

Research and Graduate Studies @ KU

Updates from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies



Faculty group supports promotion, oversight of graduate education

Competitive graduate student recruitment, a streamlined approval process for new graduate degrees, and a new oversight and advisory structure are among the recommendations contained in the recent report of a faculty group concerned with graduate education at KU. The goal of the report is to strengthen graduate degree programs and coordinate the university's mission in graduate education.

The 13-member group, comprised of graduate faculty, was organized last fall by Sara Rosen, associate vice provost and dean of graduate studies. It was chaired by Susan Twombly, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and was asked to help redefine the relationship between the graduate studies office and graduate programs in four key areas: administration of graduate education, program assessment, recruitment and student services.

"The message of the task force was clear," Rosen said. "Strengthen graduate education at KU by working more closely with the graduate programs. The members have tremendous experience educating graduate students and developing degree programs. Their report is extremely valuable, and will help us establish a new office with a new focus."

The faculty recommendations reinforce the need for a graduate studies office that supports graduate education throughout the university. This office should strengthen academic, research, and administrative partnerships across campus. Specific recommendations include:

- Create a policy oversight and advisory committee designed to "facilitate the goal of promoting graduate degrees of the highest quality";
- Facilitate an "assessment and rethinking of the funding model for graduate students" at KU, in order to help provide competitive levels of funding for doctoral students;
- Develop a "streamlined, supportive process for approving new graduate degrees and reviewing major changes to existing degree programs";
- Play a "prominent role in gathering, interpreting and disseminating data on graduate students and programs";
- Support a recruitment and application process that results in the recruitment of graduate students of the highest quality, including an online application and admission process and the coordination of various graduate recruitment activities; and
- Maintain current levels of student services programming and strengthen such efforts as GTA training, a comprehensive web site for current services, Responsible Conduct of Research programming, and provision of data about national/international trends in graduate education.

April 2008

In this issue:

Faculty group supports promotion, oversight of graduate education

'Ph.D. Comic' coming to KU with fun message for graduate students

Undergraduate Research Symposium highlights student work

Kansas delegation members support research funding

KU Natural History Museum seeks art for new gallery space

Researchers & Grad Students in the News

Research Administration

Upcoming Events

Research and Graduate Studies@KU is produced by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. For more information, please contact Gretchen Wieland at rgs-news@ku.edu.

KU
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The University of Kansas

In addition to Twombly, other members were Tim Shaftel, business; Kent Spreckelmeyer, architecture; Mary Anne Jordan, design; Elizabeth Topp, pharmaceutical chemistry; John Colombo, psychology; Susan Kemper, gerontology; Arvin Agah, electrical engineering and computer science; Ann Schofield, American studies; John Ferraro, allied health; Rita Clifford, nursing; and Allen Rawitch, KU Medical Center. John Augusto, Research and Graduate Studies, served in an ex officio capacity.

The full report is available at www.rgs.ku.edu.

'Ph.D. Comic' coming to KU with fun message for graduate students

A lecture entitled "The Power of Procrastination" may sound like something you'd like to put off. But for "Ph.D. Comic" Jorge Cham, it's a fun way to help graduate students be more productive and feel less stressed.

Cham, an author and teacher with a doctorate from Stanford, will speak at the University of Kansas Tues., Apr. 8 at 5:30 p.m. in the Spahr Engineering Classroom, Eaton Hall. His presentation is free and open to the public.

According to Cham, a recent survey found that 95% of all graduate students feel overwhelmed, while more than two-thirds have felt seriously depressed at some point in their careers. In this talk, he recounts his experiences bringing humor into the lives of stressed out academics. He also examines the source of their anxieties and explores the guilt and the myth surrounding procrastination.

Cham produces a comic strip – "Piled Higher and Deeper" – for a number of campus newspapers around the country. In a humorous way, it chronicles "life (or the lack thereof) in academia," according to Cham. Three collections of the strips have appeared in book form since 2002. Copies of the books will be available for signing following his lecture.

Cham's appearance at KU is sponsored by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, the Graduate Engineering Association, the Graduate and Professional Association, and the KU Student Senate. For more information, visit www.phdcomics.com.

