



Professors (from left) Ed Folsom, Frederick Domann, Constance Berman and Jeff Murray received outstanding faculty mentor awards by the Graduate College during a ceremony Feb. 9.

Graduate College honors mentoring excellence

Ed Folsom, Jeff Murray, Constance Berman, and Frederick Domann earned top recognition from The University of Iowa Graduate College for excellence in mentoring graduate students.

Outstanding Mentor Award

The Graduate College Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award in humanities and fine arts was awarded to Folsom, professor of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). Murray won the outstanding mentor award in biological and life sciences. He is affiliated with the Graduate College's interdisciplinary programs of genetics and molecular and cellular biology, and is professor of neonatology in the UI Carver College of Medicine, as well as the colleges of dentistry, liberal arts and sciences, nursing, and public health. This award carries a \$2,500 prize.

"It's a terrific honor. On a personal level, it's a symbol that what we've done has had an impact on people's lives," Murray said. "In many ways, it's a reward for all the mentors and

people at the university who take students seriously. Getting the award is an acknowledgment of the impact (mentoring) has on students and that they recognize it's really important, and that the university values these kinds of interactions."

Special Recognition Award

Special Recognition Awards for Mentoring went to Berman, professor of history in CLAS, and Domann, professor of radiation oncology in the Carver College of Medicine. This award includes a \$500 prize.

The professors were nominated by their students and colleagues and honored during a ceremony Feb. 9 at the Levitt Center.

This year's awards recognized faculty in biological and life sciences and in humanities and fine arts. In alternate years, the awards are presented to faculty in social sciences and in mathematical and physical sciences and engineering.

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ACT commits \$5 million to UI graduate education

The ACT Scholars Program, co-directed by ACT and The University of Iowa Graduate College, is providing an opportunity for qualified students to pursue graduate degrees at the UI while simultaneously obtaining on-the-job training at ACT.

ACT, founded in 1959 as the American College Testing Program by UI education leaders E.F. Lindquist and Ted McCarrel, celebrated its 50th anniversary last October by committing \$5 million to The University of Iowa Foundation to endow the ACT Scholars Program. The program will begin presenting awards to graduate students during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Recipients will receive an annual nine-month stipend equivalent to a half-time research assistantship (\$20,000), benefits, and a full resident rate tuition scholarship. ACT welcomes nominations from underrepresented populations, including African-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.

"The Graduate College is honored to work with ACT to establish the ACT Scholars Program," said John C. Keller, associate provost and Graduate College dean. "This support from ACT is an exceptionally strong commitment to graduate education and research in disciplines pertinent to ACT's work."

ACT Scholars must be nominated by their departments in several areas of study, including education, business, communications, information technology, statistics, and engineering. While at the UI, the students will be assigned to a business unit at ACT to gain experience.

For more information, visit <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/aid-youre-nominated-for/ACT-scholars-program-fellowships>.

Office created to serve postdoctoral scholars

The University of Iowa has established the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars to serve as a professional and administrative home that will promote and serve the community of postdoctoral scholars and fellows.

The office, a collaboration of the Graduate College and the Office of the Vice President for Research, will support postdoctoral scholars and their faculty mentors through activities involving recruitment, education, mentorship, and networking.

"We're not only providing career development paths for the postdocs, but the office will also serve as a resource for mentors, faculty, and the programs on campus," said Minnetta Gardinier, associate dean of the Graduate College, who oversees the office.

The UI employs approximately 300 postdoctoral scholars annually with about 60 percent trained in the Carver College of Medicine. These positions are limited to five years and are unique since these scholars aren't classified as students, faculty, or staff.

Historically, at many universities, postdoctoral scholars were employed directly by the hiring faculty member with minimal involvement of other university offices. It is rapidly becoming the norm that these scholars receive a more comprehensive and much higher quality training experience. Nationally, the top research universities are

establishing postdoctoral offices to serve this population on their campuses.

"Postdocs are individuals on campus who really don't have a programmatic home, which can leave some a bit too isolated. So far, they've been without a formal office to more effectively serve them and to better meet their needs," Gardinier said.

The UI Office of Postdoctoral Scholars intends to serve postdoctoral scholars by creating and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships between its office, the postdoctoral trainees, their faculty mentors, and their academic departments.

"Mentoring of postdoctoral scholars is critical for their future success and for the success of our overall research programs here at Iowa, and this office will fill a void that existed in this area," said Jordan Cohen, UI's vice president for research.

