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Welcome New 2015 College of Communications Graduate Students

September 4, 2015

Happy New Academic Year! We hope your semester is off to a great start.

This is the graduate office's second newsletter. These newsletters will provide graduate students and faculty with updated policies, important deadlines, and successes of our graduate students.

This issue includes:

- ◆ Photos and bios of our new cohort that consists of 10 Ph.D. and 5 MA students
- ◆ Information about the three graduate student organizations (two within the college and one within the university)
- ◆ Important dates both university wide and college wide (College of Communications deadlines and dates are in bold)
- ◆ Registration Requirements
- ◆ Updated Graduate School policy on grade changes
- ◆ Update on travel policy both at the college and university level
- ◆ Spring 2016 course schedule

I hope each of you has a productive and healthy semester. As always, I encourage students to stop by my office to discuss upcoming meetings, exams, and other general questions as needed.

Welcome New 2015 Ph.D. College of Communications Graduate Students



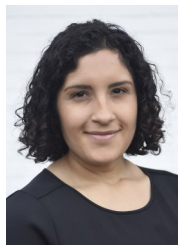
Yang Bai received his master's degree in Communication from the University of Southern California. Before graduate school, he earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. Yang's academic interests mainly focus on the areas of ICT4D and internet policy. Believing that good theories can serve as a valuable roadmap to practices, he's very interested in applying various economic theories to analyzing various ICT4D and internet policy issues, such as the emergence of social enterprises and the network neutrality debate. In his leisure time, he likes watching soccer games and reading about world history. And if there is ample snowfall in LA's winter, he likes to snowboard with his friends.



Pratiti Diddi, from India, received her master's degree in Mass Communication at Louisiana State University. She received her bachelor's degree in English Literature (2007) from the University of Delhi, India. She also holds a master's degree in Mass Media (2009) from Indraprastha University in New Delhi, India. She has worked for more than three years as a print and online journalist in India. Her research interests focus on understanding the psychological effects and cognitive processing implications of media messages for improving public health. Of specific interest, are the role of interactive communications on social media platforms in promoting health literacy for breast cancer and smoking, and its implications on health behaviors and social policy. Pratiti enjoys cooking, playing Sudoku, and listening to music.



Arieenne Ferchaud completed her bachelor's degree in Mass Communication at Louisiana State University and recently graduated with a master's degree in media studies from Penn State. She is a media effects scholar focusing primarily on new media entertainment. Her master's thesis explored moral decision-making in narrative video games. She also explores the way YouTube has emerged as a new entertainment source. Her research is inspired by her personal hobbies, namely playing video games and binge watching her favorite YouTube channels.



Elysia Galindo-Ramirez has a master's degree in Cultural Studies with an emphasis in Media Studies from Claremont Graduate University. She received her bachelor's degree in Political Science with a minor in Women's Studies from Loyola Marymount University. Her primary areas of interest are gender and sexuality in media, sports and sports media, and new media. During her doctoral studies, Elysia plans on further exploring and unraveling the media narratives that surround non-hetero/homo sexual identities and non-traditional gender presentation/gender identities. In her spare time, she enjoys Star Wars, comic books, and lots of Netflix.



Erica Hilton earned her bachelor's degree from Johnson C. Smith University in Communication Arts and her MA from American University in Public Communication. Her previous research has focused on social media usages and trends, the representation of African American women in hip hop lyrics, and community relations at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For the last three years she has worked for an international labor union managing its website and social media to promote activism within the labor movement. While at Penn State, Erica plans to research the use of digital and social media in social movements and the effects that sharing violent images to spread awareness has on its viewers. In the months before coming to Penn State, Erica set off on a Refresh Journey and traveled to four countries to explore the different cultures in the Bahamas, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic.



Jin Kang earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology at York University in Toronto, Canada. Broadly, her research interest is in self-representation in virtual environments. She would like to examine how a user's interaction with virtual avatar may affect their offline cognition, behavior, and affect. She is also interested in the field of cultural psychology in which she hopes to examine a unique interaction between culture and media. Fun fact! Jin often sleeps over straight 16 hours and her sister speculates that she might be a hibernating creature.

