South Central & Midwest Conference
University of Missouri
April 22 – April 24
Columbia, MO

2016 Regional Conferences

West
Colorado School of the Mines
April 8-10, 2016

South Central
University of Missouri
April 22-24, 2016

Midwest

Northeast
Stony Brook University
April 15-17, 2016

Southeast
University of Central Florida
April 1-3, 2016

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS
SC & MW Conference Welcome

Dear graduate-professional student leader,

The 2016 NAGPS Board of Directors would like to welcome you to this year’s South Central and Midwest Regional conferences hosted at the University of Missouri. Our regional conferences are truly exciting events, inspiring ideas and energy throughout each region. Jacqueline Gamboa and her team have done a fantastic job organizing the conference this year, and we hope you’ll enjoy the event!

NAGPS’s theme this year is “Expanding Horizons” and we have been doing some amazing things. In March, we held the biggest Legislative Action Days (LAD) in years, along with hosting our inaugural NAGPS Gala fundraiser. We have great projects we’re working on from our Legislative Concerns Committee (LCC) and the Advocacy Board and our regions are stronger than ever.

We also observed Graduate Professional Student Appreciation Week April 3rd - 9th where our members hoed events on their respective campuses that highlighted some aspect of graduate-professional student life. The highlight of the week was our GradsHaveDebt2 National Call Congress Day on Wednesday April 6th.

This coming summer and fall we will also be launching the NAGPS Institute, President’s Council, and Alumni Association, and a member recognition program.

This year is also NAGPS’s 30th, diamond, anniversary and we hope you will be in attendance at our 30th Annual National Conference to be hosted by the Graduate Student Government at Stony Brook University (SBU) in beautiful Long Island, New York. The dates for the conference will are November 3rd - 6th. This will be the largest, most impressive, National Conference we’ve ever held. Begin thinking early about abstracts you wish to submit, and begin requesting funding from your University.

As always, we always welcome your feedback on how we’re doing. In addition, if you are interested in volunteering for a committee, or in some other regard, please feel free to reach out to any of us for more details! Again, welcome to the Northeast Regional Conference!

In service,

NAGPS Board of Directors

Kristofferson Culver
Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the University of Missouri, our host for the 2016 NAGPS South Central and Midwest Regional Conference! As you know, this is a priceless opportunity for all of us to get together and exchange information and best practices, while building and strengthening our networks. This is a working conference, and our success is dependent upon all of us making our own contributions, whether in sharing best practices, past pitfalls, or brilliant new ideas spurred by ongoing conversations of those dedicated to service.

Graduate and professional students are the nation’s future intellectual, business, and political leaders. Yet we face an increasingly uncertain future: increased competition over smaller pools of money for research and development, increased student loan debt, and increased political gridlock leaving Washington unable to address the critical problems of our time. Organizations such as NAGPS serve an increasingly important role in helping us as graduate and professional students learn the skills necessary to become effective national leaders, with advocacy training at the federal level - but also by helping us become more effective leaders in student government at our home institutions. This mission is a major reason that I volunteer my time and service to the organization.

As part of this mission, the theme of this year's regional conference is Advocacy 101. Given an uncertain future, it becomes more and more important to develop our skills as leaders and advocates that will be effective in many facets of our academic, professional, and personal lives. Advocacy skills are also at the foundation of our respective organizations and will help to sustain and grow them in a way that they are able to adapt to a changing environment, while improving school culture, and being effective vehicles for campus and political advocacy.

As the South Central and Midwest Regional Chairs for NAGPS, our primary responsibilities are recruitment and retention of members within the region and assisting in the organization of the regional conference. We are fortunate and thankful to be working with many individuals who made planning this conference easier. In particular, I would like to extend a special thank you to the Graduate and Professional Student Council (GPC) and campus administration at the University of Missouri, who were instrumental in organizing and executing conference logistics. We would also like to thank Regional Board members, as well as our fellow Regional Chairs, for their support and assistance.

