



COGS GRADLETTER

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS | UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - TWIN CITIES

www.cogs.umn.edu

August 2009

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fellow Graduate Students:

My name is Mandy Stahre, the new president of the Council of Graduate Students (COGS). I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to COGS and let you know how you can get involved in student governance. COGS represents over 10,000 graduate students across departments and colleges whose degrees are conferred through the Graduate School. We are the largest student council in the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA), filling 8 of 19 seats in the GAPSA assembly. In 2008-2009 we passed resolutions prompted by the reorganization of the graduate school for greater consultation and transparency with regards to major changes decided by University administration, promotion of a greener University, and a call for better academic advising and mentoring. In addition, COGS members (including department reps) serve as a voice of graduate students on many University Committees and Councils. I invite you to join us in becoming an active voice for graduate students as your department rep. Hope to see you this next year.

Mandy Stahre
President, COGS

UPCOMING EVENTS

COGS General Assembly Meeting (FREE FOOD!!!)

Tuesday, September 22, 5:30-7:30pm
Mississippi Room, Coffman Union, 3rd floor

Find out about opportunities for graduate students to become involved in COGS this year. The COGS executive team is focusing our efforts on several goals this year including increasing funding for travel grants, increasing attention on the critical role that graduate students play in research and teaching on campus, and promoting communications between University administration and graduate students. A *complimentary dinner* followed by the meeting at 6 PM.

Homecoming Student Scholar Showcase

Wednesday, October 7th, 1-4pm
TCF Bank Stadium

Register by September 18 to present your research poster, art or design project at the 1st Annual University of Minnesota Student Scholar Showcase. The event will be held in the new TCF Bank Stadium on Wednesday, October 7. Current students and 2009 graduates are all welcome to present. More information, including the registration form, can be found here: <http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/osa/expo2009.html>

Helpful Resources for Graduate Students | COGS publishes two valuable guides developed by graduate students for graduate students. Both guides are available for download on the COGS website at www.cogs.umn.edu/publications.html

Staying on Course: Mutual Roles and Responsibilities in the Graduate School Experience

This in-depth guide is about what you can do to make graduate school a good experience. This booklet will guide a first year student with numerous tasks, such as finding an advisor, filling out forms and just getting accustomed to graduate student life. It also provides advice to continuing graduate students on taking preliminary exams, presenting research, staying motivated, job searching and having fun. Lastly, advice is given to faculty on interacting with students.

Graduate Student Survival Guide

This handy volume is a summary of services you may need during graduate school. Do you know where to get your UCard, get forms, and buy books? How do you get to and around campus? Where can you eat, get money? Looking for a place to live and buy affordable furniture? This survival guide will help point you in the right direction.

CURRENT ISSUES | Here's a quick run-down of current issues facing graduate students at the University of Minnesota and how COGS is working for you to address these issues...

Graduate School Restructuring On February 9, 2009, Provost Tom Sullivan announced a plan in which the "the Graduate School [would] be reconfigured from a free-standing administrative unit to which all graduate programs directly report, to an Office of Graduate Education within the Provost's Office". In response, COGS and GAPSA worked together to develop a response on behalf of graduate students. COGS continues to play a role in the graduate school reorganization by sitting on working committees and advising administrators in the interest of graduate students. (Memo announcing restructuring at www.academic.umn.edu/provost/reports/documents/grad_report062609.pdf)

Tuition Increases On June 24, 2009, the U of MN Board of Regents approved the 2010 fiscal year budget, which included a 7.5% increase in graduate student tuition. COGS President Mandy Stahre sent a letter on behalf of graduate students citing the additional stress this puts on graduate students' lives (see COGS website).

COGS Awards Winners

The **Leadership Award** recognizes graduate students that have demonstrated leadership and service on behalf of their fellow graduate students, the University, and broader communities. The 2008-09 winners are:

Apeckhya Karki, Urban & Regional Planning
Greg Schneider, Rhetoric (*Honorable Mention*)

Travel Awards are given to graduate students to assist in the costs of attending conferences, meetings, and workshops. The 2008-09 recipients are:

John Ballard, Electrical Engineering
Viveca Braganza, Ed. Psychology/ Special Education
Brandon Breen, Conservation Biology
Fernando Calderon, History
Yi-Wen Chiu, Water Resource Science
Jill Flynn, Curriculum & Instruction (Literacy Education)
Tom Giarla, Ecology, Evolution & Behavior
Yiu-Kang Hsu, Anthropology
Amanda Kueper, Conservation Biology
Oksana Laleko, Linguistics
Hiroki Nomoto, Linguistics
SooJin Pate, American Studies
Uttam Sharma, Applied Economics
Elizabeth Wallace, Conservation Biology
Brian Walseth, Bioproducts & Biosystems Engineering
Lucia Zacchi, MICAB

Congratulations to the 2008-09 recipients of the COGS Leadership and Travel Awards! To find out more about these awards and application information for 2009-10, please visit www.cogs.umn.edu/awards.html.

Graduate Student Survey COGS administers a biennial survey of graduate students to gather information on the needs and concerns of graduate students (see COGS website). The survey results showed that graduate students are very concerned about the increasing costs of graduate education and the shortage of assistantships and travel funding. This year, COGS plans to begin to gather data on graduate student publications, conference presentations, and classes taught and TA'ed in order to advocate for the important role we play at the U of MN.

Social Events Last year, COGS sponsored an evening with Jorge Cham, author of phdcomics.com. There was a great turnout, and we hope to bring Jorge back to campus this year in partnership with GAPSA. We also plan to sponsor other events and outings throughout the school year. Check out the COGS website, follow us on Twitter (@umncogs), or become a fan on Facebook to keep up on the latest events.

Contact COGS!

COGS is **your official voice** in the Graduate School. We're here for you, anytime, for any reason



Email: cogs@umn.edu

Twitter: @umncogs

Facebook: COGS (University of Minnesota)

COGS Executive Committee 2009-10

President: Mandy Stahre

Executive VP: Charlie Billington

VP of Finance: Andy Exley

VP of Communications: Tim Salo

VP of Internal Relations: Jeremy Wang

VP of External Relations: Boyd Cothran

Policy and Review Chairs

Biological Sciences: Jeff Hall

Social Sciences: Nelson Amaral

Education & Psychology: Caroline Hilk

Eng., Phys. & Math Sci: Yun Li

Language, Literature & Arts: Muhammad Abdurrahman

Health Sciences: Sarah Greising

DEPARTMENT REPS WANTED!

The best way to get involved in COGS is being your department representative. As a representative, you have a voice in voting on resolutions and serving as a graduate student representative on a diverse range of University and COGS committees.