NAGPS Legislative Action Days

NAGPS’s Legislative Action Days for Spring 2010 was held over three days in late February in Washington, D.C. Professional training was provided by the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition. Three main issues were focused on: the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA), graduate student tax exemption, and H-1B visa reform. Over 70 legislative and staff visits were made in just two days.

For a full summary of LAD, keep reading on page 3.

The State of NAGPS

Dear NAGPS Members:

Amid a declining membership, a lacking communication infrastructure, a tough financial situation, a mandated organizational restructure, and without a bid for the national conference, the 2010 Board of Directors took office.

Even with the daunting task presented us, we have made significant accomplishments since assuming office on January 1. Within two months, we have increased membership (40+ members), coordinated a well-executed advocacy event with professional training, completed our regularly scheduled national newsletter, and standardized e-mail communications. In addition we have assisted members in local advocacy (e.g., student tax), selected the 2010 National Conference location to be at MIT (Cambridge, MA), and expanded our health insurance to be available to recent graduates up to 18 months after graduation.

We now have our members-only area on the website fully functional, providing access to the Annunicator (NAGPS periodic e-mail news announcement), select conference presentations, forums, and message boards.

Even with the many accomplishments, we have much more on the horizon including data collection from Graduate/Professional Student Associations (GPSAs) to empower our members, a national graduate-

In This Issue

Letter from the President – 1
Legislative Action Days – 1,3,5
Grad Appreciation Week – 2
Jobs for Celebrating
2010 Conference Host – 4
2009 National Conference – 6
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
2010 Board of Directors – 7
2010 Accomplishments – 7
Spotlight on a GSA – 8
Oklahoma State University
Job Searching Tips – 8,9
UnitedHealthcare Plans – 9
UnitedHealthcare Plans – 9
Midwest Regional Conference – 10
Southeast Regional Conference – 10
NAGPS New Members – 10
2010 Board Biographies – 11-13

professional student assessment survey, partnerships with like-minded organizations, dental care plans, tuition insurance, disability insurance, and much more.

Within the next year, NAGPS has a great potential to improve the general welfare of our students and GPSAs. I have no doubt that we can make NAGPS greater, better, and stronger by the end of the year. However, this does require the support and dedication of our membership. We have key positions on the Board of Directors that need to be filled: Midwest Regional Chair and Western Regional Chair. We also are seeking participation on NAGPS committees and within our regions. You and all of your students are eligible to run for these positions. Having a student from your institution serve on the NAGPS Board is a privilege and a great way to build leaders within your organization.

As we are working hard to improve NAGPS for you, I hope you appreciate our efforts and support us through keeping your students informed, encouraging participation, and providing feedback.

Best Wishes,

Alex Evans
NAGPS President & CEO
Celebrate Graduate Student Appreciation Week

04/12/2010 - 04/16/2010

Graduate Student Appreciation Week is a national initiative endorsed by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), which seeks to shed light on the contributions that graduate and professional students bring to their campus, community-based partners, and the surrounding states in which they reside. As administrators, faculty, and staff members who work with graduate/professional students, Graduate Student Appreciation Week can be the perfect opportunity to bring the campus together in a celebration of accomplishment and support for you graduate students.

Today’s graduate/professional student has multiple life responsibilities, is balancing the social, mental, and emotional challenges of daily life, and struggling to produce their own cutting edge intellectual property in the world of academia. Providing a space for graduate students to unwind, feel free to interact with other students, or just relax are among some of the most important ideas of Graduate Appreciation Week. Some of the most successful graduate/professional student appreciation weeks have been a combination of academic, life skills, and social based events that cater to the varying backgrounds of students on the campus.

If you have not participated in Graduate Student Appreciation Week on your campus, then starting out small might be a viable option in the first year. Suggested events include hosting an open house in the campus Dean of Students Office or creating a sticker or button with “I Support Graduate Students” that people on your campus can wear in support of Graduate Student Appreciation Week. Successful events to consider include bringing in a special guest speaker who would appeal to a grad audience or even providing a coffee break or afternoon snack hour for graduate students between travel to and from classes.

For the more ambitious administrator, Graduate Student Appreciation Week can be the perfect collaborative project. Form a committee of campus departments and offices which provide services to graduate students. Utilize this committee to plan a series of events and programs that would be of benefit to your intended graduate/professional student audience. For example, several campuses have hosted stress buster programs sponsored by their university recreation department, and the counseling center which providing yoga therapy, relaxation techniques and helpful hints on finding and keeping balance in the busy graduate student’s life.

In addition, it is important to involve members of your graduate student government. You can partner with them to provide new initiatives or support things that they are already doing. The most important thing to remember is that your participation in Graduate Student Appreciation Week can provide your graduate students with the momentum they need to complete the semester on a high, while knowing that their university supports them every step of the way.