I look forward to meeting more of you this weekend, and hope you enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Gamboa     Brandon Creagan
South Central  Regional Chair    Midwest Regional Chair
Cell: (915) 783-7353
FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

NAVIGATING THE CAMPUS
Friday, April 22

4:30 PM  Registration  
*Traditions Lounge*
MU Student Center  
Columbia, MO 65211

5:00 PM  Reception  
*Traditions Lounge*
MU Student Center  
Columbia, MO 65211

Saturday, April 23

Conference location:  
MU Student Center  
Columbia, MO 65211

Conference Contact:  
Jacqueline Gamboa  
(915) 783 - 7353  
scrc@nagps.org

8:30 AM  Registration  
*Leadership Auditorium*  
MU Student Center

9:15 AM  Opening Session - Welcome  
*Leadership Auditorium*  
Jacqueline Gamboa, NAGPS South Central Regional Chair  
Brandon Creagan, NAGPS Midwest Regional Chair  
Kristofferson Culmer, NAGPS President & CEO

9:45 AM  Outreach Presentation  
*Leadership Auditorium*  
Dwayne Johnson, NAGPS Director of Outreach

10:15 AM  Lessons from Mizzou: Organizing Graduate and Professional Students  
*Leadership Auditorium*  
Alex Howe, NAGPS Employment Concerns Chair  
Connor Lewis, NAGPS South Central Region Director of Advocacy

10:45 AM  Break

11:00 AM  Keynote Panel: Effective Methods of Student Advocacy at the State and Federal Level  
*Leadership Auditorium*  
Kip Kendrick, (D-45), Missouri State Representative  
David Baker, Assistant Dean Emeritus, MU College of Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension  
Jordan Hoyt, MU Graduate Student, Public Health  
Dina Van Der Zalm, MU Graduate Student, Social Work and Public Health
AGENDA
PROGRAMMING AND NETWORKING

12:00 PM  Introducing and Moving State Legislation Forward: Student Debt Relief Act
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Kip Kendrick, (D-45), Missouri State Representative
Matt McCune, NAGPS SC Director of Legislative Affairs (University of Missouri)

12:30 PM  Lunch
MU Student Center 2205 A & B

1:30 PM  Shaping the NAGPS Institute
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Scout Johnson, NAGPS Vice President, (University of Arkansas)

2:10 PM  Shaping A Solution: Legislative and Regulatory Reforms on Visa Policy
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Jesse Kremenak, Graduate Student (Physics), University of Missouri

2:30 PM  Spoilt Past, Future Tense
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Subho Chakraborty, Graduate Student, SUNY

2:45 PM  Break

3:00 PM  Communications for Graduate and Professional Student Advocacy
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Anahita Zare, Graduate Student (Chemistry), University of Missouri

3:25 PM  Self-advocacy: Leveraging simple daily interactions
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Hallie Thompson, Graduate Professional Council (GPC) President, University of Missouri

3:50 PM  Catalyzing Student Involvement in Advocacy: GradsHaveDebt2
MU Student Center 2205 A & B
Jesse Kremenak, Graduate Student (Physics), University of Missouri

4:20 PM  Closing Remarks
MU Student Center 2205 A & B

6:00 PM  Dinner
Physics Building Rooftop

8:00 PM  Evening Adventures
Downtown Columbia, MO
Sunday, April 24

9:00 AM  The State of Your Union
MU Student Center 2206 B & C
University of Missouri
Western Michigan University
The Ohio State University
University of Arkansas

10:20 AM  Break

10:35 AM  Regional Conference Bids, Election of Regional Officers
MU Student Center 2206 B & C

11:00 AM  Closing Remarks
MU Student Center 2206 B & C

11:15 AM  Regional Board Meetings
MU Student Center 2206 B & C

12:00 PM  Departures
Lessons from Mizzou: Organizing Graduate and Professional Students
10:15 AM
Presenters: Connor Lewis and Alex Howe, NAGPS Employment Concerns Chair
The 2015-2016 surge of grassroots activism at University of Missouri provides a blueprint for graduate and professional students to effectively advocate for both themselves, and for higher education.

This presentation will use insights from community organizing to teach effective strategies and methods to organize and mobilize graduate and professional students. Key themes will include:

1.) Community Organizing 101
2.) Coalition Building
3.) Building and Utilizing Power
4.) Strategies of Organizing (Community vs. Labor)
5.) Movement Democracy and Inclusivity

Although the presentation will focus principally on broadly-defined community organizing, it will include brief notes on labor organizing, pertinent labor law in states in the Midwest and Southcentral regions, and resources for member institutions interested in further information.

Effective Methods of Advocacy at the State and Federal Level
11:00 AM
Panel: Kip Kendrick (D, MO-45), Dave Baker, Dina Van Der Zalm, Jordan Hoyt
This panel will focus on strategies and insights into how graduate-professional students can advocate effectively at the state and federal levels. Our panelists include a member of the Missouri Legislature, a longtime administrator at the University of Missouri with decades of experience in federal advocacy, and two University of Missouri graduate students who have been active in state level advocacy throughout their academic careers.

