April 20, 2016

Graduate College Announces Recipients of 2016 Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award

The Graduate College is pleased to announce that two WMU doctoral students have been named recipient of Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award for the 2016–17 academic year. The Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award are funded generously from Dr. Donald Thompson, former WMU vice president for research and dean of the Graduate College. Awards are given to assist recipients in all fields of study with expenses associated with the dissertation.

The 2016–17 Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award recipients:

**Megan M. Arnott – Department of English:** Megan will receive the Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award for her dissertation titled, “Hardruler: Characterizations of Haraldr harðráði,” Megan’s research into medieval historiography and characterization reflects current work in her discipline. Through her research, she examines the ways in which King Harold Sigurdsson, king of Norway from 1046-1066, has been characterized in medieval and post-medieval sources. In addition, she examines the authors’ political motivations or biases realized through their respective characterizations and provides insight into the ways in which scholars and communities construct their heroes. Dr. Jana Shulman, Megan’s dissertation advisor, writes that Megan has “an impressive publishing record.” She has also presented her research in national and international conference settings, eight in all. Moreover, Megan holds degrees in Public History, Norse, and Viking Studies, and is well versed in Old-Norse-Icelandic, Old English, Latin, and French. Dr. Shulman considers Megan to be “an ambassador for things medieval,” one who takes this work “very seriously.” According to Dr. Shulman, there have been no full length studies of King Harold, and Megan’s research “will have significant impact on the disciplines of medieval Scandinavian literature and history.”
Shawn R. Brueshaber – Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering: Shawn will receive the Patricia L. Thompson Dissertation Award for his dissertation titled “Accumulation of Polar Vorticity in a Forced-Turbulence 3D Primitive Equations Model.” Shawn is a mechanical and aerospace engineer with 21 years of experience who is currently completing his doctoral studies. He has a distinguished teaching record at Western Michigan University and has designed and developed a course in Theoretical and Computational Fluid Dynamics, as well as a course in Thermodynamics. Shawn has been actively involved in research, having presented at the American Astronomical Society’s 46th Annual Division of Planetary Sciences conference, a major venue for his discipline. Of his research, Shawn writes that “the more we choose to understand about the atmospheric motion of the worlds of our solar system, the more we will learn about fundamental basics of weather and climate on other planets, and on our own,” and moreover, “we may help to breach the last bastion of classical physics: fluid turbulence.” Dr. William Liou, Shawn’s dissertation advisor, describes Shawn as an “insatiable learner” whose research is the “first to model the polar atmospheric environment of the giant planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune) using a 3-D primitive equations model with forced-turbulence.”