



National Association of Graduate-Professional Students
Spring 2010 Newsletter—Volume 24, Number 1
The Postgraduate Voice

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 Announcer (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-

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

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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 your 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

NAGPS Legislative Action Days in Washington D.C. – *Continued*

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 originat-

ing 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

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Photos courtesy of (from top): Carnegie Mellon University via Chad Foerster; Johns Hopkins University via Chad Foerster; Kuang Xu, and Kevin McComber; MIT.

MIT Graduate Student Council – 2010 National Conference Hosts

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 students 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

NAGPS LAD – Continued from p.3

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 immi-

gration 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 debrief 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

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2009 NAGPS National Conference, University of Nebraska Lincoln

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



2009 National Conference Photos from Patrick Gage Kelley

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, Announcer
- 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 – <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i>
Vice-President	Svetlana Tyutina – <i>Florida International University</i>
Director of Administration	Donna Dueker – <i>University of Southern California</i>
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Midwest Region	Vacant
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Northeast Region	Jason Heustis – <i>Tufts University</i>
Ex-Officio	Julia Mortyakova – <i>University of Miami</i>

For complete officer bios see pages 11-13

A Spotlight on a GSA – GPSGA at Oklahoma State University

The Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA) at Oklahoma State University has significantly matured since it was formed in 1995 when it split from the Student Government Association. Now the association is one of the four representative advisory bodies to the Oklahoma State University President. The GPSGA has been responsible for graduate student insurance, the graduate advancement program (tuition

waiver benefits for graduate students), research grade policy changes, travel grant programs, and much more.

In recent years, the OSU GPSGA has broadened its horizon and reached out to actively participate and contribute to NAGPS. To demonstrate our commitment to support NAGPS, GPSGA is organizing the South-Central regional conference this year in Stillwater, OK; the first regional conference after a three year hiatus.

Our success has always been a result of our graduate students and their unselfish commitment to help their peers; as well as our strong relationship with our administration. We believe that is our winning formula, students + good relationship with administrators = success, a formula that has brought us a long way and will help continue to reach new heights.

Aravind Seshadri
GPSGA President

Job Searching Tips for Graduate Students: Building Your Network

Completing graduate school is a major step in your career path, which can provide opportunities and open doors to future employment. For many graduate students, who are focused on their classes, research, or teaching responsibilities, building a professional network can seem like a daunting and overwhelming task. The fact is the vast majority of jobs are found through networking. Therefore, overlooking this important facet of communication while transforming your graduate education into a career can be extremely counterproductive. Even without prior work experience related to your field you can implement the following strategies to increase the value of your existing connections, expand your network, and jumpstart your career.

Motivate Yourself

Some graduate students might expect their university to help place them in a job prior to graduation. Unfortunately, this is rarely the case, as most career centers focus their efforts on undergraduates. As frustrating as this may be, don't let it deter you. Instead, prepare yourself for your own job search by clearly defining what you want to do with your career and which roles best suit your individual skill sets. Next, research, create, and continually maintain a list of employers that offer the types of positions you are looking to fill. You should also research alumni from your university who are currently working for an employer you are interested in. This preliminary research should motivate you by helping you think of new ways to meet people who can be influential in your professional growth.

Set Goals

Setting goals is extremely important to building a solid professional network.

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.

Next, tighten up your resume or CV. This document should create a story, paint a picture of who you are as opposed to a list of facts about previous employment and achievements. You want to stand out from the competition, as typically, you have thirty seconds to make a lasting impression before your resume is discarded. Before submitting your resume or CV have it reviewed by at least ten people including your university career center, professors, industry professionals you trust and alumni already working in the field. When you are in academia, it is acceptable to submit your CV to an industry position, though it should be streamlined to contain only those elements essential to the position you are applying for.

Branding yourself online is another critical aspect of networking and finding a job. Publicly available websites such as LinkedIn and inDegree offer a valuable platform for enhancing your personal 'brand.' Professional webpages about you hosted by universities and companies can also go a long way in solidifying your professional identity. Use these websites to your advantage by including past work and education experience in your profiles. Employers can view this information online, so make sure you are representing yourself in the very best way possible. Highlight professional accomplishments and achievements to help you stand out from the competition.

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

Job Searching – Continued from p.8

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 interest-

ing 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 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 Mortyakova, 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:

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.

- 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 eva-

tion are satisfied by enrollment in the international plan

More information is available at
<https://www.uhcsrc.com/nagsps>.

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.UHCSR.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:

Carnegie Mellon.



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 “Otherification” 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



Southeast Regional Conference Group courtesy of Svetlana Tyutina

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.

Jon Kowalski *Director of Finance*

Jon Kowalski is a doctoral student at Carnegie Mellon University in the Strategy, Entrepreneurship and Technological Change (SETChange) program within the department of Engineering and Public Policy. He holds a B.S. from Kettering University in Electrical Engineering with a minor in Computer Engineering. His research interests include Firm and Industry Development of High-Tech Industries, Technological Business Strategy, Serial Entrepreneurs, Agglomerations through Spinoffs, and the Locus of Innovation in Developing Technologies.

Jon currently serves as the Vice President of External Affairs for the Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Assembly, having previously served as the NAGPS liaison for the group. Additionally, Jon served as the Vice President of the NAGPS Northeast region in 2009, helping to rejuvenate a region that had been dormant in recent years.

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 repre-

sentative 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-

phasis on Instructional Technology. He currently serve as the Vice Chair of External affairs for the university of Nebraska Lincoln Graduate Student Association and the Treasurer of the Teaching Learning and Teacher Education Graduate student association. His involvement in student activities and organizations and dealing with student concerns started when he was elected president of the undergraduate student organization in Mutah university, which sparked an interest in dealing with, understanding, and working on making students quality of life better and improved. He also served as the president of the student technology group at UNL.

Deb Morrison *Social Justice Chair*

Deb Morrison is working on a PhD in Science 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 science. 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 fundamentally intertwined. She is excited to work with NAGPS to support and promote work on social justice at campuses across the US.

Stephanie Rogers *Southcentral 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 focused on microbial forensics, specifically in the area of agricultural biosecurity and bioterrorism 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 Professional 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 degree from St. John's College – Junior College (SJC-JC) in Belize City, Belize. Thereafter, he transferred to Saint Louis University (SLU) and completed studies leading to an Honors Bachelor of Science and an Honors Bachelor of Arts. He is currently enrolled as a Doctoral Candidate in Biology at Tufts University (Medford, MA). Jason has extensive experience in student representation via organizations like those represented 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 activities 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 University (Arts, Sciences and Engineering).

Fabian Bauwens *Southeast Regional Chair*

Fabian Bauwens is currently a Political Science 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 studies, 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 University (KUL, 2007). His research interests include: Comparative democratization, political participation in liberal democracies, and ethnic and historical minorities. Fabian has experience as a student representative 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 Doctorate degree from the University of Miami, a Master's degree from New York University (NYU), and a Bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University. Her dissertation topic is "Existential Piano Teacher: Applying the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre to Piano Instruction in a Higher Educational Setting." She has presented her research interests 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 represented NAGPS as the official spokesperson and in this capacity she has given interviews to the New York Times, Inside Higher Ed and US News and World Report. 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 advocating for graduate students rights, and believes NAGPS is a community through which graduate students can bring attention to their important research and contribution 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 Student Organization of the Steinhardt School of New York University during her Master'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
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