

SUMMER 2016

gradmatters

NEWSLETTER FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE UIC GRADUATE COLLEGE



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DEAN'S WELCOME



In this issue of GradMatters, I am happy to celebrate our strengths and to appeal to our alumni and friends to help us to sustain these worthy initiatives in the face of difficult budgetary times.

Celebrations

A key function of the Graduate College is to help students financially negotiate the costs of graduate school. We have several outstanding graduate students who each year win our competitive stipend and research awards. I invite you to enjoy the profiles of a current Abraham Lincoln Fellow (page 3) and a former Dean's Scholar (page 4).

A primary goal of mine when I began as Dean was to increase services for graduate students, particularly professional and skills development opportunities to prepare students to successfully negotiate graduate school and to prepare them for their future careers. I am pleased to say that with the help of excellent colleagues in the Graduate College, especially Theresa Christenson-Caballero, we now offer nearly 50 workshops in four different areas: academic skills, job skills, life skills, and wellness, in addition to a number of networking opportunities for graduate students all across campus. The annual Graduate Student Appreciation Week boasted over 350 attendees March 14-18, 2016. (See page 5.) In addition to our courses for international teaching assistants and for the responsible conduct of research, we will offer a basic writing course for graduate students starting in Fall 2016, and have implemented a series of teaching courses that have been combined into a campus teaching certificate, all through the efforts of Dr. John Coumbe-Lilley, a colleague from the College of Applied Health Sciences.

The diversity efforts in the Graduate College have always been at the forefront, largely due to the pioneering efforts of former Dean, Dr. Clark Hulse. I am very pleased to announce that our Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) is celebrating thirty years of success. Created to introduce underrepresented undergraduates to academic research experiences, SROP sought to promote the entry of these students into both graduate and

professional programs. The initial cohort in 1986 had six students. We now have over 1,000 UIC SROP alumni! To complement this effort, Dr. Lunaire Ford started the Fellows Mentoring Initiative in 2013, to bring together underrepresented graduate students from across campus to share their research and form a supportive peer network.

Concerns

As you are well aware, the Illinois state budget crisis has left public universities with shortfalls. Without funding since July 1, 2015, UIC has been riding out the crisis better than many of our other colleagues in the state; however, the Graduate College and UIC graduate students have already felt the impact with the elimination of one fellowship program and uncertainty about the funding of others. The Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois (DFI) Fellowship Program, sponsored by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), has not received funding due to the budget crisis. The SROP and Abraham Lincoln Fellowship for underrepresented students are also at risk as they are funded by off-campus sources.

Fortunately, the Graduate College has been able to continue to our internal support of graduate student stipends and research, but honestly, our ability to support students has never matched our peers, especially in Chicago. Those students who win our awards are amazing, but there are many more incredible students that deserve funding.

Final Request

With the state budget crisis and likely cuts to any future funding to the university, our graduate students need your help more than ever to fund their education and research. Please consider donating to the Graduate College at <http://grad.uic.edu/giving> to support graduate student fellowships and our other initiatives. Your donations can help to diversify the future faculty of America, fund internships, and to support tomorrow's innovators and scholars.

Karen J. Colley

Dean and Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics



Images on page one: "Engraved in Stone: Desert Shamans in South America," by David Reid, Anthropology, and "Glacier Hopping," by Benjamin Alsp, Earth and Environmental Sciences. Above: "The red, white, and great blue," by Mason Fidino, Biological Sciences. These images placed first, second, and third respectively in the 2015 Image of Research Competition co-sponsored by the Graduate College and the University Library. With both moving and static image categories, the 2016 competition closes June 30, 2016.

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ENGAGED PHILOSOPHER

**MYISHA CHERRY, PHD CANDIDATE,
PHILOSOPHY**

"I am a philosopher and educator. Yes, there exist philosophers who are Black and are women." Thus starts doctoral student Myisha Cherry's online biography (<http://www.myishacherry.org/bio/>).

