Graduate School

UWM GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIP CELEBRATION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th
GOLDA MEIR LIBRARY CONFERENCE CENTER
4-6pm

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN MILWAUKEE
POWERFUL IDEAS | PROVEN RESULTS
UWM Graduate Student Fellowship Celebration
Wednesday, September 30, 2015
Golda Meir Library Conference Center, 4th Floor

Program

4:30 Opening Remarks
1. Marija Gajdardziska-Josifovska, Dean of the Graduate School
2. Mark Mone, Chancellor
3. Johannes Britz, Provost

Featured Speaker: Dr. Ramona Tenario
200405 Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) fellow
[Introduced by Graduate School Associate Dean Tracey Heatherington]
“Reimagining Your Degree”

Recognition of 2015-16 Fellowship Recipients
1. Distinguished Dissertation Fellows
2. Distinguished Graduate Student Fellows
3. New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

5:30 Social Networking
Featured Speaker and Former AOP Fellow

Ramona Tenorio
PhD: Anthropology, UW-Milwaukee, ’13 • MS: Geography, UW-Milwaukee, ’05 • BA: Geography, UW-Milwaukee, ’99

Trained as an applied medical anthropologist, Ramona Tenorio has over nine years experience in applied health research, and 10 years combined of leadership in research, scholarship, and departmental management. As director of the CTSI Pilot Translational and Clinical Studies Program at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)—where she is also an assistant professor—she has increased funding across the translational continuum and expanded interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaborations in team science.

In addition to her faculty and director roles, Tenorio is active in facilitating community-engaged research and scholarship on campus. She also has a leadership role in the MCW branch of the National Coalition Building Institute, an international leadership development network dedicated to the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression.

Her employment at UWM reflected her wide-ranging academic and research interests: assistantships in the Anthropology Department, Geography Department, UWM Field Station in Saukville, and UWM Cultures and Communities/Institute for Service Learning. She has also been an adjunct professor in sociology at Carroll University and a lecturer at the UWM-Whitewater Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice.

Tenorio’s research portfolio is as diverse as it is impressive. Her 2013 dissertation examined what she calls “shadow medicine”—lay healing and sociomedical networking practices among Milwaukee’s diasporic Latino population. She found that a section of Milwaukee’s undocumented population seeks healthcare outside the biomedical establishment.

She has examined medicinal plant use by midwives in Oaxaca, Mexico. Her ethnographic work documented the stories of the local lay midwife and her knowledge and use of medicinal plants as part of her healing repertoire. She also documented pharmaceutical companies’ appropriation of that knowledge and subsequent profits, with no compensation to the communities where the knowledge originated.

Her geographic research includes an exploration of vegetation and landscapes found in the karst springs of Wisconsin’s unglaciated region. Springs are an integral part of this region of southwestern Wisconsin, which is known as “Driftless Area.”

Her many UWM awards included an Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellowship, the Mary Jo Reed Graduate Fellowship, a Roberto Hernandez Center (RHC) Grant for Applied Latino Research, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Graduate Student Undergraduate Travel Award, UWM graduate student travel grants, Office of Professional and Instructional Development Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant.

She also earned a U.S. Department of Education Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship and a National Hispanic Scholarship Fund award.

Her dissertation was among the 50 Best Cultural Anthropology Dissertations of 2013, as judged by the Culture in Global Affairs Research and Policy Program at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.
2015-16 Distinguished Dissertation Fellows (DDF)

Ghassan Abou-Zeineddine, English PhD Program — Creative Writing
MFA: Columbia University, ‘05 • BA: George Washington University, ‘02

“I am honored to have received this award, which will enable me to spend more time to complete my dissertation novel. Also, I’ll be able to travel to Beirut, Lebanon, the setting of my novel, to conduct field research.”

Abou-Zeineddine’s interests include Anglophone Arab literature, comedy in fiction, short story cycles, folklore, wrestling, cycling, and waxing nostalgic about Beirut. In 2013 he won fiction awards from the Association of Writers & Writing Programs and the UWM Creative Writing Program. While at Columbia University, he earned an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant and a writing fellowship. His ambition is to be a full-time creative writing professor and a writer.

Michael Beebe, English PhD Program — Literature & Cultural Theory
MA: New York University, ‘10 • BS: Syracuse University, ‘06

“This award grants me the time to concentrate on the completion of my dissertation on Irish literature and biopolitics, as well as my related professionalization and publishing efforts.”

Beebe studies Ireland’s social, political, and infrastructural modernization throughout the first half of the 20th century. James Joyce and his iconic Ulysses are prominent in Beebe’s research. He was one of two 2013-14 UWM Chancellor’s Golda Meir Library Scholar Awardees.

Saman Beyhaghi, Engineering PhD Program—Mechanical Engineering
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘10 • BS: Sharif University of Technology, ‘05

“(This fellowship) definitely allows me to focus more on my PhD research, so I can deliver a higher quality work, and contribute more to mechanical engineering science and the field of renewable energies.”

“As a mechanical engineer, I would like to be actively involved in design, analysis and modeling of energy efficient systems (such as novel HVAC products and solutions), as well as renewable energy applications utilizing wind, solar, geothermal, or other forms of clean sustainable energy. I am also interested in environmental sciences, and delivering solutions for global problems such as pollution of air, water, and soil all around the world.”

Natalie Brei, Psychology PhD Program—Clinical Psychology
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘14 • BS: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, ‘11

“This fellowship opens up the possibility of spending the needed time on my research, and it makes the timeline toward earning my degree more manageable.”