Below is a list of ideas that make great appreciation week activities:

- Host a Graduate Student Awards Banquet
- Life Skills Classes- Meals in Minutes, Money Management Workshop, Free Grant Writing Program
- Create Banners and Stickers for Faculty/Staff to wear in support of Grad Appreciation Week.
- Solicit the support of the Graduate School Dean in favor of Grad Appreciation Week activities
- Sponsor a First Friday’s at Five event
- Ask the SGA to declare a special “Grad Appreciation Week” resolution
- Provide giveaways and door prizes throughout the week
- Host a talent show
- Have a coffee break or donut hour just for graduate students
- Ask local businesses to provide discounts and specials during Grad Appreciation Week
- Provide a quiet study space or free printing
- Host an online wine and cheese social for distance students
- Bring in special guest speakers on a variety of topics
- Create a graduate student recognition system and host a ceremony to recognize them
- Host Karaoke or Speed Dating event
- Give away scholarships or monetary awards for special research
- Have Fun!

In the end, what’s important is your commitment to your graduate and professional student population and their needs. Meeting these needs can be done through a variety of programmatic efforts. It is important to you to recognize what will be most beneficial to your students.

Rosalind Moore
NAGPS Advisory Board Member and Director of Graduate Student Services at the University of Alabama
Recently NAGPS coordinated the first major advocacy event for the year, the Spring 2010 Legislative Action Days (LAD). The event was held over three days in late February in Washington, DC. With the assistance of our like-minded affiliate the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) we secured professional lobby training our first day, which focused on open access. The next two days were devoted to visits at legislators’ offices on Capitol Hill. Seven NAGPS membership universities sent delegations to LAD, these included Carnegie Mellon University, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Oklahoma State University, Saint Louis University, Western Michigan University and University of California San Diego. These attendees, in addition to the NAGPS leadership present at LAD, helped conduct over seventy individual visits in only two days.

Three main issues were proposed by NAGPS for discussion during lobby visits: the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA), graduate student tax exemption, and H-1B visa reform.

While these were the suggested topics of discussion, as with any LAD attendees are encouraged to bring forth their own issues which may be more pertinent to their university, state, or region. For instance, the JHU delegation approached the subject of single entry visas for international students at their representatives’ offices. Even though this issue is more closely related to the state department there was some good feedback on how to proceed with the JHU concerns. Combined with NAGPS’s recent resolution regarding Iranian student visas hopefully we can gain traction with this issue and bring forth some meaningful change for our fellow international students who are affected by these restrictive policies.

With regards to the main issues, there was broad bi-partisan support for each issue. The FRPAA discussion was focused on the current senate bill in committee which would mandate that publications originating from federally funded research be released to the general public six months after their publication date. Nearly all the senators’ offices that the delegations met were open to the bill and understood the positive impact it would have not only for the research community but the general population as a whole. In addition, we searched for representatives that were potentially interested in authoring or co-sponsoring a House companion bill. I am glad to report that at this time a sponsor has been identified and the bill should be introduced in the House in late March. Discussions at future LAD with representatives will provide a solid foundation for drumming up support for this House companion bill. Look for a call to our membership from me regarding this issue in the coming weeks. We will use the membership of NAGPS to contact as many representatives as possible with statements of support for this upcoming bill.

Graduate student tax exemption is a topic that NAGPS has been working on since its inception. Past bills have been proposed by Representative English (R-PA) but none have made it out of committee. However, based on the lobby visits during LAD there appears to be a good deal of support on this issue. Presenting it as a tax incentive...
Created 56 years ago, the MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC) exists to enhance the overall graduate experience at MIT by promoting the general welfare and concerns of the graduate student body, create new programs and initiatives to provide opportunities for growth and interaction, and communicate with the MIT Faculty and Administration on behalf of graduate students. These goals are accomplished through a structure of elected representatives, standing committees, and officers. Currently, over 100 active MIT graduate students serve as executive committee members and representatives.

Graduate student advocacy is the central role of the GSC, and the past year’s efforts were very successful, yielding resolution to several long-standing GSC priorities and demonstrating the value students can bring to MIT’s decision-making processes. The GSC’s annual stipend recommendation to the MIT Administration has been a consistently strong example of the success of the data-driven advocacy by the Council. Each year’s recommendation is made from a cost of living analysis, produced from surveys and government inflation statistics. This is one of the most successful stipend negotiation processes compared to those of MIT’s peer institutions.

One of the biggest achievements in the past two years was the creation and implementation of MIT’s first graduate student dental plan. The plan launched in September 2008 and in this current year has over a thousand subscribers. Also regarding student health, and because of increasing student numbers in the northwest corner of campus, the GSC (in collaboration with MIT Medical) launched the Northwest Flu Shot Clinic. Over 200 students took advantage of this service.

The GSC expanded on last year’s initiatives focusing on enhancing and embracing diversity at the institute. This year the GSC provided funding and support for the Minority Summer Research Program which provides research opportunities for high school students of underrepresented minority groups and encourages them to apply and attend MIT. In addition the GSC continued the International Student Mentorship Program, matching new international students with current student mentors, and organized a Diversity Social Hour during graduate student orientation.

