

# GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

## Graduate Student Association

### University of Alabama at Birmingham



Helen Liu, Erin McCoy, and Angelina Orozco from the Pathology Department were among the graduate students who participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Read more about their experience on page 5.

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The UAB English Resource Center is the place to go for free advice from tutors on your papers, proposals, applications or reports. Find out more on page 7.

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The GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER is published in electronic format every two months and distributed to all 5,000+ UAB graduate students via email. Articles submitted by UAB graduate students will be given priority for publication, however UAB faculty and staff are also welcome to write. The submission deadlines are on the 30th of July, September, November, January, March, and May. To submit an article, e-mail [gsn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:gsn.editor@gmail.com).

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## Calendar of Events for Graduate Students

*Thursday, January 8, 2009*  
Dissertation Defense for  
Luqin Deng (Cell Biology)

*Monday, January 19, 2009*  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

*Friday, January 23, 2009*  
Dissertation Defense for  
Yi Tang (Pathology)

*Friday, January 30, 2009*  
Abstract Deadline for  
Graduate Student Research Days

Deadline for Graduate Student's  
Application for Degree for May Commencement

*Friday, February 6, 2009*  
Industry Roundtable's  
Science Career Awareness Workshop

*Friday, February 13, 2009*  
Dissertation Defense for  
Marcienne M. Wright (BMG)

*Sunday, February 15, 2009*  
Aura Literary Arts Review Submission Deadline

*Wednesday, February 18, 2009*  
Dissertation Defense for  
Jillian Wohler (Microbiology)

*Wednesday, February 25, 2009*  
Graduate Student Research Days  
Competition for Master's Students

*Thursday, February 26 & Friday, February 27, 2009*  
Graduate Student Research Days  
Competition for Doctoral Students

*Sunday, March 8 - Saturday, March 14, 2009*  
Spring Break

## GSA NEWSLETTER

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Bethany Carr

**Copy Editor**  
Jessica Perez

**Guest Writer**  
Brett Pickett

**Guest Photographer**  
Erin McCoy

**Advisor**  
Amy Kilpatrick

Email: [gsn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:gsn.editor@gmail.com)

Graduate Student Association  
<http://www.uab.edu/gsa>

President:

Mick Edmonds  
Pathology  
[edmonds1@uab.edu](mailto:edmonds1@uab.edu)

Vice-President:

Marci Smith  
Behavioral Neuroscience  
[mercury1@uab.edu](mailto:mercury1@uab.edu)

Treasurer:

Jeff Bolland  
Microbiology  
[jbolland@uab.edu](mailto:jbolland@uab.edu)

Secretary:

Rebecca Rudicell  
Microbiology  
[rudicell@uab.edu](mailto:rudicell@uab.edu)

Travel Grants Officer:

Rachel Gill  
Cell Biology  
[travelgrants@hotmail.com](mailto:travelgrants@hotmail.com)

Newsletter Editor:

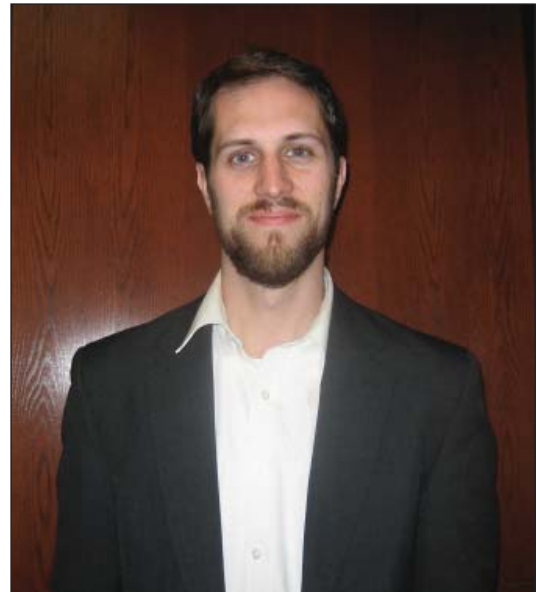
Bethany Carr  
English  
[gsn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:gsn.editor@gmail.com)

The GSA Newsletter is the Graduate Student Association Newsletter of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Signed columns and letters reflect the opinion of the writer and serve as expressions of fact and opinion to GSA Newsletter readers.