In addition to a UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award, Brei received a travel award to attend the 2014 Williams Syndrome Association Professional Conference and a Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research Award in 2013 for her work in language abilities in young children with Neurofibromatosis-1.

She hopes for a career as a licensed clinical psychologist working in a primary care or hospital setting, incorporating both clinical work and research.
2015-16 Distinguished Dissertation Fellows (DDF)

Brittany Cavallaro, English PhD Program
MFA: UW-Madison, ’11 • BS: Middlebury College, ’09

“This fellowship year will allow me to approach my reading, writing and research with the unparalleled focus I’ve always wanted, and I am so grateful.”

Graduate fellows dedicate their time and effort hoping to become recognized contributors to their chosen fields. But Brittany Cavallaro is already there. She has completed the first novel of her three-book contract with HarperCollins’ imprint for young adult books. Her first collection of poetry—GirlKing, published by University of Akron Press—was recognized as the press’s Editor’s Choice for its 2013 Poetry Prize. And her poetry also earned her a $25,000 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in 2014.

Zahra Ghanian, Engineering PhD Program—Electrical Engineering
MSc: Amirkabir University of Technology, ’01 • BS: Sharif University of Technology, ’98

“This award represents a great acknowledgement for the hard work carried out through the years. I’m glad the committee recognized the potential and the novelty of my dissertation.”

In addition to multiple UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awards and funding from the Graduate Student Travel Support Program, Ghanian has been featured in the UWM Research Report and in Milwaukee Engineer magazine. She submitted the top-ranked PhD qualifying exam at UWM for electrical engineering in 2012 and was recognized for academic excellence throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies in Iran. Her career interests include biophotonics, biomedical imaging, RF design and wireless communication.

Amy Goetz, Psychology PhD Program—Clinical Psychology
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’13 • BS: Florida State University, ’11

“This award means a great deal to me. I am very grateful to be given the chance to delve wholeheartedly into my dissertation area.”

Following graduation, Goetz hopes to be a child and adolescent psychologist in an academic hospital, where she can remain active in research while working directly with children and their families in a treatment context.

Goetz is a past Distinguished Graduate Student Fellow and recipient of two Graduate Student Travel Awards and a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award. In 2014 she was a Department of Psychology Summer Research Fellow.

Emily Siebers Hansen, Health Sciences PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’12 • BS: UW-Madison, ’09

“This award will allow me to pursue my passion in biomedical research with increased focus, and it provides increased inspiration to keep working towards my goals.”

Hansen is a recipient of multiple Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awards and a Graduate Student Travel Award.

Her research focuses on understanding the immune events that occur in Lyme arthritis in order to develop new treatments for patients who don’t respond to traditional therapies.
2015-16 Distinguished Dissertation Fellows (DDF)

Bridget Kies, English—Media, Cinema, and Digital Studies PhD Program  
MFA: Columbia College, ‘06 • BA: Lake Forest College, ‘02

“Receiving this fellowship will afford me significant gains in time to spend on research and writing. Because of this fellowship, I expect to complete the writing of my dissertation in one academic year.”

Kies proposed and coordinated an LGBT section for the 2014 Film and History Conference, an achievement recognized with the Peter C. Rollins Director’s Award for Conference Management. At the 2012 International Conference on the Book, her presentation earned her a Graduate Student Award. UWM honors include a 2014 James A. Sappenfield Award from the English Department.

Katherine Sterner Miller, Anthropology PhD Program  
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’12 • BS: Pennsylvania State University, ’09

“This fellowship will allow me to collect data for my dissertation in the UWM Archaeological Research Laboratory and at other institutions, including the Wisconsin Historical Society and UW-La Crosse.”

Miller won the 2015 UWM Anthropology Department Paper Competition, a 2014 Wisconsin Archaeological Society Research Award, and second place in the 2013 Midwest Archaeological Conference Student Paper Competition. She calls her DDF award “a significant investment in archaeological knowledge and practice, which will provide invaluable learning, funding, and research opportunities for me and the UWM Anthropology Department.”

Rahul Ramachandran, Engineering PhD Program  
ME: Birla Institute of Technology & Science, ’11 • BT (Technology): Cochin University of Science & Technology, ’08

“The DDF award is a recognition for my research, and in general my performance in graduate school at UWM.”

“After completing my degree I want to go into academia doing teaching and research. I would like to build on my work on surface science that I am currently pursuing at UWM. With what I have learned at UWM, I want to make my own small contribution to science, society and a greener future.”

Ramachandran was a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awardee from 2012 to 2014.

Seyedmohammadsadegh Shams, Engineering PhD Program  
MS: Tarbiat Modares University, ’02 • BS: Malek-Ashtar University of Technology, ’99

“By awarding me this fellowship, you have lightened my financial burden, which allows me to focus on the most important aspect of my dissertation. Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community.”

Shams is studying defects in composite materials, and how they affect performance in composite structures. These lightweight materials are important in aerospace and automotive industries, energy and biomedical fields, as well as the manufacture of commercial recreational products.

Shams has earned multiple Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awards, an NSF travel grant, and...
2015-16 Distinguished Dissertation Fellows (DDF)

**Meysam Tabandeh Khorshid, Engineering PhD Program**  
*MS: Shiraz University, ’10 • BS: Islamic Azad University-Najafabad Branch, ’07*  
*“This fellowship will give me the tools I need to take this technology close to commercial applications.”*  
The technology Tabandeh Khorshid is referring to stems from his research on synthesizing aluminum/graphene and aluminum/aluminum oxide ultrahigh strength lightweight metal matrix nanocomposites. “This technology could have a significant impact on energy efficiency by decreasing fuel consumption in vehicles with lightweight construction.”  
Tabandeh Khorshid was recipient of a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award in 2012 and 2013.

