Grad Student Appreciation Statement Compilation

Nominated by: Julie Latempt-Brazier

Your Dept: THEATER AND DANCE

Students Name:   KEELY HECK

Statement:   Keely is an absolutely stellar graduate assistant.  She is efficient and accurate, goal oriented and driven and I don’t know what we are going to do without her.  She has proven herself to be a valuable asset to the Theater and Dance Department.

Nominated by: Staphanie McAndrews

Your Dept: Teaching and Learning

Students Name: Veeta Jackson

Statement: Veeta is a non-traditional graduate student who came back to SIUE to earn her MSED in Literacy Education in May 2019.  She is a very conscientious teacher and student. She is a risk taker and a collaborative learner.   Any k-12 school would be fortunate to have her as their reading specialist.

Nominated by: Paul Rose

Your Dept: Exercise Physiology

Students Name: Dakota Kamm

Statement: Congrats to Dakota Kamm, who ranked 2nd among master's students for his @TexasACSM research poster titled “Diet and Sex Differences Induce Unique Alterations of Markers for Blood Brain Barrier Integrity in Age-Accelerated Mice”.

Nominated by: Paul Rose

Your Dept: School Psychology

Students Name: Brittany James

Statement: Thank you to Brittany James for serving as a mentor in the @estlnaacp ACT-SO program for high school students.

Nominated by: David Hagedorn

Your Dept: Campus Recreation

Students Name: Kari Kolle

Statement: As a second year graduate assistant, Kari is continuing to grow and demonstrate an unselfish approach to her efforts. She contributes strongly to any task that she is engaged with and truly enjoys being able to help processes and efforts to reach their potential through advanced planning and effective management. Kari has a vision beyond her years and an ability to think beyond herself to what may be best for the good of the organization. I have come to really appreciate how Kari holds herself to a high standard of performance and easily sees the big picture and mission behind each facet of our operation. She knows the value of how each component and aspect of our operation is important and plays a critical role in our total delivery of programs, services and offerings. As a Facilities/Operations GA, Kari really enjoys being able to be a part of so many different aspects of our department, including the staff members in each area. It allows her overall passion for working in university recreation to be fully utilized.  Kari readily and frequently sits on event and program committees and jumps at the chance to be connected to anything new where she may be able to help and learn something. Kari is the kind of professional that we want in our field and that you want on your team.

Nominated by: Nancy Huyck

Your Dept: PAPA

Students Name: Sean Maher

Statement: Sean Maher is a GA for the department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis and works as an intern for the City of Highland. He assists the local city management in a multitude of daily tasks and always displays a positive, superior work ethic. Sean is graduating May 2018. This is Sean speaking at the annual MPA internship luncheon held March 15, 2018 in the MUC.

Nominated by: Min Liu

Your Dept: Applied Communication Studies

Students Name: Ryan Mossor

Statement:  Ryan is an amazing writer; he approaches his scholarship activity, and his interactions with colleagues/students always with integrity and sincerity.  I am inspired by his work and believe in its potential to produce real-world impact.

Nominated by: Chaya Gopalan

Your Dept: Nursing

Students Name: Andrea Fentem

Statement: Andrea is a very focused and organized student. She is very punctual, very capable and an amazing student overall.

Nominated by: Jon Klingensmith

Your Dept: Electrical and Computer Engineering

Students Name: Addison Elliott

Statement: Addison is a dedicated, productive Graduate Student who has made meaningful progress in his research, developing automated segmentation algorithms for cardiac MR and ultrasound images, in just his first year.  Not only that, he is a talented engineer and software developer and is always willing to share his knowledge, input, and skills with other members of the lab. It is a joy to work with Addison and I am excited to see where his career may lead.

Nominated by: Mark Poepsel

Your Dept: Mass Communications

Students Name: Laura Jesse and Madelaine Gerard

Statement: Laura Jesse, who works in University Marketing and Communications and Madelaine Gerard, who also works in University Marketing and Communications presented papers on how mass media newspapers frame Lyme disease (Jesse) and on how the Marvel Cinematic Universe characterizes Black Widow, the lone founding female member of the Avengers (Gerard).