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# Graduate Involvement: Student Organizations

## A Message from the GSA President



*GSA President Mick D. Edmonds*

Dear Colleagues and Fellow Graduate Students,

Happy New Year! We are nearly a third of the way through the academic school year and five months into the 2008-09 GSA Senate. I know many of you are new to UAB, and I would like to welcome you to a community of 5,000+ graduate students in various studies ranging from the biomedical sciences to art history. Every student in graduate school is a member of the GSA and this most likely leads many of you to now ask, "What does the GSA do?" In one sentence, **the GSA is a professional organization that promotes graduate student development by offering leadership opportunities and providing travel grants for academic meetings.** This has been my vision/purpose for our organization for the last year and a half as GSA president.

This summer, I presented my goals for the year to the GSA Senate and by these goals my leadership will be judged. I'd encourage you, if interested, to visit the GSA website and view these goals in the August 2008 Senate minutes. In brief, but not in entirety, here are some of these goals:

- Find sponsors for GSN (already achieved!)
- Increase the amount and number of travel grants offered (already achieved!)
- Gain access for graduate students to the UAB student dental health program
- Develop a mentoring program for students in downtown Birmingham public school system
- Host fundraising career day
- Collaborate with regional banks to develop a mortgage plan specifically for graduate students

Again, I'd like to point out that this is not the entire list, and as it is the number of things to achieve is great. However, with the increase in Senate membership, my attitude of "do one thing" allows the GSA to take on big projects that won't overwhelm individual graduate students. As I tell our Senators, the purpose in serving in the Senate isn't to just be there, but to do one thing. If you show up to a job/post-doc interview, and the potential employer sees that you were a Senator, they will likely ask, "What did you do?" If your answer is a blank face and "I attended the monthly meeting," you're most likely not going to get the job – employers aren't really seeking someone who just shows up and doesn't do anything. So, what our Senators do is call companies like Books-A-Million and get at least a \$100 donation for one of our fundraisers. Then if asked, "What did you do?" they can respond adequately, because they did something.

If one of the items on the list above interests you, please get in touch with our GSA Secretary to find out how to become a Senator. It's been my pleasure to work with many of your colleagues in the Senate, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to represent you as President.

*Mick D. Edmonds*  
*GSA President*

# Graduate Involvement: Student Organizations

## Graduate Student Association Committees

Any graduate student is welcome to participate in the Graduate Student Association Committees. And if you don't already qualify to apply for the GSA travel grants, activity in a committee will meet the application qualification standards. Descriptions of these GSA committees and contact information are listed below or you may contact GSA Vice President Marci Smith at [mercury1@uab.edu](mailto:mercury1@uab.edu).

• **Activities Committee** – responsible for planning and carrying out GSA sponsored activities and community service events. Next meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 1 p.m. at Lucy's Coffee. Chair: Philip Bucolo ([apbucolo@gmail.com](mailto:apbucolo@gmail.com))

• **Graduate Relations Committee** – responsible for recruiting new GSA Senators and informing new Senators of their duties. Chair: Gwendolyn Hudson ([gnhudson@uab.edu](mailto:gnhudson@uab.edu))

• **Student Health Care Committee** – responsible for reviewing student health coverage and campaigning to improve student coverage and health care. Chair: Grace Walton ([gwalton@uab.edu](mailto:gwalton@uab.edu))

• **Budget Committee** – responsible for planning and carrying out GSA fundraisers as

well as reviewing the GSA budget. Next meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 11 a.m. at KAUL 737. Chair: Jeffrey Bolland ([jbolland@uab.edu](mailto:jbolland@uab.edu))

• **Constitution Committee** – responsible for reviewing and revising the GSA constitution. Only active during the spring. Next meeting: Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 5 p.m. Chair: Amanda Plain ([playette@uab.edu](mailto:playette@uab.edu))

