

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

at Mississippi State University[®]



Campus Tours

Need assistance with [campus tours](#)?
Contact: Natalie Parrott Coats
(nparrott@grad.msstate.edu).

Upcoming Events

Summer Graduation will take place August 6th. August graduates are invited to participate in December ceremony with no charge except regalia rental.

GTA Workshop will take place August 9th-12th.

Kudos

Acacia Lopez, a doctoral student in the Psychology Department, won the best overall poster and presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association. Her research highlighted racial disparity in trauma-related events. Learn more about Acacia's accomplishments [here!](#)

Opportunities

The GTA workshop designed for all new GTAs will be held August 9-12. Departments are responsible for registering their new GTAs and the deadline is July 26. You can find more information about the workshop on our [GTA Workshop website](#). In addition, we are looking for faculty members who would like to volunteer as an evaluator for the Classroom Teaching Evaluations on August 12. These are a great opportunity to give new TAs feedback and learn something new. You can register [here](#).

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Graduate School,

Summer is here and I hope graduate students, faculty and staff have made plans to take some time off to enjoy the nice weather and do all those fun things during the summer season that were shut down during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in summer 2020. It is very important that folks take quality downtime, to relax, rejuvenate and return to their tasks refreshed and invigorated. Many graduate students are busy in their laboratories conducting experiments, in their fields collecting data, in their archeological dig sites answering questions or in their libraries and institutes ploughing through archival documents to bring to light exciting and some challenging events of the past. To all our graduate student researchers we wish you a successful summer. For those that are defending theses, dissertations, sitting for qualifying or comprehensive exams with the intention to graduate this August, we wish you every success and congratulate you on your accomplishments and graduation.

Please keep in touch and share with the Graduate School your exciting summer adventures that we may post them in the newsletter during the fall semester.

Stay well, stay safe and enjoy some quality down time.

Respectfully,

Dr. Peter Ryan
Executive Vice Provost and Dean - The Graduate School

2020-2021: Preparing Future Faculty Program

The Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of the Graduate School completed the 2020-2021 Preparing Future Faculty Program in April with 27 successful PFF candidates. PFF is a year-long program offered to graduate students across campus to help in preparation for a career in academia. Topics presented by various faculty members and guest speakers include work-life balance, active teaching, lesson planning, research and scholarly activity, teaching philosophy, and preparing for a faculty interview.

Sachini N. K. Kodithuwakku Arachchige, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Kinesiology and PFF candidate in 2020-2021, joined the program “to help with professional development,” and found that the program “helped me get more familiarized with the nature of an academic job.” Sachini says the program “exceeded...expectations. I would highly recommend this program to all the PhD students interested in pursuing a career in academia in the future.”

Sachini’s advisor, Dr. Harish Chander, Associate Professor of Biomechanics and Co-Director of the Neuromechanics Laboratory at MSU, found the program “extremely well structured with critical topics covered in a timely manner.” Knowing his students were involved in the program, “helped me greatly to understand what my graduate students are exposed to, which ultimately helped me cater my mentorship to them.” Finally, he described the PFF program as “an extremely unique initiative that sets the grad students on the best path to be successful in higher education and academia.”

For more information on the 2021-2022 Preparing Future Faculty Program, visit their website [here!](#) You may also contact Amy Barefield at abarefield@ctl.msstate.edu for more information.



Sachini Arachchige, Kinesiology

Student Spotlight: Meredith Brock, Biological Engineering

Meredith Brock, a Masters of Science student in Biological Engineering, shares her experience here at MSU through our [video testimonial series.](#)

Meredith has been a member of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) Executive Council since 2018 and was elected as the GSA President for 2020-2021. She helped host various graduate student development events and functions during one of the most challenging years.

Meredith studied agricultural water resources throughout the Mississippi Delta. She used various techniques such as geographic information systems, remote sensing, and watershed modeling to research different irrigation conservation practices..

For the past two years Meredith served as a Mississippi Space Consortium NASA Graduate Research Fellow. Through this opportunity, Meredith was able to share her research and experiments to local high school students who expressed interest in STEM research.

Watch Meredith's video testimonial [here!](#)



Meredith Brock, Biological Engineering

If you would like to highlight a student in our video testimonial series, please contact Natalie Parrott Coats, at nparrott@grad.msstate.edu.

Graduate School Staff Spotlight: Sara Thomas

Sara Thomas first joined the Graduate School in 2012 where she served in the admissions unit until 2014. After a five year stint in Human Resources, Ms. Thomas returned to the Graduate School in 2019 to serve as an Administrative Assistant II. Ms. Thomas holds a bachelor's degree from MSU in Business Education.

When asked about returning, Ms. Thomas said, "I love working in the Graduate School—my second time around." Because of her previous experience, Ms. Thomas has a sound understanding of the stress that both staff and students may face dealing with deadlines, handling sensitive documents and awaiting decisions. This helps her juggle the day to day interactions that take place in the office and do so with a kind spirit and bright smile.

A highlight of her position is working closely with the Associate Dean, Dr. Brien Henry. Thomas says, "his even temperament and genuine empathy for people sets the tone for the Graduate School". In addition to managing Dr. Henry's calendar, scheduling meetings, processing leave, and ensuring the office has the supplies it needs to function, Ms. Thomas has the enormous responsibility of managing the eight graduate assistants that work in the office. This includes juggling their ever evolving schedules, assigning duties, and monitoring efficiency. Ms. Courtney Welch, who serves as a Graduate Assistant, said, "Working for Ms. Thomas has been a wonderful experience. It feels great to work in a warm, friendly environment with a supervisor who is fair and understanding."



Sara Thomas, Administrative Assistant II

Summer 2021: Deadlines

July 7: Last day for initial submission to Library

July 30: Last day for final submission to Library

August 3: Last day for non-thesis comprehensive exams for August graduation

August 3: Deadline to pass thesis/dissertation defense after all other requirements are met except thesis/dissertation submission to Library, allowing student to enroll in GRD 9011 in Fall semester and apply for December graduation

“

Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.

-JFK

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