Born in Wilmington, Delaware and raised in Norfolk, Virginia, Myisha Cherry earned a bachelor of arts in philosophy at Morgan State University in Baltimore and then a master's in divinity at Howard University, where she first stepped in front of a classroom. One suspects that she found teaching to be a natural fit for her magnetic personality and her strong sense of social justice. For more than a decade, Cherry has taught in Baltimore County (Community College of Baltimore County and the University of Maryland) and in New York City (The Fortune Society, St. Francis College, St. John's University, York College, Long Island University, John Jay College, Columbia University, and Liberty Leads). Her courses have ranged from the traditional "Intro to Ethics" and "Intro to Philosophy" to interdisciplinary courses on death and dying, on re-entering society after incarceration, and on being and knowing. "Philosophically," she notes, "I find forgiveness, character, and compassion very intriguing, and I am interested in how race, class, and gender affect how a moral agent acts on these traits."

"Myisha brings a wonderful liveliness and fervor to our Department. She also has a remarkable knack for bringing live political issues together with philosophy: she is a model of engaged philosophy."

--Prof. Sam Fleischacker, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Jewish Studies Program

A recipient of the Graduate College's Abraham Lincoln Fellowship, Myisha Cherry matriculated in August, 2014. In the Department of Philosophy, she is working at the convergence of moral psychology and political philosophy, an area inhabited by psychologists, neuroscientists, and philosophers. Guided by Professor Samuel Fleischacker, she studies moral responsibility, virtue, ethics, attitudes, and normativity. Specifically, Cherry is examining the nature and role of moral and political emotions, particularly anger, at the intersection of race and gender.

Her project, tentatively titled "Acting Mean," explores how insights from moral psychology can aid in social justice.

Cherry is not the stereotypical philosopher who only writes esoteric philological treatises or who deconstructs questionable concepts ad infinitum. She sees herself in two traditions: David Hume's 18th-century empiricism and the 19th-century moral reevaluation of Friedrich Nietzsche. Her scholarly work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in academic anthologies and *Critical Philosophy of Race*. She also embodies, however, the cultural commentary of Slavoj Žižek and Toni Morrison. To wit, she has bridged philosophy and pop culture in *The Wire and Philosophy* and *Orange is the New Black and Philosophy* while contributing poignant social commentary, both written -- for the Huffington Post and Salon.com -- and on stage -- on BET, HuffPost Live, SXSWedu, and TEDx.



"I am a philosopher and educator. Yes, there exist philosophers who are Black and are women." -- Myisha Cherry
(photo courtesy of M. Cherry)

but also to encourage students to realize that philosophy is for everyone not just an intellectual or socio-economic elite.

For now, Cherry generally splits her time between Brooklyn and Chicago. When not teaching, writing, or presenting, she enjoys running, playing instruments, riding her bike and longboard, comic bookstores, and engaging with the world through social media. As a Visiting Edmond J. Safra Graduate Fellow in Ethics and a Santayana Fellow in the Department of Philosophy, at Harvard University, during the upcoming academic year, she will work on her dissertation, which is an examination of the rhetoric of forgiveness aimed at black victims of anti-black racism and attempts to provide an account of forgiveness that makes anger and forgiveness compatible. She has also been invited to speak about forgiveness, race, and public philosophy at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa in October 2017.

(Ms. Cherry's TEDx talk, filmed at UIC can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/uysTk2Elotw>.)

In the summer of 2015, with funding from the Graduate College, the Department of Philosophy, and the Office of Diversity, Cherry was a graduate assistant for the Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI) at Penn State University designed to encourage undergraduates from underrepresented groups to consider future study of philosophy. For Cherry, it cemented her post-UIC career plans not only to teach philosophy,

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SOCIAL SCIENTIST TACKLES CORRUPTION

By DR. LUCIANO DA ROS

In this edition of GradMatters, the Graduate College is highlighting a recent alumnus, in his own words, whose dissertation research has proven to be quite timely.