Jesse, who is an Integrative Studies Master's student, is pictured discussing her paper with her fellow panelists.

Gerard, a Mass Communications Master's student, is pictured discussing Marvel films with a graduate student from Texas Tech who also studies films.

Nominated by: Natalie Rosales

Your Dept: Campus Recreation

Students Name: Jacqueline Chavez

Statement:Jacki Chavez is a second year Graduate Assistant for Aquatics in the Department of Campus Recreation. Over the past two years Jacki has been focused on creating student centered aquatic programming for our diverse student population at SIUE. This included implementing a program for Adult swimmers that encouraged under-represented students to participate in a learn to swim program that provided the skills necessary to be comfortable in an aquatic setting and learn swimming skills. Jacki has developed a strong and dynamic aquatic staff of lifeguards and swim instructor student staff that are vibrant and make our patrons and students feel welcomed at the indoor pool.  Jacki has been able to collaborate with multiple campus partners to provide opportunities for our students to be engaged, such as Campus Activities Board with the Dive-In Movie flick which provides Students with families to partake in a movie at the indoor pool. During Greek Week, the Aquatics and Intramural department partner with Fraternity and Sorority Life to provide the battleship event that draws over 200 students to the event. Other opportunities that Jacki has either implemented, developed or created aquatic programs have been focused on providing opportunities for students at SIUE to stay engaged and try something new within the Aquatics Department.

Nominated by: Scott Umbaugh

Your Dept: Electrical and Computer Engineering

Students Name: Gita Pant, Lakshmi Gorantla, Akhila Karlapalem

Statement: These students work as research assistants in support of our Computer Vision and Image Processing laboratory. They are all dedicated, hard-working and exceptional researchers. I know I can count on them to work independently and effectively. In additional to doing assigned tasks, they are able to go above and beyond to generate and pursue their own, often very good, ideas. I am fortunate to have them working in my lab.

Additionally, Gita and Lakshmi are TAs for my 400-level course(s) and the associated imaging labs. Here they also help substantially with the students in their lab work and projects. I have received much positive feedback from the students and know I can rely on their dedication to helping the students.

Nominated by: Laura Pawlow

Your Dept: Psychology

Students Name: Kristen Sleeper

Statement: Kristen is my URCA GA and she is absolutely amazing!  She is bright, hard-working, professional, mature, independent and I couldn't do it without her!  She's a true junior colleague and while I will be so sad to see her graduate this May, I am so excited to see what wonderful things her future holds!

Nominated by: Sorin Nastasia

Department: Applied Communication Studies

Students Name: Zach McGeehon

Statement: Zach is always full of energy and enthusiasm. He is not only an outstanding graduate student and an excellent teaching assistant, but he also never hesitates to help the department with participation in Preview SIUE and other forms of outreach

Nominated by: Dan Segrist

Your Dept: Psychology

Students Name: Kaitlin Henning

Statement: Kaitlin is a first year student in our Clinical master’s program. She is an actively engaged citizen of our program – she never hesitates to give of her time to represent the program or talk to potential applicants to our program. Given the time demands on our graduate students her consistent willingness to help out is not only admirable but also very much appreciated by our program’s faculty!

Nominated by: Lindsay Ross-Stewart

Your dept: Kinesiology

Students Name: Kerry Guest

Statement: Kerry has been an exceptional student while simultaneously working in both education and physical education settings.

Nominated by: Tarsha Moore

Your Dept:Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Students Name: Taylor Johnson

Statement: Over the past year I have had the pleasure of supervising Taylor Johnson and I am very thankful to have her as a graduate assistant in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs! She has worked tremendously to help develop and implement the Sustained Dialogue program pilot, which is a partnership program between academic affairs and student affairs. Taylor's ability to complete various assignments and tasks with minimal supervision really speaks to her passion and commitment for doing this work and I am excited to see the impact that she will make on the field of Student Affairs. She consistently goes above and beyond to holistically develop the students that she interacts with on a daily basis and that has become evident in the relationships she's built during her tenure here!