• **Orientation Committee** – responsible for planning and carrying out GSA Fall Orientation. Primarily only active during the summer. Chair: Marci Smith ([mercury1@uab.edu](mailto:mercury1@uab.edu))

• **Election Committee** – responsible for finding candidates for GSA Officers, distributing the candidate bios, and running the voting process. Only active during the spring. Temporary contact, President Mick Edmonds ([edmonds1@uab.edu](mailto:edmonds1@uab.edu))

GSA also plans on creating the following committees:

• **Career Day Committee** – responsible for planning and carrying out a Career Day fundraiser. Temporary contact, President Mick Edmonds ([edmonds1@uab.edu](mailto:edmonds1@uab.edu))

• **Graduate Student Newsletter Committee** – responsible for developing story ideas and soliciting advertising for the newsletter. Chair: Bethany Carr ([bmcarr@uab.edu](mailto:bmcarr@uab.edu))

Although only Senators can vote, all graduate students are invited to attend GSA's monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 5 p.m. in BMR2 Room 101. ■

## Want to see your Literary or Visual Arts in print?

UAB's Aura Literary Arts Review is seeking submissions for its Spring 2009 issue. Aura is looking for quality *poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and visual artwork* from UAB students, faculty and staff, and Birmingham artists. Please, no previously published work. Deadline for emailed submissions to [uabaura@yahoo.com](mailto:uabaura@yahoo.com) is Sunday, February 15, 2009.

## Graduate Life: Social & Service

### Graduate Students Support Their Community

GSA encourages graduate students to stay involved with social and service activities with their peers.

One of the recent events that GSA participated in was the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in October, where UAB graduate students represented over 100 race participants and donors. These graduate students' participation helped raise money to fight breast cancer.

Erin McCoy, a GSA Senator, was the team captain for the Pathology Department graduate students. The group had 28 members and raised over \$600, earning them UAB's third place in number of members and also third place for amount of money raised from UAB.

McCoy comments on how rewarding the experience was saying, "It was neat to get other people involved and watch online as our contributions increased, and then during the actual race it was just amazing to see the number of people who were willing to donate their time and money to support such a cause."

She also encourages other graduate students to "participate in this event in the future,



Post-docs Doug Hurst (left) and Kedar Vaidya (right) show their support during the GSA Amendment 1 Rally.



Graduate Students in the Pathology Department were among those who formed teams to raise money and participate in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure.

as well as choose from a variety of other 'races' for different charities/organizations available, because, as the current/future generation, we have a strong influence on the direction that research is heading. In a sense, we are protecting our loved ones and our own future health. During the race, we were able to interact with a few survivors and it really meant a lot to them."

If you would still like to donate, please visit <http://komentcalabama.org>.

Other recent GSA events include the Sloss Furnace Fright Night with 18 graduate students gathering for the GSA sponsored discounted event, and Into the Streets Service Day brought graduate students together with others at UAB to volunteer around the city. GSA also hosted an Amendment 1 rally with free pizza and "Vote Yes" T-shirts a few days before the election. In a short time, all the shirts were given out along with information fliers and pizza as more than 100 students gathered to discuss the amendment.

Stay tuned for future GSA events, including an opportunity to volunteer with Community Kitchen and a casino night.

For more information on these or other GSA activities, contact Activities Committee Chairman Philip Bucolo at [apbucolo@gmail.com](mailto:apbucolo@gmail.com). ■

# Graduate Education: Career Development

## Industry Roundtable

by Brett Pickett

### Career Development Workshop (GRD 710)

On Friday and Saturday, April 17-18, 2009, UAB's Industry Roundtable will be hosting the annual Career Development Workshop. This 1 credit hour workshop (GRD 710) will begin at 3 p.m. on the afternoon of April 17 with a keynote presentation followed by a reception to give students and post-docs the opportunity to network and meet each other as well as the speakers. The workshop will continue the following morning with 10 presenters from various disciplines and fields such as researchers and scientists in government, non-profit organizations, pharmaceutical companies, and funding agencies from around the country. The attendees will have various opportunities throughout the day to network with the speakers, including during lunch.