Welcome New 2015 Ph.D. College of Communications Graduate Students



Bingjie Liu earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism and bachelor's degree in Economics at Renmin University of China, where she was named as the Outstanding Graduate Student of Beijing. Afterwards she received the master's degree in Global Communication at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Before coming to Penn State, she spent 2 years in City University of Hong Kong as a doctoral student in communication study. As a Ph.D. student at Penn State, Bingjie plans to study media effects from an individual perspective, especially the effects of new technologies on human psychology, such as psychological well-being, cognition and attribution processes in the context of social media, etc. She is also interested in the differences in human-computer interaction between generations and how communication technologies can be applied in supportive communication to better help mentally stressed people.

She is interested in applying mixed research methods and seeks interdisciplinary cooperation. Fun fact: When she watches comedies in the theater, her laughter always starts earlier and ends later than the average, which sometimes makes friends sitting around her feel embarrassed.



Rose Luqiu Luwei had been a television journalist in Hong Kong for 20 years. She covered almost all of the major international news events ranging from the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Gaza to the tsunami in Indonesia, the earthquake in Japan and China. She also reported on Chinese political news and interviewed several Chinese leaders. She was a television producer, commentator and presenter as well. In addition, Luqiu's book writing and online activities have also made her recognizable in China, especially among the Internet users. Since 2002, she has released six books on her reporting trips around the world, and one autobiography. She also wrote weekly columns for dozens of leading Chinese media outlets. She is not only one of the first to blog in China, but one among other renowned writers attracting millions of followers and readers on the Internet. In 2006, Luqiu became a Nieman fellow

at Harvard, where she launched a website in 2007 to promote citizen journalism in China. It turned out to be so influential among Chinese netizens that the Chinese government shut it down in May 2014 due to a series of "unacceptable" topics under discussion there. She was also one of the founder of 1510 Foundation in Hong Kong, which promote civic education among the young people from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong through organizing seminars and summer camps. The foundation was closed under the political pressure later on. In addition, Luqiu had taught a graduate course at Hong Kong Baptist University(HKBU) for seven years, where she obtained her master's degree in Mass Communication. She was born and raised in Shanghai and earned her bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Fudan University.



Bumgi Min earned a master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin, and he received a bachelor's degree in Media Studies from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, South Korea. His research interests include digital divide, digital literacy, and telecommunication policy. His master's thesis analyzes North Korean refugees' digital access in South Korean society. In this work, he maps out the digital divide between North Korean refugees and South Koreans. In particular, he focuses on how North Korean refugees' digital access influences the refugees' adaptation in South Korean society by employing social capital theory. Moreover, he is working on research related to net neutrality issues.



Wunpini Fatimata Mohammed received her bachelor of arts degree in English and Spanish from the University of Ghana where she won a scholarship to study Spanish for a year in Cuba. She completed her master's in Michigan Technological University's Rhetoric and Technical Communication program. Wunpini's research focused on the representation of Ghanaian women in the mass media and how the media's articulation of the narrative impacts the Ghanaian populace's perception of women as agentive subjects. During her Ph.D. in Penn State, she plans on working in the areas of visual media, new media and the representation of gender, race and class in the media. She volunteers as a social media liaison for various non-profits in her birth city, Tamale in Ghana's Northern Region. At her leisure, she reads African literature, dabbles in creative writing and binge watches TV shows.

Welcome New 2015 M.A. College of Communications Graduate Students



Juan Flores earned his bachelor's degree in Mass Communications with a concentration in public relations from Bloomsburg University. Juan was a member of Bloomsburg University's PRSSA chapter where he was part of many rewarding campaigns. During his senior year of college, Juan interned at the United Way of Columbia County where he served as one of the two communications interns specifically doing media relations and dealing with the organization's 2014 fundraising campaign. At Penn State, Juan will be working as a TA and plans to study strategic communications in order to effectively do media relations in the public relations sector. During his free time Juan plays soccer and tennis as much as he can.



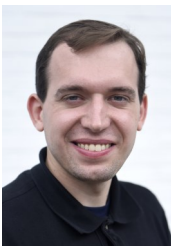
Kelly Seeber earned her bachelor's degree (Magna Cum Laude) in Psychology from Trinity University, where she received the Outstanding Senior in Psychology award and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. Kelly was granted the Murchison Research Fellowship for the summer of 2014, which she used to develop a scale to measure a person's desire for meaningful social interaction. She presented her research at the Society for Social and Personality Psychology conference in 2015. As a master's student at Penn State, Kelly plans to study media effects, particularly how video games might influence individual's lives in a positive manner through content or interpersonal interactions. An interesting fact about Kelly is that when she studied abroad in New Zealand, she went "zorbing", otherwise known as rolling down a hill in a giant hamster ball.