**Jason Tenboer, Physics PhD program**  
*BS: UW-Milwaukee, ’11*  
*“This award affirms my belief that not only is UWM a fantastic graduate research institution, but also that the opportunities available here rival those at any PhD-awarding university.”*  
“Each achievement these last three years has opened the door to more challenges, raising my expectations of what is possible. . . . I have concluded unequivocally that I made the right decision to pursue graduate education with the UWM Physics Department.  
Tenboer received the 2014 David Lichtman Scholarship, awarded for outstanding performance in Experimental Physics.

**Whitney Welch, Health Sciences PhD Program — Exercise Physiology**  
*MS: University of Tennessee, Knoxville, ’12 • BS: University of Tennessee, Knoxville, ’10*  
*“The DDF will allow me to participate, alongside my advisors, in collaborations between my laboratory and other researchers within our department and universities across the world.”*  
Welch is a past Distinguished Graduate Student Fellow and Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award recipient.  
Her research objectives include developing and validating physical activity assessment methods, identifying the role physical activity plays in varying health outcomes, and developing interventions to increase physical activity.

**Jinyong Ying, Mathematics PhD Program**  
*MS: Hunan University, ’10 • BS: Hunan University, ’08*  
*“This DDF not only confirms the progress I made toward the degree in the last three years, but also provides the great opportunities to focus more on my research and PhD thesis.”*  
Ying, who seeks an academic career in mathematics, received a 2015 Mark Lawrence Teply Award, a prize to recognize students who show remarkable potential in their research fields.
2015-16 Distinguished Graduate Student Fellows (DGSF)

Ebrahim Aboualizadeh, Physics PhD Program
MS: Razi University, ‘09 • BS: Shahid Chamran University, ‘07

“As a young researcher, I always tried to be dedicated and relentless in my research and winning this award makes me feel I am on the right path and it would be a great motivation for rest of my career."

“In general, my research focus is biological and medical applications of infrared spectroscopy and microscopy to understand pathology of disease, response of the cells to the external and environmental stimuli and detecting molecular vibrations.”

Before he earned numerous UWM Physics Department awards, Aboualizadeh was recognized in his home country as an elite university student by Iran's National Elites Foundation in 2010.

Thomas Almonroeder, Kinesiology PhD Program
Doctor of Physical Therapy: UW-La Crosse, ’13 • BS: UW-La Crosse, ’09

“This award will help me reach my goal of becoming an independent researcher whose work directly affects clinical practice in the area of sports medicine.”

When he finished his doctorate at UW-La Crosse in 2013, the program faculty awarded him the Most Outstanding Student Award. While at UWM he has received a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award and chaired the Research Committee of the Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association.

Upon graduation, Almonroeder hopes to continue research and serve as a faculty member in a physical therapy program.

Mehdi Azimipour, Engineering PhD Program—Electrical Engineering
MS: Shahid Beheshti University, ’08 • BS: Tehran Polytechnic University, ’05

“This award provides me an opportunity to concentrate more on my studies and continue my research. It has also given me the motivation to work harder in the future to achieve my goals.”

Azimipour earned a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award last spring.

He hopes to continue research and innovative work on the faculty of a prestigious university or as a professional researcher. “I know that my path will lead me to many obstacles, but I am confident I will be able to overcome them relying on my determination, talents, and hard work.”

Roseric Azonddekon, Biomedical & Health Informatics PhD Program
MS: University of Massachusetts, ‘14 • MS: University of Abomey-Calavi, ‘10 • BS: UAC, ‘07

“The skills and experiences that this opportunity enables me to acquire will serve the greater good of the university and our pluralistic international society.”

Because Azonddekon won’t have to skip a year of school due to financial problems, he will work to merge his biomedical and public health backgrounds with computer science. “I hope to better health outcomes for vulnerable populations in my home country of Benin and internationally.”

His awards include a 2012 Fulbright Foreign Student Program Scholarship, scholarships from University of Massachusetts-Amherst and Islamic Development Bank, and a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award.
2015-16 Distinguished Graduate Student Fellows (DGSF)

Lauren Benson, Health Sciences PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘13 • BA: Amherst College, Chemistry, ‘08

“This award allows me the opportunity to work full time on my dissertation and to do my best work on a project that will set me up for my career.”

Academic awards include two College of Health Sciences Georgio Sanna Memorial Scholarships, a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award, and a College of Health Sciences Alumni Chapter Scholarship.

Her goal is to be a research scientist in the field of biomechanics, with a focus on injury prevention.

Scott Cowan, Philosophy MA Program
MA: Fuller Theological Seminary, ‘14 • BFA: Columbia College Chicago, ‘10

“This award is both special and encouraging to me because UWM has provided the most caring and wonderful department I have seen during my years of education.”

In spring 2015, Cowan earned the Philosophy Department’s Richard Peltz Memorial Award for Excellence in Philosophy, in recognition of the top essay reviewed by the department’s Awards committee.

Cowan hopes to earn a PhD, and continue conducting research and teaching at a university.

Carlos Fittante, Dance MFA Program
BA: SUNY Empire State College, ‘05

“As a recipient, I am entrusted to uphold a standard of excellence throughout my graduate studies and to contribute to the academic and culturally diverse environment of the program.”

His awards include full scholarships to attend the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, Boston Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, and the School of American Ballet—the academy for the New York City Ballet.

Like many MFA dance students at UWM, Fittante is an experienced, accomplished professional. A specialist in Baroque dance, he has been a performer, choreographer, artistic director, and teacher in prominent dance organizations in New York City and Boston.

