many exciting stories regarding our progress this past academic year.

To the exciting future ahead,



Alexandria M. Lesak
Master's Student, Public Health
Executive Chair
2014–2015



Alexandria Lesak
Executive Chair
Master's Student
College of Public Health



Fritz Yarrison
Vice Executive Chair
Doctoral Student
Department of Sociology



Gordon Cromley
Finance Chair
Doctoral Student
Department of Geography



Andrea Meluch
Advocacy Chair
Doctoral Student
College of Communication
and Information



Scout McCully
Symposium Chair
Doctoral Student
Department of
Psychological Sciences



Mark Rhodes
Information Services Chair
Master's Student
Department of Geography



Yeo Jung Yoon
*Administrative Assistant
Chair*
Doctoral Student
Department of Political
Science



Dr. Kate McNulty
Advisor
Assistant Dean of Graduate
Studies

Anthropology

Morgan Chaney, Andrew Skrinyer

Applied Engineering, Sustainability, & Technology

Lauren Woolum, Nayzaritza Morales

Architecture

Cathleen Matuzak, Anjanette Barrick

Art

Zachary Wollert

Biological Sciences

James Redfearn, Jennifer Remus

Biomedical Sciences

Jessica Krieger, Will Hamlet and Gina Wilson

Business Administration

Matuesz Lozykowski, Doreen Matthes & Christina Bills

Chemistry & Biochemistry

Randall Breckon, Sonya Adas

Computer Sciences

Mazen Al Zyoud

Digital Sciences

Mahieja Reddy

Economics

Bruce Pucci

English

Audrey (Lehr) Berkemeier, Rebekah Taylor & Christopher McCracken

Fashion

Sophia Adodo, Lauren Brallier

Foundations, Leadership, & Administration

Kara Kirby, Kathryn Klonowski

Geography

Krystal Levstek, Chris Willer

Geology

Wade Jones, Sebastian Dirringer

Health Sciences

Sara Harper, Kylene Boka

History

Philip Shackelford, Mallory Neil

Journalism & Mass Communication

Maja Bajac-Carter, Shawn Starcher

Library and Information Science

Andrea Wittmer

Lifespan Development & Educational Sciences

Robin Eastman, Elizabeth Egert

Liquid Crystal Institute

Leah Bergquist, Larry Honaker

Mathematics

Lopamudra Chakravarty, Marina Terzi

Modern & Classical Language Studies

Michael Joseph, Kora Maczkowska

Music

Samuel Boateng

Nursing

Chris Rankin, Chutarat Akkarawongvisit

Philosophy

Daniel Robinson, Adam Shatsky

Physics

Derek Haney

Political Science

Amanda Clark, Sweta Sen

Psychological Sciences

Adam Ulmen, Alexandra Chong

Public Health

Suparna Navale, Sunita Shakya

Sociology

Matthew Pfeiffer, Elena Fox

Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum

Karen Tollafield, Vanessa Klein

Theater and Dance

Ryan Patterson

Visual Communication Design

Rachel Hellgren

As a graduate student organization, the Graduate Student Senate provides professional development, financial support, community involvement & networking opportunities to advance all graduate students at Kent State University in their academic journey.

The professional responsibilities of an academic can be summarized into three main categories: research, teaching, and service. As Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is the governing body for all graduate students at Kent State University, it represents a service component of graduate training for those individuals who are senators or executive board members. In addition, GSS is charged with providing representation at the university level on a number of committees across Kent State. These positions are wonderful opportunities for professional development in the service aspect of academia. Additionally, the opportunity to participate in committee work at the university level is a privilege. GSS is honored to have committees request graduate student representation. This is a testament to the quality of feedback and perspective graduate students provide while serving on committees.

ACTIVE COMMITTEES WITH GRADUATE STUDENT 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
- University Teaching Council
- Public Safety Advisory Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- University Libraries Advisory Committee
- Committee on Administrative Officers

This year, GSS appointed representatives to fourteen active committees throughout the university. The Executive Vice Chair is responsible for the coordination of representation. Once appointments are made, the representatives then attend all committee meetings and report back to the Executive Vice Chair and Senate. This allows for information discussed within each committee to be disseminated to the graduate student body through each Senator. This process provides the most direct and concise method for the distribution of pertinent information to all graduate students at Kent State University.