Tongxin Sun earned her bachelor's degree in Communications at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China where she studied French as the second foreign language. Her research interests put an emphasis on intercultural communications and political and economic communications. During undergraduate study, she did research on intercultural issues as well as cultural industry. As a graduate student at Penn State, Tongxin plans to focus on speech communication, especially when related to transnational problems.



Lewen Wei earned her bachelor's degree at Wuhan University in China, where she was honored the Outstanding Graduate Student, with a major in Editing and Publishing, and a minor in Computer Science. During her undergraduate study, Lewen's research interests covered Open Access, Transmedia Publishing as well as Rhetoric on Social Media, and she will continue to expand and reinforce her multidisciplinary educational background. As a master student at PSU, Lewen intends to further study Media Effects, Computer-Mediated-Communication and Human Computer Interaction. In her spare time, Lewen aims at tasting all kinds of delicious food while striving to keep fit by running and yoga exercise.



Brent Wilson earned his bachelor's degree in American Studies at Penn State University's Worthington Scranton campus in May of 2014. While in the process of obtaining his degree, Brent chose to focus his studies on American folklore and culture of the 20th century, emphasizing the ever-expanding role of media in American life. While a student at Penn State Worthington Scranton, Brent was deeply involved in student life, serving as Chief of Staff on the executive board of the Student Government Association (SGA) in 2012, following that with a stint as Chief of Staff for the Student Senate in 2013, and finally being appointed to the SGA executive board once again as the Senate Leader for the Spring 2014 semester. As a result of these responsibilities, Brent was nominated for both the Patrick J. Rose Award for Excellence in Student Leadership and Service and the Eric A. and Josephine S. Walker

Award for Outstanding Student Leadership in 2014. Brent's academic writing was also featured in the Annual Undergraduate Student Research Fair in the spring of 2014. As a master's student at Penn State, Brent plans to focus his research on the power of media and its effects on everyday life, specifically the mechanisms that films and television employ to create such vivid impressions on society that their themes and motifs are still analyzed decades after being produced. In addition, Brent plans to explore the ways that cinema influences and shapes public policy and opinion concerning real-world societal issues.

Grad Student Organizations

Graduate Students in Communication (GSIC)

Graduate Students in Communication (GSIC) is an organization composed of all the graduate students in the College of Communications. It acts as a liaison between the graduate student community and the Associate Dean's Office. While every graduate student in the College is a member of GSIC, three students are elected each spring to serve as executive officers (president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer). GSIC officers often assist with implementation of new policies and procedures to better the graduate student community. They also listen to graduate students' concerns, suggestions and questions about anything involving graduate life in the

College, and bring information to the Associate Dean's Office as needed.

GSIC also collaborates with other organizations and departments at Penn State to get more resources for graduate students. For instance, graduate students who are enrolled in courses at University Park are eligible for UPAC funding, which can offer graduate students extra money for conference travels on top of the funds from our College.

GSIC also hosts various social events throughout the semester. We recently hosted the Annual Fall Picnic at Circleville Park on August 30th. The event was a wonderful gathering of faculty, graduate students, and their

families. Students will be gathering Saturday, September 5th to watch the defending national champions Penn State women's volleyball team take on Stanford University. The game is free for students. Please join us for a fun evening at Rec Hall. Watch for updates on our GSIC Facebook page.

As a community, GSIC likes to hear from you! Please feel free to contact GSIC officers:

Fan Yang at fuy106@psu.edu, Azeta Hatef at auh238@psu.edu, and Frank Waddell at tfw119@psu.edu with any questions, concerns or suggestions. Join our Facebook page and we look forward to seeing you during our social events!

Comm GRAD Forum (CGF)

The Comm GRAD Forum (CGF) is an open and inclusive group dedicated to enriching the intellectual and professional interests of graduate students in the College of Communications. Not only will the CGF expand our knowledge base and deepen our understanding and ability as scholars, but it also will be a venue in which we can engage with scholarship across disciplines. CGF is about us students— we aim to showcase the work and intellectual

interests of everyone under the broad communications umbrella so that we can learn from each other and become more well-rounded as scholars. Everyone who participates provides service to their colleagues, college and the academic community.