My relationship with UIC cannot be described as love at first sight, but as something that grew over time. Coming from Brazil, my first visit to the United States was in August 2009 to start a PhD program in public policy at the University of Chicago on a joint scholarship from Fulbright and the Brazilian Ministry of Education. As soon as the program started, however, I realized it was far from what I had in mind for my graduate training. My disappointment arose especially from the fact that I was increasingly interested in comparative historical analysis and mixed-methods research, but the program exhibited a much narrower focus. With its strict emphasis on formal modeling, microeconomics, and the like, it was quite distant from the multiplicity of approaches I believe social scientists must master in order to conduct relevant research. So, only four months after my arrival, I applied for the PhD program in political science at UIC. The idea to apply to UIC came to me from my most trustworthy source: Marina Toneli Siqueira, my wife. She too had arrived in August of that year, with the same scholarship, to start her PhD program in urban planning and policy at UIC. Differently than what I experienced, her relationship with the university was indeed love at first sight.

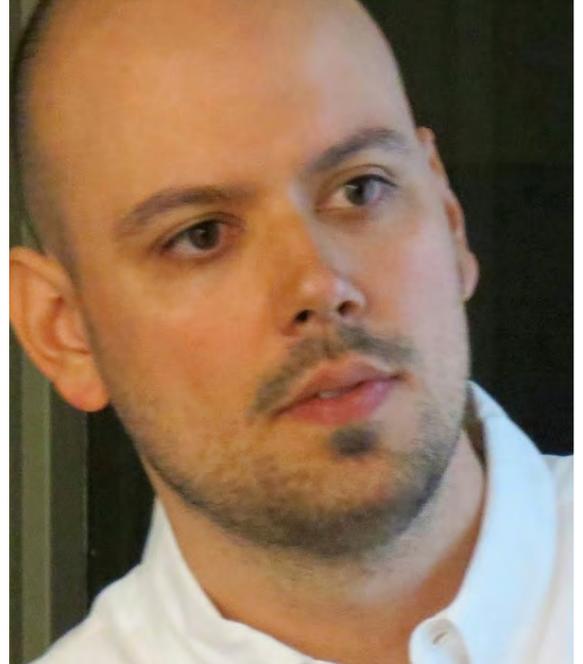
By August 2010, I had already transferred my credits and scholarship to UIC, and was ready to begin afresh. The Department of Political Science proved to be exactly the type of environment I had imagined for my graduate training. The open-door atmosphere derived from the relatively small size of the department put me in close contact with the diverse research developed both by professors and students. Moreover, the department's rigorous, yet flexible, program introduced me to a variety of topics and approaches that allowed my own research interests to mature. With a background both in law and political science, my research thus far had examined the impact of judicial review in recent democracies, particularly

in Brazil. The more I discussed the topic with professors and classmates, however, the more I realized the topic was too abstract. Only in September 2012, after passing my prelims, did I have the courage to change the topic of my dissertation. The new topic -- the role of the courts in fighting city hall corruption -- had a clear inspiration in Chicago's history and can be interpreted as a sign that I had been converted to UIC's urban mission.

In short, I wanted to know why the courts in some Brazilian states had criminally convicted mayors at much higher rates than others while enforcing the same national laws on corruption.

This simple question led me to four months of fieldwork in three Brazilian states during the summer of 2013. After interviewing dozens of judges, prosecutors, and investigative officials, as well as conducting archival research, participant observation, and quantitative analysis, I returned to Chicago with a ton of material to decode and interpret. Thanks to the Graduate College, which awarded me the Dean's Scholar Fellowship, I was able to complete my dissertation during the following year. As a result, I successfully defended it in June 2014 -- in the exact same week Marina successfully defended hers too.

After our defenses, we returned to Brazil. I took up a post-doctoral position at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, in Porto Alegre, starting in January 2015. Judging from the events that had occupied Brazil's public agenda since the return, my choice of topic could not have been more appropriate. The country is in the midst of its largest political turmoil in decades, which has been largely fueled by the bold initiative of a team of judges, prosecutors, and federal investigators to unveil and punish corruption at Brazil's largest state-owned oil company, Petrobrás. Seen through the lenses of my research, it is only



Luciano Da Ros (courtesy of the author)

a matter of adjusting the scale: instead of judicial responses to corruption in city halls, it is the case of judicial responses to corruption at the higher echelons of the federal government. Not surprisingly, I have been teaching graduate and undergraduate courses on corruption and the role of judiciary in public policy-making that have been quite popular.