The purpose of Career Day is to help both graduate students and post-doctoral fellows learn about the diverse career opportunities that exist – not only in classical academic positions but outside of the university setting as well. It is our hope that after participating in this two-day Career Development Workshop, attendees will feel better prepared to represent UAB in the diverse careers available in the scientific field and have a better idea of what career will best fit their interests.

Last year's workshop was extremely successful. We had speakers from NIH, FDA, Northrop-Grumman IT, Brookwood Pharmaceuticals, King and Spalding law firm, Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, UAB CORD, and others. Many of the students and fellows that attended were surprised by the vast opportunities that are available upon graduating from a

respectable institution like UAB. We expect that this year's workshop will exceed last year's by allowing more students to register and a greater diversity in speakers.

### Science Career Awareness Workshop

In order to help undergraduate students to prepare and plan for future degrees and/or careers in science, UAB's Industry Roundtable is planning the first annual Science Career Awareness Workshop on Feb. 6, 2009 (venue not finalized). This event will consist of a mid-day seminar with lunch from 12-12:30 p.m. provided for all those in attendance.

The presentation portion of the workshop will take place from 12:30-3 p.m. Speakers, who have knowledge or firsthand experience of the variety of careers available in their fields, have been invited from various departments around campus including Chemistry, Biomedical Research, Physics, Engineering, Biology, Forensics, etc. We have asked that they discuss the variety of jobs available in their fields and how the students can work toward those jobs. Each 15-minute speaker presentation will be interactive and discussion-oriented and will be followed by 5 minutes for questions.

### Committee Meetings

Committee meetings currently take place on the first Wednesday of every month. While no vacancies currently exist, we encourage any student to contact the Industry Roundtable co-chairs if a specific field or speaker would be of particular interest. We can then attempt to contact someone from the field (or the particular person) and subsequently schedule a date for them to come to UAB and present a seminar. Chairs include Brandon Hatcher ([bhatcher@uab.edu](mailto:bhatcher@uab.edu)), Justin Barnes ([barnesja@uab.edu](mailto:barnesja@uab.edu)), and Eneida Owens ([eneidao@uab.edu](mailto:eneidao@uab.edu)).

— Brett Pickett is a graduate student  
in the Department of Microbiology. ■

# Graduate Education: Papers, Proposals & Reports

## English Resource Center



*Tutoring services at UAB's English Resource Center are free for any UAB student. Tutors assist with any writing task, including papers, proposals, applications, and reports.*

- abstracts,
- annotated bibliographies,
- memos,
- proposals,
- resumes,
- letters of application,
- documented essays, and
- business and technical reports.

If you are looking for a free resource to help improve your writing, the English Resource Center offers free tutorial assistance to any UAB student. Whether you are looking for help with reading proficiency or need aid for a writing task of any kind, the ERC provides tutors for all student levels and tasks. The ERC also provides free handouts on all aspects of writing along with the use of computers with word processing programs and Internet access for student use anytime the office is open.

“Soon we will be adding online resources such as online tutoring and scheduling,” said Dr. Tracey Baker, Director of English Resource Center and Associate Professor of English. Long-term plans also include moving the ERC into the Sterne Library renovation to become a part of the University Writing Center.

According to the ERC website, students can schedule tutorials during any part of their writing assignments:

- talking out ideas,
- discussing a thesis,
- looking at a draft for development and organization,
- considering revisions, and
- focusing on grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.

The website also notes that typical writing assignments that tutors see include the following:

- expository paragraphs and essays,
- literary criticism,

One note is that the ERC does not provide proofreading services. Although tutors are eager to help students recognize and address their problems, they are not allowed to change or edit papers.

ERC is usually open four to six days a week including some evenings, and appointments are also available. Please stop by the ERC in Room 224 of the Humanities Building located at 900 13th Street South or call (205) 934-8118 to confirm current hours or make an appointment. About a week into each semester after the schedule is finalized, students can also access the current term's schedule on [www.uab.edu/English](http://www.uab.edu/English). ■

# Graduate Education: Research & Presentation

## Graduate Student Research Days

Every UAB graduate student has the potential to have their hard work recognized by presenting their research at the upcoming Graduate Student Research Days. GSRD is judged by faculty members and the event is sponsored by the [UAB Graduate School](#); [Sigma Xi](#), [The Scientific Research Society](#); and the [UAB Graduate Student Association](#).

