



GRADUATE STUDENT CELEBRATION

GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Presented by the Office of Graduate Studies in
collaboration with the Graduate Student Association

DECEMBER 6, 2013



Graduate Student Celebration

December 6, 2013

Hager-Lubbers Exhibition Hall
Charles W. Loosemore Auditorium

Presented by the Office of Graduate Studies

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in collaboration with the
Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Program

5:00 PM: Refreshments and Social Hour (Hager-Lubbers Exhibition Hall)

6:00-7:30 PM: Awards Presentation Ceremony (Loosemore Auditorium)

- Introduction: Paul Jabaay, GSA President
- Welcome: Dr. Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Dean of Graduate Studies
- Awards: Dr. Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Dean of Graduate Studies,
Dr. John R. Stevenson, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies,
and Steven Lipnicki, Assistant Dean of Students
- Faculty Mentor Recognition Award: Hilary Powsner, GSA Vice President

*Award recipients please note: group photos will be taken
immediately following the award ceremony.*

Welcome!

Dear Graduate Students, Family Members, and Friends,

Tonight we have the great pleasure to honor individuals who have distinguished themselves in graduate education at Grand Valley State University. The Dean's Citation Awards for Academic Excellence honors the accomplishments of our students and faculty, celebrates their hard work, and recognizes their achievements. First held in 2006, this proud Grand Valley State University tradition originated through the combined efforts of the members of Graduate Council and the Graduate Program Directors. The Graduate Student Association and the Office of Graduate Studies are co-hosts for this evening's activities.

The Dean's Citation recognizes excellence in academic performance in several categories. Graduate students are nominated for these awards by staff or faculty members, advisors, graduate program directors, and departmental chair or school directors. The Dean of Graduate Studies reviews the nominees and approves the final selection. Each recipient receives a certificate of recognition and a graduate honors cord, which may be worn at commencement. Additionally, we honor several of our graduate faculty members who have distinguished themselves in mentoring and serving our students at Grand Valley. Their dedication helps to create a rich and vibrant learning environment.

Grand Valley State University is proud of the accomplishments of these students and faculty members. I wish each and every one of our award winners a successful future.

Congratulations!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey A. Potteiger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeffrey" being the most prominent part.

Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Ph.D., FACSM

Dean of Graduate Studies

Grand Valley State University

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GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
Fall 2013

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE MAJOR

Seidman College of Business

- ❖ Jill R. Schutte, Accounting
- ❖ Laura A. Gentry, Business Administration
- ❖ Michelle S. Andrews, Taxation

College of Community & Public Service

- ❖ Jacqueline B. Stevens, Criminal Justice
- ❖ Danielle L. Montag, Health Administration
- ❖ Samantha M. Leonard, Public Administration

College of Education

- ❖ Jaclyn F. Timmer, School Counseling

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- ❖ Shravya Yeragani, Computer Information Systems

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Maribeth A. Fisher, Physician Assistant Studies

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Jared J. Homola, Biology
- ❖ Shawna M. Tanner, Biostatistics
- ❖ Marian J. Testori, Cell and Molecular Biology
- ❖ Skyler S. Latshaw, English

Kirkhof College of Nursing

- ❖ Mariah C. Hockin, Nursing

OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS

College of Education

- ❖ Reba L. Oguntokun, College Student Affairs Leadership

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Jared J. Homola, Biology
- ❖ Marian J. Testori, Cell and Molecular Biology

OUTSTANDING MASTER'S FINAL PROJECT

College of Education

- ❖ Karri L. Sanders, Education
- ❖ Emily M. Parrott, Special Education

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

- ❖ Joshua N. VerHage, Engineering

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Danielle C. Boloven, Angela E. Fiorillo, and Maribeth A. Fisher, Physician Assistant Studies

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Angela K. Peavey, Communications

Kirkhof College of Nursing

- ❖ Michelle A. Smith, Nursing

EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION

College of Community & Public Service

- ❖ Shane W. Scherer, Public Administration

College of Education

- ❖ Kristin A. Mier, Instruction & Curriculum

College of Health Professions

- ❖ Megan F. Sprin^astead and Lauren W. Toro, Physician Assistant Studies

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

- ❖ Stephanie L. Celano, Cell and Molecular Biology

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO GVSU

College of Community & Public Service

- ❖ Elle G. Teshima, Criminal Justice
- ❖ Jason Escareno, Public Administration

College of Education

- ❖ Lindsay A. Greyerbiehl, College Student Affairs Leadership

*Congratulations to all of the Fall 2013
Graduate Dean's Citation Award Recipients!*

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN THE MAJOR
Fall 2013**

Seidman College of Business

❖ **Jill R. Schutte, Master of Science in Accounting**

Jill earned both her BBA and MSA from GVSU with perfect 4.0 GPAs. She is the type of student who not only earns a high grade but adds to every class she takes. She was a recipient of a Delta Sigma Pi key in 2013 and received the "I am Grand Valley" award. She is also a member of Beta Gamma Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi. She has already passed all four parts of the CPA exam (an unusual feat to accomplish before completing the MSA). After working as an accounting assistant in the 2012 and 2013 tax seasons, Jill accepted a position as a staff accountant at Ferris, Busscher & Zwiers P.C. and will begin in January 2014.

❖ **Laura A. Gentry, Master of Business Administration**

Laura's 3.9 GPA is among the highest of all MBA graduates this year. She is an excellent representative of GVSU's MBA program. She thoughtfully applies classroom content to real-world issues to provide constructive insights. Her analyses show a thoroughly researched understanding of public policies and industry conditions, and the business judgment necessary to apply them. Her current business venture in Zeeland, Michigan shows she has the courage and creativity to innovate, not just profitably but with promise of creating benefits for her community.