Anwar Ul Haq, Philosophy MA Program
MA: University of London, Birkbeck College, ‘12 • BS: Lahore University of Management Sciences, ‘11

“I’m thankful for being selected as a recipient of this competitive award. It is both reassuring and motivating.”

After graduation, Haq plans to earn a PhD and continue research and teaching at a research university.

His awards include a 2014-15 Commonwealth Scholarship at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, a 2013-14 lectureship in philosophy at Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan, and a 2014-15 UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award.
2015-16 Distinguished Graduate Student Fellows (DGSF)

Sherri H. Hoffman, English PhD Program—Creative Writing
MFA: Pacific University, ’13 • BA: Weber State University, ’91

“My husband and I are extraordinarily grateful for this award, which will enable us to be together more often while I continue in such an esteemed and unique PhD program—one of only 32 programs available in the United States."

Her UWM awards include a Chancellor’s Award; the Ellen Hunnicut Prize and the Władysław Cieszyński Literary Prize for writing; and the James A. Sappenfield Fellowship for academic excellence. She was a Pushcart Prize nominee, and she co-edited an anthology, Utah Reflections (2014), which was selected for the Utah Lit book club and nominated for a League of Utah Writers book annual award.

Mohamed Hussein, Mechanical Engineering PhD Program
MS: Cairo University, ’10 • BS: Cairo University, ’07

“I consider this award as recognition from my school of my effort over the past few years. This is something I will be very proud of when I write in my resume or tell my grandchildren.”

Freed from his teaching assistantship, Hussein says he can devote his time to focusing on research and academics, and use the fellowship travel funding to present his work at a major conference.

Hussein plans to have a career in thermo-fluids mechanical engineering, particularly combustion.

Laura Korthauer, Psychology PhD Program—Clinical Psychology
MS: University of Chicago, ’10 • BS: Marquette University, ’09

“This award will allow me to pursue my research and scholarship in the area of age-related cognitive decline.”

Korthauer’s research on identifying middle-aged people who may be at risk of developing Alzheimer’s has earned her the first UWM Graduate Student Excellence Fellowship. See more about this new award on the back cover.

Her awards include a 2014 Summer Graduate Research Fellowship from the Psychology department and a UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award. After graduation, she plans to continue conducting research and work clinically with older adults.

Matt Richie, Social Welfare PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’14 • BS: UW-Oshkosh, ’12

“This award means the department recognizes my efforts and one of the top graduate schools in the state recognizes my potential to become an excellent researcher and academic.”

Honors include a 2014-15 Dean’s Fellowship from the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, the 2013-14 Graduate Student of the Year award from the Criminal Justice Department, and two Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awards from 2012 to 2014.

Richie’s goal is to obtain a faculty position in a criminal justice department and further his research on prisoner reentry, criminological theory, and police use of force.
2015-16 Distinguished Graduate Student Fellows (DGSF)

Jun Tan, Engineering PhD Program—Electrical Engineering
MS: Huazhong University of Science & Technology (HUST), ‘12 • BS: HUST, ‘09
“The award will boost my confidence in graduate study with the knowledge that others have noticed my academic success.”

Tan’s UWM honors include a 2015 Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award. His awards while at HUST in China include Excellent Student in Graduate School in 2011, a 2006 State Scholarship, and a 2005 New Great Wall Scholarship.
Tan’s career goal is to become a faculty member in a research university or a researcher at a national research laboratory.

Emily Tyner, Freshwater Sciences PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘14 • BA: Smith College, ‘06
“These funds will support the second year of my PhD program as I begin my dissertation research.”

Recently selected for a fellowship opportunity at the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography, Tyner was a 2013 Fulbright U.S. Student Fellow, studying water quality in Lake Malawi and assessing shoreline residents’ water collection and treatment practices.
She hopes for a career that intersects aquatic sciences research, community outreach, and science communication, at a university extension or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA’s) Sea Grant College Program.

Mahyar Sharif Vaghefi, Management Science PhD Program
Master of Information Systems Management: KNTU University (Tehran) ‘11 • BS: Azad University, ‘07
“It is a great honor to be recognized as a distinguished graduate student. I really worked hard during the last two years, and winning this prestigious award is a huge achievement for me.”

Vaghefi, who is specializing in information systems, was a 2014-15 Sheldon B. Lubar Doctoral Scholarship recipient. His goal after graduation is to continue his research as a professor at a research university.

Natasha Wright, Clinical Psychology PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘14 • BA: Point Loma Nazarene University, ‘12
“This award enables me to dedicate more time to conducting research on how substance use in adolescence and emerging adulthood affects brain development and neuropsychological functioning.”

Wright’s awards include a Research Society on Alcoholism Student Merit Award for the 2015 RSA Conference, a 2013 Student Poster Award from the Clinical Neuropsychology division of the American Psychological Association, and a Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award.
Her professional goal is to join the faculty at a university and continue her research on the neuropsychological impact of substance use in adolescence.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Jillian Austin, Experimental Psychology PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘14 • BS: Elmhurst College, ‘08

“Having funding through the AOP Fellowship means that I will have time to focus on conducting research, especially my dissertation, and getting this research published.”

Austin was a 2014-15 UWM Distinguished Graduate Student Fellow.
She plans to pursue a clinical research position where she can both treat and conduct research on various psychosocial and behavioral interventions in pediatric psychology. Her specific interest is treating children with either a developmental disability or type 1 diabetes and conducting research on enhancing their clinical outcomes.