By the end of 2015, I was selected for a tenure-track position at the same university, hopefully starting this Fall. I say "hopefully" because it is a position in a federal university, and I am still waiting to be hired. As the country has just witnessed the impeachment of one president and the new one is far from stable in office, one can only wonder in which direction the federal government will go -- and what will happen to my position. In any case, I have been keeping my fingers crossed. Hopefully, my object of study will not destroy my chances of becoming a professor and continue to study it!

Who should the Graduate College profile?
Do you have a story to tell?

To recommend an alumna or alumnus, please contact gradcoll_alumni@uic.edu

GRADUATE STUDENT APPRECIATION WEEK

SUPERHEROES!

Under the theme of “Superheroes,” the Graduate College hosted its second annual Graduate Student Appreciation Week this spring, March 14-18, 2016. Over 350 graduate students from both east and west campus united to participate in the sixteen programs and workshops that focused on career and professional development, academic development, wellness, and social programming. The most popular programs were the free professional headshots, the interview and negotiation workshop, and the strengths quest assessment sessions. (Superpowers were assessed, too!)

The week was capped by a fun family movie screening of “The Incredibles” at the Rafael Cintrón Ortiz Latino Cultural Center. Throughout the week, students had the opportunity to learn about tips for professional networking, creating professional development plans, alternative academic career exploration and tips for applying for grants. Overwhelmingly, students responded positively finding the sessions useful, relevant, and helpful. From superhero-themed breakfasts to free massages and other perks, Graduate Student Appreciation Week was a success!



Above: SACNAS@UIC members (from left to right) Kayleigh Tovar, Lillian Perez, and Leo Venegas with Dr. Aixa Alfonso (Biological Sciences). Courtesy of Roberta Dupuis-Devlin, UIC Photo Services. **Top right:** Looking sharp for professional headshots during Grad Student Appreciation Week. Courtesy of Theresa Christenson-Caballero.

GRADUATE SACNAS CHAPTER CREATED

UIC has established a graduate chapter of Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). Although it primarily represents Mexican-Americans and Native Americans, this is an inclusive community that serves under-represented groups in science. One of SACNAS@UIC’s primary events is the SciTalk series, which is a student-led forum where chapter members increase their scientific communication skills in STEM disciplines by exchanging ideas and promoting graduate student collaborations.

SciTalk offers students the opportunity to receive feedback on research presentations and to practice public speaking. In addition, SACNAS@UIC is partnering with other Chicagoland chapters to organize the Chicago SACNAS Conference.

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS

The Graduate College offers a number of fellowships and awards to students, who, depending on the funding mechanism, either apply directly to the Graduate College or are nominated by their academic program.

Fellowships carry a stipend (currently \$22,000) with a tuition and partial fee waiver, and are used for both recruitment and retention. Recruitment fellowships provide up to two years of stipend and two years of “topping off” of the home department’s funding. Smaller awards promote research and/or highlight achievements in mentoring or scholarship. Complete information on the Graduate College’s funding mechanisms can be at <http://grad.uic.edu/funding-your-education>.

Abraham Lincoln Fellowship

The goal of the Abraham Lincoln Fellowship program is to increase the excellence

and diversity of the graduate student body by attracting applicants who have overcome obstacles to achieve academic success, like President Lincoln himself, who by his words and actions forged the framework for America’s pursuit of freedom, equality, and justice. All applicants must be nominated by their departments. Selection criteria include academic achievement, promise, and alignment with the goals of the fellowship.