ACCESS TO THE STUDENT RECREATION & WELLNESS CENTER

In the last year Graduate Student Senate, the representative body for graduate students at Kent State, has had several students express concerns regarding the costs that are incurred to use the Kent State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center while enrolled in Thesis II or Dissertation II credit hours. Graduate students would like free access to the SRWC regardless

of student status (Note: Some departments pay membership fees with assistantships for graduate students on Thesis II and Dissertation II credit hours, but this is not universally true). GSS has spoke to the SRWC director and is working to increase communication between graduate students and the SRWC staff.

2014-2015 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Fall 2014 Women's Center Drive

The Women's Center is a Kent State University program that facilitates professional and education development for women across all Kent State University campuses. GSS collected non-perishable food, children's toys, and diapers to help benefit female students in need. Graduate students from across the university donated 8 large boxes of goods.

Spring 2015 Miller Community House

The Miller Community House is a local shelter in Kent, Ohio, dedicated to helping individuals struggling with housing and personal needs. GSS collected non-perishable food, toiletries, and personal items (e.g., blankets, towels). Recently, the Miller Community House took in several Kent State University graduate students who were left homeless after a fire in their apartment building.

Through the University, GSS is a 501c3 organization. GSS chose to focus on local organizations within the University and Kent community. As a body of graduate students, GSS is tasked with promoting philanthropic events, as an opportunity for graduate students to give back to the community.

The 2014-2015 academic year has represented a period of increased demand in support for travel awards. The GSS Domestic Travel Award (DTA) is an award that supports research and professional development of Kent State University graduate students. It is the largest expense in the Graduate Student Senate budget. It is required that students who receive this award are traveling to conferences within the United States, Canada or Mexico and presenting research. Full- and part-time students whose departments are in good standing with GSS are eligible to receive one DTA per academic year. The award reimburses 50% of eligible expenses up to \$350.00. This award is offered at the beginning of the fall, spring and summer semesters.

Due to the increased demand for this award, several improvements were made to better manage the demand, but also maintain the spirit of the award. A DTA Committee was established to

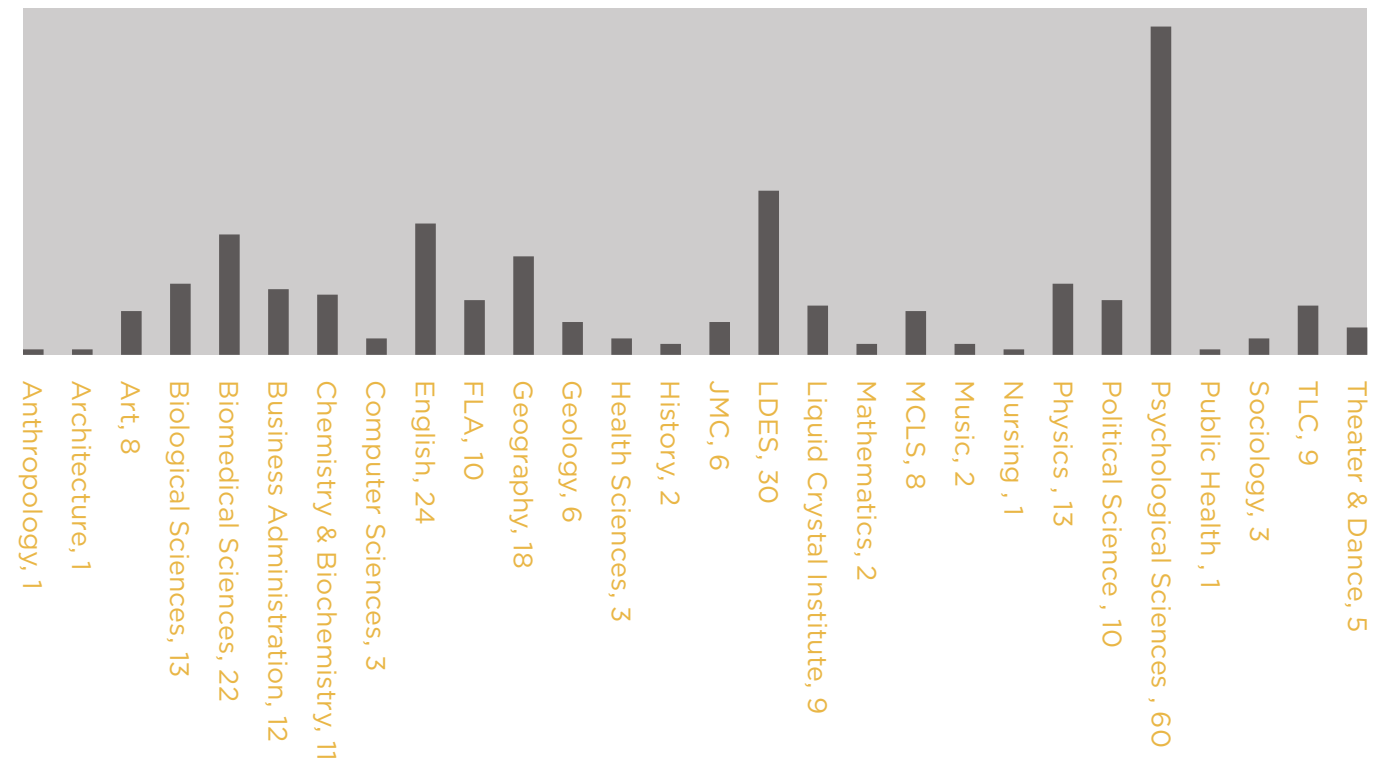
reevaluate all aspects of the award. During the fall semester, applications were awarded based upon the requirement that they provide proof of presentation. Concurrent with this change, the DTA Committee proposed an improvement of randomizing the selection of applicants should the demand exceed available funds. This was implemented for the spring and summer 2015 semesters. The aim of the DTA Committee has been to streamline the processing of the award while speeding up reimbursement, and creating a fair selection method when the demand for the award exceeds available funds. Options to provide more substantial improvements for the following academic year are currently being discussed.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL AWARD METRICS

