

GSAC Psychology Spring 2020 Activities Report

Hello Graduate Students! Welcome back from the holidays!

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the GSAC Newsletter! With this newsletter, GSAC hopes to foster transparency and connections between students by sharing our activities each semester. Within each issue you will find a list of activities, news concerning the department, and highlights that keep you informed. Please be sure to contact us with any feedback, questions or concerns, or things you want featured via gsacpsymsu@gmail.com.

Summer and Fall 2019 GSAC Activities

Terminal Master's Requirements: In response to student concerns about accessing important information on requirements and processes for obtaining the Terminal Master's Degree, GSAC advocated for the development of a comprehensive document that outlines Terminal Master's Degree Procedures which was generated and disseminated by the Associate Chairperson on September 27th, 2019.

Taxation of Summer Hourly Pay: In response to student concerns about tax differences in summer hourly pay, GSAC informed the faculty of this issue and its impact on students. GSAC advocated for improved communication for hourly positions and sought extra monies to supplement the difference. The FAC will be setting up a new system for hourly pay in the summer that will include a message to inform students of the difference in taxes. Additionally, faculty have been encouraged to pay hourly positions in the summer a slightly higher rate to make up for the difference in take home pay, though this ability may be limited due to the funding source.

Graduate Issues Contact Tree: In response to concerns raised by students about unclear communication channels, GSAC advocated for the development of a document with information about the contact tree for students seeking to resolve an issue or raise a concern which was generated and disseminated by the Associate Chairperson on October 24th, 2019.

Graduate Student Townhall: In response to GSAC goals to hear and respond to the needs of graduate students, a townhall meeting was held on October 29th, 2019. GSAC outlined

topics that had been submitted and collected student feedback on those topics. GSAC prioritized the feedback and used it to action plan for the remainder of the academic year.

Hourly Pay Policy: In response to student concerns about the new hourly pay policy, GSAC wrote an open letter to the FAC to advocate for adjusting the policy. Approximately 50% of graduate students in the department signed the document in support and the letter was taken into consideration at the December FAC meeting.

Update on Hourly Pay Policy: The Faculty Advisory Council has decided to delay implementation of the change to the hourly pay policy until Fall of 2020. The AC will work to draft a revised policy that takes the concerns raised by graduate students into account while maintaining the oversight and protections that motivated the original proposal.

Graduate Education Task Force Workshops: The Graduate Education Task Force began offering a series of workshops in Fall 2019 to engage graduate students in working on topics related to areas of improvement indicated in the Graduate School issues report. GSAC co-facilitated the following workshops:

- Mentor-Mentee Expectations Workshop – Friday November 22nd, 2019.
- Graduate Student Wellness Workshop – Friday, December 6th, 2019.

Upcoming Spring 2020 Activities

Upcoming Graduate Education Task Force Workshops: The Graduate Education Task Force is offering additional workshops this semester. Please see the details of upcoming workshops below.

- Creating an Inclusive Climate. *Wednesday, January 29th at 4:15 p.m. in Rm 230.*
- Graduate Student Performance Evaluation Process. *February, other details TBD.*
- Graduate Student Recruitment. *March, other details TBD.*

Spring Semester Social Events: An area of focus for GSAC is creating spaces for graduate students across various program areas in the department to connect and build interpersonal relationships. As we work to plan social events, we would love to hear from you! If you have any suggestions for graduate student social events, please share your ideas with our Event Planner, Jessica Lee (leejes17@msu.edu) by February 12th.

GSAC Spotlight Corner

*Our first Graduate Student spotlight corner features the current GSAC Chair, **Jenna Harder**.*



Jenna is a fifth-year graduate student working in Joseph Cesario's Social Cognition Lab in the Social & Personality Psychology program. Her research has centered around the social cognitive processes underlying stereotyping and prejudice. In particular, much of her work has involved using computational modeling techniques to understand racial and social class bias in police use-of-force decisions. She is a recipient of the Blake and Mary Krueger University Distinguished Fellowship and the Joseph L. White Outstanding Student Multicultural Research Award.

She expects to graduate this semester and will be starting a job next summer at Abt Associates, a research consulting company focused on using data to improve the quality of people's lives worldwide. Outside of graduate school, Jenna loves getting out-of-doors and particularly enjoys wilderness camping and canoeing. Her other hobbies include playing with her friends' cats and trying to convince near-strangers to read books she loves. Jenna is originally from Green Bay, Wisconsin.

GSAC Representatives 2019/2020

BNS: Jessica Lee (leejes17@msu.edu)

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Social-Personality: Jenna Harder (harderj3@msu.edu)

*To learn more about GSAC, or raise any questions/issues/concerns, please reach out to your program's representative or any of the other representatives listed above.