Shaping the NAGPS Institute
10:45 AM
Presenter: Scout Johnson, NAGPS Vice President
This session is intended to be an interactive discussion focused on the development and launch of the NAGPS Institute. The NAGPS Institute will be an online repository of resources for NAGPS members and graduate-professional students across the country. The resources in the Institute will be wide-ranging, from leadership and professional development, programming, survey data, etc... Participants will give insight in what they want from the Institute and the direction they would like to see it go in the future.

Spoilt Past, Future Tense 2:30 PM
Presenter: Subho Chakraborty, Graduate Student at SUNY
This presentation details the hazing, assault, racial discrimination and confiscation of freedom of speech that I had to endure at the University of Texas, Brownsville (UTB), when I was a Masters student there. I recently published an Amazon Kindle book about this.

The presentation will be as follows - first outline what another grad student of UTB did to me (assault, hazing, sexual harassment) in UTB, then describe how the college adjudicator of judicial affairs, exonerated my assailant, and carried out an act of racial favoritism on me and even violated my right to freedom of speech. How I had to often take emergency medical counseling in UTB, and how I was later diagnosed PTSD. How the Brownsville police Dept. , under very suspicious circumstances, ruined my claim to a U visa. How I then earned an MS from another University in Texas and then went to CUNY for a PhD - how my PTSD recurred since last year in NYC and how I recently decided to bare all, in a small Kindle book. Finally I would like to put in my thoughts about how this disaster could have been prevented, and how an organization like NAGPS could help to mitigate such occurrences, through increased visibility and active support.
Shaping a Solution: Legislative and Regulatory Reforms on Visa Policy
2:10 PM
Jesse Kremenak, MU Graduate Student, Physics
NAGPS is urging the U.S. government to establish a program that would allow international students the opportunity to renew their visas within the U.S., prior to travel, rather than at an office abroad. Why is this needed? Currently, international students must renew their visas at a U.S. Embassy or Consulate office abroad – a process that often takes at least 30 days. Requiring the renewal of academic visas abroad is disrupting scholarship, impeding research, and undermining U.S. interests. Other sectors beyond academia would also benefit from stateside visa processing, including industries with high-skilled international employees. We are pursuing two paths to establish a stateside visa processing program: through federal legislation (with the help of Congressman Sam Graves), and through a change in regulation.

This session will detail background information regarding visa processing, how the proposed solution was shaped, current advocacy efforts and how you can get involved.

Communications for Graduate and Professional Student Advocacy
2:45 PM
Anahita Zare, Graduate Student, University of Missouri
Graduate and professional student advocacy is driven by effective communication of the issues our community faces. Crafting and delivering an eloquent but powerful public message will boost visibility, engagement, or awareness for a cause. Also, methods to develop a targeted online presence can elevate the modern advocate’s message above the normal noise of social media. This talk will investigate methods for effectively crafting communications, such as press releases or op-eds, as well as how to ensure that these communications have a strong online presence.

Catalyzing Student Involvement in Advocacy: GradsHaveDebt2
3:50 PM
Recently, Congress has discussed taxing tuition waivers, changing the student loan program and they are currently working on reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA). However, little public attention has been given to the impact on graduate and professional students while they are targeted to generate profits for the federal government. One example is the current student loan interest inequality that imposes higher interest rates on postgraduate students even though they are the safest borrowing population. The result, 77% of the government’s student loan profits (billions annually) are made off graduate-professional students who are only 13% of the borrowers. The national GradsHaveDebt2 campaign gives voice to graduate and professional students in the ongoing student loan and graduate funding conversations.

Through a partnership between the University of Missouri Graduate Professional Council and NAGPS, the GradsHaveDebt2 campaign is urging Congress to REUNIFY the undergraduate and graduate loan rates and REINSTATE in-school interest subsidies. GradsHaveDebt2 is a catalyst for addressing issues that impact our financial situations and empowers participating students to have their voices heard.

This session will detail background information regarding graduate student loans, the current situation, how GradsHaveDebt2 has been a catalyst for student involvement, and what you can do to advocate for our future.
Interested in being more involved in NAGPS? Why not start with a regional board position? Elections will be held during the regional business meeting for the following positions:

1. Vice-Chair
2. Director of Outreach
3. Director of Legislative Affairs
4. Director of Communications & Administration
5. Employment Concerns Advocate
6. Social Justice Concerns Advocate
7. International Student Concerns Advocate

If you are interested in more information about a position, talk to Jacqueline Gamboa, South Central Regional Chair, or Brandon Creagan, Midwest Regional Chair.