John Keller, Graduate College dean, said the Graduate College is pleased to partner with the Office of the Vice President for Research in this effort.

"The Graduate College hopes to offer valuable assistance and resources to our postdoctoral scholars as they transition into an important phase of their academic and research careers," Keller said.

The Office of Postdoctoral Scholars plans to provide a variety of services to these scholars including a welcome and orientation, a postdoctoral scholars handbook, and a professional development seminar series.

For more information, visit the Office of Postdoctoral Scholars website at postdoc.grad.uiowa.edu.



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Folsom, Murray win mentor awards

continued from cover

Adam Bradford, a presidential fellow in English, recommended Folsom for the Mentor Award. Bradford's first meeting with Folsom occurred before Bradford set foot on the UI campus and is one he will always remember.

Bradford had just finished presenting a paper at a conference in Paris, France, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the publication of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, when a senior scholar delivered an antagonistic and dismissive critique. Folsom, co-director of the Walt Whitman Archive, immediately reached out to Bradford after his presentation.

"One of my first mentoring relationships with Adam was really trying to help him put that experience in context and the relatively small stakes that were involved in what seemed to him at that early stage to be a massive catastrophe," Folsom said.

Folsom acknowledged the value of Bradford's core ideas and pointed out ways in which he could reframe them to make them more provocative.

"What he did at the conference was huge for me, because it was first aid," Bradford said. "It was a crisis moment."

Folsom's initial dream was to teach at an undergraduate liberal arts college like Ohio Wesleyan, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. That all changed shortly after he landed a job at the UI in 1976.

"When I ended up at Iowa and had a year or two of graduate teaching, I realized I could never go back to teaching at an undergraduate liberal arts college," Folsom said. "Graduate students have given me intellectual life—non-stop intellectual life—because they're continually demanding that I know things."



Graduate College Dean John Keller (right) presented Jeff Murray with his outstanding faculty mentor award Feb. 9.

his knowledge with others, particularly his students. He frequently rearranges his schedule in order to meet with students and attend their talks and presentations."

Murray thinks of his students the same way he thinks of his own children.

"They very much are an extension of what you value," Murray said of his students. "I know I'm not going to be able to solve all the problems that I think are interesting or important, but I hope my students will carry on that interest long after I'm gone and do good in the world at the same time."



Adam Bradford (left), a presidential fellow in English, has benefited from the guidance of his mentor, Ed Folsom.

Murray, who has several appointments in multiple colleges on campus, feels guilty that he doesn't spend enough time with his graduate students.

His students, however, don't see it that way.

"Dr. Murray is in high demand as a speaker, frequently traveling to meetings and workshops and setting up new collaborations. He also maintains clinic responsibilities in the newborn nurseries," said Elizabeth Leslie, a graduate student in genetics. "While these responsibilities may seem to be collectively more important than the students who work in the lab, the opposite is true. He is humble, unassuming, and approachable, and loves to share

Mentor Award winners

2009

Jeff Murray
Biological/Life Sciences

Ed Folsom
Humanities/Fine Arts

2008

Frank Schmidt
Social Sciences

Vicki Grassian
Math/Phys. Sciences/Engr.

2007

Judith Liskin-Gasparro
Humanities/Fine Arts

Karen B. Farris
Biological/Life Sciences

Mary Lou Emery
Humanities/Fine Arts

2006

Virginia Dominguez
Social Sciences

Alberto Segre
Math/Phys. Sciences/Engr.

2005

Kathleen Diffley
Humanities/Fine Arts

Richard Shields
Biological/Life Sciences

2004

Tom Casavant
Math/Phys. Sciences/Engr.

Charles Whiteman
Social Sciences

2003

Gail Bishop
Biological/Life Sciences

Florence Boos
Humanities/Fine Arts

2002

Susan Lutgendorf
Social Sciences

David Manderscheid
Math/Phys. Sciences/Engr.

2001

Michael Apicella
Biological/Life Sciences

Steve Duck
Humanities/Fine Arts

Ziemann runner-up for nation's top dissertation honor

Former UI graduate student also among seven recognized with Graduate College awards

Adam Ziemann views neuroscience as an undiscovered frontier for researchers.

In his quest for knowledge about how the brain works, Ziemann, who earned his Ph.D. in molecular physiology and biophysics and his M.D. at The University of Iowa in 2009, was co-lead author in a UI study that identified a brain pathway that shuts down seizures.