Currently, we are actively planning a brown bag lunch series, where student scholars will have the opportunity to present research in an

informal and inviting atmosphere that will likely enrich those presenting, and foster great discussion between those watching. We are also planning on a series of professional-oriented workshops such as creating a CV and the journal submission process. Importantly, though, we are here for the students and will respond to the interests of you. For more information and input, please join the Comm Grad Form Facebook page.

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) serves Penn State's graduate students by supporting and programming leadership, service, and social opportunities. Furthermore, the GPSA advocates for student interests, and represents the graduate student voice before the university's administration. Upcoming events sponsored by the GPSA and open to all graduate students include social

mixers, the winter gala, and a dissertation bootcamp (all dates TBA). Meetings are scheduled twice monthly, Wednesdays at 6pm in 134 HUB-Robeson Center; the next meeting will be held September 9th in 232 HUB-Robeson. All are welcome to attend. If you would like to plan an event on campus, the GPSA has funds and resources to support you.

For information about becoming involved, please contact the College of Communications delegate Jared LaGroue (jal570@psu.edu). The current calendar of events can be found at <http://gpsa.psu.edu/calendar-of-events/> and you are encouraged to subscribe to the GPSA newswire (email gpsanewswire@gmail.com) for weekly updates.

Fall 2015 Important Dates in the Graduate School

September

Friday, September 4

Late Registration Begins

Monday, September 7—Labor Day (No classes)

Tuesday, September 8

Last day for fall graduates to activate the intent to graduate on eLion

Thursday, September 10

Registration Begins for Spring 2016 Semester

Wednesday, September 23

Ph.D. annual reviews due



October

Monday, October 5

Last day for fall graduates to upload a draft of the doctoral dissertation to the eTD website for format review (Refer to the thesis website: <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/>)

Wednesday, October 7

Last day for fall graduates to upload a draft of the master's thesis to the eTD website for format review (Refer to the thesis website: <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/current-students/etd/>)

Wednesday, October 14

5:00-6:00 pm: Grad Student Open Forum with Matt & Betsy in James Building (Pizza & drinks provided)

Friday, October 16

Last day for fall graduates to pass final doctoral defense (department must return report form to Graduate Enrollment Services immediately)

Friday, October 23

Last day for fall graduates to pass final masters defense (department must return report form to Graduate Enrollment Services immediately)

November

Friday, November 13

Late Drop - Deadline

Friday, November 20

Last day for fall graduates to upload final thesis or dissertation to the eTD website

Sunday, November 22 - Saturday, November 28—Thanksgiving Holiday (No classes)

December

Friday, December 11

Classes end

Monday, December 14 - Friday, December 18

Final exams

Saturday, December 19

Graduate School Fall Commencement Ceremony, Bryce Jordan Center, 4:30 p.m.

Spring 2016 Important Dates in the Graduate School



January

Wednesday, January 20

Regular Drop – Deadline

Thursday, January 21

Regular Add – Deadline
Late Drop begins

Friday, January 22

Late Registration Begins

April

Friday, April 8

Late Drop - Deadline

Friday, April 29

Classes End

May

Monday, May 2 – Friday, May 6

Final Exams

COMM Graduate Course Offerings—Spring 2016

Registration begins September 10

COMM 501

Proseminar in Mass Communications

Tuesday, 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm
003 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Matt McAllister

The course will review and discuss the major concepts, issues and approaches involved with studying media from a critical-cultural perspective. Topics covered include the Frankfurt School, political economy, cultural studies, feminism and representation, globalization, consumer culture, medium theory and digital culture. Issues and trends of COMM as a field will also be reviewed.

COMM 511

Mass Communication Research Methods II

Wednesday, 9:05 am - 12:05 pm
003 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Colleen Connolly-Ahern

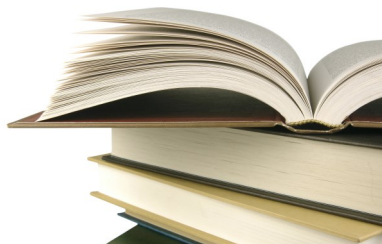
This course is designed to introduce students to the wide range of qualitative social science methodologies that fuel academic inquiry in the field of mass communications. First, we will evaluate the broad theoretical paradigms on which qualitative research is based. Through readings, students will become familiar with the design and conduct of qualitative research. Students will gain firsthand experience in two methodologies: observation and interviews. Finally, students will design a qualitative research project and run a pilot study. We will also discuss qualitative analysis, evaluation, and ethics.