Brittany Benitez, Psychology MS Program—Behavior Analysis
BS: UW-Milwaukee, ‘15

“With the help of the fellowship I will be able to engage in more research opportunities rather than have to balance school, research, and a job.”

Benitez is pursuing a career helping children with autism in all aspects of their life. She also hopes to offer help with computer-assisted instruction clients who are nonverbal or have difficulties with motor movements.
She earned a BA in psychology with honors from UWM in May and plans to begin the Certificate In Assistive Technology And Accessible Design program in the spring.

Franklin K.R. Cline, English PhD Program—Creative Writing
MFA: Western Michigan University, ‘14 • MA: Truman State University, ‘11

“The AOP award will allow me time to continue learning the Cherokee language and working on my poetry. Additionally, it will afford me the ability to travel to Talequah, the Cherokee capital, and study there.”

Cline’s goal is to become an English professor at a four-year University, teaching composition, literature, and creative writing at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Megan Josie Corby, Chemistry PhD program.
BA: UW-Madison, ‘06

“This award means that I will be able to devote full-time focus and effort to finish my PhD. I am able to do higher-quality work in a more efficient time frame.”

Corby studies the biochemistry of proteins in the hepatitis C virus. Her honors include first prize in the UW System Liberal Arts Essay Competition and two UWM Chemistry Department research awards. She has presented research at national and regional conferences.
Besides advancing in her field, Corby—whose BA is in women’s studies—is dedicated to encouraging young women to pursue science.” I am uniquely positioned to encourage young women because it took me a number of years to decide on science research as a career.”
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Allain Daigle, English PhD Program—Media, Cinema, and Digital Studies
MLitt: University of St Andrews, ’13 • Dual Honors BA: SUNY Oswego, ’12

“The fellowship will make it feasible to travel to post-production houses and perform on-site research that I didn’t imagine possible when I began my course of study.”

Daigle’s research interest is community and artist-conscious infrastructures of film production. He would also like to teach cinema studies at a public university, and to practice local media production.


Larry Davis, Master of Public Health Program
BSW: UW-Milwaukee, ’15

“This award gives me a sense of hope that society is still willing to invest in students so we can put forth the effort to achieve goals to improve the larger community.”

Davis began his research at UWM as a McNair Scholar, studying outcomes of youth who transition from foster care. He was recognized in 2011 for his own successful transition from foster care with a Governor’s Foster Care Youth Award. He earned a Title 4E Scholarship—funded by the Social Security Administration—and a Foster Care to Success Scholarship.

Davis wants to pursue another professional degree in preparation for a career as a social science researcher and policy advisor.

Kiranjeet Kaur Dhillon, Communication PhD Program
MA: University of Northern Iowa, ’13 • BS: University of Iowa, ‘10

“The award impacts my progress in earning my degree and achieving my goals, giving me time to exclusively focus on my writing and research interests.”

Besides completing her dissertation within one year, Dhillon’s research goals are to contribute scholarship to rhetoric and popular culture with a focus on discourses of Brown gendered bodies, and to publish scholarly articles.

She aspires to be a tenure-track professor at a Research 1 university, “so that I may research, teach, and contribute to my university, department, discipline, and community through service.”

Davalois Fearon, Dance MFA Program
BFA: SUNY Purchase, ’05

“This award has given me access to the best low-residency MFA Dance program….I will get the most out of my experience at UWM while earning my degree.”

Fearon’s honors include an Arts Fund Grant from the Bronx Council on the Arts and coverage in The New York Times, Wall Street Journal and others for her 2015 season with the Stephen Petronio Company at the Joyce Theater.

Her goals include becoming a dance professor at a reputable university, starting a dance company and dance school, and opening an art center to house them—with a cafe.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

DaJuan Ferrell, Sociology PhD Program
MA: Middle Tennessee State University, ’14 • BA: Jacksonville State University, ’12

“This award is a ‘key’ that will open doors and present opportunities that will allow me to better myself as an academic, through my work within the classroom, empirical research, and activism.”

Ferrell aspires to be a tenuretrack professor in sociology who makes a difference. “I hope to act as a ‘key’ that unlocks the potential of students by way of the classroom and also use my research to illuminate societal patterns and inequalities to improve the lived experiences of citizens within the United States and aboard.”

Jeannette Glover, Information Studies PhD Program
MLIS: UW-Milwaukee, ’07 • BS: Butler University, ’05

“This award is just what I needed to be able to finish the final phase of my PhD program. I did not see myself being able to complete the actual research without funding.”

Glover is the first in her family to earn a master’s degree, and she plans to finish her PhD by the end of her fellowship. Her research explores library classification systems in Wisconsin tribal libraries. She hopes her research leads to classification/organization systems that are more inclusive to American Indian tribes in Wisconsin and indigenous communities worldwide.

Her honors include a two-year UWM Libraries postgraduate internship and a four-year SOIS Barriers to Access Fellowship. Glover hopes to someday open a non-profit literacy center.

Sarah Ann Gordon, Nonprofit Management MS Program
BA: UW-Milwaukee, ’09

“When my professor suggested that I apply for the fellowship, I felt a sense of validation for the years of effort and persistence toward my goals.”

Gordon—a first-generation college student—received an award in 2006 for volunteerism from American Indian Student Services (AISS). This past April, she earned an AISS award for academic achievement.

She hopes to integrate the knowledge from her MS degree with her BA emphasis in intercultural communications to build a career educating the public on contemporary Native American life and issues.

Ethan Guyant, Geosciences MS Program
BS: UW-Milwaukee, ’13

“The fellowship . . . will be extremely beneficial to my future academic success and allow me to continue to hold myself to a high standard both academically and as a researcher.”