❖ **Michelle S. Andrews, Master of Science in Taxation**

Michelle earned an outstanding GPA of 3.942 in her MST studies. She is a CPA, and has worked as a senior tax accountant for PricewaterhouseCoopers, CPA's, and as a tax manager for Plante Moran, CPA's. She has volunteered extensively with the VITA tax prep program, and at a homeless shelter in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Prior to earning the MST, Michelle earned a BBA, cum laude, at Western Michigan University, double majoring in Accounting and Spanish, and a Master's in Education from Framingham State University in Massachusetts.

College of Community & Public Service

❖ **Jacqueline B. Stevens, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

While a graduate student at GVSU, Jacqueline has continuously provided an extremely high academic rigor to her studies in the School of Criminal Justice. Her preparedness and leadership within and outside of the classroom have set a tone of success for other graduate students in the program. She recently defended her Master's project, a successful exploration of philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of punishment and current incarceration ideologies, which will serve as a model for intellectual rigor and exemplary degree completion within the criminal justice graduate program.

❖ **Danielle L. Montag, Master of Health Administration**

The faculty of the School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration highly recommends Danielle for this award, as her outstanding academic work speaks for itself. Danielle is a veteran of the United States Air Force and was instrumental in the creation of a Veteran's Student Lounge on campus. After completing the Master of Health Administration program, Danielle plans to pursue the Master of Public Administration program. She currently applies her property and resident management skills with her employer, successfully combining her educational and military backgrounds.

❖ **Samantha M. Leonard, Master of Public Administration**

Samantha is known by the faculty of the School of Public, Nonprofit and Health Administration as an outstanding student. She is a leader in the classroom and is highly engaged in the course materials. Her work is consistently exceptional and worthy of recognition. She is the recipient of the Joyce F. Hecht Scholarship in Philanthropy, which honors students who plan to promote and develop philanthropy and achieve goals in nonprofit fundraising. Samantha successfully managed a campaign for the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan in 2011-12, exceeding the fundraising goal by \$20,000. She is currently a Development Administrator with Paws with a Cause of Wayland, Michigan and has exceeded her current fundraising goals by 120%.

College of Education

❖ **Jaclyn F. Timmer, Master of Education in School Counseling**

Jaclyn stands out among the most capable students as one who is both detail oriented and meticulous in her work. She employs confident leadership skills, an ability that is prized in the school counseling profession. She continually sought opportunities to contribute to the existing program at her internship site. Jaclyn recognizes and values a data-driven program that demonstrates how students are different as a result of the school counseling program. She has demonstrated an aptitude for using and analyzing data to inform her programming decisions.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

❖ **Shravya Yeragani, Master of Science in Computer Information Systems**

Shravya has been successful in a wide variety of courses such as software engineering, graphical user interfaces, management of software development, databases, and machine learning. Her interests have also led her to take a graduate-level linguistics course from the English department. She currently has a perfect 4.0 GPA. Shravya is a conscientious learner, not only paying attention to what is taught in class, but also willing to make the extra effort to study what she considers as being relevant, even if it is beyond the subject area of the course. As such, her work in every assignment was of high quality.

College of Health Professions

❖ **Maribeth A. Fisher, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Maribeth has demonstrated unwavering dedication to her education since her admission into the Physician Assistant Studies program. She has tirelessly applied herself to each and every academic endeavor that she has undertaken. She has strived to go above and beyond what has been expected and as a result has excelled not only in the didactic phase, but also the clinical phase of her schooling. Maribeth has represented both the program and GVSU in a professional and extraordinary manner as evidenced by outstanding reviews from her clinical preceptors, praising her knowledge, communication skills, and empathy for her patients.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Jared J. Homola, Master of Science in Biology**

Jared is described by his faculty advisor as the type of student who needed to be “reined in” (in the most positive of ways) in terms of his thesis research because his research plans were too ambitious. It speaks volumes about Jared’s drive as a researcher. It is always a pleasure to advise a graduate student who wants to go far beyond what is required in terms of their research. He has also been nominated for the Dean’s Citation Award for Outstanding Thesis based on his research and final thesis.

❖ **Shawna M. Tanner, Master of Science in Biostatistics**

The faculty of the Statistics Department recommends Shawna for this award without hesitation. Her attention to detail is very impressive and she always has interest in considering an analysis or design from all possible angles and approaches. In addition, Shawna is an active participant in class and her contributions are thoughtful and eloquently phrased. Shawna also worked as a graduate assistant in the Statistical Consulting Center with great enthusiasm, diligence and anticipation. She was dependable and vigilant, not afraid to initiate conversation with clients. She next plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology.

❖ **Marian J. Testori, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**

Marian has been an excellent student who has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA, the only one of Cell and Molecular Biology’s 30 graduate students to do so. She has conducted high-quality research, written an exemplary thesis and represented the university at national and international (London, England) conferences. Marian was also selected to represent the graduate program in the Office of Graduate Studies’ Graduate Showcase. Upon completion of her thesis, Marian accepted a position with Syzygy, a local biotechnology firm. The department unanimously supported honoring Marian with this award.

❖ **Skyler S. Latshaw, Master of Arts in English**

Skyler brings numerous scholarly skills to his academic work, most notably his ability to seamlessly blend pointed textual illustration and justification with rich, purposeful critical analysis. But it is Skylar’s perceptive insight and

awareness that separates him from the many talented graduate students who surround him. He did outstanding work in the English graduate program and wrote a particularly strong thesis, some of which he has presented at national conferences. For his academic foresight, his scholarly dedication, and his creativity, imagination and perception in approaching intellectual issues worthy of study, the faculty nominates Skyler for this award.

Kirkhof College of Nursing

❖ Mariah C. Hockin, Master of Science in Nursing

- ❖ Mariah's academic and clinical performance has demonstrated excellence and is exemplar. Her accomplishment in her academic work has driven her clinical work, which is a demonstration of the commitment that she has and will carry forth: excellence in community service. Her project focused on the improvement of care through intentional nursing intervention aimed at reducing the readmission of patients with a chronic disease state. Mariah presented the results of her work at the Graduate Showcase and will be representing the Kirkhof College of Nursing at the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society's 2014 Conference.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATIONS FOR
OUTSTANDING MASTER'S THESIS IN A MAJOR
Fall 2013**

College of Education

❖ **Reba L. Oguntokun, Master of Education in Higher Education**

- **Thesis Title:** The African American/Black Male Experience at Grand Valley State University: Implications for the Future
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Mary Bair (Chair), Dr. Donald Mitchell, and Diana Pace

Through her comprehensive analysis and synthesis of the relevant literature, Reba uncovers the gaps in our understanding of issues related to the experiences of African American males at GVSU.

Reba uses critical race theory to frame the study and support her argument regarding the saliency of race in higher education. She draws upon counter storytelling, a key aspect of critical race theory, to shed light on the experiences of Black males at GVSU. Using in-depth interviews to explore the lived experience of African American male students at GVSU, Reba uncovers the social, psychosocial, and institutional factors that affect the academic experience of the students. Her study reveals many of the minority status stressors, such as stereotype threat, that cause students to feel disconnected from the University.

Because this study is guided by a consistent theoretical perspective and is rooted in the relevant literature, the research question, the design, and the interpretation of the findings fit together coherently and form the basis for this nomination for Outstanding Thesis.

ABSTRACT

Researchers note that African American male students are disadvantaged by several social, psychosocial, and institutional factors. These factors affect their enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. This study, guided by Critical Race Theory in education, explores the lived experiences of African American male students at Grand Valley State University through in-depth interviews and the utilization of qualitative data analysis. Findings reveal that social, psychosocial, and institutional factors had the ability to positively or negatively affect the academic success of the participants. The issues most frequently mentioned by participants were public school education, minority status stressors (MSS), stereotype threat, environmental incongruency, differential treatment, low expectations, and a desire to prove misconceptions wrong. These findings reveal the salience of MSS at Grand Valley and Black men's desire to be successful and accepted at Grand Valley. They also indicate some ways in which Grand Valley can support its African American male students.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Jared J. Homola, Master of Science in Biology**

- **Thesis Title:** Disease Ecology of a Microsporidian Parasite and its effects on Mottled Sculpin
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Carl Ruetz (Chair), Dr. Ryan Thum, Dr. Mark Luttenton, and Dr. Stephen Kohler (Western Michigan University)

Jared's research focused on the disease ecology of a small, non-game fish species, the mottled sculpin. His research required two rigorous field seasons, which he successfully completed. Jared also helped an undergraduate student with his research on mottled sculpin, and Jared's contribution was sufficient to justify co-authorship on a faculty's manuscript being completed based on the undergraduate's research.

Jared gave eight scientific presentations on his research (he was first author on four and co-author on the others) at national and regional conferences, including the annual meeting of the Michigan Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) in Gaylord, Michigan. Jared is planning to publish two manuscripts from his thesis research in a peer-reviewed journal; he will be first author on both manuscripts.

Jared was a pleasure to work with, and he has a very bright future. He is very mature and an extremely hard worker. Most recently, Jared's hard work and future promise as a fisheries biologist and researcher was recognized when he was accepted into the Ph.D. program at the University of Maine and received a prestigious fellowship.

Jared is also the recipient of the Graduate Dean's Citation Award for Excellence in the Major from the Biology Department.

ABSTRACT

Infectious disease can influence organisms at all levels of ecological organization, from individuals to ecosystems. Likewise, the ecosystems where pathogens exist directly influence their success. Recent theoretical studies have tied disease prevalence to biotic factors such as genetic diversity, biodiversity, and host behavior, and abiotic factors that include temperature and increased nutrient concentrations. Parasites included in the phylum Microspora are increasingly recognized for being ubiquitous in nature, although their ecological roles are generally unknown. This study examined several environmental, community, and host-related metrics to compare the biotic and abiotic aspects of 16 small streams; 6 with mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*) populations infected by the microsporidian *Glugea* sp., and 10 without the parasite. Comparisons were made between the condition of infected and uninfected mottled sculpin. Relatively high water temperatures were implicated in the presence of the parasite, although the fish assemblages did not differ significantly between streams with and without *Glugea*. Evidence of the consequences of infection was limited to reductions in liver somatic indices and increases in the somatic mass at age for infected individuals, as well as reductions in gene diversity and Wright's inbreeding coefficient. No significant differences were detected in host densities, host sex ratios, relative abundances, or mortality rates, and there was an absence of genetic bottlenecks in infected mottled sculpin populations. Together, these findings suggested that host population dynamics were generally unaffected by the disease. Contrary to previous ecological research on microsporidian species, mottled sculpin populations appear to be robust to infection, which is likely due to the strong density-dependent population dynamics of mottled sculpin that allow for losses due to disease to be compensatory and quickly offset. This study provides basic ecological insight into the role of microsporidian parasites in natural ecosystems.