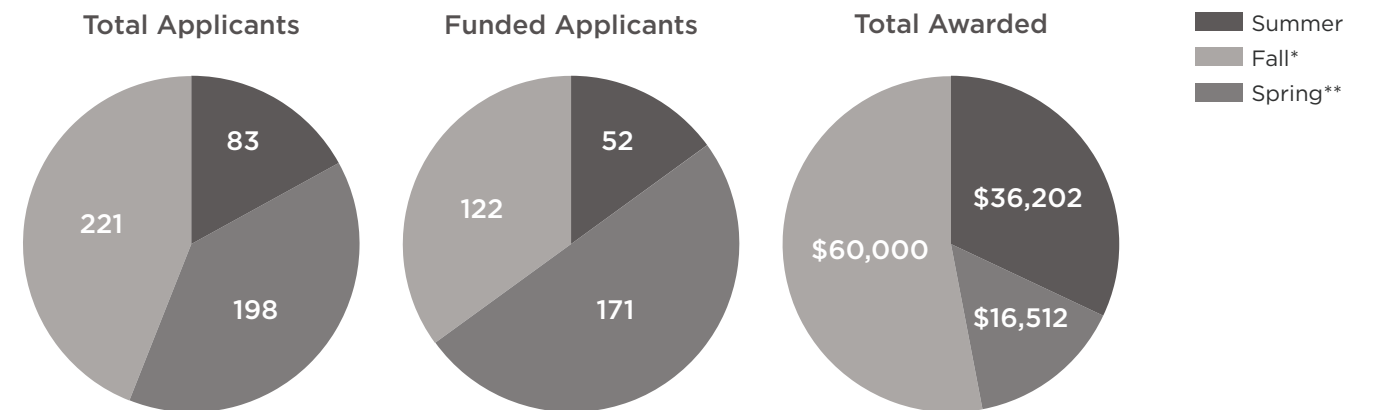
Semester	Total Applicants	Funded Applicants	Total Awarded
Summer	83	52	\$ 16,512.67
Fall	221	122*	\$ 36,202.80
Spring	198	171**	\$ 60,000.00
Total	502	345	\$ 112,715.47

*Using a modified selection process of proof of presentation
 **Number derived from total available funds

DEPARTMENT BREAKDOWN OF AWARDS



DOMESTIC TRAVEL AWARD CHARTS



The International Travel Award (ITA) is a competitive award that provides financial assistance for international networking, research, and professional development by Kent State graduate students. The ITA promotes development of Kent State University's graduate students, supports diversity through exposure to foreign cultures, and extends Kent State University's recognition on an international level. The ITA funds up to \$1,500 of student-incurred travel expenses outside the United States, Canada, and

Amount Awarded 2014–2015

\$ 17,500

Number of Students Awarded 2014–2015

12

Countries Visited

10

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 ITA.