To compete, an electronic abstract form must be submitted online and abstracts from eligible UAB graduate students are accepted on a first-come/first-served basis. Refer to the timeline for important deadline dates.

For more information, please visit the website at [www.uab.edu/graduate/researchday](http://www.uab.edu/graduate/researchday) or contact Kellie Carter at (205) 975-8724 or [GradResearchDay@uab.edu](mailto:GradResearchDay@uab.edu). ■

### GSA NEWSLETTER

### Wants You!

We strive to provide a forum for graduate students to voice their opinions and are always on the lookout for articles, stories, updates, notable mentions, pictures or artwork that will be of interest to our readership.

Interested in contributing?

Please email us at:

[gsn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:gsn.editor@gmail.com)

According to the website, the following is the schedule for the 2009 Graduate Student Research Days competition:

#### GSRD 2009

**January 30, 2009, 12:00 Noon**  
Deadline for Abstract submission.  
(See competition rules for eligibility requirements.)

**February 18, 2009**  
**Master's presentations** due in the Graduate School offices, HUC 511, no later than 7:00 p.m.

**February 19, 2009**  
**Doctoral presentations** for those presenting on *February 26* due in the Graduate School offices, HUC 511, no later than 7:00 p.m.

**February 20, 2009**  
**Doctoral presentations** for those presenting on *February 27* due in the Graduate School offices, HUC 511, no later than 7:00 p.m.

**February 25, 2009**  
Graduate Student Research Days Competition for **Master's students** in the HUC Great Hall

**February 26 & 27, 2009**  
Graduate Student Research Days Competition for **Doctoral students** in the HUC Great Hall

**March 6, 2009**  
Awards Luncheon – 12:00 Noon to 1:00 p.m.  
in the HUC Great Hall

## Graduate Student Notable Mentions

Congratulations are in order for Martinique Perkins, who was awarded a two-year pre-doctoral fellowship, specifically the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research. She is currently a fourth year Ph.D. student in the Lifespan Developmental Psychology program. The fellowship training will allow Martinique to continue to develop her research proficiency, establish collaborative relationships across UAB, and expand her knowledge base in the field of gerontology. The training component will be primarily led by her mentor, Dr. David Roth from the Department of Biostatistics, with additional faculty forming her interdisciplinary mentoring team. The research component will allow Martinique to conduct her dissertation



*Martinique Perkins*

research by examining the relationships between strain experienced by informal family caregivers, physical health, and risk for all-cause mortality.

To submit an announcement of a notable recognition or event, please email [gsn.editor@gmail.com](mailto:gsn.editor@gmail.com). ■

## SNAP i.d. Protein Detection System

Superior blots with less bench time!



Millipore has just launched the SNAP i.d. system, an inexpensive Vacuum manifold to process a western blot in less than 30 minutes. The SNAP i.d. Protein Detection System utilizes vacuum to generate superior Western blots in a shorter period of time than traditional methods. Unlike conventional Western blotting, where diffusion is the primary means of reagent transport, the SNAP i.d. system applies a vacuum to actively drive reagents through the membrane. This allows you to minimize overblocking by using lower concentrations of blocking reagents; wash steps are also more effective at removing unwanted particles from the membrane. With the resulting low background, you can get incredibly sensitive detection without worrying about signal-to-noise ratios. And your immunodetection time (blocking, antibody incubations, and wash steps) will drop from 4 hours to only 30 minutes!

### **Advantages**

- Reduces immunodetection time from 4 hours to 30 minutes.
- Vacuum actively drives reagents through blotting membrane.
- Compatible with standard gel sizes and protocols.
- Process up to 6 blots simultaneously.

For more information contact your local Millipore Account Manager Robert Bunzel at 865-851-2137 or [robert\\_bunzel@millipore.com](mailto:robert_bunzel@millipore.com)