Undergraduate Research Symposium highlights student work

The 11th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium will be held April 12 in the Kansas Memorial Union. The symposium is an excellent opportunity for students to display their work, practice presenting in a public forum, obtain feedback and synthesize their results for mentors and peers. Students will make either a poster or an oral presentation. After the presentations, students and their mentors will attend an awards banquet.

This year's symposium will be held in concert with the Sigma XI Student Research Day to further highlight the breadth of undergraduate research at KU. The symposium is sponsored by the University Honors Program, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Kansas delegation members support research funding

Members of Congress circulate and sign onto "Dear Colleague" letters as a way of expressing their personal support for a particular legislative issue. Recently, letters in support of the Department of Energy Office of Science and the National Science Foundation for FY09 appropriations were signed by Rep. Nancy Boyda, Rep. Dennis Moore, and Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas. In addition, Rep. Boyda and Rep. Moore joined 177 colleagues in signing a letter urging House appropriators to provide a 6.5 percent increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY09.

President Bush's FY09 budget proposal would flat-fund the NIH at the FY08 level. The letter signers find

Upcoming Events

April 7

"The Weather Makers: How We Are Changing the Climate and What It Means" — 7:30 p.m.

Tim Flannery, Scientist, Humanist and Author
Ballroom, Kansas Memorial Union

April 8

"The Power of Procrastination" — 5:30 p.m.

Jorge "Ph.D. Comic" Cham
Spahr Engineering Classroom, Eaton Hall

"The Republic of Letters: Science, Scholarship and Civility in Early Modern Europe" — 7:30 p.m.

Anthony Grafton, Princeton University
Hall Center for the Humanities

April 9

"What Kind of Theory is the Theory of Evolution?" — 7:30 p.m.

Jerry Fodor, Rutgers University
Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Memorial Union

April 10

"Evolution Without Adaptation?" — 7:30 p.m.

Jerry Fodor, Rutgers University
Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Memorial Union

April 12

Undergraduate Research Symposium — 12 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Kansas Union

Sponsored by the University Honors Program, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

More information: Mark Nesbitt-Daly at mdaly@ku.edu, John Augusto at jaugusto@ku.edu or Chris Hauffer at vulgare@ku.edu

April 16

Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute Annual Dinner

Keynote: Kenneth Kaitin, Director, Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development

Hyatt Regency Crown Center, 2345 McGee St., Kansas City, MO

More information: www.kclifesciencesday.org

April 23

Graduate Studies Award Ceremony — 3:30 p.m.

Courtside Room, Burge Union

Refreshments served; public invited

April 29

Friends of the Hall Center Annual Meeting — 6 p.m.

Hall Center for the Humanities

May 17

KU Commencement Doctoral Hooding Ceremony — 4 p.m.

Lied Center

this "deeply troubling given the high rate of biomedical inflation." The letter goes on to say that the short-term impact of flat funding is a reduced number of NIH-funded grants, adding, "Inadequate funding for biomedical research delays or ends cutting-edge research, making it more difficult to retain talented American researchers in the United States. Even worse, flat funding further impedes our ability to mitigate or delay the onset of the chronic diseases, which are the greatest contributor to spiraling health care costs."

Rep. Jerry Moran, Rep. Boyda and Rep. Moore also signed onto a letter that urges House appropriators to provide a \$30 million increase in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in FY09. The letter notes that this would return the total funding for NEH to its nominal 1994 level of \$177 million. President Bush has proposed \$144.4 million in FY09 for NEH, an amount roughly equal to FY08 funding.

The letter states, "We believe that strong federal support for the humanities is an important investment in the lives of our fellow citizens and the well-being of our democracy."

KU Natural History Museum seeks art for new gallery space

Artist submissions for a new rotating art exhibit are welcome by the University of Kansas Natural History Museum Student Advisory Board until approximately April 15. The exhibit, which will be showcased throughout four floors of spiraling new gallery space in Dyche Hall, will display artwork that focuses on artistic interpretations of scientific topics. Artwork will be showcased for six months with an exhibition opening on August 18.

For more information, or if you have a question, please contact Thomas Hardy, Student Advisory Board President, (785) 864-4450 or tcarlhardy@gmail.com.