❖ **Marian J. Testori, Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology**

- **Thesis Title:** Identification of actin cytoskeletal protein interactions with the fission yeast scaffold, Mid1
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Dawn Clifford Hart (Chair), Dr. Bradley Wallar, and Dr. Merritt Taylor

Marian's thesis addresses a fundamental question in cell biology that speaks to a broad audience. How does a cell know where to divide and when to divide?

She identified a highly conserved protein domain in Mid1 that directly associates with a major component of the cell division machinery, called actin. This was an unexpected finding that led her in a much different direction than originally planned for her thesis work. After presenting her preliminary results at the Chicago Cytoskeleton meeting (March 2012), she was invited to learn advanced imaging methods to track single particle actin nucleation at the University of Chicago in Dr. David Kovar's lab. This lab uses cutting edge technology that is not available at GVSU. This method of data collection and analysis was brand new to Marian but she was eager to take on the challenge.

Marian also took the initiative to consult with the Biostatistics department to improve the statistical analysis of her actin nucleation assays. Her results were well received when she presented her final thesis at the International Fission Yeast meeting (June 2013, London, UK), which is the biggest stage to present in her field of research. It is because of Marian's careful technique and willingness to take on new challenges that her thesis work advanced into what will be a high quality publication.

Marian is also the recipient of the Graduate Dean's Citation Award for Excellence in the Major from the Cell and Molecular Biology Department.

ABSTRACT

Cancer is a disease of uncontrolled cell division. Cell division in eukaryotic cells occurs by the formation of a contractile ring, predominantly composed of filamentous actin (F-actin). During mitosis, actin filaments polymerize to form rings at the medial plane of the cell that constrict causing the cell membrane to pinch and divide. Proteins that regulate this process are essential because dysregulation can lead to uninhibited cell growth and division. In fission yeast, the protein Mid1 functions as a scaffold to recruit regulatory proteins required for actin filament formation and simultaneously anchors the contractile ring at the cell division site. The Mid1 Pleckstrin Homology (PH) domain can bind lipids in the membrane, but direct binding of the PH domain to other contractile ring proteins has not been described. The GTPase Rho1 is an important activator of proteins that regulate actin filaments, and has been shown to localize to the contractile ring during cell division. Since F-actin, Mid1, and Rho1 are important components for contractile ring formation and proper cytokinesis, it is important to clarify their interactions. Co-sedimentation experiments indicated that the Mid1 PH domain specifically binds F-actin. The PH domain also inhibits F-actin filaments from elongating by actin polymerization assays. Low speed actin co-sedimentation showed that the PH domain also bundles actin filaments. Creation of a Rho1-GFP yeast strain was attempted to perform co-immunoprecipitation of Rho1 and Mid1 in vivo. The confirmation and importance of the interaction of Rho1 and Mid1 will be explored in future studies. The interaction of Mid1 with F-actin and Rho1GTPase may reveal important regulatory events for contractile ring assembly during cell division.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR
OUTSTANDING MASTER'S FINAL PROJECT IN A MAJOR
Fall 2013**

College of Education

❖ **Karri L. Sanders, Master of Education in General Education**

- **Title:** Breaking Tradition in the Mathematics Classroom: Making Mathematics Real, Relevant, and Personal
- **Advisor:** Jacque Melin

Karri's project represents the Instruction and Curriculum master's program with an emphasis in Educational Differentiation superbly. Karri's project addresses ways in which she, as a middle school algebra teacher, can help to make all of her students successful algebra students. Her exemplary, original lessons for algebra units for most of the school year helped her struggling students, as well as all of her students, exceed algebra standards.

Karri currently teaches at Knapp Charter Academy as part of National Heritage Academies where she teaches 8th grade algebra, advanced algebra, and pre-algebra classes. She was a finalist for the National Heritage Academies Excellence in Teaching Award. She completed the Educational Differentiation graduate program at GVSU with a perfect 4.0 GPA in August 2013. The College of Education honored her work at its end-of-semester awards.

ABSTRACT

Traditional mathematics education is failing students as many are unable to comprehend and master advanced and abstract concepts (Rakes, Valentine, McGatha, & Ronau, 2010). Struggling students, including those at Knapp Charter Academy, face a disadvantage in subsequent mathematics classes and limited opportunities in higher education and beyond. The importance of mathematics, as a gatekeeper to opportunity, makes increasing students' success in mathematics a necessity. The mathematics failure rates coupled with the proven ineffectiveness of traditional mathematics teaching and learning additionally establish the need for meaningful reform. This project analyzes educational theory and research to determine the effect of certain reform constructs on students' mathematical comprehension and achievement. *Continued on next page.*

ABSTRACT

A supplementary algebra curriculum was created based on research to improve the plight of struggling mathematics students at Knapp Charter Academy. Authentic real world connections, differentiation for meeting student needs, active learning, and an emphasis on conceptual understanding and flexible problem solving are key features of the supplementary algebra curriculum because research found these constructs linked to increased student achievement in mathematics.

❖ **Emily M. Parrott, Master of Education in Special Education**

- **Title:** A Model for Professional Development Training: Evidence-Based Practices to Implement in the General Education Classroom for Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders Using a Tiered Model
- **Advisor:** Dr. Paula Lancaster

Emily's project replaces existing approaches to managing children's behavior and extends current research by considering layers of positive behavior support within a tiered model. As is often the case in education, service delivery models for students with emotional and behavior disorders (EBD) are being implemented in schools without sufficient knowledge and training provided to general education teachers who are expected to work within these models. Emily's project identifies this significant problem, provides sufficient evidence regarding the extent of the problem, and offers a well-supported framework as a solution.

