



The GSChronicles

August 2008

Table of Contents

Upcoming Events
Announcements
Graduate Student Spotlight: *Khalisa Herman*
Tip of the Month: *Absentee Voting*
GSC Meeting Overview
Grad Student Entertainment

Upcoming Events

September

- 1 Labor Day
- 5 Overseas Security Training Workshop
- 8 GSC Meeting 5PM
- 11 Felcom Happy Hour 7:30PM, Sapphire Cafe
- 16 CV-Resume Writing Workshop

October

- 12 Columbus Day (*Observed 10/13*)
- 16 Job Fair

November

- 11 Veteran's Day
- 14 Grad Student Research Symposium
- 27 Thanksgiving Day

Announcements

▪ GSC Meeting:

The next GSC meeting will be held on Monday, **September 8th at 5PM** in the Grad Student Lounge, Building 10 Rm 6S235.

▪ GSX Listserv:

The Graduate Student Exchange (GSX) is a social listserv for grad students at NIH. Postings for roommates, items for sale, and social outings are common. It's a great way to connect to the group of grad students. To join the group, visit the GSC webpage for the link.

▪ Upcoming Social Activities:

This fall, the social committee will be hosting hiking events along the Potomac and First Fridays gallery tours in Dupont Circle. Look for emails with more details soon.

▪ GSC "Activity Pass"

Typically, each major event the GSC hosts (including the Halloween Party, Holiday Party, and retreat activities) costs participating students between \$5 and \$15 at the event. As an alternative, the GSC is offering an "activity pass" for interested students to pay a once-a-year

nominal fee of \$20 to attend all of these events throughout that year. The pass will not be required to attend events, but will prove much cheaper than paying for each event separately. *Thank you to the many students who have already purchased GSC Activity Passes!* Contact a co-chair or Stephanie Guzik (guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov) for more information or to purchase a pass.

▪ Pathways:

Pathways is a monthly meeting where career options and development are discussed, usually from the perspective of someone outside of basic research. The next Pathways discussion will concern CV-Resume writing and will be held on September 16th. The Job Fair on campus will be considered a Pathways event and will be on October 16th.

▪ GS3:

The **Graduate Student Seminar Series (GS3)** is a monthly meeting where students present their work to fellow graduate students. These meetings are great practice for talks, conferences, retreats, a dissertation defense, etc. Students meet on the third Thursday of the month at lunchtime with two speakers, who each give 20-minute talks. If you would like to present your research to your fellow grad students, please email Roseanne Zhao (zhaof@mail.nih.gov) to schedule a date.

▪ 5th Annual Graduate Student Symposium:

This year's NIH Graduate Research Symposium will be taking place at the Natcher building on **November 14th**, and will be highlighted by opening remarks by Dr. Story Landis, director of NINDS, and a keynote science talk and discussion with the pioneering German cell biologist Dr. Peter Friedl. All graduate students at the NIH are encouraged to submit an abstract to present a poster or to be considered for a talk during the symposium. There will be 10 travel awards given out to students with outstanding posters, and at least one award will be given for beginning students who present a poster outlining a project proposal and/or methods.

Abstract submission starts on September 2nd and closes on September 22nd, but it's never too early to think about what you want to present at this year's Graduate Research Symposium!

▪ Thesis Talk Committee:

A new GSC committee has been established to coordinate formal, publicized thesis talks on the

NIH campus for graduating students. Gayani Weerasinghe and Khalisa Herman have volunteered for the committee, but more volunteers are needed. Please contact a co-chair (GSCcochair@od.nih.gov) if you're interested in being on the committee or to schedule a talk.

▪ **Biophysics and Structural Biology Group:**
The Biophysics and Structural Biology Graduate Student Interest Group has been meeting bimonthly. The first meeting of the month focuses on learning a new laboratory technique, whereas the second meeting of the month is used to discuss a paper that uses the technique. If you are interested in attending or have any questions, contact Matt Berberich (berberichm@mail.nih.gov).