Graduate students participated in the Diversity Congress organized in the fall of 2008 and in the institute-wide efforts on diversity and inclusion, including the design of a new diversity website. As well, the GSC started the Rethinking Interactions seminars, a bi-weekly series of conversations on diversity with faculty and staff members. Furthermore, a Diversity Task Force was launched in August.

The GSC created a task force on alumni relations, the major aim of which was to design and implement the nation’s first Grad Gift in conjunction with the alumni association. In addition, the task force organized events linking current graduate students with graduate student alumni. The goal of the Grad Gift campaign, which was rolled out this spring with initial success, is to foster a habit of philanthropy, even if the amount donated by each individual graduate student is modest.

Each year, the GSC partners with the Undergraduate Senior Class and the Society of Women Engineers to host one of the largest career fairs in the country, bringing together 300 companies and 5000 students. In addition, we sponsored an email parsing competition with the objective of developing an Interdisciplinary Lecture Calendar (ILC), a centralized interface to all research seminars, talks, and workshops on campus. Furthermore, as part of a broader advising initiative, we developed a new graduate student survey on mentoring issues and the advisor-advisee relationship and began analyzing the results from a similar survey conducted in 2004 and doctoral exit surveys.

GSC activities, like the highly successful graduate orientation, the Welcome Address featuring the MIT President and multiple Nobel laureates, Two Dollar Tuesdays dinners, the GSC Ski Trip, and the Grad Gala were all extremely successful. The most substantial addition was the launch of joint university events. The Boston Graduate Party by BGLO attracted almost 1000 students from over 12 universities in the greater Boston area. Additionally, the GSC Funding Board awarded $124,142 to over one hundred MIT graduate student groups in the past academic year, which made hundreds of events possible.

The GSC provided funding to students and student groups through several additional avenues beyond the Funding Board. Recognizing that grad students participate in a broad array of artistic and sporting activities the council continued its Athletic and Performance Activities Grant to help students pursue these types of hobbies at competitive levels. Through this grant, students who excel in sports, music, dance, and various other talents were able to travel and compete around the nation. The Collaboration Reward funds events organized jointly between two or more existing student groups, to promote a mixing of social circles within the student body. To support graduate student professional development, the GSC again this year offered a travel grant program. Travel grant funds were intended to enable students to present their work at research-related conferences, primarily when the research supervisor was unable to support the travel.

Early this year, the MIT GSC team started the Boston Graduate Leadership Organization as a platform to connect with the graduate student population in the greater Boston area (there are over 65,000 graduate students in greater Boston), and thus far 12 universities have joined.

Last year the GSC also hosted the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) Northeast Regional Conference, helping to build support for NAGPS in an area of the country where membership has generally been somewhat weak. Through the work of MIT GSC members, the Northeast Regional membership of NAGPS increased 100% since the beginning of 2009, from four to eight universities. GSC members also traveled to Washington, D.C. to support the lobbying efforts of NAGPS. In fall 2009 we met with legislators or the staffers of 11 Senators/Representatives.

Our longer-term goal is to establish MIT as a leader in the graduate community nationwide and globally. MIT was a participant in the 2009 Ivy Summit during which MIT made a presentation promoting NAGPS. MIT GSC also won the bid to host the 2011 Ivy Summit, providing another dimension for joint university collaboration.

Alex Hamilton Chan
President, MIT GSC
for encouraging United States citizens to pursue advanced degrees is probably the strongest argument. The fiscal impact would be minimal initially and the federal government could see more tax dollars generated from these individuals over their career life with their advanced degrees.

New bill language created by MIT’s Legislative Action Committee was passed out at some meetings for legislators to look over. The goal is to have some type of bill introduced this spring by a representative on the Ways and Means Committee. The time is now to push this type of legislation through with the current focus on improving the United States’ competitiveness in the global arena. Graduate students are our future educators, innovators and industry leaders. Incentivizing a graduate school education in order to develop highly skilled talent is something that legislators can get behind and support in the current political climate.

H-1B visa reform was the toughest issue because the type of reform we are proposing usually gets lumped into a larger immigration bill that is struck due to its partisan nature. Another sticking point with H-1B visas is the idea that it takes away jobs for American citizens.

However, H-1B reform is widely supported regardless of the negativity surrounding the current immigration reform situation and the protectionist mindset of some individuals. Most people understand that keeping the talent we educate and train here with private and federal money is beneficial to the economy. Touting the fact that for every H-1B visa issued there are five U.S. jobs created is a great way to show the effectiveness of this program. Needless to say the debate about immigration reform has soured some legislators’ attitudes towards this issue but at LAD some of the delegations discussed possibly approaching the immigration reform issue on a piecemeal basis. This strategy of forgoing the bloated bills that have been proposed in the past was well received and could be a viable solution moving forward with some of the legislators’ offices that we visited.

In the following weeks after LAD the various attendees have been following up with their legislative visits and providing any additional information to address any questions that were posed.

In addition, the Legislative Concerns Committee will be going through the de-brief forms from all the visits and start planning out a short and long term strategy for each issue. The success of LAD really stems from not only the one-on-one interaction on Capitol Hill but also the relationship that is built afterwards. As the year progresses we will use these relationships to ensure not only that graduate and professional students’ concerns are voiced on a national level but that meaningful action is pursued to address the issues at hand.