During the 2014-15 academic year Guyant received a Chancellor’s Graduate Research Award, presented his research at the 2014 American Geophysical Union meeting, and published his first leadauthor article—in the International Journal of Greenhouse Gas Control.

He aspires to a career in environmental consulting, focusing on employing environmentally sustainable methods in energy and resource management.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Mark Heiermann, English PhD Program
MA: St. Cloud State University, ’09 • BA: St. Cloud State University, ’07

“I cannot overstate the importance of this award to me. This award—and especially the preparation that went into applying for it—helped me see that my disability has made me into a better person and academic.”

Heiermann was a 2013-14 Distinguished Graduate Student Fellow. His work has appeared in the Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics and the anthology The Child in Post Apocalyptic Cinema. He also sits on the executive committee of the International Comic Arts Forum.

He would like to teach literature and/or comics studies at a four-year university, “where I hope to expose my students to texts and ideas that help them learn about themselves.”

John Joseph Hernandez, Master of Nursing Program
BS: UW-Milwaukee, ’13

“The AOP fellowship will help me reach my goals by both supporting my progress while challenging me to hold to the rigorous standards of scholarship that I have maintained since beginning my studies as a returning Navy veteran.”

Achievements include a 2013 travel grant funded by NSF and the Moore Foundation to attend the Global Lakes Ecological Observatory Network conference, two summers as a McNair Scholar, and a 2010 UWM Chancellor’s Distinguished Service Learning Award.

His future goals include pursuing a doctorate of nurse practice and working as a primary care or specialty clinic nurse practitioner with rehabilitating veterans at the Milwaukee VA hospital.

Skype Hopinka, Film MFA Program
BA: Portland State University, ’12

“This award alleviates so many of the stresses and burdens of having to search for funding to support myself and my work.”

Hopinka views his community—he is a member of the HoChunk Nation—as “inextricably connected” with his thesis, which is a featurelength film exploring Native American Pow Wows and the diverse tribal approaches to these events around the country.

Festivals in Los Angeles, Brussels, Paris, Toronto, Chicago, and Portland have screened his work. After graduation, Hopinka hopes to teach and continue to create videos, particularly those promoting preservation and revitalization of his tribal community’s language and culture.

Dmitriy Kazakov, Clinical Psychology PhD Program
MA: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’11 • BA: University of Nevada-Las Vegas, ’09

“Receiving this fellowship is an amazing opportunity that will enable me to make a significant and lasting impact on my field.”

Honors include best 2014 student poster awards from the National Academy of Neuropsychology and Wisconsin Psychological Association, as well as top three finishes in the 2010 John Jay College Forensic Psychology Master’s Student Research Group Conference and 2008 Psi Chi/UNLV Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference.

He would like to become a clinical neuropsychologist focusing on assessment and forensics. His research goal is to improve brain function assessment in psychological
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Alexandra Kedlik, Mathematics MS Program—Atmospheric Sciences
BS: Florida State University, ’14

“This award will allow me to further my exciting research and allow me to take more classes in Atmospheric Science.”

Kedlik is planning to use her passion for the weather and for learning to help others stay safe from harm. She hopes to work at the National Weather Service or a private sector company, applying what she is learning at UWM to improve weather prediction. She also envisions a future forecasting severe weather at the Storm Prediction Center and translating forecasts into Spanish for the Hispanic community in the United States.

Kedlik presented research earlier this year at the American Meteorological Society Conference.

Melissa Krabbe, Psychology PhD Program—Behavior Analysis
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’14 • BA: Marquette University, ’12

“This award has given me the financial stability necessary to be able to focus my time and attention on my clinical work and research interests throughout the remainder of my graduate education.”

A recently board-certified behavior analyst, Krabbe is working to improve the lives of children with autism and other developmental disabilities, through research and clinical interventions to develop their academic and daily living skills and decrease problem behaviors. Other achievements include a 2014 UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award, research presentations at regional conferences, and other student grants and stipends.

Nick Lambrou, Educational Psychology PhD Program
MS: UW-Milwaukee, ’13 • BS: UW-Madison, ’11

“In receiving the fellowship, I believe it is crucial that this gift be returned through my service as a psychologist, educator, researcher, advocate, and mentor.”

“The more I move into positions of power, the more I realize the incredible responsibility that comes with along with it. Transgender individuals remain underrepresented in higher education and positions of power, and this gift of the AOP will have a ripple effect. My presence as an educator, colleague, counselor and community member will instill hope and support for marginalized individuals who may have experienced similar barriers and victories.” Honors for Lambrou include teaching assistantships and a UWM Chancellor’s Graduate Student Award.

Nicholas Lerma, Kinesiology PhD Program
MA: Central Michigan University, ’13 • BA: Albion College, ’07 • BA: Michigan State University, ’04

“The AOP Fellowship is important for the development of future institutions in becoming representative of a student body growing more diverse and coming from underrepresented backgrounds.”

Lerna has been involved in basic and applied research projects, including molecular mechanisms in bone loss/preservation, athletic performance in adolescents and young adults, and muscle cramp prevention. A two-time recipient of the Helen Bader Aging and Community Award, Lerna hopes for a career as a professor at an academic institution with a research focus in exercise physiology and applied gerontology.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Elizabeth Linhart, Women’s Studies MA Program
MBA: UW-Whitewater, ’15 • BA: UW-Whitewater, ’09

“Aside from providing the capital needed to further my own educational goals, I believe this fellowship would be an investment in the future of other underprivileged individuals.”