Researchers & Grad Students in the News

Researcher says habitat destruction may wipe out butterfly migration

<http://www.news.ku.edu/2008/april/1/migration.shtml>

According to Chip Taylor, KU professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, the astonishing migration of the monarch butterfly may collapse rapidly without urgent action to end devastation of the butterfly's vital sources of food and shelter.

KU graduate programs move up in U.S. News national rankings

<http://www.news.ku.edu/2008/march/28/usnews.shtml>

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Seven graduate programs moved up the national rankings ladder while an eighth — already at No. 1 — held onto its top spot in U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best Graduate Schools" rankings.

Journal wants undergraduate research

http://www.kansan.com/stories/2008/mar/24/undergraduate_research/?news

Editors of the Journal of Undergraduate Research, or JUR, are looking for original research from university undergraduate students for the journal's first edition, which is set to come out as early as this spring.

KU researcher predicts plant response to rising carbon dioxide levels

<http://www.features.ku.edu/plants/>

Joy Ward, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, studies plants that grew during the last ice age, when low carbon dioxide levels were "highly limiting" for plant life. Through awareness of this ancient past, Ward hopes to show how plants might fare in a future of much higher carbon dioxide concentrations.

Life Span Institute develops online disaster training to assist people with disabilities

<http://www.news.ku.edu/2008/march/7/disaster.shtml>

Researchers have created a two-hour online training course on how to assist people with disabilities during a community emergency. "Ready, Willing and Able" targets staff in county health departments and hospitals, emergency managers, disaster relief teams and professionals working with people with disabilities.

Research Administration

Graduate Studies award ceremony coming April 23

The Graduate Studies Award Ceremony is scheduled for Wednesday, April 23 at 3:30 p.m. in the Court-side Room, Burge Union. Graduate faculty and students will be recognized for their accomplishments. Refreshments will be served, and the public is invited to attend.

Below is a list of students, with their awards and departments, who won Graduate Teaching Assistantship awards for 2008:

Joshua Long	Carlin Award	Geography
Keri Behre	Carlin Award	English
Jennifer Kittlaus	Outstanding GTA	Philosophy
Robert Fucci	Outstanding GTA	History of Art
Evelyn Clark	Outstanding GTA	Sociology
Karen Blakeman	Outstanding GTA	Journalism
Natabhona Mabachi	Distinguished Service	Communication Studies
Papa Bousso	Distinguished Service	French & Italian
Regine Kroh	Exemplary Teaching	Germanic Languages & Literatures
Shelly Cline	Exemplary Teaching	Humanities & Western Civilization
Frank Cai	Exemplary Teaching	Humanities & Western Civilization

Next TRIPS flight to Washington, D.C. is May 1

For several years, the university has provided researchers with an opportunity to fly to Washington, D.C. on a KU airplane at no charge. The program is called TRIPS (Travel of Research Investigators to Potential Sponsors). These are one-day, in-and-out trips. The only requirement is that researchers must have scheduled meetings with one or more agency program officers to discuss the possibility of funding for a future sponsored research project.

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The next TRIPS flight is Thurs., May 1. The KU plane leaves the Lawrence airport at 6 a.m. Central time and arrives at Reagan National by 10 a.m. Eastern time. The return flight leaves around 5 p.m. Eastern time and arrives in Lawrence by 7:30 p.m. Central time. Researchers are responsible for arranging meetings and transportation while in Washington.

Space on TRIPS flights is limited. For more information, go to <http://www.rgs.ku.edu/depts/rgs/trips/index.shtml>. Reservations can be made by contacting Linda Crawford at the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, 864-7298, lcrawfor@ku.edu.

Got research? REP is for you

The Research Experience Program (REP) is identifying undergraduates who have completed a combination of research coursework and a research product, which could meet the qualifications for certification with the REP program. For more information about the REP, go to <http://www.rgs.ku.edu/depts/training/rep/rep.shtml>.

Conference opportunity for postdoctoral researchers

The 2008 National Postdoctoral Association annual conference will be held April 25-27, 2008 in Boston. For information about the conference, visit the association's website at www.nationalpostdoc.org.