Nominated by: Kara Shustrin

Your Dept:                      Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Students Name:            Micah Jones

Statement:                     Micah is serving as a graduate practicum student in our office this semester and is helping impact student learning through the conduct process.  While it isn’t the flashiest work, Micah has been quick to understand how important this work is for students who are struggling to make decisions that are consistent with expectations in the Student Code of Conduct.  She is analytical, inquisitive, fair, and thorough in her projects and always offers her thoughts and input.  In addition to serving as our intern, she is also finishing up her first year in the CSPA program and represents SIUE on the women’s basketball team!  We are thrilled to have Micah in our office this spring.

Nominated by: Tyler Manning

Your Dept: Kimmel Student Involvement Center

Students Name: Rachel Dunnning

Statement: Rachel advises with passion and support.  She understands each student is an individual learner and tailors her advising style to support each student’s specific needs.  She can be described as caring and willing to go above and beyond in any role. One student stated that, “Rachel is one of the best advisors that I have had the privilege to work with at SIUE.  She cares about helping me grow as a leader and a woman.  I could not have asked for a better mentor to help me with some of the greatest challenges I have faced.”

Here is an [@TheAlestle](https://twitter.com/TheAlestle) picture of Dr. Ross-Stewart, Jeff Price, Jessica Schnebly, and Kery Guest (current or former research assistants) presenting to the SIU Board of Trustees. Alestle Article:

Nominated by: Sarah Laux

Your Dept: Kimmel Student Involvement Center

Students Name: Melissa Bandy

Statement: Melissa is a great asset to Kimmel & Community Engagement. Her work ethic, sense of humor, and empathy toward others is outstanding. It’s been a joy to work with her these last 2 years!

Nominated by: Sarah Laux

Your Dept: Kimmel Student Involvement Center

Students Name: Quincy Phipps

Statement: Quincy is an incredible role model for our students and is phenomenal at showing others the importance of service to the community. Her positivity and sense of humor are just a few things that make her a wonderful team player. Her creativity is an added bonus!

Nominated by: Sarah Laux

Your Dept: Kimmel Student Involvement Center

Students Name: Alexis Lambert

Statement: Alexis is an up & coming Student Affairs rock star! She’s been an awesome & flexible team player – always looking for the next project to tackle. We’ve loved having her as part of our team.

Nominated by: Cindi Inman

Your Dept: Exercise and Physiology

Student Name: Cody Snyder – graduate teaching assistant

“I think he’s a great student who is ambitious.  He puts in a lot of effort to learn every aspect of exercise physiology.”

Nominated by: Brianne Guilford

Megan Schaller – graduate research assistant.   
Megan is a diligent and hard-working student with an enthusiasm to learn that will surely continue outside the classroom as she advances throughout her professional career. –Josh Wooten  
Megan also has phenomenal technical skills in the laboratory.-Brianne Guilford

Mark Weishaar – graduate teaching assistant  
Mark is an excellent teacher and student. He always has a smile on his face. His upbeat personality and positive attitude is contagious, and I appreciate having him as a student.  
Brianne Guilford

Mike Martino – Mike is an exceptional student, with a genuine hunger to learn and expand his knowledge. His quality of research and thesis writing is near the level of a PhD student. I appreciate is inquisitive questions in the classroom, and enjoy his polite and respectful personality.

Nominated by: Carol Gentry

Your Dept:   Elect & Comp Engr

Students Name:   Steven Slaby

Statement:  Steven is a MSEE student who splits his graduate assistant work teaching an ECE 200-level lab section and assisting the ECE Lab Manager.  As a very hard working and experienced GA, he anticipates departmental needs, not waiting to be told to do a task. Steven take his responsibilities seriously and works well with the other GAs as he is collegial and friendly.  Always willing to tackle whatever we ask him to do, he is invaluable to the department.

Nominated by: Mingshao Zhang

Your Dept: Mechanical Engineering

Students Name: Pengji Duan (graduate student in Electrical and Computer Engineering)

Statement:  
I hired Pengji when I received my first external grant, he has served as the lead researcher in my research team. I am very satisfied with his performance so far.