The ITA guidelines were updated in Summer 2014 to provide clearer instructions regarding technical aspects of the application requirements, including re-daction of personal information & length limitations.



AWARDEES

Art

Noraliz Ruiz, Rachel Smith

Biological Sciences

Jennifer Remus, EmmaLeigh Given

Biomedical Sciences

Philip Iffland

Geography

Michael Allen

History

Denise Jenison

Lifespan Development and Educational Sciences

Emily Mupinga

Modern & Classical Language Studies

Elizabeth Nelsen

Psychological Sciences

Shannon Claxton, Brian Don

Sociology

Megan Shaeffer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Applied Engineering, Sustainability, & Technology

Lauren Woolum

Biological Sciences

James Redfearn

Business Administration

Hillary Mellema

Chemistry & Biochemistry

Randall Breckon

Foundations, Leadership, & Administration

Natalie Fox

Geography

Mark Rhodes, Gordon Cromley & William Kiskowski

Health Sciences

Keith Burns, Sara Harper

Lifespan Development & Educational Sciences

Yvette Medoza, Jesse Wray & Robin Eastman

Nursing

Tamra Courey

Political Science

Yeo Jung Yoon

Psychological Sciences

Scout McCully (Chair), Shannon Claxton

All graduate students are invited to serve on the review committee for the International Travel Award each semester. This commitment includes reviewing each blinded application based on an established rubric. Upon assessing all applications, the review committee convenes to discuss the applications and ultimately determine which applications receive the International Travel Award.

We would like to thank each graduate student who served on the International Travel Award committee this past academic year. We are so appreciative of your time and dedication to this process.



The Research Award (RA) is a competitive award that supports research related expenses for Kent State University graduate students. The RA promotes research development and discovery across a variety of academic disciplines. The RA funds up to \$2,000 of student-incurred research related expenses and is offered in the fall and spring semesters. Full- and part time graduate students whose departments are in good standing with GSS are eligible to receive one RA per academic year.

Graduate students from several departments (e.g., geography, health sciences, EHHS) indicated that the current deadline for the Research Award

hindered their ability to meet eligibility standards, specifically IRB requirements, for the award. The Advocacy Chair met with IRB, and moving to a mid-semester deadline was advised. The Advocacy Chair also surveyed the Senators to determine if the current deadline presented similar challenges in other departments across campus. Almost 80% of the Senators indicated they would prefer a mid-semester deadline due to the IRB requirements. Moving forward, the Advocacy Chair is looking to adjust the Research Award deadline to mid-semester with the Senator's approval.

RESEARCH AWARD METRICS

Semester	Total Applicants	Funded Applicants	Total Awarded
Fall	41	6	\$ 5,960.00
Spring	45	9	\$ 7,999.00
Total	86	15	\$ 13, 959.00

AWARDEES

- Anthroplogy**
Michelle Bebber
- Biological Sciences**
James Redfearn, Angela Freeman & Binaya Adhikari
- Biomedical Sciences**
Aidan Ruth
- Liquid Crystal Institute**
Sahhil Sandesh Gandhi
- Chemistry & Biochemistry**
Chamila Gunathilake, Sonya Adas
- Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum**
Jennifer Toney
- English**
Joshua Murray
- Exercise Physiology**
Brandon Pollock
- Geography**
Cadey Korson
- Political Science**
Kristen Traynor
- Sociology**
Meghan Novisky, Megan Shaeffer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Anthropology**
Morgan Chaney
- Art**
Zach Wollert
- Art History**
Andrea Maxell
- Chemistry & Biochemistry**
Debalya Bhattacharyya, Randall Breckon
- Geography**
Mark Rhodes
- Health Sciences**
Sara Harper
- Library & Information Science**
Heather Flynn
- Mass Communication**
Maja Bajac-Carter, Shawn Starcher
- Mathematics**
Lopamudra Chakravarty
- Modern & Classical Language Studies**
Nathan Cardenas
- Sociology**
Elana Fox

All graduate students are invited to serve on the review committee for the Research Award each semester. This commitment includes reviewing each blinded application based on an established rubric. Upon assessing all applications, the review committee convenes to discuss the applications and ultimately determine which applications receive the Research Award.

