May 26, 2016

Graduate College Announces the Recipients of 2016 Western Michigan University Dames Endowed Scholarship

The Graduate College is pleased to announce that three students have been awarded a WMU Dames Endowed Scholarship. First awarded in 1997 in accordance with an agreement made between Western Michigan University and the WMU Women’s Association, the scholarship is offered on a competitive basis to exceptional graduate students enrolled in a graduate degree program at WMU. Both men and women may apply for this scholarship, but by the terms of the agreement, preference is given to women. The scholarship funds are restricted to the following elements only: tuition payment, fees, and the purchase of books.

Karina Ortiz-Paccheco - Department of Spanish
Karina is a doctoral student with the Department of Spanish and anticipates completing her degree in 2016. She is actively engaged in the life of the University, serving as an adjunct instructor and also as Spanish Assistant Coordinator, developing professional activities for graduate students and developing tests and examinations. Karina also won the Department of Spanish 2015 Department-Level Graduate Research and Creative Scholar Award, as well as the 2013 Department-Level Graduate Teaching Effectiveness Award. Dr. Irma Lopez, Department Chair and also Karina’s dissertation chair, writes that Karina has “always been praised by her professors,” who acknowledge her intellectual talents and her dedication to graduate study and research. Karina’s dissertation research is focused on developing a narrative of five 21st Century Ecuadorian women writers.
Shacara Burrell - School of Social Work

Shacara is a master’s student in the School of Social Work, currently completing her degree. She plans on beginning her Juris Doctorate with Cooley Law School in 2016. Shacara is dedicated to working with vulnerable populations of women and children, and has training in the areas of substance abuse, alcohol, and sexual abuse prevention. She is engaged in community outreach and has worked on the United Way Health Impact Team, as well as served on the Kalamazoo Child Abuse and Neglect Council. Her professional career trajectory reflects her dedication to the cultivation of health and well-being in others. Dr. Dolly Daftary describes Shacara’s commitment to pursue knowledge which will “promote social justice and empowerment for women, children, and families.” Shacara’s work and life goals reflect an individual who is acutely aware of the centrality of shaping human well being through policy, as well as through a commitment to social responsibility - to enact change and social justice via the law.

Laura Pacheco del Castillo - Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Laura is a doctoral student with the Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology. She is currently completing her internship at Texas A &M University and will return to WMU in the summer to complete her dissertation. Her research is titled “Dominican College Students’ Experiences of Distress, Help-Seeking and Stigma,” and according to Dr. Joseph Morris, Laura’s dissertation chair, this research is “significant because it will provide much needed information to guide counseling-related services on college campuses in the Dominican Republic.” Laura has presented her work at professional conferences and associations and contributed to research in invaluable ways. Dr. Morris recognizes Laura’s unique leadership qualities which have emerged through her dedication to research and through a myriad of contributions she has made to the University.