Where Emily has added to the field and created a very exciting approach is in her desire to focus on the theory and research associated with children with EBD and to share this information with her colleagues. Her project is very well conceived, detailed, and complete. Emily created both the professional development materials and materials teachers will need to implement the interventions. Her project will have a strong impact in her district.

ABSTRACT

Historically, students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders have been among the most difficult population of students to teach (Billingsley, Fall, & Williams, 2006; Lane, Kalberg, & Shepcaro, 2009; Landrum, Tankersley, & Kauffman, 2003). Rice and Yen (2010) explain that the challenge of educating students with EBD is due to the vast ranges of deficits that are exhibited by these students in the behavioral, social, and academic areas.

Behaviorally and socially, students with EBD are most often characterized by the externalizing and inappropriate behaviors that are displayed within the classroom setting (Farley, Torres, Wailehua, & Cook, 2012; Kern, Hilt-Panahon, & Sokol, 2009; Rice & Yen, 2010).

With the numbers of students with EBD included in general education classes on the rise (Strieker et al., 2012), all teachers, general and special education, need to have a greater understanding of evidence-based practices and interventions that could be utilized in the classroom to help make inclusion a more successful and positive experience for these students. The purpose of this project is to provide a model for professional development training for teachers that educate students with EBD in the general education, inclusion setting. Teachers receiving the training will be supplied with evidence-based practices that target specific intervention approaches to help prevent or remediate behavioral difficulties for students with EBD in the general education classroom.

Padnos College of Engineering & Computing

❖ **Joshua N. VerHage, Master of Science in Engineering**

- **Title:** Mechanisms for Development of Proper Application Testing in Product Design Validation
- **Committee:** Dr. Shabbir Choudhury (Chair), Dr. Charlie Standridge, and Dr. John Farris

For his final project, Jared did praise worthy analysis trying to relate pre-market product testing to multiple quality factors. In the process, he has shown significant self-learning in various related topics. He has tackled the very difficult problem of identifying cost effective extent of application testing. He has done a commendable job in literature search and algorithm development.

His quest for better solutions is impressive. Beyond academics, his work will have quality and economic impact in the project sponsoring company.

The methodology he developed shows his maturity as an engineer and holds great promise for further work. His project committee members were impressed with not only his diligence, but also his ambition. The School of Engineering highly recommends Joshua for this award.

ABSTRACT

In many industries, new product development includes some form of application endurance testing, or operating the new product in the intended environment. This is just one aspect of a new product validation plan but serves several purposes, one of which is to identify any remaining unforeseen design failure modes that were not conceived during development. While this form of testing and failure identification is important, the time and resources required to conduct this testing often conflict with goals related to project schedule, budget, and potential sales revenue lost by delaying a product release. This project will investigate the value of endurance testing, whether there are factors that can help determine the appropriate endurance test for a product development project, and suggest key considerations in planning endurance testing on future projects. The decision model will be based on product development best practices, and leverage historical application test data and project requirements of Tennant Company, a manufacturer of commercial and industrial floor cleaning equipment. The proposed methodology may be applicable to other industries.

College of Health Professions

The Physician Assistant Studies program has selected three recipients of this semester's Outstanding Master's Final Project Award as part of a group project.

❖ **Danielle C. Boloven, Angela E. Fiorillo, and Maribeth A. Fisher: Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

- **Title:** The Use of Perceived Efficacy of Complementary and Alternative Medicine by Multiple Sclerosis Patients in Michigan
- **Advisor:** Dr. Martina Reinhold

❖ **Danielle C. Boloven, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Danielle completed her undergraduate degree at GVSU in 2011 and was admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies program. Her clinical experiences include West Michigan Family Medicine, Zeeland Community Hospital, Cherry Street Health Services, and Metro Health Community Clinic. She presented at the Grand Rapids Medical Education Partners Research Day in April 2013. She also volunteers with MomsBloom of West Michigan.

❖ **Angela E. Fiorillo, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Angela earned a Bachelor of Science in Managerial Engineering Science from University of Michigan. Her clinical experiences include Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, Lakeshore Medical Center, Montcalm Area Health Center, and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Hospital. She has volunteered as part of the Richard Paul Clodfelder Student Society, which includes assisting underserved populations at Oasis of Hope and the Ronald McDonald House.

❖ **Maribeth A. Fisher, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

After completing her Bachelor's degree at Western Michigan University, Maribeth was admitted to the Physician Assistant Studies program at GVSU. She completed clinical experiences at St. Mary's Health Care Emergency Department, Advantage Health – Grand River Cardiology, and Forest View Hospital. She is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society.

The faculty of the Physician Assistant Studies program nominates these three students for the Outstanding Final Project award. The group members were passionate about their project and showed the willingness and dedication to go beyond the expected to have their survey reach the target population - patients with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in Michigan. All members of the group were highly committed to the project in hopes that the study would provide helpful information for patients suffering from MS. They worked very well together and were dedicated to the promise of advancing medical knowledge.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, inflammatory, autoimmune disorder of the central nervous system causing several clinical symptoms in those affected by the disease. Complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) are those treatments used in combination with and/or outside of standard therapy. Many patients seek out CAMs in hopes of improving their overall quality of life. The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a perceived improvement in quality of life with the use of CAMs by people with MS in Michigan. Another aim is to assess which CAM therapies are most frequently used by MS patients in Michigan.