Fellowship Winners for AY 2016-17:

- **Opeyemi Adeyemo**, Kinesiology & Nutrition
- **Fatima Brunson**, Policy Studies in Urban Education
- **Ayana Chavis**, Museum & Exhibition Studies
- **Kelly Correa**, Psychology
- **Robel Demissie**, Chemistry

- **Jonathan Fast**, Biomedical Visualization
- **Ni-ka Ford**, Biomedical Visualization
- **Nicole Inniss**, Biological Sciences
- **Tannya Islas**, Latin American & Latino Studies
- **Daniel Lambouths**, Sociology
- **Erin Madarieta**, Art History
- **Alexis Mixon**, Museum & Exhibition Studies
- **Vanessa Nepomuceno**, Pharmacognosy
- **Kayleigh Tovar**, Microbiology & Immunology
- **Bryant Thurman**, Chemistry

(Continued on next page)

RECENT AWARD WINNERS

Dean's Scholar Fellowship

The Dean's Scholar Fellowship is a one-year, non-renewable award in recognition of a student's scholarly achievement. The fellowship is intended to provide the most distinguished, advanced-level students with time dedicated solely to the completion of their degree. The Dean's Scholars are nominated by their program.

Fellowship Winners for AY 2016-17:

- **SK Nasir Ahmad**, Civil and Materials Engineering
- **Ancira Baca Marroquin**, Anthropology
- **Ana Baez**, Hispanic Studies
- **Janella Baxter**, Philosophy
- **Gaurang Bhide**, Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics
- **Jason Bugno**, Biopharmaceutical Sciences
- **Ajar Chekirova**, Political Science
- **Samantha Fortin**, Neuroscience
- **Karen Greenwalt**, Art History
- **Rajdip Karmakar**, Chemistry
- **Yaye Keite**, Urban Planning and Policy
- **Adam Lelkes**, Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science
- **Kiminad Mamo**, Physics
- **Lindsay Marshall**, English
- **Matthew McCary**, Biological Sciences
- **James Mestaz**, History
- **Megan Rexius**, Bioengineering
- **Emily Ruehs**, Sociology
- **Sujeong Kim**, Nursing
- **Colleen Whittingham**, Curriculum and Instruction
- **Poya Yasaei**, Mechanical Engineering
- **Patrick Zueger**, Pharmacy Systems, Outcomes, and Policy

University/W.C. Deiss Fellowship

University Fellowships aim to recruit outstanding students newly admitted to graduate programs at UIC. Both Master's and PhD students who receive the University Fellowships will be awarded \$22,000 in the first year. Ph.D recipients are eligible for an additional year of support when they begin their dissertation research. In the second year (for a master's recipient) and the second and third years (for a doctoral recipient), the student's academic program must provide a 50% FTE nine-month appointment or equivalent. Students with a 50% teaching or research assistantships will have their stipends topped off to \$22,000 or by a maximum of \$6,000. University Fellowship recipients also receive a tuition and partial fee waiver. Research in the area of clinical or basic medical sciences receive funding from the **W.C. and May Preble Deiss Fund**.

Fellowship Winners for AY 2016-17:

- **Aditi Aggarwal**, Anthropology
- **Anastasia Bondareva**, Electrical & Computer Engineering
- **Franklyn Lyons**, History
- **Maria Mejia**, Philosophy

Provost/Deiss Research Award

The Graduate College holds bi-annual (fall and spring) competitions for graduate student research support. The Provost's Award for Graduate Research and the **W.C. and May Preble Deiss Fund for Biomedical Research** provide \$1,000 - \$3,000. The Provost's Award is open to all graduate students and the Deiss Fund is for graduate students engaged in clinical or medical sciences.

Fall 2015 & Spring 2016 Winners:

Cassandra
Jacobs-Brichford Puppala
Keshtharjahromi Roberto
Anupama Brennan David Heather Bailey
Nicolas Yasaman Poya Gracia Malone
Yasaei Badiola Jana
Stephanie Pomeroy
Deng Baker Chancellor
Mahsa Ruch Demissie DeLeon Robel Jody Rincon
Tunde Ruch Demissie DeLeon Robel Jody Rincon
Alice Syrooz Bugno Alexandra Nancy Tiffany Smith
Vergara Lucia Hedlund Jason Hsu Devin
Gabriela Marissa Ahlm Daniel Gallik Aleksa
Wellborn Maguregui Wilson Arican
Ceserpes Allison Reid Ghaffari Owen
Chik-Yang Krajemski Maria
Fadma Martin Romaine
Rousseva Nicoletta McCurdy
Luna-Duarte