This discovery tied into his dissertation, "Effects of Low pH on Seizures and Fear: A Critical Role for Acid-Sensing Ion Channels," which was honored with a first runner-up distinction in the Council of Graduate Schools CGS/UMI Distinguished Dissertation Award competition for 2009.

This is the nation's most prestigious honor for doctoral dissertations. Iowa has won five national awards, more than any other institution,

public or private. Eleven other Iowa nominees, including Ziemann, have been finalists in the competition.

"I feel very fortunate to have worked with such great mentors and people in my lab," said Ziemann, who is in the residency program in internal medicine at The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. "It gives you a great combination of flexibility to work on what interests you and really good guidance and suggestions from people. The level of discourse is very high. People are excited with what they do."

"The nervous system is really complicated. Each project you work on, there are always intriguing implications."

Ziemann was awarded one of the Graduate College's most prestigious dissertation prizes: the D.C. Priestestersbach Dissertation Prize. He was among seven scholars recognized for their exemplary research as graduate students on March 26 during a ceremony on the UI campus.

The Graduate College recognized the winners of the D.C. Priestestersbach Dissertation Prize, Graduate Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award, and L.B. Sims

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award at the event, held in conjunction with the James F. Jakobsen Graduate Conference, organized by the Graduate Student Senate.

Ziemann and **Samuel Graber** (American studies) received top doctoral honors with the Priestestersbach Prize. Each was awarded \$2,500 along with a Graduate College award certificate. The dissertations of **Carmen Halabi** (genetics), **Matthew Miller** (English), **Alok Shah** (molecular and cellular biology) and **Elizabeth Sutton** (art history) were honored with the Graduate College Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award. **Susan McKernan** (dental public health) won the L.B. Sims Outstanding Master's Thesis Award.

Ziemann won the Priestestersbach Prize in biological and life sciences.

Graber, who earned his doctorate in American studies in 2008, won the Priestestersbach Prize in humanities and fine arts for his dissertation "Twice-Divided Nation: The Civil War and National Memory in the Transatlantic World." Graber currently is a lecturer in humanities and English in Christ College at Valparaiso University.



Adam Ziemann



Yi-Tzu Huang

Second language acquisition student wins presentation prize

Learning how to accommodate the interests and needs of Chinese heritage learners is a challenging task for college instructors.

Yi-Tzu Huang, a graduate student in The University of Iowa's second language acquisition program, is researching the learning behavior of Chinese heritage learners and non-heritage learners in a classroom setting. Huang has found that heritage learners – American-born Chinese – have a higher oral proficiency with the Chinese language than the non-heritage learners, but possess no advantage in reading and writing.

"Their oral advantage can't be transferred to reading comprehension and writing," Huang said of the five pairs of heritage and non-heritage learners she observed at the UI for her research. "They struggle the same as non-heritage learners. If we want both groups to get engaged in the classroom activities, we can give them reading and writing. Then, non-heritage learners will not feel intimidated."

Huang was honored by the Chinese Language Teachers Association (CLTA) with the Walton Presentation Prize for her presentation on Chinese heritage learners' interactive patterns in collaborative discussion during the CLTA's annual meeting on Nov. 20, 2009, in San Diego, CA. A \$500 prize is awarded to the individual with the best first-time presentation at the annual meeting.

Huang was one of three finalists who presented at the conference. Huang started work on this topic with Professor Judith Liskin-Gasparro in a course entitled Topics in Second Language Acquisition: Speaking. Huang has continued her work with Professor Chuanren Ke.

Graduate students help Hawkeye Poll gain national media attention

Poll results analyzed by University of Iowa graduate students in a little room in Schaeffer Hall have made a big impact on national politics.

During the 2008 election season, the UI political science department launched the Hawkeye Poll, with its public opinion results about the presidential candidates featured in such national media outlets as the *Boston Globe*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Washington Post*.

The poll provides a platform for academic research on political and public policy topics, including elections, policy issues, attitudes and beliefs about Iowa, and the national political environment. UI graduate students gain experience in survey research that connects to their academic work as they serve as trained callers and analyze survey results in their classes.

"You go through this whole long process and it becomes worth it when you see your questions and you actually have the data and get to run analyses," said graduate student Amanda Keller, whose dissertation is about donations people make to political and charitable organizations. "It always amazes me that graduate students and professors can work together and create this thing that people are interested in."

Fred Boehmke, faculty advisor for the Hawkeye Poll, says most of the responsibility for running the poll falls on about 12 students.