His main achievement in this research project so far includes:

1.  His work has helped me secured a second phase funding from the sponsor ($26,146.00)

2. His research has appeared on two SIUE news Story.

* "SIUE Researchers Aim to Enhance Telepresence Teaching Robots"
* “Walking Skype”: SIUE Researchers Funded to Advance Telepresence Robot (scheduled to be published next week)

3. On publication at the 2018 IMECE conference (abstract accepted).

Nominated by: Ali Kutan

"Tazin is a very reliable and efficient. She is one of the best graduate assistants I ever had"

Student name: Tazin Hannan

Teaching Assistant

Economics and Finance

Nominated by: Anita Joy

**Department**: Growth, Development and Structure; School of Dental Medicine

**Student's Name**: Hailey Freres

**Statement**: Hailey is a 1st year graduate student pursuing an M.S. in the Biological Sciences. Hailey is a responsible, hard-working, and responsible student. She is a fast learner, asks lots of questions, and always tries her best to function at her highest level. She has performed extremely well in her coursework and is rapidly making progress in her research project as well. I enjoy having Hailey in our lab and look forward to another year with her, before she finishes her project, defends her thesis, and graduates from SIUE!

Nominated by: William Neumann

Dept:  Pharmaceutical Sciences

Student Name:  Stephen Kukielski

Statement:  “Stephen has been an absolutely brilliant and highly productive researcher in my laboratory.  Ove the past year he has synthesized a large number of highly potent drug candidate molecules that may be useful for treating Alzheimer’s disease.  It has been my great pleasure to work with Stephen and I am absolutely sure he will go on to do great things in science!”

Stephen is a GA in our department.

Nominated by: Earleen Patterson

Your Dept: Student Opportunities for Academic Results (SOAR)

Student’s Name: Yvonne Akinyi

Statement: Yvonne began in SOAR as a practicum student from the College Student Personnel Administration master's program in Summer 2017; and we quickly realized that she would be the perfect fit as the Teaching/Graduate Assistant for our Females of African-descent Modeling Excellence (FAME) and Goal-oriented African-American Men Excel (GAME).  Yvonne has positively impacted the academic, professional, and personal lives of the students in our programs with encouragement, support, compassion, and persistence.  Her personal standards for excellence are readily apparent to every individual she encounters, and we feel honored to be a part of her journey as she continues onward and upward into an undoubtedly bright and successful future.

**Students Name: Jarrid Williams**

Jarrid is a graduate student worthy of recognition. He came here not knowing anyone and initially felt a bit disconnected, but as he integrated into our community at SIUE and got settled into his classes the unique perspectives he brought to the class were invaluable. His life experience and awareness of the world and his willingness to share that has been a gift to his classmates, our department, and SIUE.

Dept: Social Work

**Students Name: Sara Bennett**

Sara Bennett is a social work graduate student that embodies SIUE's value of citizenship and inclusion. Since joining our community two years ago she has vocalized her commitment to social justice and diversity continuously. She goes out of her way to get knowledge by attending trainings and seminars [w/o being required I might add] and brings that information back to her cohort and faculty with enthusiasm. In the past year, she has also stood out against social and individual injustice very boldly. She has been a voice against violence in our community and has stood up as a beacon for those who were unable to stand for themselves. Her strength and empowerment is admirable and demonstrates a deep commitment to improving the wider world we live in.

Dept: Social Work

**Students Name: Brianna Scott**

Brianna is a social work graduate student and is also an alumni of SIUE's social work undergraduate program. She is refined, engaged, humble and committed to excellence. Her work products and ethos are both impressive. She represents our University well in all she does. She is willing to step up into student leadership roles and shows such grace with how she handles that on top of her academics. She consistently earns top grades in all her classes and not because she doesn't struggle perhaps like others, but because she goes above and beyond to learn and explore content beyond the walls of the class. She is definitely worth recognition.

Dept: Social Work

**Students Name: Mackenzie Diecker**

Mackenzie is a GA and her time in this role working with me has definitely made her stand out. She demonstrates such professionalism working with faculty in the department and is able to balance all of this and her academics very well. Mackenzie is dependable, willing to work hard, and always submits impressive work products. She is so quiet, but self-assured. She is also highly respected by her classmates and other faculty. She takes it all in and you know that what she will deliver in the classroom or in her role as GA will be top notch. In her journey in social work I am confident she will quietly rise into a leadership role.