▪ **SNIG:**
The **Systems Neuroscience Interest Group for Graduate Students** is a group of students interested in systems/ cognitive/ clinical neuroscience. The group meets once a month to discuss the latest topics of systems neuroscience and to listen to a talk from a member of the group. Often these talks are rehearsals for thesis proposals, defenses, conference posters, etc. Sometimes they have someone give a tutorial. An informational email is sent out once a week. From time to time there will be lunches with renowned outside speakers from the NIH Neuroscience series. Please contact Kara Lindstrom (lindstrk@mail.nih.gov) if you would like to join.

▪ **Campus Area Listservs:**
Lunches have continued for grad students on campus. The August lunch had a good turnout. Look out for future emails for planned lunches in your area!



Congratulations to **Jamie Schroeder** on his participation in the Men's Quadruple Sculls event at the Beijing Olympics! His team finished in 5th place in the finals on August 17th. Jamie is a student in the OxCam program.

Happy Birthday to: Molly Bright (Aug 1st), Tina Tang (Aug 2nd), Claire Shaler (Aug 7th), Mulsimah Najee-ullah (Aug 14th), Erica Jones (Aug 14th), Rui Gao (Aug 15th), Elizabeth Mayne (Aug 27th), and Lindsay Hayes (Aug 30th).

Upcoming Birthdays: Tahir Ahmed (Sept 1st), Wes Beckstead (Sept 6th), Thelma Escobar (Sept 14th), Vania Cao (Sept 14th), Steve Mayclin (Sept 19th), Kai-Markus Mueller (Sept 25th), and Athena Klutz (Sept 30th).

Please **send your publications, awards, graduation, and birthday announcements** to Stephanie Guzik (guziks@nhlbi.nih.gov) for recognition. Also send your **requests for nominations** for students to be included in the **Graduate Student Spotlight**.

Graduate Student Spotlight:



Khalisa Herman

Khalisa Herman, a 4th year US individual partnership student, is this month's Spotlight. It's hard to believe that Khalisa, who is originally from the eclectic, laid-back city of Santa Cruz, California, gave up the great weather and breathtaking views for grad school. Her hometown still seems to hold a special place in her heart. When asked to further describe Santa Cruz, she says it is the former murder capital of the nation, home to the Mystery Spot and vegetarian sushi, and unquestionable Ralph Nader territory where you can get a doctor's permit to buy medical marijuana from a vending machine.

With this colorful backdrop to her upbringing, Khalisa developed a deep desire to investigate the world around her. In high school, she realized that a career in science would pay her to pursue her curiosity. Her favorite quote from Goethe provides some insight into the motivations she must have felt during this early period of her scientific path: "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

So it was that Khalisa enrolled in Marlboro College in Vermont, where she chose an interdisciplinary degree in biology and psychology. During this time, she conducted observational research on gorillas, which involved examining the use of gorilla facial expressions during social interactions. This project was quite an interesting experience, with some unusual workplace annoyances. The

most memorable was the time she was videotaping a cranky gorilla. The videotaping apparently upset the gorilla so much, she started throwing cabbages and feces at Khalisa!

In her current graduate work, Khalisa continues to study non-human primates, though she is now in the field of Comparative Psychology. Specifically, she investigates the role of individual differences, such as temperament and genetic markers, in the socioemotional development of rhesus macaques. Her individual partnership agreement is between the University of Maryland at College Park and Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. She works in the Laboratory for Comparative Ethology in the NICHD, under the mentorship of Dr. Stephen J. Suomi.

Khalisa's interest in primates also extends to the GSC, on which she serves as an Individual Partnership representative. She has participated in a number of GSC meetings, and she hopes to get more involved this year, now that she is working on the main campus. She has also volunteered to help with the new Thesis Talk Committee. We can only hope that she will find the grad student community slightly more socioemotionally developed than the monkeys.