The students are allowed to place their own research questions in each survey in exchange for managing tasks such as recruiting and training callers, designing sampling strategies, and helping write press releases.

"Giving students opportunities to develop a set of skills that can be used in future jobs will give them a big leg up in writing grants in the future, because they know all the steps," Boehmke said. "It shows

them the inside component of how research is done and data is generated. It teaches you to be proud and humble about data, because you see how data is generated."

Graduate student Nicholas Martini said it is "awesome" to put your own questions in the survey because it leads to better research.

Two Hawkeye Polls this academic year asked respondents for their opinions on the chance of an economic turnaround in 2010 and the United States' involvement in global issues. Martini and fellow graduate student Nathan Darus both provided their interpretations of the results for either a press release or a news story.

"You read about all these polls and I had never really experienced it. When I saw the Hawkeye Poll (in national newspapers), it felt really good," said Darus, who is in his second semester working with the poll.

The 2008 election season was one of those experiences that won't be forgotten.

The students stayed busy helping produce a series of polls. Since the Iowa Caucus was the first contest for eventual presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain, the poll results appeared in countless media outlets.

Everyone wanted to know the opinions of Iowans because Iowa can help springboard a candidate's campaign. Obama won the Iowa Caucus and never looked back on his way toward becoming president.

"They really wanted to pay attention. They knew what was going on," Martini said of Iowans. "Even though they were getting bombarded with so many calls they thought it was great that Iowa was in the spotlight."

The Hawkeye Poll hopes to have Iowans in the public eye during the 2012 election season. The future of the poll is dependent on graduate students.

"We're setting it up for long-term sustainability that builds on the work and effort of graduate students, but also gets incorporated into the graduate research curriculum," Boehmke said.

IOWA Hawkeye Poll

"You read about all these polls and I had never really experienced it. When I saw the Hawkeye Poll (in national newspapers), it felt really good."

—Nathan Darus, Iowa graduate student in political science

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Newsweek

TIME

The Boston Globe

The Washington Post

The Dallas Morning News

The Star
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Poll cited in major U.S. news and media outlets during 2008 election season

Remarkable mentor

Dan Tranel puts in time, energy to help graduate students become successful

His graduate students simply call him Dan. Not Dr. Tranel. Not Professor Tranel.

This isn't a lack of respect for their mentor, one of the top neuroscientists in his field. They just see him as a normal guy who happens to have a 100-yard football field, complete with goal posts at each end, on his farm in southern Johnson County.

"They call me on a first-name basis, but they respect me," Tranel says. "I'm demanding and ask them for a high level of productivity, and I don't tolerate mediocrity and laziness."

Tranel directs The University of Iowa neuroscience graduate program. His mission is to help his students succeed, but not without fun along the way.

"Dan goes into everything wanting his grad students to graduate," says Justin Feinstein, a doctoral candidate in clinical neuropsychology. "He wants to see us become successful, and he's willing to put in a lot of time and energy to make sure that happens."

The Iowa Board of Regents honored Tranel's commitment to students last October, presenting him with a 2009 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence.

"A good mentor is passionate about what they're doing. That's a starting point," says Tranel, a professor of neurology in the Carver College of Medicine and professor of psychology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

"Being available is critical," he adds. "I can't underscore that enough. A lot of

people at my level spend most of their time on the road giving talks all over the globe, but you're not available if you're not around."

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7:30 a.m., Tranel convenes a meeting of graduate students, neuropsychologists, neurologists, and postdoctoral scholars to discuss their research. During these meetings, students practice their "elevator" speeches—one-minute presentations of their research in plain language.

"Students need the ability to talk about their science in lay terms, to make it transparent to the average intelligent person, and convey why it's important," Tranel says. "Scientists depend heavily on grant money to fund our research.



Dan Tranel, posing in the barn on his farm, lives a lifestyle in rural Johnson County that parallels his early years growing up in Montana. Photo by Tom Jorgensen.

In all cases, it requires you to indicate to people pulling the purse strings why they should pay for this.”

Tranel is an editor of several neuropsychology journals, a frequently invited speaker, and the author of several hundred publications and reviews. But his students and patients come first.

“He’s always quick to respond to any question. He’s remarkably engaged,” neuroscience graduate student Erik Asp says. “He’s interested in what ideas you might have. If you come up with a great idea and have good reasoning behind it, he’s like, ‘Let’s go ahead and go for it.’”