Each year a host school is selected to host the next regional conference. This occurs this weekend, also during our regional business meeting.

NAGPS requests that potential Regional Conference Coordinating Councils (RCCCs) submit a letter of approval from their governing student body to the NAGPS Executive Committee and Regional Chair prior to the bid selection process. This letter shall provide approval of the organization to host the regional conference; this can include approval from your GPSO, Dean, or Administrator, and a named Director of Regional Conference to coordinate planning and volunteers of the regional conference (the Director must be a member of the host organization).

Potential RCCCs shall present their proposal to the membership. Please limit your presentation to no more than 10 minutes and 10 slides. The presentation shall include, but is not limited to Dates of conference (must occur between March 1st and April 31st), location and member organization overview, meeting facilities, accommodations, projected budget, projected expenses for an attending organization, name of the Director of Regional Conference, required assistance from the Association.

Time will be allotted for questions on each proposal. After all regional bid presentations have concluded, there may be a closed discussion followed by a vote of the membership. The majority vote of the regional membership will elect the Regional Conference Coordinating Council.

RCCCs shall secure funding for the conference. It is the responsibility of the host school to lead fundraising efforts. All fundraising and other partners must be submitted to the Board of Directors, which reserves the right to reject any partnership. RCCCs shall adhere to the NAGPS Constitution, Bylaws, and Standard Operating Procedures. All approved written and verbal communications to host the conference are binding.
Jacqueline Gamboa
Chair (SC), University of Missouri

Jacqueline Gamboa Varela is a PhD candidate in Chemistry at the University of Missouri. Her research is focused in studying DNA damage more specifically DNA interstrand cross-links. She obtained her Bachelor’s in chemistry from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Jacqueline is excited to be serving for the first time as the regional chair for the Southcentral region. She is looking forward to connecting with the current member universities and bring to the front the issues currently affecting graduate and professional students in the region.

Prior to serving as the regional chair for the region, Jacqueline served in the Alumni Board for the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She has served in various organizations on campus and is a big advocate for science outreach; she is the host and producer of a science radio show, The Big Electron.

Matt McCune
Director of Legislative Affairs (SC), University of Missouri

Matt is a PhD student in theoretical and computational biophysics and has a B.S. and M.S. in Physics from Northwest Missouri State University and the University of Missouri, respectively. In the past he has served as the GPC Director of State Affairs, GPC At-Large Representative, on GPC’s National Affairs Committee (as the Webmaster for GradsHaveDebt2), as the Public Relations Officer for GSA, and on the UM-System Board of Directors for The Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM).

Connor Lewis
Director of Advocacy (SC), University of Missouri

Connor Lewis is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History. He serves as NAGPS Southcentral Director of Advocacy, and is a member of the National Advocacy Board. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Coalition of Graduate Workers, a union local affiliated to the National Education Association.
Brandon Creagan  

*Chair (MW), The Ohio State University*

Brandon is from Marysville, Ohio and is currently working on his Master Degree in City and Regional Planning from The Ohio State University (OSU). Prior to OSU he spent two years teaching in Nanjing, China at Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology. Additionally he received his BA degree from Muskingum University in New Concord, Ohio.

Aside from NAGPS Mr. Creagan serves on the Council of Graduate Students (CGS) at OSU representing his graduate program. He also serves as a Senator to the University Senate at OSU representing CGS on Rules Committee. Before becoming the Midwest Regional Chair Brandon briefly served as the Midwest Director of Legislative Affairs.
WE ARE THE FUTURE.

WHO WE ARE

We are over 600,000 graduate and professional students standing together to ensure that our nation continues to produce top quality research, creative and artistic works, and invests in American education. We are the backbone of research and teaching at universities across the US, and play a key role in building our nation’s technological innovation and artistic and cultural heritage through scholarship and community engagement. We are America’s future business, political, and intellectual leaders. We are the future.

WHAT WE DO

NAGPS provides three core services to graduate-professional students in the US

ADVOCACY
Coordinated federal and state advocacy on issues that impact students

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
Events, workshops, and publications that designed to empower the next generation of leaders in the US

RESOURCES
Access to benefits and services that help save students money and improve their quality of life

80 +
Universities across the US

600,000 +
graduate-professional students

STAND WITH US
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS