This month, GSA would like to recognize Ibtesam Y. Alja’afreh Ph.D. for her dedication to Western Michigan University through research and leadership. Ibtesam received her Bachelors and Master’s degree in Organic Chemistry from Mu’tah University in Jordan. From the influence of Dr. Sultan Abu-Orabi, Ibtesam decided to further her education and join Western Michigan University with a focus in Biochemistry. While at Western, Ibtesam has been able to influence fellow students through her exquisite skills and service. She worked as a teaching assistant; supplying time and motivation to her students. Ibtesam also participated in study groups with fellow graduate students to be a support system amongst her fellow peers. Moreover, as an active member of the National Organization for the Professional Development of Black Chemist and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE), Ibtesam has been an exceptional representation of GSA through volunteer work and service. She has helped the community by doing demos at various schools and participating in museum day. Ibtesam has participated in National Science Bowls dedicated to inspire the youth in STEM. In October, Ibtesam successfully defended her research and has decided to take an academic position at Tafila Technical University in Jordan.

Ibtesam the Spotlight is on you. Thank you for all your hard work! Go Broncos!
**GRAD TALKS**

Giving an effective presentation about your interest or scholarship is essential in a graduate student’s career. Why not practice and get feedback from fellow graduates in various departments.

For more Information:
E-mail: gsa-gradtalks@wmich.edu

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**THE SPOTLIGHT**

Graduate Student Spotlight recognizes outstanding graduate students who make a difference in the lives of others. If you would like to be featured or know an outstanding graduate student, please nominate them for the GSA Spotlight.

Email: denisha.c.griffey@wmich.edu for more information.

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**Hilltop Review**
Publication for the Fall 2014 issue will be available December 10, 2014. Please contact the Editor with questions at: gsa_hilltop@wmich.edu

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**RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT**

Are you a born leader? Are you interested in making a difference around campus? Would you like to advocate for graduate students? If so, you should run for GSA President in 2015. For more information please contact:

"Shealyn Jenee' Blanchard"
shealyn.j.blanchard@wmich.edu

or

"Marcial Amaury Pineda Moquete"
marcialamaury.pinedamoquete@wmich.edu

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**GRADUATE STUDENT DISSERTATION DEFENSES**

*Let's congratulate our fellow graduate students on all of their hard work and defending.*

- Kelly Kohler—Ph.D. Department of Psychology
- Matthew Abernathy—Ph.D. Department of Biological Sciences
- Marlene Kowalski-Braun—Ph.D. Education Leadership, Research and Technology
- Joseph Abbott—Ph.D. Department of Sociology
- Tamara Chase Coleman—Ph.D. Department of Science Education
- Andre Fields—Ph.D. Counseling Education and Counseling Psychology
- Racha El Kadiri—Ph.D. Department of Geosciences
- Hector Chaves—Ph.D. Department of Computer Science
- James R. Jobe—Ph.D. Counseling Education and Counseling Psychology
- Walter Jensen—Ph.D. Department of Sociology
- Robert Elisha Musookho Kagumba—Ph.D. Science Education
- Courtney Gale Deloney—Ph.D. Counseling Education and Counseling Psychology

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**GRADUATE STUDENT UPCOMING EVENTS**

Hilltop Review Journal Publish Date/Call for Papers: **December 10, 2014**
Application for GSA President: **December 19, 2014**

GFAC Meeting: **January 16, 2015**
GSA General Body Meeting/Grad Talks: **January 30, 2015**
Application closes for GSA President, Make a Difference Award Nomination: **January 30, 2015**

Make a Difference Award Ceremony 2015: **April 18, 2015**

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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS (NAGPS)**

November has been a proactive month dedicated to promoting your rights. WMU GSA has participated with NAGPS to cater to the needs of graduate students.

On November 6-9, 2014, 12 members of the GSA attended the NAGPS National Conference at the University of Missouri (see page 3). Leadership had the opportunity to network with other graduate and professional students to share best practices. WMU GSA presented a session titled "Building a presence: Interwining Successful Leadership through New and Innovative Programs". This presentation allowed leadership to share programs and strategies that have been implemented on Western’s campus.

WMU has definitely built their presence on the National level with four GSA members elected to the regional and national board of directors. Damon Chambers (President of GSA) was elected as the Director of Outreach; Marlies Hagge (GSA member) was elected Director of Administration, Denisha Griffey (Legislative Chair) was elected Midwest Regional Chair, and Danielle Smith (Outreach Chair) was elected Midwest Regional Director of Outreach. Let’s congratulate everyone on their success.

On November 19, 2014, the leadership of the GSA participated in the "National Call Congress Day". This is one of many advocacy efforts that take place yearly through partnership with the NAGPS and their Grads Have Debt2 campaign. Graduate and professional students from across the country took to the phones to advocate for graduate student debt. The main focus of this event was to reinstate subsidized Stafford loans and reunify student interest rates.

To learn more about advocacy efforts please visit www.wmich.edu/gsa/legislative and www.nagps.org. If you would like to know how you can get involved please email me at denisha.c.griffey@wmich.edu.

Denisha Griffey,
GSA Legislative Chair
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

On behalf of WMU GSA, we would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday. This has been a wonderful year all due to you. To all of the graduates, thank you for your hard work and dedication during your time at Western. Our primary mission is to empower, develop, and support you on your journey as a graduate student and are looking forward to next year.

GO BRONCOs!!!

GSA PRESIDENT MESSAGE

On behalf of the Gradate Student Association family, I extend a sincere congratulations and best of luck to the all students graduating on December 13, 2014. You have been exceptional representatives of Graduate students and the University. I have no doubt that you will continue to serve as worthy ambassadors for WMU by building upon our reputation for excellence.

I believe that graduates of WMU are unique in that, regardless of your chosen area of practice, all of you have the opportunity to enrich the lives of those around you. As you embark upon and progress through your careers, I urge you to always remember why you chose your respective field and the sacrifices that you endured in order to make it happen: to serve our communities and improve the quality of life of its members with compassion, honesty and integrity.

I would also like to give special thanks to the parents, spouses, children and friends of our graduates for their patience, understanding, sacrifices and support - both moral and financial - during these challenging, but rewarding, years at WMU. Although your guidance, comfort and encouragement certainly will continue to be sought and appreciated in the years to come, you can rejoice in the gradual return to "normalcy" with no more long nights of studying, get-togethers unattended and trips untaken. Yet, even more so, you can relish the shared feeling of pride in what your graduate has accomplished and the abundant opportunities ahead.

In the coming years, I would ask that you not forget the Graduate College, the Graduate Student Association, former professors, and fellow and future students. I encourage you to not only give back to the University by supporting our activities, programs and scholarships, but also by keeping us updated on the many achievements you will experience in your careers and personal lives. We will always take great pride in your achievements.

Congratulations again to the graduates of 2014!

Damon Chambers MA
GSA President