We would like to thank each graduate student who served on the Research Award committee this past academic year. We are so appreciative of your time and dedication to this process.



The Graduate Research Symposium is a springtime event hosted by the Graduate Student Senate which features oral and poster presentations by graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines. Faculty and graduate students serve as judges for groups of presentations sharing similar themes or representing common areas of study. The symposium is concluded with an Awards Luncheon which features a keynote address and presentation of awards to the winning graduate students. Each awarded graduate student receives an award certificate and a monetary prize of \$100.

The symposium offers benefits for students with any range of presentation experience and skills. For those with minimal presentation experience, the symposium provides an opportunity to speak about research and receive interdisciplinary peer and faculty feedback. The multidisciplinary nature of the event is one of its key features; GSS is dedicated to fostering the multidisciplinary nature of the event, welcoming all forms of scholarship, from empirical research to works of art.

Graduate Student Senate's 30th Annual Graduate Research Symposium took place on Friday, April 3, 2015 in the Kent Student Center. The symposium was the largest to date, with 289 student presentations and 90 faculty, staff, and administrator judges. The symposium was also the most diverse symposium to date; nearly every GSS academic unit was represented. The theme, Three Decades of Discovery, celebrated the 30th anniversary of the symposium—recognizing our past achievements and looking to the future ahead. Kent State University President Dr. Beverly Warren delivered the Keynote Address during the Awards Luncheon. The 31st Annual Graduate Research Symposium will be held on Friday, April 22, 2016.

Increase in Presenters Since 2010

723%

Masters Students Presenters 2015

130

Doctoral Students Presenters 2015

159

ORAL PRESENTATION AWARDEES

Art

Sophia Adodo

Biological Sciences

Angela Freeman, Ryan Schoeneman

Biomedical Sciences

Monica Burgett, David Cunningham

Business Administration

Paul Mills

Chemistry & Biochemistry

Sonya Adas, Gayan Mirihana Arachchilage

Computer Sciences

Christian Newman

English

Amanda Stovicek

Foundations, Leadership, & Administration

Shakhnoza Yakubova

Geography

Thomas Ballinger, Kathryn Hannum & Stian Rice

Health Sciences

Amal Albeshri

Journalism & Mass Communication

William Kelvin

Physics

Brian Hunt

Political Science

Amanda Clark

Psychological Sciences

Shannon Claxton, Jenna Wall

Sociology

Brooke Long, Meghan Novisky & Nancy Weissman

Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum

Karen Tollafeld

POSTER PRESENTATION AWARDEES

Anthropology

Andrew Kramer, Alexa Stephenson

Applied Engineering, Sustainability & Technology

Nuttapong Phantkankum

Architecture

Daniel Armagno, Cathleen Matuzak, Alexa Copeland, Tyler Middendorf, Christopher Moyer, Christine Scaglione & Caleb Heller

Biological Sciences

Lydia Heemstra, Shruti Jain, James Redfearn & Jonathon Van Gray

Biomedical Sciences

Gaelle Muller-Greven

Chemistry & Biochemistry

Jibin Abraham Punnoose

Health Sciences

Hayden Gerhart

Lifespan Development & Educational Sciences

Yolanda Mahoney, Emily Mupinga

Music

Noraliz Ruiz Caraballo

Public Health

Diana Kingsbury

Teaching, Learning, & Curriculum

Elizabeth Lattime, Jennifer Toney

Visual Communication Design

Joshua Kruszynski



GSS hosts monthly social events called GradFest which enable students to have fun and network with other graduate students from across campus. Each GradFest is held in a downtown establishment where GSS provides pizza and a raffle of prizes of Kent State University gear such as mugs, shirts and a large stuffed black squirrel.

The seven GradFests held during the 2014-2015 year were hosted at 157 Lounge, Dominick's, The Local Public House and Zephyr Pub.

Number of Facebook Likes

506

Number of Followers on Twitter

180

Increase Over Time

In April 2014, we had 377 likes on Facebook and 84 followers on Twitter





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For more information visit kent.edu/graduatestudies/gss