A single mother who moved to Milwaukee to pursue Women’s Studies at UWM, Linhart plans to help others pursue their educational and vocational goals through non-profit work and research. As an undergraduate in sociology and women’s studies, Linhart was elected president of the Golden Key International Honour Society and named Senior of the Year in UW-Whitewater’s Sociology Department.

Anny Nguyen, Master of Nursing Program
BS: Beloit College, ’10

“Receiving this award greatly reduces my stress and worry about how I’m ever going to pay back my school loans.”

“Nursing is a complex concept; it’s a verb, an adjective, a career, and a symbol.”

As an undergraduate, Nguyen was awarded the CRC Press First Year Chemistry Achievement Award, the American Chemical Society Award for Achievement in Organic Chemistry, the Ferwerda Endowed Science Scholarship, the Verville Scholar’s Award, the Nair Award. A McNair Scholar, she spent two summers conducting research and was an early electee into Phi Beta Kappa. Since attending UWM, she has been inducted into Phi Kappa Phi.

Mia Beth Phifer, MA Program—Public History
BA: Coe College, ’15

“This award means that I will be able to focus my energies on earning my degree, within organizations at UWM and in the Milwaukee area that relate to my career interests.”

Before attending UWM, Phifer completed two internships, conducted original research on African American families in post-Civil War Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and volunteered at the State Historical Society of Iowa, a food pantry, and in Joplin, Missouri, helping rebuild a house after the tornado disaster.

Phifer plans to pursue a management position at a non-profit history museum or historic site.

Katherine Prange, Art MFA Program—Digital Media & Design
MA: UW-Milwaukee, ’15 • BFA: UW-Milwaukee, ’96

“The AOP award has given me the freedom to pursue my academic goal of pushing the boundaries of the creative process while exploring new ways of creating through new and emerging technologies.”

Prange plans to hone her skills in design and interactive and multimedia art and engage in rigorous research to expand her knowledge of art history, theory, philosophy and criticism as it speaks to artworks that engage with social issues. Awards include the Frederick R. Layton Fellowship Award. After graduation, she wants to continue her art practice and teach at the university level or gain employment within a sustainable, forward-thinking work environment.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Caitlin Scarano, English PhD Program—Creative Writing—Poetry
MFA: University of Alaska-Fairbanks, ’14 • MA: Bowling Green, ’11 • BA: James Madison University, ’09
“...This amazing fellowship opportunity will enable me to focus on my writing, become a author, and graduate from UWM within four years.”
Scarano has two published poetry chapbooks and was a finalist for the 2014 Best of the Net Anthology. She won the 2015 Indiana Review Poetry Prize, the inaugural Sally Greene Hassan Annual Prize in Letters, and the Orlando Prize for Flash Fiction. Scarano is an artist in residence at the Hinge Arts Residency program and the Artsmith’s 2016 Artist Residency on Orcas Island. Scarano’s career interests include teaching creative writing in higher education and social justice or activism work.

Shelbie Sullivan, Clinical Psychology PhD Program
BS: Ball State University, ’14
“This award means that someone else believed in my goals and believed I can achieve them. I will be able to commit to...becoming the research clinician that I aspire to be.”
Inspired by her mother’s serious illness, Sullivan is dedicated to helping others who experience chronic health conditions. Her broad career interest is to increase awareness of such conditions and decrease negative outcomes through research clinical services.
Sullivan was active in undergraduate research, and was named senior of the year in psychological science. She was supported by Chancellor’s Graduate Student Awards for her first two years at UWM.

Mai Xiong Vang, Doctor of Nursing Practice Program
BS: UW-Milwaukee, ’12
“This award is definitely giving me the chance to perfect my role, learning, and understanding to be the best of the best as a future family nurse practitioner.”
As a first-generation college student and the only Hmong registered nurse in her medical/surgical telemetry unit, Vang has made a strong commitment to advocate for the Hmong community and to work to increase Hmong representation in the nursing field. When she was crowned the first Miss Hmong Milwaukee in 2008, Vang set ambitious academic and professional goals for herself, and credits the AOP fellowship for keeping them within reach.

Mike Visetsouk, Biological Sciences, PhD Program
BS: Marquette University, ’12
“This fellowship will provide freedom to focus on my research and professional development. These first few years in the field are crucial for developing professional relationships and exploring and creating new frontiers in research.”
Visetsouk’s awards include the 2015 Ruth Walker Grantin-Aid, an Outstanding Graduate Poster in the area of cell and molecular biology from the Biological Sciences Department, and Best Poster at the 2015 Midwest Zebrafish Conference.
His career interests include a position in industry leading a research group or in academics with a faculty position.
2015-16 New Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellows

Laura Voith, Social Work PhD program
BS: UW-Milwaukee, ’08
“Receiving the AOP Fellowship allows me to focus on the two most important components of achieving my professional goals: completing the dissertation and successfully navigating the academic job market.”
A recipient of the Dr. Tomas Garrett-Rosas Research Award, Voith is conducting an ambitious, mixed-methods dissertation—involving a secondary data analysis and primary data collection and analysis.
After she earns her PhD, Voith plans to develop and improve upon violence prevention practice and policy strategies through research as a faculty member at an academic institution.

David Kent Watson, MFA in Art Program
BFA: UW-Milwaukee, ’10
“The AOP fellowship will allow me to develop skills in physical computing and electronics to achieve my goal of creating artworks that are kinetic and that allow viewers to have different sensations and participate in new ways of knowing.”
Following years of secretly struggling with dyslexia, Kent discovered he excelled in the arts in college. “Art and technology allowed me to engage with an intellectual community in a creative and rewarding way.” After graduation, Watson envisions careers in the creative use of technologies such as electronics or fabrication within the fine arts and teaching others about creative problem-solving using new media.