Last August, Tranel celebrated his 30th anniversary at Iowa. Before joining the faculty, he earned a clinical psychology master’s degree in 1981, a Ph.D. in 1982, a clinical neuropsychology residency in 1983, and a behavioral neurology fellowship in 1984.

What’s kept this Montana native here for three decades?

Tranel cites Iowa’s top-notch neuroscience program and facilities, access to a unique patient population, and a stellar psychology department. Then there’s his lifestyle.

“I live on a farm, and that replicates some of my experiences growing up in Montana,” Tranel said. “I’m two stop lights and 15 minutes between home and work, and that’s not something you find everywhere.”

When he’s not playing flag football, ice hockey, or basketball on the farm with his students, he is riding one of his four horses. On a horse he’s reminded of his younger days in southeastern Montana, where the nearest major hospital and movie theatre were 120 miles away.

Being isolated from big city life forced Tranel to be a self-starter and helped him develop survival skills. He attended high school on a reservation with members of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes, one of a handful of white kids at the school.

Despite being an all-conference football player and class valedictorian, Tranel needed to be a smooth talker around his Native American classmates.

Iowa Patient Registry one-of-a-kind operation

Students in the neuroscience graduate program have access to a key resource to help unlock the mysteries behind a wide variety of common neurological disorders.

One of the aspects that makes this graduate program outstanding is the Iowa Patient Registry, which contains neuropsychological and neuroanatomical data for thousands of patients who visit The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

For example, graduate students Justin Feinstein and Sahib Khalsa, and neurology professors Daniel Tranel and David Rudrauf, discovered a second pathway to feeling your heartbeat after studying a patient who has virtually complete bilateral insula and anterior cingulate cortex brain damage. This person is believed to be one of the only patients in the world with this condition.

The Iowa Patient Registry, which was started in 1982 by former UI head of neurology Antonio Damasio, former UI professor of neurology Hanna Damasio, and Tranel, is unique in many ways.

“It’s difficult not only to put in place, but also to sustain,” said Rudrauf, director of the laboratory of brain imaging and cognitive neuroscience. “There is a unique context here, because we have a great neurology department, and we have a population that is very stable. In many major cities, people don’t stay very long, so it’s hard to get people involved. Here, we can see the same patients for decades.

“It’s quite a unique operation; there’s no equivalent in the country and in Europe. There are other registries that are smaller in scale and far more specialized.”

What else keeps the patients coming back year after year?

“People are very enthusiastic because they want to help with research,” Rudrauf said. “They also want to learn about themselves and what’s happening to them. They know what it’s like to go through a neurological condition. They want to help, so someday this won’t happen to somebody else.”

The registry consists of patients who are representative with the same type of brain damage in the same location and others who have unique conditions that help with case studies. All patients are put through an extensive battery of neuropsychology tests to profile their case and given an MRI before being admitted to the registry.

The Iowa Patient Registry is partially funded by a project grant from the National Institutes of Health.

“I learned a lot of coping skills to avoid physical encounters,” Tranel says. “I learned to talk my way out of situations really effectively. Those are skills you can use the rest of your life.”

He had the grades to get into a good college, but he needed a foreign language, which wasn’t offered at his high school.

That didn’t stop him. Tranel recruited a teacher to teach him Spanish. He ordered his own textbook and took the tests by himself.

“I had to take responsibility for things on my own,” says Tranel, who went on to undergraduate work at

Notre Dame. “That’s shaped where I’m at today. In science, you have to figure it out as you go along. There’s not a lot of training.”

The oldest of 10 children, Tranel has always been eager to teach and share his discoveries. He loves to see students’ eyes light up when they learn something new.

“I’m giving to them my enthusiasm and passion for what I’m doing as a scientist,” Tranel said. “I’m relaying to them my excitement in discovering how the human brain works, the importance of what we do, and the mystery of it all.”

For more about the neuroscience graduate program, visit <http://neuroscience.grad.uiowa.edu>



John C. Keller
Associate Provost for Graduate
Education and Dean of the
Graduate College

Letter from the Dean

Graduate student researchers explore uncharted territory, but they don't do it alone. Faculty mentors help guide their progress. Here's one student's story:

I am in my lab late in the evening, working hard to solve a problem. The emerging data do not match my initial hypothesis, and I am looking for ways to redefine the parameters of my research.