Chancellor's Research Fellowship

Since its creation in 2009, the Chancellor's Graduate Fellowship Program has supported increased multidisciplinary scholarship opportunities and exposure to varied research and creative fields for graduate and professional students, who show exceptional promise for future multidisciplinary research and creative activity. Funding of up to \$4,000 per year for up to 2 years has allowed graduate or professional candidates to supplement their existing stipends. The **L.J. and M. Allen Cancer Research Fellowship Fund** and the **Dorothea Fleming Student Research Fund** permit the Graduate College to select additional winners who are working in the areas of cancer; the **Deiss Fund** underwrites clinical research. (The award is being reconfigured this summer to provide an internship component as well as one-year funding awards.)

Fall 2015 Winners

Manamee Guha
Marie Gravalos
Huiging Chen
Dawson White
Ahmed Metemally
Benjamin Linder
Subbulakshmi Karthikeyan
Jillian Aurisano
Eliot Fuchler
Michael Canilao
Paige Swetz
Karen Greenwalt
Miaoran Ning
Megan Garfinkel
Maryann Parada
Kevin Kruse
Justin Sysol
Jennifer Ash

Graduate Faculty Mentoring Award

The Graduate Mentoring Awards are designed to encourage and award excellence and innovation in all aspects of graduate mentoring. Awards are given annually. This year's winners are:

- **Susan Corbridge**, Clinical Associate Professor, College of Nursing
- **Ramin Takloo-Bighash**, Professor, Mathematics, Statistics, & Computer Science
- **Anthony Tasset**, Professor, Art

Honors College and Graduate College Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring

Now in its fourth year and co-sponsored by the Honors College, the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring highlights the most outstanding, creative, and hardworking graduate students who mentor undergraduates. The 2016 winners are:

- **Elsa Anderson**, Biological Sciences
- **Abigail Kindelsperger**, Curriculum & Instruction
- **Lisa Lynn**, Educational Psychology
- **Emily Ruehs**, Sociology

Honorable Mention:

- **Hailee Gibbons**, Disability & Human Development
- **Christina Mekonen**, Germanic Studies
- **Katharine Sjostrom**, English

Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Arts and Humanities (ICAH) Award

Created in 2014, the ICAH facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration in the arts and humanities between graduate students and junior faculty members. Each collaboration, consisting of one graduate student and one faculty collaborator, receives an award of \$5,000 for travel, research, etc. The 2016 winning collaboration is **Javairia Shahid**, Art History with faculty collaborator Andrew Clarno, African American Studies and Sociology. (Continued on page 8.)

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GIVING BACK TO GIVE FORWARD

Consider giving back to UIC's Graduate College to give forward: help to diversify future faculty, fund internships, and support tomorrow's innovators and scholars.

Each year, UIC enrolls approximately 8,000 master's and doctoral students. They conduct cutting-edge research on ecologically sustainable farming techniques in southern Mexico, Ming dynasty porcelain kiln production in the Fujian Province, and vascular neurogenic niche in stroke victims; they teach foundational courses in the humanities and laboratory sciences; and they help to support some of our academic units – to enumerate a few examples. In short, graduate students are vital to the success of our university and of our society.

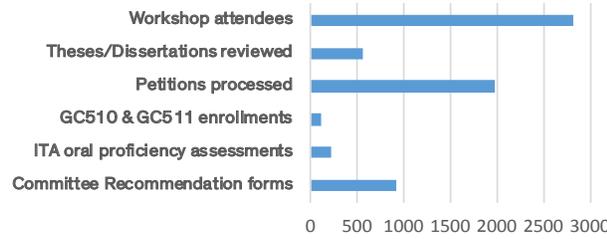
What role does the Graduate College play in the life of a graduate student? The Graduate College is more than a compliance office (see graph) and places emphasis on providing programs to support the success of graduate students as they progress through their studies and enter the job market.

