April 20, 2016

Graduate College Announces Recipients of 2016–17 Dissertation Completion Fellowships

The Graduate College is pleased to announce that three WMU doctoral students have been named recipients of Dissertation Completion Fellowships for the 2016–17 academic year.

The 2016–17 Dissertation Completion Fellowship recipients are as follows:

**Abotalib Z.A. Farag – Department of Geoscience:** Abotalib will receive a full-year fellowship for his dissertation, “An Integrated Approach For a Better Understanding of the Paleo-Hydrology and Landscape Evolution in the Sahara During the Previous Wet Climatic Periods.” He has authored or co-authored six articles for publication in peer-reviewed journals, distinguished by their high impact factors, and currently has three manuscripts in preparation. Abotalib’s research is focused on the implementation of cost effective, interdisciplinary, collaborative research that proffers insight into the role of groundwater on Mars. Moreover, he writes that the research may assess “the possibility of recent or ancient life on Mars by applying a comparative analysis between outflow channels and RSL (recurring slope linea) on Mars and their terrestrial counterparts in the Sahara.” Dr. Mohamed Sultan, Chair of the Department of Geosciences and Abotalib’s dissertation chair, describes his protégé as an “interdisciplinary scientist” who employs his vast background in geology, as well as in remote sensing and GIS applications and brings the best of these varied disciplines to his current research. Abotalib will be honored at the Awards Ceremony on April 28th, when he receives the All-University Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award.

**Krystal J. Howard – Department of English:** Krystal will receive a full-year fellowship for her dissertation, “The Collage Effect and Participatory Reading in Contemporary Children’s and Young Adult Literature.” She writes that her research is “important to the field of children’s literature because it contributes to the conversation about the interplay between word and image in a variety of forms in children’s literature.” Krystal is the recipient of numerous honors and awards for her research. Among the most recent is the 2016 Graduate Student Essay Award-Ph.D. Level from the Children’s Literature Association. She also received the Norma Van Rheenen Award for Graduate Teaching Effectiveness in English Composition, as well as the Department of English Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award. She is also the recipient of Western Michigan University’s prestigious All-University Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award. In addition, she has received Graduate College Graduate Student Travel Grants to present her research at academic conferences. Krystal has presented her research at six professional conferences and also published two book chapters on the history of the American comic book and on the Gothic graphic novel for young readers. She is also a creative writer, with publications in literary journals, and has served as managing editor and poetry editor for Third Coast, the Department’s award-winning journal. Dr. Gwen Tarbox, Krystal’s dissertation advisor, considers her “one of our department’s finest teachers of literature.”
Randall A. Janes– Department of History:  Randall will receive a full-year fellowship to complete his dissertation titled “Between the Ingenio and the Ingeniero: The Spanish Sugar Master and the Development of the Ibero-American Sugar Industry.” Randall has been the recipient of many awards, including the Judith F. Stone Award from the Department of History, as well as the Dr. Nora Faires Research and Travel Award from the History Graduate Student Organization. In addition, he has received a Graduate Student Research Grant from Western Michigan University’s Graduate College. He was awarded a prestigious fellowship from the Smithsonian Institute to work as a resident scholar in the Museum of American History, and also was awarded a Dibner Fellowship in the History of Science and Technology from the Huntington Library in San Marino, California to examine treatises and other documents related to his dissertation research. Dr. Lewis Pyenson, Randall’s dissertation chair, describes Randall’s “mastery of secondary sources in a wide range of languages,” as well as his ability to write in a compelling manner that illuminates the narrative process. Dr. Pyenson considers Randall, “one of the finest thinkers and writers among graduate students in History here.”