My mentor appears in the doorway, on his way out for the weekend. I seize the opportunity to talk through my situation. As I explain the problem, I follow him down the hall to the elevator. When the elevator arrives, I find that I am nearly holding my breath as I ask, "So what should I do?" At that moment, I am hoping that he is about to offer a simple, easy solution.

He boards the elevator in silence and turns to look at me. As the doors of the elevator close, he says, "Keep working on it. See you next week." The doors thud as they close, and the elevator takes my mentor to the parking lot. Resolution seems out of reach, and I stand there stunned. This is not what I had expected.

I have no choice but to take his advice, so I return to the lab. The reality is this: I must find a new way to look at the problem at hand. There is no shortcut.

Over the course of the weekend, I work on the problem, too driven to go home, too tired to think straight. Somehow, my mentor must know that something will materialize. Finally, I am able to make a breakthrough that leads to a new perspective on my research.

I believe that I am able to find the tenacity to continue with my research because of my mentor. I am lucky to have a mentor who understands how to support my efforts in ways that challenge me to keep working even when it doesn't feel like progress.

This scenario is repeated daily in research labs and scholarly settings the world over. The best mentors give students enough direction to ensure that they do not drift off course, but allow students enough freedom to develop independent research skills. Graduate students learn to navigate unrecognizable territory, and effective mentors provide balanced guidance during the toughest moments.

I hope you've read the stories in this newsletter about our most recent winners of the Graduate College Outstanding Mentor Award. I commend Iowa's graduate faculty for their work as mentors, and I hope that as alumni, you will consider supporting our commitment to mentoring by volunteering your time or contributing to the Graduate College General Fund.

John C. Keller

Associate Provost for Graduate Education
Dean, Graduate College

Faculty mentors foster valuable relationships with graduate students

The mentoring relationship between faculty members and students begins before students enroll and endures long past matriculation. Mentors provide research and academic support, establish a context for productive critique, foster collegiality among students and faculty, and help students connect with the professional world.

You can help support mentoring by:

- **Volunteering your time to help current students.** Alumni working in the field have valuable knowledge of practical skills such as networking, writing, and time management. If you are interested in mentoring a student or could present a seminar, please contact:

Jennifer Masada

319-335-2815 jennifer-masada@uiowa.edu

- **Contribute funds to further mentoring efforts at Iowa.** Any amount will help provide resources to offer best practices seminars to faculty and students. To donate, please visit www.givetoioiowa.org/graduate. You can earmark your gift for graduate mentoring when you check out.
- **To learn more about graduate mentoring best practices:** Margaret F. King's book *On the Right Track: A Manual for Research Mentors* is available from the Council of Graduate Schools at www.cgsnet.org and <http://facstaff.grad.uiowa.edu/dgs/handbook/mentoring/principles-and-good-practices-concerning-research-mentoring>.

War 'humanized' for non-fiction writing students during workshop

Stephanie Griest is a major peace activist, having marched about a dozen times in Washington, D.C., and New York City against the war in Afghanistan.

But she hasn't lost sight of the people who are putting their lives on the line for their country.

Griest, a graduate student in The University of Iowa nonfiction writing program, reached out to war veterans by volunteering at the UI Vets Midwestern Writing Workshop Jan. 15-17 in the UI Distance Learning Site in Iowa City.



Stephanie Griest

The University of Iowa Veterans Center and the UI Division of Continuing Education co-sponsored the workshop for about 40 veterans, ranging in age from 21 to 78. Participants came from all over Iowa, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Omaha among other places.

Griest and fellow nonfiction writing graduate student Jen Percy taught the description class.

"(The workshop) humanized our side of the war a great deal more, which was important for me as an

activist," said Griest, whose father was in the navy for 30 years. "One of the healthiest things that can be done for veterans is to get them talking and get them writing, as writing can be such a powerful, cleansing force."

Emma Rainey, who co-facilitated the workshop with John Mikelson, veteran's advisor with the UI Veterans Center, thought it would be a sorrowful weekend, but instead it was uplifting.

The veterans were active members of the classes, volunteering to read selected excerpts from other authors' work as well as their own original writing. The 10 nonfiction writing students remained on hand to assist during the entire weekend, despite being slotted for only a few hours.

"(The students) are the best writers on earth. I know they are from having been in workshops with them the last three years," said Rainey, a 2009 graduate of the UI nonfiction writing program. "They're dedicated,



Jen Percy, a graduate student in the non-fiction writing program, teaches a description class at the UI Vets Midwestern Writing Workshop Jan. 15-17 in the UI Distance Learning Site.