Victor Williamson, Engineering PhD program—Computer Science
MS: Massachusetts Institute Of Technology, ’10 • BS: Massachusetts Institute Of Technology, ’05
“AOP allows me to pitch ideas to my advisor and attain the independence and freedom necessary for innovation and critical thinking within black communities.”
“I am building a Web platform to aggregate, search, and disseminate Afrocentric ideas and research. I want to enable budding black developers, animators and writers to collaborate, produce and distribute content. The platform supports reading in the Yoruba language of West Africa, allow searching dictionaries and provide help for writing in native African languages such as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa, and in other languages from east, south and northern Africa.”
Learn About UWM Graduate School Fellowships for Full-Time Study

Fellows are nominated by their programs in a competitive process.

In addition to their stipends, all fellows are eligible to receive:

- Tuition remission
- Health insurance
- $1,000 travel award.

Distinguished Graduate Student Fellowship (DGSF)

The DGSF recognizes strong academic achievement or exceptional potential, demonstrated leadership potential, and research goals.

Who is eligible? New or continuing master’s and doctoral (non-dissertator) students.

Annual stipend is currently $15,000

Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship (DDF)

The DDF recognizes exceptional scholarly achievements and recognition relative to expectations in field of study, and exceptional potential contribution of new knowledge.

Who is eligible? UWM PhD students who have either dissertator status or will achieve dissertator status during the award year.

Annual stipend is currently $16,500 for current dissertators; $15,000 for students yet to achieve dissertator status.

Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellowship

This need-based, renewable award recognizes strong academic achievement and potential.

Who is eligible? New or continuing UWM graduate degree students who are U.S. citizens/permanent residents and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Individuals from racial or ethnic populations under-represented among students of higher education.
- First generation college students and individuals from financially disadvantaged backgrounds or circumstances.
- Individuals with disabilities.
- Recent Immigrants (must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States).
- Participants in TRIO precollege or undergraduate programs (e.g., McNair, Student Support Services, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Veterans Upward Bound) or other approved program (Project 1000, etc.).

This award is also based on merit, where the student’s studies and contributions indicate high potential for or achievement in their chosen disciplines.

Annual stipend is currently $15,000.
Extramural Graduate Fellowships Initiative

The Dean of the Graduate School has launched a new initiative to develop extramural sources of financial support for graduate students. Under the management of our first Director of Development for Graduate Education, Nicole Sippy, we are honored to announce the very first philanthropic scholarship through this initiative. Laura Korthauer, the top-ranked Distinquished Graduate Student Fellowship nominee, is the recipient of the Graduate Student Excellence Fellowship, in the amount of $1,500.

UWM Graduate Student Excellence Fellowship (GSEF)

**Laura Korthauer, 2015-16 Fellow**

A third-year PhD student in clinical psychology, Laura Korthauer earned her MA in the Social Sciences (Cognitive Psychology concentration) from the University of Chicago in 2010. She is interested in the neural correlates of age-related cognitive impairment in both healthy older adults and those experiencing pathological aging (e.g., mild cognitive impairment or dementia).

She is interested in investigating indices of brain structure related to spatial navigation performance and characterizing brain integrity of middle-aged individuals who may be at genetic risk for age-related cognitive impairment. More specifically, she is studying network-level indices of brain structure and function between carriers and non-carriers of risk alleles for Alzheimer’s disease. The ultimate goal of her research is to improve earlier detection of Alzheimer’s disease and better characterize the progression of age-related cognitive impairment. In her clinical work, she is interested in neuropsychological assessment of older adults with mood disorders, memory impairment, and other age-related cognitive deficits. Her career goal is to work as a licensed clinical neuropsychologist in an academic medical setting.

**Matthew J. Flynn, GSEF Sponsor**

Matthew J. Flynn is considered one of Wisconsin’s foremost litigators. A graduate of Yale University and the University of Wisconsin Law School, Matt served as Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review and law clerk to the chief judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit. Mr. Flynn is a commercial litigation partner in the firm Quarles & Brady, LLP, in Milwaukee.

“I come from a UWM family,” he says. “My father was on the UWM faculty for 34 years. My sister currently teaches in the UWM French Department. I have five family members who graduated from UWM. I feel strongly that UWM is one of our State’s most important assets. The best way to ensure access to this University is by supporting fellowships and scholarships.”

Matt’s father, Gerard Flynn, was instrumental in developing the study of Spanish at UWM. He chaired the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and was active in the faculty senate and as a Humanities Divisional Committee member. Matt is the author of the 2012 novel Prynne Knumber, which is set in Milwaukee. He also served as President of the Board of Directors of the Skylight Opera Theater.

Other Awards

In addition to raising funds for philanthropic fellowships, the Graduate School’s Extramural Graduate Fellowship Initiative encourages and prepares graduate students and faculty to submit grant proposals to federal agencies and foundations for individual and block grant fellowships. This is a collaboration with the UWM Office of Research.

**National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships Program (GRFP) Fellows**

- Brittany Suttner, Environmental Engineering
- Erika Pliner, Bioengineering
- Dylan Wilmeth, Geosciences

**GRFP Honorable Mentions:**
- Sara Schaal, Evolutionary Biology
- Geoffrey Severin, Biochemistry

**Other Notable Awards**

- Gabriela Nagy, UWM Psychology PhD Program: earns top graduate scholarship from Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee.
- UWM Biomedical and Health Informatics PhD program: Awarded Department of Education Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) block grant.