Dept: Social Work



Dept: Biological Sciences

Student: Jacob W. Miller

Statement: Jake Miller is an outstanding M.S. student in the DiSalvo lab. He studies the interplay between symbiont infection parameters, symbiont genotypes, and host outcomes using a collection of related bacterial symbionts and their amoeba hosts. Jakes work has elucidated emergent patterns in host-symbiont dynamics and has lead to the development of new tools for wide-spread use in the lab. He is also a wonderful TA in Microbiology and Bacteriology.



Dept: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Students Name: Toria Trost

Statement,  Jon Clark, Biological Sciences Lab Manager: Toria has worked in the greenhouse at SIUE for the past 2 years as both part of a team of assistants and most recently as the lead. The greenhouse houses a diverse collection of flora that is utilized in a variety of biology courses at SIUE. Teaching assistants that work in the greenhouse are responsible for maintaining this collection as well as assisting faculty/student researchers using the greenhouse with whatever plant care needs they may have. The greenhouse is a “living” space that requires constant attention; Toria has gone above and beyond in this role time and time again. The greenhouse under Toria’s watch has turned into a place the department is very proud to show off. Last spring Toria oversaw the installation of a native pollinator flower garden at the entrance of the greenhouse that attracted several compliments from the SIUE community.  The incredible work she accomplishes is probably a close second to the love for what she does. I couldn’t ask for better employee than Toria and I’m certain she will have a similar impact wherever she may land down the road.



Dept: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Students Name: Alex Smith, Brandon Schack, Haley Kutosky and Kassie Karssen

Statement,  Dr. Paul Brunkow:   I would put forward names of my TAs as deserving of some recognition regarding TA excellence and quality.  Alex Smith, Brandon Schack, Haley Kutosky and Kassie Karssen have done a bang up job this semester in BIOL 151 in combining their experience (Alex and Brandon as the experienced ones helping Haley and Kassie) and dealing with numerous teaching and student challenges.  These guys work together extremely well and proactively in organizing the labs with lab coordinator Katie Durbin, and coordinate their grading and quizzes to make experiences for their students as equitable as possible.  Haley has done especially well in her first term as a TA, which has been especially enjoyable to watch since she just had the class a few years ago and is now on "the other side of the desk."



Dept: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Student Name: Daniel Karcher

Statement,  Dr. Tom Fowler:  Daniel is a model graduate researcher and TA.  He has a strong base of knowledge of the literature around his project and puts an enormous amount of physical and intellectual energy into getting the experiments completed.  He takes on techniques that are new to our lab and pushes forward.  All the while, he has been a genetics laboratory TA with great teaching skills and has mentored and guided an undergraduate researcher throughout her senior project.  He will be missed after graduation in May!



Dept: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Student Name: Allison Newton

Statement, Dr. Tom Fowler (on behalf of several faculty):  Allison is the consummate professional in all she does, and even better, she does everything with excellence and good humor.  As a TA, she was awarded the SIUe Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award in 2017 for her awesomeness!  The word that is used to describe Allison quite often by faculty is conscientious.  For faculty members, this is such a valuable asset in a graduate student or TA.  Allison very often anticipates needs and acts ahead, and she doesn’t leave jobs unfinished.  We hope she knows how much her contributions are appreciated!



Dept: BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Student Name: Ben Wedeking and Jeremy Howard

Statement, Dr. Tom Fowler (BIOL Graduate Program Director):  Ben and Jeremy have my thanks for their extraordinary flexibility as TAs in the BIOL graduate program.  The two have taken on more than one course at a time as a TA in a couple different semesters in their graduate careers and in all evaluations from their supervisors, they did the jobs they were assigned superbly.  This includes courses that sometimes had little to do with their own main interests in biology.  We wouldn’t have provided the variety of great experiences to students through our teaching laboratories in the last two years without the dedication and graciousness shown by these TAs.  As the Graduate Program Director, I want them to know that their contribution to our departmental mission is recognized and greatly appreciated.