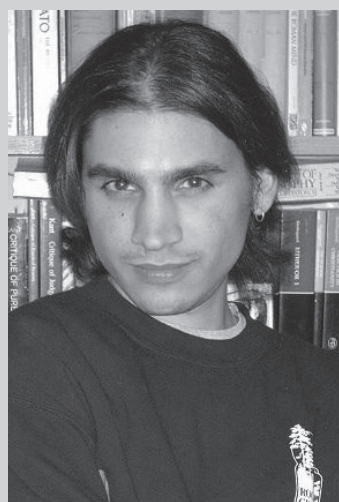
and I knew that dedication would translate into offering tools to those who don't know what the tools are—dialogue, point of view, style, senses, character description."

Actually, the graduate students were impressed by the skills the veterans brought to the workshop.

"The works I read were deeply moving, intelligent, and self-aware. There was a great deal of talent in that room," Percy said. "A lot of the veterans I spoke with had stories that they had kept buried for years. This was a rare opportunity for them to share. It was our job to create a safe space for them to tell their stories."

Grad College funding opportunities benefited former UI doctoral student

"I benefited greatly from the Graduate College's Division of Sponsored Programs. The graduate studies research assistants can help you find funding opportunities in addition to helping you write and revise the applications. They can even do the printing, copying, and mailing of your applications. On top of all that, if you get a nationally competitive fellowship, you may even be eligible for additional money from the Graduate College. While they can't help you with internal, University of Iowa funding opportunities, just taking advantage of their help with external funding will give you useful skills to apply to any funding opportunity. Alternately, you can just set up a reading group with other graduate students in your discipline and edit each others' applications."



Aaron Sachs is an assistant professor of media, technologies, and culture at Saint Mary's College in Moraga, Calif.

He was a doctoral student in communication studies at The University of Iowa, and a recipient of a Ballard and Seashore Fellowship.

Sachs received his Ph.D. in 2009 and his dissertation title was "The Hip-Hopsplottation Film Cycle: Representing, Articulating, and Appropriating Hip-Hop Culture."

Urban and regional planning students lend helping hands with C.R. flood relief

Molly Fleming has lent a helping hand in flood relief efforts in New Orleans and Cedar Rapids and thinks these two cities are experiencing many of the same struggles.

"They are long-lasting, deep-rooted communities of working-class people," said Fleming, a graduate student in The University of Iowa's urban and regional planning program. "Those are the communities in both of those cities that have been utterly wiped off the map. Those are the people who have been displaced."

"That's what affects me the most when you go to those places. Those are the people who don't have the means necessary to rebuild."

Fleming and her 10 fellow students in Professor Jerry Anthony's housing policy class spent two Saturdays last October helping clean up the yards of two flooded houses in the Time Check Neighborhood in Cedar Rapids.

The students removed branches, shingles, and siding, and mowed the lawns.

"The focus of this trip was to help students understand the extent of the flood damage and the impact it has had on families," Anthony said.



(Left picture)

The following urban and regional planning students and faculty member helped with flood recovery efforts in Cedar Rapids last fall: (front) Ashley McDonald, Melissa Atalig, Ashley Bross and Meembo Changula; (back) Professor Jerry Anthony, Karl Burhop and Robert Laroco.



(Bottom picture)

(From left) Melissa Atalig, Ashley Bross, Ashley McDonald and Meembo Changula remove debris from one house's yard.

The graduate students saw the citizens' plights first-hand.

"I saw a lot of hopelessness in that neighborhood," Meembo Changula said. "People had written comments on some houses saying, 'I used to live in this neighborhood.' There was such a sense of loss I felt for the former residents of that place."

But those comments don't represent the feelings of all citizens.

"The people I spoke with are incredibly hard working. They've embraced this idea of putting their heads down and grinding through the work until things are better," Robert Laroco said. "They are fully aware of all the barriers lying in front of them. They are excellent at being optimistic."

Anthony assigned the students to write critical analyses of the recovery efforts in New Orleans and Cedar Rapids to see if there were any lessons to be learned from recovery efforts in New Orleans that could be used to help rebuild Cedar Rapids.

Former SROP student using people skills

The people side of life always has been important to Kevin Shroth.

From growing up in a racially diverse middle class neighborhood of south Chicago to continuing his academic career as a Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) scholar at The University of Iowa, Shroth has had no problem building friendships.