COMM 516

Introduction to Data Analysis in Communications

Thursday, 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm
008 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Mary Beth Oliver

This introductory course in quantitative data analysis is designed to provide students with a broad examination fundamental assumptions, procedures, and interpretations of statistical analyses commonly employed in Communications and related disciplines. The course does not assume any prior coursework in statistics, but some familiarity with basic social science methods is helpful. Consequently, this course is often taken by students the semester following their completion of Comm 506 or other, related methodology courses. Comm 516 takes a hands-on and applied approach, with the goal of empowering students to both understand statistical analyses frequently reported in journals, as well as to analyze their own data and present it scholarly formats. The course is conducted in a computer lab, where students will be given many opportunities to practice the topics covered in each meeting. Topics include descriptive statistics, analysis of variance-based models, regression, and exploratory factor analysis.



COMM 517

Psychological Aspects of Communication Technology

Friday, 10:10 am - 1:10 pm
024 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Shyam Sundar

Do you feel lost without an internet connection? Are you addicted to your mobile phone? Do you behave socially toward your computer? Do you feel self-conscious when posting on social media? More generally, do you think interactive media shape the way we think, act and react? If so, consider enrolling in COMM 517, "Psychological Aspects of Communication Technology," in Spring, 2015. This graduate seminar will provide an extensive overview of foundational theory and empirical research on human-computer interaction (HCI) and computer-mediated communication (CMC), drawing from a broad array of disciplines including communication, psychology, consumer behavior, and human-computer studies. Topics to be covered include social scientific research on: 1) social responses to communication technologies, 2) the uses and effects of unique technological features, 3) the nature and dynamics of mediated interpersonal and group interaction, 4) how issues of source, self, and privacy are altered by computer-based media, and 5) the broad socio-psychological consequences of Internet use, among other topics. The instructor is the current editor-in-chief of JCMC, the premier journal for computer-mediated communication in the fields of Communication and Information Science.

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COMM Graduate Course Offerings—Spring 2016

(continued from previous page)

COMM 585

Media and Telecommunications Industries

Wednesday, 9:05 am – 12:05 pm
003 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Krishna Jayakar

This graduate seminar provides exposure to the applications of selected microeconomic concepts, principles and topics to the analysis of the media, telecommunication and information markets. No prior knowledge of economics is assumed. Coverage of selected microeconomic topics will begin at basic principles and advance to a level of complexity worthy of graduate coursework. We will connect ideas and principles from microeconomics to communications theories, demonstrating possible complements and conflicts across the two disciplines. Discussion of both theoretical and empirical scholarship is emphasized. We will be covering international markets but the focus is on North America. Topics may include selected industries such as wired and wireless telephony, satellite communications, broadband/cable, broadcasting, film, advertising, publishing, computing and Internet; industrial organization; competition and competitive advantage, growth and the economic causes of innovation; economics of intellectual property protection; electronic markets, hierarchies and transactions cost economics; natural monopoly economics; cost modeling, demand forecasting and pricing in regulated monopoly and competitive industries; the economic justification and effects of regulation; deregulation and privatization.

COMM 597F

Internet Cultures

Tuesday, 9:05 am – 12:05 pm
003 Carnegie Bldg. (tentative)
Russell Frank

The World Wide Web has spawned countless subgroups, each with its own customs and expressive traditions. This course will examine several online communities – writers of fanfiction, photoshoppers, gamers, shamers and flammers are among the possibilities -- as case studies of the larger phenomenon, while exploring methods of studying them and raising questions about privacy, anonymity, ethics and aesthetics.

COMM 597G

Public Relations Theory

Monday, 1:25 pm – 4:25 pm
003 Carnegie (tentative)
Denise Bortree

This class provides an overview of the theoretical body of knowledge in public relations including theories pertaining to audience segmentation, relationship building, agenda setting, ethics, and crisis communication. Special attention will be given to theory building and development in the field. Research from a number of content areas will be discussed including social responsibility, advocacy, health, and international communication.



Registration Requirements

Spring 2016 course registration for graduate students starts on Thursday, September 10.

Students Receiving an Assistantship/Fellowship: All graduate students who are being paid on an assistantship/fellowship needs to maintain full time registration of 9-12 credits (COMM 590--Colloquium and COMM 602--Supervised Teaching do not count as part of this requirement).

Ph.D. students who are in ABD (all but dissertation) status are required to register continuously for each semester from the time of the comprehensive exam is passed the two-semester residence requirement if met until the dissertation is accepted by the doctoral committee, regardless of whether work is being

done on the dissertation during this interval.