Conclusion: This study found that a majority of our survey respondents, patients with MS in Michigan, use CAMs to attempt to alleviate a multitude of MS-related symptoms. Vitamins and minerals are the most commonly used CAM, and diets were the least used CAM. In addition, most CAM users do believe CAMs improve their quality of life. These findings suggest that further studies are warranted to examine clinical efficacy of specific CAMs in the global MS population.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Angela K. Peavey, Master of Science in Communication**

- **Title:** Our Beautiful Secret: The Story of Jonathan Peavey and His Family
- **Advisors:** Dr. Roy Winegar and Dr. Alex Nesterenko

Angela's project provides a valuable contribution to the fields of communication and public health. Her film project offers encouragement to families and individuals with disabilities, and it educates those who have not experienced someone with a disability.

Angela's brother was born with cerebral palsy and was not expected to live beyond infancy. She has created a docudrama that is the story of how her brother, who is now in his 30s, beat the odds. She brought a lot of energy to producing this film and she did the same for her classes, displaying the natural curiosity of a scholar.

Angela approaches her subject matter with the critical insight and awareness needed to have produced this film. Her film goes far to make the public more aware of, and compassionate toward, those with disabilities. Angela has shown she can be a major contributor to the field of communication. The School of Communications recommends her for this award without hesitation.

ABSTRACT

People with disabilities often face multiple barriers, including access to services and supports and discrimination in community, education, and employment settings. *Our Beautiful Secret: The Story of Jonathan Peavey and His Family* explores topics such as disability medical discrimination, social and communicational issues, and overcoming all odds when society says “you can’t.” The film, *Our Beautiful Secret*, was made to promote the full inclusion and participation of children and adults with severe disabilities in every aspect of their community, and to eliminate the social injustices that diminish human rights. These things are accomplished through collaboration among self-advocates, families, professionals, policy-makers, advocates, and many others who seek to promote equity, opportunity, and inclusion.

Kirkhof College of Nursing

❖ Michelle A. Smith, Master of Science in Nursing

- **Title:** Using Case Studies and Videotaped Vignettes to Facilitate the Development of Critical Thinking Skills in New Graduate Nurses
- **Advisor:** Beth Triezenberg (Mercy Health Saint Mary’s)

Michelle is known as one of the most professional and hardworking MSN students by the Kirkhof College of Nursing faculty. She routinely goes the extra mile in all of her academic and clinical work. Her clinical work is stellar, and her preceptor cannot say enough good things about Michelle and her leadership in the unit.

In addition, her final project has been exemplary, a product of her scholarship abilities. After researching the issues surrounding postoperative pain control in orthopedic patients, she designed a revolutionary program for controlling pain post-operatively in orthopedic patients.

The intervention is intended to improve patient satisfaction with pain control and increase nurse and provider satisfaction with the pain management process. The intervention will also provide a more consistent pain plan to allow for provision of optimal postoperative care and reduced pain scores.

Finally, Michelle prepared her portfolio describing what the Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) role is and how it could positively affect patient care and promote positive organizational outcomes, and presented the CNL role to a local Michigan hospital. It is hoped that after this presentation, this organization will also begin to use the CNL to affect patient care outcomes.

ABSTRACT

Under-treated pain is a significant problem in the United States leading to dissatisfaction and poor patient outcomes. On a local orthopedic in-patient unit, patient satisfaction scores related to pain management are lower than targeted, patients are not currently urged to give input to their own pain management regimen, and no distinct plan exists for pain management after surgery. The literature suggests that a patient who receives an educational intervention with consistent postoperative education will be better able to manage pain at time of discharge. Evidence also relates that patients wish to be more involved in the pain management regimen and empowered patients are better able to control pain after discharge when care is delivered in this way. Nurses will introduce a new form to patients upon admission to the post-operative unit. Patients will communicate their desired preferences for pain management therapies, including medications and other non-pharmacological modalities using the form. Nurses will educate the patient about pain goals and how the health care team will help the patient to meet the goals. The healthcare team will individualize and standardize the pain management plan of care based on the needs, recommendations, and input of the patient. The goals of the intervention are to improve patient satisfaction with pain control and increase nurse and provider satisfaction with the pain management process. The intervention will also provide a more consistent pain plan to allow for provision of optimal postoperative care and reduced pain scores.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR
EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY OR PROFESSION
Fall 2013**

College of Community & Public Service

❖ **Shane W. Scherer, Master of Public Administration**

After serving as a Sergeant in the United States Army, Shane began his graduate studies at GVSU. He is a member of GVSU's Cook Leadership Academy. His work on the Wounded Warriors Project has been stellar and recently earned him a special placement in a national meeting of the group in Washington, DC. Shane also volunteers as a grief counselor for Camp Compass Youth Camp and youth lead at Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids. He recently completed an extensive internship with God's Kitchen and the Meals on Wheels program. The faculty members of the School of Public, Nonprofit & Health Administration are impressed with Shane's leadership abilities and his service to GVSU and the greater Grand Rapids community.

College of Education

❖ **Kristin A. Mier, Master of Education in Instruction & Curriculum**

Kristin was instrumental in bringing the Chinese Immersion Program to Greenville Public Schools. Kristin was eager to become involved in such a program because she realized the importance of giving students (especially students in a lower social-economic community) the opportunity to become bilingual, bi-literate, and multi-cultural citizens. Kristin is very active in informing the Greenville community about the value of a dual immersion program, presenting to the Greenville Board of Education, Lyons Club, Rotary, and several other community groups. She is truly a standout teacher because of her sheer dedication to her students, her school, her school district and the Greenville community.

College of Health Professions

The Physician Assistant Studies program has selected two recipients of this year's Excellence in Service to the Community or Profession Award as part of a group project.