Shroth, a UI alumnus of Native American ancestry, now is using his interpersonal skills as a faculty member in communications at Ivy Tech Community College in Lafayette, IN, where he began teaching this semester.

"It's enjoyable for me to sit down and read a piece of work that a student has worked on, and tell them what they need to do to get better," said Shroth, who earned his Ph.D. in communication studies in May 2009. He also received his undergraduate and master's degrees at the UI as well.

"It's an intellectual exercise for me in terms of how can I identify what went wrong and what went right and explain it to them in a way that they'll understand."

Shroth was awarded a presidential fellowship by the Graduate College, and was a participant in the SROP program in 1997 and 1998.

The SROP program provides promising underrepresented undergraduate students with in-depth research experiences while working with a faculty member. The program is administered by the Graduate College's Office of Graduate Ethnic Inclusion (OGEI).

"(The OGEI staff) helped create a warm and inviting environment," Shroth said. "The people side of any business is really important. They are always very helpful. They went out of their way to help get funding for an undergraduate to present at a conference. Typically there is no funding for an undergraduate to present at a conference, especially in the humanities."

Shroth's mother is Native American and a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations in South Dakota.

Shroth was raised by his mother in Chicago and earned a scholarship to attend The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, which had a diverse student population representing such countries as Pakistan, India, and Japan during his time at the school.

MAC encourages men to become part of solution in violence awareness

The majority of men are not violent. However, too many are silent.

The focus of the Men's Anti-Violence Council (MAC)—a volunteer program of the Women's Resource & Action Center (WRAC) at The University of Iowa—is to get the silent majority to spring into action as part of the solution in raising awareness about preventing violence, especially male perpetrated intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking against women.

Currently, there are 15 members of the council, including five graduate students. Jerrod Koon, a doctoral degree candidate in counseling psychology in the UI College of Education, is the MAC coordinator.

“We send a message that men care about these issues and can be helpful. Historically, men haven't been engaged about these issues and if they were, it was as potential perpetrators,” Koon said. “We engage men because they can be active bystanders and part of the solution. We need more men to step up and get involved.”

MAC members encourage men to make a choice other than silence and to ignore the belief that it's “none of my business.”

There are numerous ways to get involved. It can be by expressing disapproval or questioning the meaning of a comment or joke or expressing concern if you feel that someone's safety or well-being is in danger. The point is that bystanders have a choice. They can choose to remain silent or to be helpful.

“I don't see intervening as an act of kindness. I see it as my (and any person's) responsibility to step in and correct an injustice or prevent an assault,” said Patrick Dolan, a UI lecturer in rhetoric. “When a man intervenes to say that a joke is inappropriate or that some hostile action toward a woman isn't right, he is sending a very strong message that our community has values and ways of acting that don't allow men



Once not knowing what to do when women encountered violence, Jerrod Koon is now educating men by serving as coordinator of the Men's Anti-Violence Council (MAC). Photo by Tim Schoon.

to mistreat women.”

MAC provides resources, training, and workshops for the campus and community, encouraging men to send a message about what is acceptable in the community.

“We have wonderful men in our community who lead incredibly healthy and fulfilling lives. However, it is the unhealthy messages that often get the most attention,” said Koon.

One workshop teaches bystander intervention skills, applying them to scenarios and providing options about how to intervene when something is inappropriate.

These skills are particularly meaningful to Koon.

“Too many women in my life have survived violence and sexual assault. Too many to ignore or dismiss. However, I never knew how to be helpful,” Koon said. “I never knew what to say, I never knew what to do, and I never knew how to help. I always felt helpless.”

Koon ultimately got tired of not knowing what to do and volunteered with the Women's Resource and

Action Center. His volunteer efforts turned into a job at the center in May 2008.

WRAC used grant funds earmarked for violence prevention to hire Koon to help form what would eventually become the Men's Anti-Violence Council.

Another MAC workshop covers topics regarding masculinity and the importance of positive mentors in the lives of young men inside and outside the classroom.

“Men need to educate themselves about the things that prevent women from being welcomed in spaces formerly reserved for men,” Dolan said. “That happens in classrooms and the media, but it also happens when a father talks to his son, an older brother to a younger brother, a friend to a friend, or a mentor to a young man. The direct interventions will take a long time, but each one makes things a little better.”

As of last semester, the Men's Anti-Violence Council has provided workshops and presentations for over 1,000 students, staff, and community members.

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