Note: This means you will also have to be registered as a full or part-time student the semester you take your final exam. (This includes summers.)

If you have completed your coursework, but have not passed your comprehensive exam, you will need to be registered for COMM 600 (thesis research). After comprehensive exams, Ph.D. students will be registered for COMM 601 (full time dissertation status). Students are not able to register for 600 level course on their own. You will need to contact Laurie Porter (lap34@psu.edu) for registration. All 600 level courses needs to be registered through

If a student wants to register for an COMM 596 (Independent Study) COMM 594 (Directed Study) or COMM 595 (Internship), an application will need to be filled out and signed by your adviser, the faculty member who will be the instructor of record, and provide the bullet points indicated on the application. These forms need to be returned to Betsy Hall for processing.



Restricted Courses in Other Departments

Some courses in other programs have restrictions on who may register online in the course. Both English and Psychology courses for example, are open to advance online registration only to those students in

that major. However, COMM students may take these courses with permission of the professor. The key is to send a note to the relevant faculty member of a course early in the registration process requesting to

take the course. In this note, you should address your relevant background and the justification for you taking the course.

Ph.D. Annual Assessments

Ph.D. annual assessments due on September 23--
Each year the College of Communications and the University Graduate School requires doctoral students to have an annual assessment to discuss academic progress and performance in the program. See the College's Graduate Studies Handbook for detailed information.

The annual assessment is required for Ph.D. students entering their second year of study through the dissertation proposal stage.

It is the doctoral student's responsibility to schedule the assessment meeting with your adviser. The assessments and an updated vitae are due to Betsy by **Wednesday, September 23.**

The form is available on the following link: <http://comm.psu.edu/graduate/documents-and-forms>

In addition to the assessment, please provide an updated CV and program of study.

Please Betsy if you have any questions.

Grading System and Grade Changes

Below is the Graduate School's grading system and grade change policy. It is important to note that any grade change request has to come through our office for approval before being sent to the Graduate School for processing.

Grading System

A grade is given solely on the basis of the instructor's judgment as to the student's scholarly attainment. The following grading system applies to graduate students: A (EXCELLENT) indicates exceptional achievement; B (GOOD) indicates substantial achievement; C (SATISFACTORY) indicates acceptable but substandard achievement; D (POOR) indicates inadequate achievement and is a failing grade for a graduate student—a course in which a D has been obtained cannot be used to meet graduate degree requirements and will not count toward total credits earned; and F (FAILURE) indicates work unworthy of any credit, and suggests that the student may not be capable of succeeding in graduate study. The grade-point equivalents for the above marks are: A, 4.00; B, 3.00; C, 2.00; D, 1.00; F, 0. A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at the University is required for all graduate degrees. In Fall 1995 a +/- grading system went into effect that includes A-, B+, B-, and C+. The grade-point equivalents are A-, 3.67; B+, 3.33; B-, 2.67; and C+, 2.33.

In addition to the quality grades listed above, three additional grade designations, DF (deferred), NG (no grade), and R, may appear on a student's transcript. If work is incomplete at the end of a semester because of extenuating circumstances, the instructor may report DF in place

of a grade, which will appear temporarily on the student's record. It is not appropriate to use the DF either casually or routinely to extend a course beyond the end of the semester or to extend a course for a student who has failed so that the individual can do extra work to improve the grade. Required work should be completed and the DF resolved as soon as possible once assigned, but must be resolved (i.e., the course must be completed) no later than 12 weeks after the course end date as noted on the Registrar's Schedule of Courses, unless an extension of a specific duration to a specified date is agreed upon by the instructor and student and approved by the Graduate School that allows for a completion deadline longer than 12 weeks. A memo with a justifying statement and the agreed-upon date must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services in order to request an extension. A deferred grade that is not resolved before the end of this period automatically converts to an F and cannot be changed without approval by the Graduate School. A memo with a justifying statement for changing the F grade must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services in order to request a DF that has defaulted to an F grade be changed.

If an instructor does not submit a grade (including a quality grade, DF, or R) for a graduate student by the grade-reporting deadline, the designation NG (no grade) appears on the transcript. An NG that is not reconciled within 12 weeks following the posting of the NG automatically becomes an F.

A DF or NG that has converted to an F may not be changed without approval from the Graduate School. Requests for approval must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services and include a justification for the change.

It is to be emphasized that no deferred (DF), missing(*), or no (NG) grades may remain on the record at those times when a student reaches an academic benchmark. Benchmarks include completion of a degree program (e.g., master's completed for a student continuing through for a doctoral degree) and the doctoral candidacy and comprehensive examinations, and final oral examination/final performances. Graduate programs may add additional benchmarks.

It is further noted that there are only three circumstances under which a course grade, once assigned, can be changed: (1) if there was a calculational or recording error on the instructor's part in the original grade assignment (see "Graduate Council policy regarding Corrected Grades for Graduate Students" below); (2) if it is a course for which an R grade has been approved and in which an initial R can be assigned and changed later to a quality grade; (3) if, as discussed above, a DF was assigned and the deadline for course completion has not yet passed.

Pass-Fail (P/F) grading is used exclusively in certain graduate courses where it has been requested by the program and approved in advance by the graduate dean following guidelines established by Graduate Council. A grade of P does not influence the GPA, but an F does.

Travel Policy Changes

Please read carefully. If guidelines are not followed, reimbursements may not be processed. Contact Betsy or Laurie for clarification. Recent changes to the travel policy will be in bold and underline.

Enabling graduate students in the College of Communications to travel to academic conferences contributes both to their professional development and to the visibility of the College. Therefore, to the extent possible, within financial constraints, the College should support graduate student travel.



With budget constraints and a relatively small travel fund, it is imperative that the College allocate its travel resources carefully; this is made all the more important by the size of our graduate program. However, we acknowledge that there are circumstances that may alter the need for travel funds. Generally, it is assumed that students will cover many of their expenses. The College's graduate program travel fund does not support graduate student travel to conduct research; the funds are meant to support the presentation of (refereed) research. These travel guidelines are designed

to add a measure of transparency to the disbursement of travel funds, provide information for students that will be useful for planning their conference participation, and allow flexibility for both the student and the College in the case of exceptional circumstances.

Disbursement of general College funds, for the fiscal year that begins July 1 and ends June 30, will be guided by the following:

Priority for funding will go to:

- Students on assistantship;
- Advanced Ph.D. students (students who have reached candidacy in the program).

Students can generally expect the following maximum disbursements; these totals, of course, are subject to budgetary changes/constraints in the College and are re-evaluated annually:

- Post-Candidacy (2nd-year) Ph.D. students: \$800
- 3rd-year Ph.D. students: \$900
- 4th-year Ph.D. students: \$1000

Since the College offers limited funding to each graduate student, it is important to consult closely with your academic adviser on what conferences are best suited for you.

M.A. students, students who are not on assistantship, and first-year Ph.D. students may apply for funding for specific conference travel. Decisions will be based on the availability of funds.

Any student can apply for additional travel funding (international conferences, for example); however, such requests will be granted on a case-by-case basis in light of the availability of funds and the nature of the conference.

Graduate students will be notified (based on the second bullet point) by mid-July of the amount they will be allocated for the fiscal year. (Travel request forms will no longer be required before the conference.)



Reimbursement procedures

To receive the total amount of funding requested, all receipts need to be submitted within five days of the end of the conference. If this is not possible, please contact the Coordinator of Graduate Education. Reimbursements will be processed within seven-ten days of receiving the

request for reimbursement if submitted within the five business days of the end of the conference. (Receipts that are submitted after that may be processed with reimbursements for the next conference for which receipts are submitted.) Graduate students adding

personal travel needs to submit what the cost of travel would be round trip from State College of venue of conference within one day prior to and end of conference dates. The College will not reimburse student for persona; portion of travel.

Travel Policy Changes

Receipt Submission

Receipt submission should comprise: Airfare confirmation (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.). The confirmation should include:

- Total amount including taxes
- Airline (Delta, US Airways, United, etc.)
- Itinerary (time and date of departure and arrival)

If traveling by car, keep track of mileage. University will reimburse for mileage, not gas. Current rate is 56 cents per mile. For those who carpool, the graduate student whose vehicle is being used will be reimbursed (the amount will be divided among those who are carpooling.)

Please keep in mind the 750-mile rule: Generally, flying is less expensive than driving for distances over 750 miles. If a traveler chooses to drive a distance over 750 miles, the difference in cost should be documented (cost of flight, lodging, parking, etc). Without documentation, mileage reimbursement will be limited to 750 miles.