In line with this mission, the Graduate College is the engine for a growing number of programs and activities, including:

- fellowships and awards recognizing outstanding academic promise, pioneering and interdisciplinary research, and mentoring;
- programs and workshops to encourage professional, academic, and personal development;
- individualized assistance in seeking external funding;
- campus-wide orientations for new graduate students and teaching assistants;
- the Image of Research, an annual exhibit co-sponsored by the Library that showcases graduate research and fosters interdisciplinary dialog;
- the Summer Research Opportunities Program that has been introducing underrepresented undergraduates to academic research for thirty years;
- a growing number of courses to train graduate students, including international teaching assistants, to teach, write, and speak effectively.

With continuing budgetary instability, however, the Graduate College has been forced to re-

Number of Graduate Students Served in the Last Academic Year



duce the number of fellowships and awards that it offers each year. Whenever possible, it utilizes gift funds to augment or create new funding opportunities. Here are a few examples:

- The WC and May Preble Deiss Fund provides grant support to graduate students performing clinical or basic medical science research. The Deiss Fund underwrote 28% of the Provost/Deiss Awards in the 2015-2016 academic year.
- The Dorothea Fleming Student Research Fund and LJ and M. Allen Cancer Research Fellowship Fund support cancer-related research projects. Together, the Allen, Fleming, and Deiss Funds underwrote 23% of the Chancellor's Graduate Research Awards in 2015.
- In 2014, the college used gift funds from a local bank to create the new Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Arts and Humanities (ICAH) Award to facilitate innovations in two-person teams. Completed projects have included a documentary film, a seminar at an international conference, a book, and a rapid digitization workflow for scholars working in archives.
- The pledged UIC Kevin G. Barnhurst and Richard Doherty Graduate Student Award Fund will be used to provide supplemental travel awards for graduate students presenting original work reflecting LGBTQ studies.

Financial investment by alumni and friends would allow us to sustain and grow our initiatives. Here are examples of how your annual or estate gift could be allocated:

- \$100: Student Presenter Award -- Defray the cost of travel for a graduate student

presenting her research or scholarly work at an academic conference.

- \$1,000-\$3,000: Graduate Research Awards – Sponsor a student; there are two competitions annually.

- \$5,000: Interdisciplinary Collaboration in the Arts and Humanities Award – Fund a collaboration between a graduate student in the arts or humanities and an untenured faculty member. A new sponsor is needed to continue this award after 2016.

- \$22,000: Graduate Student Fellowship – Sponsor a matriculating student or offer a year of writing.
- \$50,000: Endow a travel or research award; underwrite a professional development workshop series; or sponsor the Image of Research for three years.
- \$150,000+ : Endow either a fellowship that enables graduate students to focus on their scholarship instead of juggling research and a part-time job or a lecture series that brings renowned speakers to campus.
- \$200,000: Sponsor a summer transition program for entering underrepresented students entering UIC graduate programs.
- \$400,000: Summer Research Opportunities Program -- Fund the long-running, mentored research immersion program for one year.
- \$7,000,000: Name the Graduate College (requires approvals by the Provost, Chancellor, and the Board of Trustees).

If you would like more information on how to support the College, please contact Benn Williams, Assistant Director for Interdisciplinary Programs and Development, at (312) 413-2389 or bwilli7@uic.edu. To give online, please visit <http://grad.uic.edu/giving> and give to:

- The Dean's Fund - donations will be used in the area of greatest need, as determined by the Dean of the Graduate College, or,
- The Graduate Fellowship Fund - to support fellowships through the Graduate College.

In Memorium

It is with great sadness that the Graduate College reports the passing of a tremendous friend and ally. Dr. Kevin G. Barnhurst, Professor Emeritus of Communication, died at home in New Hampshire, on June 2, 2016. He and his husband, Richard Doherty, established the UIC Kevin G. Barnhurst and Richard Doherty Graduate Student Award Fund. His warmth and loyalty will be missed.



(Continued from page 6)

Outstanding Thesis Award

This annual award honors the most outstanding research master's theses and doctoral dissertations in the College's four divisions, while also acknowledging the research advisor. The 2016 winners are:

- **Jackson Cone** (Neuroscience), "The Hunger Hormone Ghrelin Dynamically Tunes Phasic Mesolimbic Signals Underlying Food-Directed Behaviors." Advisor: Mitchell Roitman.
- **Cathleen Holtschneider** (Social Work), "The Impact of Transitional Living Programs: Perspectives of Homeless Youth." Advisor: Mark Mattaini.
- **Joseph Mates** (Mechanical & Industrial Engineering), "Tunable Multifunctional Nanomaterial and Polymer Composites: Nonwoven Applications." Advisor: Constantine Megaridis.
- **Tyler Mills** (English), "Aviator Without a Mask: Poems." Advisor: Jennifer Ashton.

SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (SROP) CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

The Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) celebrates 30 years of scholarship and service on the UIC campus this year with 32 bright-eyed and excited scholars.

Since 1986, SROP has trained developed and prepared over twelve hundred talented undergraduates for graduate study. UIC's program has served not only its own students, but also students from all over the country, ranging from the Ivy League, Big Ten, and Pac 12, to Hispanic-Serving Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Many of SROP at UIC alumni have become faculty members at institutions such as Northwestern University, the University of Illinois at Urbana, the University of California at San Francisco as well as UIC.

Our staff has gathered outcome data from the last five SROP cohorts (2010-2014), totaling one hundred and eighty five scholars with whom the program was able to remain in contact. Many SROP alumni are still enrolled in their undergraduate degree program; however, we are pleased to report that over 70% of those who have graduated are enrolled in post-baccalaureate degree programs or have already completed their graduate degree. Several are either currently in the work force or taking a "gap" year before applying to graduate or medical school. We are proud to say that

of the 185 recent alumni, thirty are currently enrolled in PhD programs, 42 are either currently enrolled or have completed their Master's degrees in various fields. In addition, ten are enrolled in professional programs, ranging from law school (JD) to pharmacy (PharmD) to medicine (MD). As anticipated, many of our SROP alumni have continued in STEM and health sciences sectors, as well as a number in social work.

Numbers do not tell the whole story. The following letter showcases the SROP experience from the perspectives of a student participant. It has been edited for clarity and length.

*Hi Mr. Allen [Bryson],
I hope you're doing well! [...]Thank you again for a wonderful summer research experience. When I first chose to participate in SROP, I wasn't entirely sure to expect. It was March and I'd had a few offers from other programs, leaving me with a difficult decision on which summer internship to take. However, by the end of summer, I knew that SROP had been a great choice – both in giving me an excellent research experience and in preparing me for graduate school applications. My experiences in this program helped me grow both academically and personally. I was matched with a wonderful mentor who inspired me with her passion and dedication for her research as well as her level of investment to make a difference. She guided and mentored me throughout the*

summer while we worked on a research project in which we investigated demographic predictors of physical activity levels in obese African American women. Throughout the summer, I was able to work on this project as well as participate in a couple of other projects she was working on and gain exposure to the research process on multiple levels.

*Being able to go out into the community to observe other investigators as well as to perform surveys was an invaluable experience. While I was often challenged, I never felt like I was completely floundering thanks to the support from the SROP staff. My mentor, along with my research team leader helped me to stay on track and not become too overwhelmed. Through SROP, I was also able to participate in a graduate portfolio course in which I learned how to become better prepared for graduate school and how to go through the graduate school application process. Leaving the program, I felt renewed and inspired to pursue graduate education. The prospect of applying and being accepted felt less overwhelming and definitely within my reach.
Sincerely,
Jaime Wong (Health and Nutrition)*

SROP alumni are encouraged to contact Allen J. Bryson at ajbryson@uic.edu with updates to their contact information as well as their professional and life milestones. We look forward to the next 30 years!

MANAGING EDITOR

Benn Williams

CONTRIBUTORS

- Allen Bryson
- Theresa Christenson-Caballero
- Karen Colley
- Marie Khan
- Lillian Perez
- Luciano Da Ros
- Benn Williams



<http://grad.uic.edu>

The **Graduate College** is located on the 6th floor of University Hall. Room 606, our main office, is open from 8:30 a.m. until 4:45 p.m.

phone: (312) 413-2550
fax: (312) 413-0185
email: gradcoll_alumni@uic.edu

mailing address:
601 S. Morgan St (MC 192)
Chicago, IL 60607-7106