❖ **Megan F. Springstead, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

❖ **Lauren W. Toro, Master of Physician Assistant Studies**

Megan and Lauren started volunteering at the Oasis of Hope Clinic, a free health clinic for the poor, homeless and indigent, prior to acceptance into the Physician Assistant Studies program. They have continued to volunteer throughout their time in the program. Additionally, they focused their research project on the assistance that Oasis gives its patients in regards to insurance and options. They have worked closely with the owner of the clinic and their dedication to this service has been extraordinary.

Megan and Lauren also have been top-notch ambassadors for the physician assistant profession and Grand Valley State University, garnering excellent evaluations from their preceptors and commendations for the program. They also presented a research poster at the American Association of Physician Assistants national convention in Washington D.C. regarding the research on their service experience.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **Stephanie L. Celano, Master of Cell and Molecular Biology**

As part of the Biotechnology track in the Cell and Molecular Biology program, Stephanie has demonstrated a strong commitment to the professional sciences. She excelled at her internship with Dr. Caryl E. Sortwell, Associate Chair of Translational Science and Molecular Medicine at Michigan State University at the Van Andel Institute. Her work on "Pre-Formed fibrils: A novel pathological rat model for Parkinson's disease" was so successful that the lab has sent her to several professional conferences to present the research and get peer-feedback to refine their model. Another indication of the value of her service is that she was offered, and has accepted, a permanent position in the lab.

**GRADUATE DEAN'S CITATION FOR
EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP & SERVICE TO GVSU
Fall 2013**

College of Community & Public Service

❖ **Elle G. Teshima, Master of Science in Criminal Justice**

Elle has amassed an impressive record of leadership and service both within and outside the School of Criminal Justice (SCJ). Elle has devoted significant time to the School of Criminal Justice Resource Center (SCJRC) over the past two years. Identified as a strong writer by the faculty in the SCJ she was placed in the writing center and served both undergraduate and graduate students as a writing consultant. In addition to her service in the SCJRC, Elle has also served the SCJ on recent search committees and collaborated with the departmental unit head to develop material for the Undergraduate Research Fair. Elle also serves the broader GVSU community as an active member of the student-oriented performance group called ACT on Racism.

❖ **Jason Escareno, Master of Public Administration**

Jason has served as the founding president of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Graduate Student Organization during the past year, and was integral to its successful start here at GVSU. This is the first and only ICMA-affiliated student organization in Michigan, a point of significant distinction for the University. In his role as president, Jason has spearheaded efforts to meaningfully link local government officials with GVSU students. One recent workshop brought together the President of GVSU, the Mayor of Grand Rapids, as well as city and county administrators from surrounding locales, giving students an opportunity to meet and learn from these individuals. His efforts have laid the framework for more effective student engagement in the graduate programs.

College of Education

❖ **Lindsay A. Greyerbiehl, Master of Education in Higher Education**

Lindsay is an instrumental addition to the university community. She excels academically, while giving so much of herself. She is the founding president of

the Student Affairs Graduate Association as well as the inaugural editor-in-chief of the *College Student Affairs Leadership Journal*. She is a member of the Campus Violence Prevention Team and co-coordinator of “ChangeU” Social Justice Training. She has represented GVSU at the 2012 Campus Pride Midwest LGBT-Friendly Fair and the 2013 Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference. Lindsay also served as first author on a manuscript submitted to the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. She possesses the characteristics that are the mark of an exceptional scholar and student affairs professional; she is confident, credible, and competent.

MAGS DISTINGUISHED THESIS NOMINEE OUTSTANDING THESIS 2013

The Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools (MAGS) calls for nominations for the annual Distinguished Thesis Award. Each school is allowed to nominate one student thesis for the award competition. The thesis representing GVSU is selected by a committee of faculty members from multiple disciplines and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

❖ **April D. Best, Master of Arts in English (graduated April 2013)**

- **Thesis Title:** Geographical, Linguistic, Social, and Experiential Demarcation: the River in Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*
- **Thesis Committee:** Dr. Corinna McLeod (Chair), Dr. David Alvarez, and Dr. James Persoon

April's thesis is an example of methodical scholarship that meticulously constructs its argument. There is a lack of academic obfuscation in which much scholarship engages. Her goal in writing this thesis was to untangle the discussion around Caribbean identity and the role of diaspora and memory. The result of her effort is this very cleanly written, thoughtful engagement with a text and with current theoretical frameworks. Her approach is concise without compromising on depth. Her analysis demonstrates a deft handling of multiple theoretical approaches and her insights into previous scholarship have enabled her to expand and deepen the discussion around Danticat's work and Haitian literatures in particular, without resorting to redundancy or dismissal of earlier scholarship.

The review committee unanimously selected April's thesis as the nominee to represent GVSU in the MAGS Distinguished Thesis competition in 2014. Her work was praised as insightful, well-written and organized, fresh, topical, and compelling. Her work makes a substantial contribution to the understanding of post-colonial literature, dealing with contemporary issues with a broad appeal.

The thesis review committee, the Department of English, and the Office of Graduate Studies are all proud to nominate April's work as an excellent example of scholarship from GVSU graduate students.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a reading of the Massacre River in Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones* that takes into account the river's role as a physical border as well as various social, linguistic, and experiential borders at work in the novel. The Massacre River physically divides Haiti from the Dominican Republic; it both unites and divides the two nations. This thesis examines the language and structure of the novel to make sense of the paradoxical and opposing representations of the river and examines the various borders Amabelle experiences and her search for belonging upon being exiled from places she calls home. The image and role of the river in Amabelle's narrative becomes a mediator between the divisions and exiles she endures within her life; it negotiates the differences of the past from the present, Haiti from the Dominican, and her own life from the lives of individuals surrounding her. The river's division is fluid and dynamic unlike the man-made bridge or man-created social, linguistic, and experiential borders that are like "iron girders dotted with night lights . . . making the distant sentinels seem like giant fireflies" (200).

**GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD
OUTSTANDING FACULTY/STAFF MENTOR AWARD
Fall 2013**

❖ **Gregory Wolffe, Professor of Computer Science**

Nominated by: Sean Fisk, Master of Science in Computer Information Systems

Sean writes: "Dr. Wolffe has consistently been a great help to students just getting started in a career in computer science. His classes are challenging, but he teaches them well and grades very fairly. Something that particularly stands out about Dr. Wolffe's classes is the inclusion of programming in every course. This helps the students learn not only the theory behind the concept, but how it is applied in practice.

Outside of teaching classes, Dr. Wolffe runs a high-performance computing lab called the Distributed Execution Network, or 'the DEN.' Dr. Wolffe typically has about ten undergraduate and graduate students participating in projects in the lab at any given time. Only a few computer science professors have such labs that they run and doing so shows great initiative. DEN projects give students a way to explore areas not covered in curriculum classes, such as parallel computing and computational science.

Dr. Wolffe is also a popular choice for advising Master's projects or theses. He is currently advising my Master's thesis and my graduate assistantship. Although he has many other responsibilities, he always finds time to help students with their projects.

It is generally accepted by Computer Science students and faculty that Dr. Wolffe is one of the top professors in the department. This is undeniably due to his commitment to his students. Dr. Wolffe has helped me and numerous other graduate students an immeasurable amount in our GVSU careers, and I believe he deserves this recognition."

❖ **Donald Mitchell, Jr., Assistant Professor of Education**

Nominated by: Lindsay Greyerbiehl, Master of Education in Higher Education

Lindsay writes: "I am deeply honored to nominate Dr. Mitchell for the GSA Faculty Mentor Award. Dr. Mitchell has been a catalyst for my success at Grand Valley State University. As a faculty member and mentor he has the

incredible ability to recognize the potential in students, challenge them with opportunities, and support them throughout the process. Dr. Mitchell has continually provided me an immense amount of opportunities to develop academically and professionally. Through the opportunities he has provided, we co-authored an article that has been submitted for publication and will co-present a poster at ACPA a national student affairs conference. Not only that but he debuted the College Student Affairs Leadership Journal, a peer-reviewed graduate student journal housed within our department that I will be the inaugural editor-in-chief of. Through his mentorship I have been challenged to grow as a student, develop as a professional, and gain the skills of an aspiring scholar.

Overall, I am privileged to recommend Dr. Mitchell as he has become one of the most respected mentors in the College Student Affairs Leadership program. I am deeply thankful for the mentorship and collegial relationship I have with Dr. Mitchell. He is deeply invested in the success of the students he works and continues to pave the way for our success. Dr. Mitchell possesses all of the characteristics of an outstanding mentor for graduate students and deserves to receive this award."

❖ **Brandon W. Youker, Associate Professor of Social Work**

Nominated by: Allyssa Ingraham, Master of Public Administration and Master of Social Work (dual-degree program)

Allyssa writes: "Dr. Youker is a second year professor in the School of Social Work program. He goes above and beyond to make sure what he is teaching in class is relevant and challenging enough that students feel like they have gained more practical knowledge and life experience by taking his class.

He developed a service-learning project for students to get real life experience by connecting with a community partner organization, Indian Trails. Through this relationship he was focused on making it a sustainable project that benefited Indian Trails with capacity building, as well as gave students real life experience with evaluating a program. He is constantly advocating for diversifying his student's professional career by attending conferences and encouraging students to look towards continuing education or a doctoral program. Personally his influence in developing my professional development has been intentional and transformational.

Dr. Youker and I recently had a paper that we had been working on for over a year and a half get accepted and published through the Foundation Review. I was able to travel and present a poster and paper presentation with him in October 2013, at the American Evaluation Association's annual conference in Washington D.C. Since he has attained another part-time Graduate Assistant, I am able to see his mentorship continue to grow through his commitment to making intentional projects for both of us. I am nominating him for this award because of his intentional commitment to his students and for his duty to serving the greater community."

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICERS FALL 2013

President: Paul Jabaay, Business Administration

Vice President: Hilary Powsner, Business Administration

Communications Officer: Alaina Clarke, Communications

Social Media: Kayle Eckerle, Higher Education

Finance Officer: Troy Bouman, Business Administration

Administrative Officer: Anna Marotti, Literacy Studies

Graduate Council Student Elected Representatives:

Nathan Bair, Business Administration

Hilary Powsner, Business Administration

Advisors:

Steven Lipnicki, Assistant Dean of Students

Dr. John Stevenson, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies

Michelle Burke, Student Life

GRADUATE COUNCIL OFFICERS FALL 2013

Chair:

Dr. Mark Luttenton, Biology

Policy Subcommittee Chair:

Dr. Mark Luttenton, Biology

Curriculum Subcommittee Chair:

Dr. Mark Staves, Cell and Molecular Biology



Dr. Jeffrey A. Potteiger, Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. John R. Stevenson, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies

Irene Fountain, Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Palm, Office Coordinator

Graduate Assistants:

Jacob Blossfeld, Accounting

Anoush Kabalyan, Business Administration

Kelley Senkowski, Educational Technology

Student Assistant:

Shannon Heynen, International Business (undergraduate)

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