Outside of the NIH, she enjoys watching movies, hiking, watercolor painting, and cooking. Among her favorite movies are *La Vie en Rose*, *Pay it Forward*, and *A Beautiful Mind*. Her favorite book is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. While Khalisa loves animals, she has no pets at home. She explains that "the monkeys at work are enough for me!"

If you're looking for someone with interesting lab stories, it seems that Khalisa is the person to talk to! Alternatively, she is full of good advice. Her words of wisdom for current PhD students are, "It's your PhD and nobody else's: the quicker you realize this, the faster you will get done, and the happier you will be during the process." Find her at the next GSC event if you wish to learn more about her research or if you just need some peer motivation!

Tip of the Month: Absentee Voting

With this year's elections coming up, make sure you're prepared to exercise your right to vote! Due to the demands of our scientific training programs, many of us will be absent from the states—or country—where we are registered to vote. If you haven't done it already, register and request your absentee ballot today!

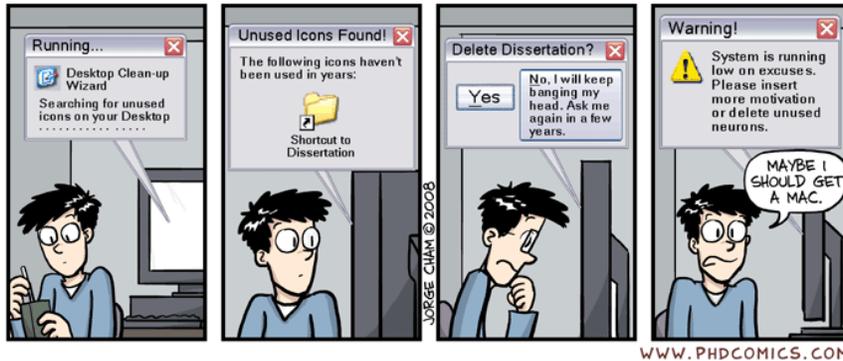
For students who are abroad, websites like <http://www.fvap.gov> and <http://www.votefromabroad.org> offer step-by-step guidance for filling out the form for your absentee ballot request. After completing and printing the form, you simply mail it to your election official (instructions/addresses will be on the website). If you want to vote absentee while in the USA, the procedure is very similar. To make sure you complete the correct form, go to your state government website for absentee voting (do a web search for "absentee voting [your state]").

Finally, pay special attention to the deadlines by which your ballot must be postmarked and received by the election official. To avoid any last-minute rush to request and mail your ballot, send in your form today!

GSC Meeting Overview

- *GPP notes: The Visiting Fellows committee would like grad student representatives.
- *A committee of fellows (including grad students) will help FAES determine what to do with their property in/around campus.
- *GPP intends to host a writing and/or grammar seminar each month of the year, but dates have not yet been set.
- *Use of Battery Lane apartments was discussed between GSC and OITE staff.
- * Retreat Recap conversations were positive. Survey results will be announced at the next GSC meeting.
- *Social Committee: BBQ details for 8/13 were reported. Upcoming events, to include Hikes and First Fridays, are planned.
- *Academic Committee: Class syllabus is being organized; textbook has been chosen.
- *Pathways for 8/14, with discussion of MD/Phd and MPH programs, was announced.
- *Trainee Advisory Committee: Concerns were raised over the enforcement of the GSC Constitution; representatives have missed several meetings. Suggested solutions included a sign-in sheet or adding the representatives to the agenda, so they may give updates on their constituencies.
- *FELCOM happy hour announced for 8/20. September happy hour is scheduled at Sapphire Café on 9/11 at 7:30pm.
- *Symposium Committee: Students may be able to interact with Keynote speaker prior to symposium. Agenda and details will be available in September. Co-chairs will organize awards next month. Registration and abstract submission details will be announced in the next GSChronicles.

Graduate Student Entertainment



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GSC Spotlight, Tip of the Month, Meeting
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GSC Spotlight

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