You can do your part by joining your graduate student association’s legislative concerns committee or becoming more active in NAGPS’s advocacy efforts. I look forward to interacting with all of you as the year progresses and hopefully I will see some new faces at the next NAGPS LAD, in the fall of this year.

Chad Foerster
NAGPS Legislative Concerns Chair
UC San Diego

Starting your career in academia?

Graduation is right around the corner. Get a jump on the academic job market with HigherEdJobs, the most comprehensive resource for jobs in higher education. Visit www.HigherEdJobs.com and take charge of your career today.

✔ Free for job seekers
✔ Now listing over 11,000 jobs from 1,700 institutions
✔ Sign up for Job Agents to receive jobs via email
✔ Salary data, interviews with experts, articles and more

HigherEdJobs

Don’t just search. Connect.
The NAGPS 2009 National Conference took place at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

In addition to the traditional business meeting and elections, which took place at the State Capitol, the conference featured sessions presented by graduate student leaders on such diverse topics as health insurance, approaches to budget cuts, event planning, lobbying and governmental relations, community engagement, university communication, unionization, and open access.

The conference opened with a reception at the UNL Skyboxes, which included a private tour of the football stadium. There were several other wonderful social events, including: a social at the Del Ray Ballroom which featured a jazz combo, and a gala dinner during which conference participants were entertained by a cabaret performance.

The speakers at the conference included: Scott Jaschik from Inside Higher Ed, Steve Goldenberg from Interfolio, and a Nebraska state senator.

I believe the conference provided a great opportunity for graduate students to discuss common challenges and goals they face as leaders at their respective universities, as well as to network and pave the way for future collaborations.

Thanks to our conference hosts, University of Nebraska, and our 2009 Vice-President, Nancy Graves for all of their hard work and dedication in making this event such a success!

Julia Mortyakova
NAGPS Ex-Officio
Welcome to our 2010 NAGPS Board of Directors!

Early 2010 Accomplishments

• Passed Iranian student visa resolution
• Defeated student tax proposal in Pittsburgh
• Legislative Action Days: over 70 appointments
• Added professional training to Legislative Action Days
• Created outreach and relations recruitment materials and strategy
• Significant membership recruitment since national conference
• Outreach to potential partners and like-minded groups
• Established periodic e-mail news, Annunciator
• Resurrected newsletter, Postgraduate Voice
• Resurrected online knowledge-sharing
• Senators Schumer (NY) and Graham (SC) propose legislation to award green cards to international graduate students in STEM
• FRPAA will be introduced in the House of Representatives

NAGPS Board of Directors 2010

President
Alex Evans – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Vice-President
Svetlana Tyutina – Florida International University

Director of Administration
Donna Duerer – University of Southern California

Director of Communications
Divya Krishnan – Oklahoma State University

Director of Finance
Jon Kowalski – Carnegie Mellon University

Director of Relations
Paul Monasterio – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Director of Outreach
Kevin Comber – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Legislative Concerns Chair
Chad Foerster – UC San Diego

International Concerns Chair
Tareq Tawaiha – University of Nebraska Lincoln

Employment Concerns Chair
Matthew Engel – Stony Brook University

Social Justice Chair
Deb Morrison – University of Colorado, Boulder

Western Region
Vacant

Southcentral Region
Stephanie Rogers – Oklahoma State University

Midwest Region
Vacant

Southeast Region
Fabian Bauwens – Johns Hopkins University

Northeast Region
Jason Heustis – Tufts University

Ex-Officio
Julia Mortyakova – University of Miami

For complete officer bios see pages 11-13
set goals

Motivate Yourself

Without goals, you can become unfocused, which can negatively affect your job search. Here are a few examples of goals you may want to set:

1. Devote a set number of hours per week to building your network and preparing for your job search. Even if you aren’t currently looking for a job, you should still be laying the foundation for your future job search now. If you’ve already graduated, you should be working on this full-time.

2. Ask friends, family, classmates, and professors for five new introductions per week. Don’t ask for random introductions—express interest in meeting individuals that are directly related to your career choice.

3. Attend a minimum of at least two networking events per month. These are the absolute best places to meet new people who can help you expand and strengthen your network. Don’t be shy, ask questions and politely request others to introduce you to individuals who can be influential in your job search. Always be sure to return the favor by offering your assistance in introducing them to someone in your network.

Brand Yourself

In order to brand yourself properly, you need to really know who you are. Write down your strengths and weaknesses, and most importantly, what you want out of your career. Once you have a firm grasp on this, prepare an elevator pitch about yourself. An elevator pitch is a thirty-second overview (typically under 130 words) that describes who you are and what you have to offer. Essentially, the elevator pitch should be designed to sell yourself and tailored to the individual you are speaking with. This will come in handy at networking events, job interviews and even more casual situations.

Ask For Guidance

Whether you think so or not, you’ve already formed a strong network while in graduate school. Your classmates and especially your professors can be a huge asset to your career. Many professors have real

continued on next page
world experience and valuable connections you can tap into. Along the same lines, fellow students may have connections you may be able to benefit from as well. Most importantly, let everyone know you are looking to build your network and find a job. If nobody realizes you are looking, they won’t know to help you.

**Build Your Network**

There are two primary methods for adding connections to your network: in person and online. Meeting people in person is still the tried-and-true best approach for making a lasting impression. You should take advantage of networking opportunities by reaching out and building relationships with faculty, administrators, students, alumni, guest lecturers from academia and industry, and professionals in the fields you are most interested in. This can be accomplished by introducing yourself to new people at seminars, conferences, and meetings in person and following up immediately online. Conferences provide a huge opportunity for you to associate a face with your name and make a strong positive impression by communicating effectively, being respectful, displaying a positive attitude, and appearing motivated. The best time to network at these events is between sessions or during the social hour. It is during this critical window that you should be shaking hands, introducing yourself, talking about your interests, and exchanging business cards. Communicating with individuals on the web is the optimal way to follow up with these new connections. You can send them an email referencing the conversation you had in person. This is a great way to help them remember who you were, and put a face to your email. In addition, you should look to expand your digital network by adding these connections to your profiles on websites such as LinkedIn and inDegree. LinkedIn is a very useful tool for reading the resumes, accomplishments, goals, and recommendations of others who have obtained a career you are interested in pursuing. InDegree allows you to network with graduate students and simultaneously search directly for jobs in your field online. In addition, depending on your areas of expertise, here are a few websites you may want to check out to help you get started:

- doostang.com
- xing.com
- visualcv.com
- jobsboard.biocareercenter.com
- bio-link.org
- fobip.org/alumni

**Sustain Your Network**

Just because you’ve found a job, doesn’t mean you’ll have that job forever, especially in the current labor market. Make sure you follow up with your most valuable connections at least once a month. Some ways to reconnect with a contact are by sending them an article that they may find interesting or relevant, asking for career advice, or sending a holiday greeting.

There are many benefits to having a wide network. However, the quantity of your connections is not nearly as important as the quality and depth of your relationship with each individual. Ideally, you should offer to assist your contacts in a meaningful way – however, if you do not know how you can assist them now, you should still ask. This will go far in showing them that you are motivated in helping them, which adds value to your relationship. In return, a strong connection could potentially open doors for you by writing a recommendation (online or hardcopy), act as a mentor, or potentially hire you in the long run.

Overall, Networking is critical to your long term success. It is known that most jobs are actually unadvertised, and that these positions are filled by people who have built relationships with an employer or their representatives. Having a strong network with will help you find out about these positions and get hired.

**Matthew A. Engel**

Alexander Miningham

Matthew A. Engel is a PhD candidate at Stony Brook University in the Department of Biomedical Engineering pursuing interests in intellectual property and management consulting, and serves as the NAGPS Employment Concerns Chair.

Alexander Miningham, founder and CEO of inDegree, is an entrepreneur focused on advancing career opportunities for graduate students.

---

**NAGPS Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plans**

At the end of January a team of NAGPS executives (Paul Monasterio, Director of Relations; Julia Morryakova, Immediate Past President; Svetlana Tyutina, Vice-President; and Alex Evans, President) met with representatives from UnitedHealthcare Student Resources to continue to improve the health insurance plans which are offered to all members of NAGPS.

This injury and sickness coverage, specially designed for graduate students, offers eight different types of plans* at a competitive cost. The plans cost as low as $677/year for single domestic students, $635/year for single international students, and $1862/year for married students. The plan includes the following important features:

- **Coverage for graduate students, offers eight different types of plans** at a competitive cost. The plans cost as low as $677/year for single domestic students, $635/year for single international students, and $1862/year for married students.
- **Access to a large nationwide panel of physicians**
- **Low co-pays and co-insurance for doctor’s visits, hospitalization, lab, x-ray and prescriptions**
- **Coverage is available for your eligible dependents, including domestic partners**
- **Maternity is covered**
- **Coverage is guaranteed regardless of any medical condition**
- **All J1 visa requirements for medical coverage, repatriation and medical evacuation**

Enrollment in the plan up to 18 months after the completion of the degree allowing for a full year of coverage after that. This is especially relevant in the current economic environment in which graduate students may have a difficult time securing employment after graduation.

More information is available at https://www.uhcsrc.com/nagps.

**Paul Monasterio**

NAGPS Director of Relations

---

*For a full description of coverage, including costs, benefits, exclusions, any reductions and limitations, and the terms under which the coverage may remain in force, log on to www.uhcsrc.com/NAGPS. Plans are underwritten by UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company and (in New York) UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company of New York. Benefits vary by state and are not available in all states.
NAGPS Southeast Regional Conference

The regional conference hosted by FIU’s GSA was a great success, both in attendance and accomplishments. The conference featured many presentations and discussions on graduate student life and NAGPS (lobbying, career opportunities, GSA survival, etc.). After an intellectually stimulating day of lectures and discussions our guests experienced Miami’s South beach.

At the regional business meeting on March 12th, the delegates of the Southeast region successfully established a new regional constitution and bylaws. Also during the business meeting a new board was elected.

Food was copiously available and quite excellent—we seriously suspected the FIU GSA members of trying to make us fatter. Our hosts, the FIU GSA, were very professional and very hospitable, definitely setting an example to follow for future conferences.

I would like to thank the GSA members of FIU and Conference Director Svetlana Tyutina for hosting a successful conference.

Southeast Regional Board
Southeast Regional Director of Communication and Administration: Kiri Lanice Walton (University of Alabama)
Southeast Regional Director of Outreach Mid-SE (TN, SC, NC, GA): Richard J. Kerr (University of Georgia)
Southeast Regional Director of Outreach South-SE (FL, AL, PR, VI): Mohamed Saleem (Florida International University)
Southeast Regional Chair (confirmed): Fabian Bauwens (Johns Hopkins University)

Fabian Bauwens
NAGPS Southeast Regional Chair

NAGPS Midwest Regional Conference

The NAGPS Midwest Regional Conference was held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN on February 20th. We had nine participants from four universities including St Cloud State, Notre Dame, Western Michigan University and the University of Minnesota. Participants attended sessions about writing support, resume writing, networking, thrifty living, tailoring job application materials, grad student parents, work-life balance, open access, grant writing, thesis/dissertation writing, and others. Participants were entertained by Jorge Cham from PhD comics and dined in the evening to a live swing band. Also, participants judged scientific posters with the winners splitting a $500 reward.

Overall, given the current economic crisis many schools were unable to send delegates to the conference. Many schools in the midwest region are struggling with state budget cuts and funding is scarce. This makes the mission of NAGPS even more important to make sure graduate and professional students are represented.

Mandy Stahre
NAGPS Midwest Regional Conference Coordinator
University of Minnesota

Welcome to NAGPS New Members!
• Columbia University
• Dartmouth College
• Eastern Illinois University
• Eastern Washington University
• Michigan State University
• University of Arkansas, Little Rock
• University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras
• Washington State University

Special Welcome to Our New Legacy Members:

Midwest Regional Conference Photo courtesy of Mandy Stahre
NAGPS Officer Biographies

Alex Evans
President

Alex Evans is a third year PhD Candidate in Planetary Science/Geophysics of the Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Prior to attending MIT, he attained a B.S.E. in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Michigan in 2006. Presently, Alex conducts research in geobiology and Lunar and Martian geophysics.

Prior to being elected as President, Alex served as the NAGPS Ombudsman and Chairman of the National Membership Meeting. He has been actively involved in NAGPS since 2008 and was part of the 2008-2009 initiative to strengthen the Northeast Region of NAGPS. At MIT, Alex has chaired the GSC Task Force on Community Engagement and represented student interests through various boards at MIT. He currently chairs the MIT GSC Legislative Action Committee and serves as the graduate student representative for the MIT Faculty Committee on Student Life.

As President, Alex is working to strengthen the NAGPS network and resources to better serve graduate-professional students and their representative organizations (GSAs).

Svetlana Tyutina
Vice-President

Svetlana V. Tyutina, PhD is a doctoral student at Florida International University in the Department of Modern Languages with a focus in Latin American Literature. Her research interests include literary and syntactic mechanisms of “orientalization” and “Otherfication” in Spanish texts. She defended her PhD dissertation at the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia in the Department of Romance Languages.

She has an M.A. from the University of Northern Iowa in Spanish and Latin-American Literature and B.A. from the State Russian Herzen Pedagogical University in Spanish Linguistics. Svetlana is the author of more than ten articles on Spanish Syntax, first chronicles of conquistadors, and Orientalism and has presented the results of her research at 15 national and international conferences and symposiums.

At Florida International University, Svetlana has been founder and President of the Modern Languages Graduate Student Organization (MLGSO), which successfully collaborates with the Spanish Resource Center (Miami, FL), supported by the Spanish Ministry of Education. She was elected Southeast Regional Coordinator at NAGPS National Conference 2008. She received an Outstanding Leader Award 2008-2009 from the Council for Student Organizations (Florida International University) and NAGPS Officer of the Year Award 2008-2009.

At the National Conference 2009, Svetlana was elected Vice President of NAGPS. She works for greater involvement of the regional schools in NAGPS, which allows promoting the graduate students’ interests on the national level. As Regional Coordinator, Svetlana will be organizing the next 2010 National Conference.

Svetlana enjoys traveling, learning foreign languages, and salsa dancing.

Donna Dueker
Director of Administration

Donna Dueker is a 3rd year PhD student in epidemiology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California (USC). She received an MPH degree in 2007 from USC. Her current research evaluates new exposure and outcome assessment methodologies for traffic related air pollution in large population studies. She also works in physical activity assessment research. Donna is currently the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Health Science Campus Operations Chair at USC. In addition to her research and student government involvement, she plays tennis and soccer.

Divya Krishnan
Director of Communications

Divya Krishnan is a Masters student at Oklahoma State University in the Department of Finance. Her research interests include risk analysis in the energy industry particularly, oil and natural gas. She has a Bachelors in Management from Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani at India. She then worked in the business intelligence arena as a consultant with a focus on healthcare finance.

At Oklahoma State University, Divya is the Treasurer of the Graduate & Professional Student Government Association. She is also an active member of the Financial Management Association and has represented the Department of Finance in International Trading Competitions organized.
by the University of Toronto and Chicago Mercantile Exchange. She has also been one of the founding members of the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at BITS Pilani, a student-led think-tank aimed at promoting entrepreneurial thinking.

Divya aims to further expand the brand of NAGPS by increased university representation. Her hobbies include reading, modern and ethnic painting, and playing ping-pong.

Paul Monasterio
Director of Relations

Paul R. Monasterio is a fourth year doctoral student in nuclear science and engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His research is concerned with the theoretical and computational description of materials systems which evolve in long time scales with applications in areas ranging from the environmental degradation of metals, radiation damage to materials, colloidal flows, and cement science. Paul also holds a Masters degree in nuclear science and engineering from MIT and Bachelors in mathematics and nuclear engineering from the University of California, Berkeley.

At MIT, Paul has served as Chair for Academics, Research, and Careers in MIT’s Graduate Student Council, graduate representative to the MIT Board of Trustees Advisory Committee, President of the Venezuelan Students Association at MIT, and President of the Tang Hall’s Residents Association. In addition, Paul is the CEO and Founder of Forg (forgweb.org), a young organization focused on the development of entrepreneurship in the developing world.

Kevin McComber
Director of Outreach

Kevin McComber is currently working toward his Ph.D. in materials science and engineering at MIT, where he also did his undergraduate studies. His research concerns thin-film germanium for electronic-photonic integrated circuit back-end devices (don’t worry, even he doesn’t know what that means). At MIT, Kevin is the Graduate Student Council (GSC) vice president; for the past two years, he was an Activities Committee chair for the GSC. He is also the chair of the Boston Graduate Leadership Organization (BGLO), a consortium of graduate student leaders from Boston-area schools.

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys weightlifting, studying foreign languages, and being picky about grammar.

Chad Foerster
Legislative Concerns Chair

Chad Foerster is a third year PhD student at the University of California - San Diego in the Department of Structural Engineering. He performs research in the field of composite aerospace structures with specific applications in Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. Chad earned his bachelors degree in engineering from Harvey Mudd College. Afterward he worked in the automotive and aerospace industry as an engineer for Honeywell International before pursuing a graduate degree at UCSD.

At UCSD, Chad is as a representative for the Structural Engineering Department in the Graduate Student Association. In addition, he has leadership roles in the Structural Engineering Graduate Student Organization and Jacobs Graduate Student Council. Within the GSA Chad serves on the Legislative Concerns Committee, which conducts advocacy efforts on behalf of UCSD and the UC system. He feels that his current progression as a lobbyist coupled with his past professional experience will allow him to be successful in this leadership role at NAGPS. Chad looks forward to serving the graduate and professional students on the national stage as we tackle the most pressing legislative issues facing our community.

When Chad is not lobbying, writing code, or flight-testing UAVs he enjoys some of the fine San Diego surf breaks. Or he might be seen in the San Bernardino mountains snowboarding when there are some fresh tracks to be made.

Matthew Engel
Employment Concerns Chair

Matthew A. Engel is a Ph.D. student at Stony Brook University in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and is performing his dissertation research at the National Synchrotron Light Source at Brookhaven National Laboratory in protein crystallography. In 2009 Matthew helped organize the Research Assistant (RA) Union at Stony Brook which has over 700 bargaining unit members. He is currently helping the RA Union Bargaining Committee negotiate a contract with the employer. In addition to being involved with his union and student government, Matthew is involved with the Fundamentals of the Bioscience Industry Program Alumni Organization which helps organize events in NY focused on biotechnology commercialization, entrepreneurship, and professional networking. As Chair of the NAGPS Committee on Employment Concerns, Matthew hopes to utilize these leadership skills to distribute knowledge and improve opportunities for NAGPS members. In the upcoming year, the Employment Concerns Committee plans on 1) collaborating with inDegree to examine the best practices of university career centers and 2) present a case study analyzing stipends, benefits, and working conditions between two different universities. The Employment Concerns Committee is committed to collecting and distributing information valuable both to the graduate student employee and job seeker. If you are interested in finding out more or joining this committee, please contact Mr. Engel at ecc@nagps.org.

Tareq Tawaiha
International Student Concerns Chair

Tareq Tawaiha is an international doctoral student in Educational Studies with an em-
obtain a job in the US government, where

degree in May of 2011. She then hopes to

cused on microbial forensics, specifically in

Pathology also at OSU. Her research is fo

began working towards a PhD in Plant

Environmental. In the summer of 2007, she

worked full time as a chemist/lab technician

for a private environmental lab, Accurate

Deb Morrison

Social Justice Chair

Deb Morrison is working on a PhD in Sci-
ence Teacher Education at CU Boulder. She
has worked as a middle school science
teacher in North Denver and prior to that
was as an ecologist in Canada. Deb has a
M.S. in Biology and Environmental Science
(think of it as bio-geochemistry) and a B.S.
in Geography. She enjoys the outdoors in
every way possible, loves laughing and is
fascinated by learning, particularly in sci-
ence. She is the mother of two amazing
children that make her smile a lot. She is
intellectually focused on environmental and
equity issues, which are often fundamen-
tally intertwined. She is excited to work
with NAGPS to support and promote work
on social justice at campuses across the US.

Stephanie Rogers

Southeast Regional Chair

Stephanie Rogers was born and raised in
Stillwater, OK and has been very active in
sports and horses all her life. She has been
married to her husband Luke for just over 2
years. Stephanie received her Bachelor of
Science in Biochemistry and Molecular
Biology from Oklahoma State University in
December of 2006. After graduation, she
worked full time as a chemist/lab technician
for a private environmental lab, Accurate
Environmental. In the summer of 2007, she
began working towards a PhD in Plant
Pathology also at OSU. Her research is fo-
cused on microbial forensics, specifically in
the area of agricultural biosecurity and biet-
errorism and she anticipates completing the
degree in May of 2011. She then hopes to
obtain a job in the US government, where

she can continue to work in the area of
bioterrorism. She is currently the Vice
President of the OSU Graduate and Profes-
sional Student Government Association and
she served as the Conference Director for
the 2010 NAGPS Southcentral Regional
Conference.

Jason Heustis

Northeast Regional Chair

Jason received an Associate’s in Science de-
gree from St. John’s College – Junior Col-
lege (SJC-JC) in Belize City, Belize. There-
after, he transferred to Saint Louis Univer-
ity (SLU) and completed studies leading to
an Honors Bachelors of Science and an
Honors Bachelors of Arts. He is currently
enrolled as a Doctoral Candidate in Biology
at Tufts University (Medford, MA). Jason
has extensive experience in student repre-
sentation via organizations like those repre-
sented by NAGPS. For one year, Jason
served as Vice President for the SJC-JC
Student Council and in that capacity was
charged with coordinating the internal ac-
tivities of the organization. At SLU, Jason
served as Vice President for Programming
for the International Student Federation
and was responsible mostly for overseeing
large-scale events. He is currently serving
his second one-year term as President of the
Graduate Student Council for Tufts Univer-
sity (Arts, Sciences and Engineering).

Fabian Bauwens

Southeast Regional Chair

Fabian Bauwens is currently a Political Sci-
ence student, and Fulbright fellow at Johns
Hopkins University. At JHU he is heading
the Graduate Representation Organization.
Fabian did his undergraduate studies at the
universities of Brussels (VUB) Belgium,
Bergen Norway, and Vienna Austria. He
received his first graduate degree, Mag. Phil.
In Political Science and Scandinavian stud-
ies, at Vienna University in 2002. Fabian
also obtained a Master’s degree in American
studies at Antwerp University (2003) and a
Master’s degree in International Relations
and Conflict Management at Leuven Uni-
versity (KUL, 2007). His research interests
include: Comparative democratization,
political participation in liberal democrac-
cies, and ethnic and historical minorities.
Fabian has experience as a student represen-
tative on internal University advisory
boards (KUL and JHU), in international
and national student organizations (Pan-
gaea, AFA, KIB), and within the Hopkins
Graduate student Government.

Julia Mortyakova

Immediate Past President

Julia Mortyakova, pianist, holds a Doctor-
ate degree from the University of Miami, a
Master’s degree from New York University
(NYU), and a Bachelor’s degree from Van-
derbilt University. Her dissertation topic is
"Existential Piano Teacher: Applying the
Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre to Piano
Instruction in a Higher Educational Set-
ting.” She has presented her research inter-
ests at regional and national conferences.

As the 2009 President and CEO of NAGPS
Julia has helped form new partnerships with
organizations such as InDegree, ProQuest,
Teach for America and Interfolio. She rep-
resented NAGPS as the official spokesper-
son and in this capacity she has given inter-
views to the New York Times, Inside
Higher Ed and US News and World Re-
port. Julia’s goal has been to have more
communication within the organization, as
well as recruitment of new members and
sponsorships. She is passionate about advo-
cating for graduate students rights, and
believes NAGPS is a community through
which graduate students can bring attention
to their important research and contribu-
tion in their respective fields. Previously she
had also served as the Public Relations
Chair of NAGPS.

During her doctoral studies, Julia served
two terms as the President of the University
of Miami Graduate Student Association.
She was also President of the Graduate Stu-
dent Organization of the Steinhardt School
of New York University during her Mas-
ter’s, and the President of the Blair School
of Music Student Council of Vanderbilt
University while pursuing her Bachelor’s
degree.

Thank you for reading the
NAGPS Newsletter - Spring 2010

Volume 24, Number 1

Immediate Past President
Julia Mortyakova

Newsletter Editor
Patrick Gage Kelley

nagps.org