Conference registration with amount paid (original email from the conference or receipt given to attendee at the conference). The University cannot accept a credit card statement or the signed credit card receipt. Please note, the University does not reimburse for membership fees.

Reimbursement Checklist

- Employee Travel Form
- Airfare confirmation with itinerary
- Lodging receipt
- Mileage
- Conference Registration
- Other transportation receipts (taxi, bus, etc.)
- Parking receipts

Guidelines for Lodging

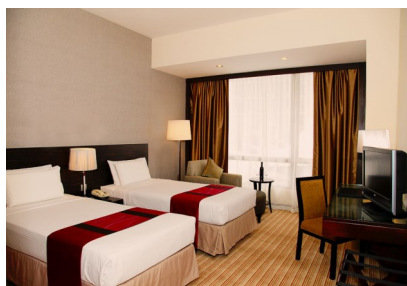
Lodging expenses must not exceed the single occupancy rate unless two or more employees are staying in the same room. Staff, faculty, or students who are spouses/partners, immediate family members, or of the same sex may be asked to share a room, provided a separate bed/cot is available for each individual in the room.

or in part by the University (Spouses/partners are excluded if they so choose). If an individual presents as a gender different from one's birth sex, individuals may not be compelled to share a room, but may do so if all individuals agree.

Hotel lodging and taxes are reimbursed only. (Internet connection, phone calls or room service – even if on the receipt -- will not be covered.) If sharing a room, it is recommended that individual receipts are secured for each person. If this is not possible, list the names of the people sharing the room on the receipt and the amount each person paid. If one person paid the entire bill, confirmation will be needed from the other students. **International lodging will be reimbursed per diem.**

Meals will be paid based on per diem (the University lists the amount per day for all the towns and cities in the US and other counties.). First and last day of travel is 75% of meal per diem. If meals are provided by a conference, host or as part of hotel accommodations, then meal per diem will be adjusted to correspond with meals provided.

All reimbursements will be processed through ERS (Employee Reimbursement System). After the receipts are input by staff in the Graduate Office, the student will receive an email from "ConcurSolutions," sent through ERS, indicating that the request is ready for submission.



The University does not expect nor does it condone University staff, faculty or students sharing a bed while on travel sponsored in whole

Travel Policy Changes

Chain for Reimbursement

The chain for the reimbursement is:

1. Entered by Grad Office staff
2. Graduate Student submits the request through ERS (www.ers.psu.edu). Penn State user ID and password will be needed to log into the system.
3. Associate Dean approves the request
4. Assistant to the Financial Officer approves
5. Financial Officer approves
6. Accounting Office approves

Note: It may take several days after the student submits the report for the reimbursement to be deposited into the student's bank account.

Reimbursements during the summer months run through the same process. The main difference for reimbursement during the summer is any student not receiving wages will need to fill out a "Non-Employee Information Form" <https://guru.psu.edu/forms/public/nonempinfoform.pdf>

Poster Costs

The College will pay for the printing of the poster for conference presentations. Students who will be making poster presentations must contact the Graduate Office on how to proceed with the printing of the poster. Since the College will be covering the costs of the posters, it is expected that the posters will be returned to the College for display on the 2nd floor of James Bldg. If a student does not return the poster for display, the cost of the poster will be deducted from the travel reimbursement requested by the student.

Posters must not be laminated. Laminated posters do not adhere to foam board. If a poster is received that is laminated, the cost of the poster will be deducted from the student's travel allotment.

Upon return from the conference, the poster should be returned to the Graduate Office at the same time handing in receipts for reimbursement.

The College will cover the cost for the poster to be mounted on form core for display in James Building.

The required dimensions for the poster to be mounted are as follows:

- 24x36 inches
- 32x40 inches
- 40x60 inches



Graduate Student Accomplishments Needed

Graduate students are asked to update the College on recent accomplishments.

Please send details of your accomplishments to:
Laurie Porter
LPorter@psu.edu

Accomplishments include:

- Papers published
- Cited/quoted in articles
- Awards received
- Book chapters

Reminders for this information will be sent twice a semester.



EMPLOYEE TRAVEL ERS WORKSHEET

Check list for ERS Travel Report Detail - CONUS

Traveler's Name _____ Access/User _____
 Description of Travel _____

Were any expenses paid by a third-party? No Yes (provide details) _____

Conference or seminar - attach registration receipt unless PREPAID (SRFC or PCard)
 Please attach conference or seminar agenda if available.

Travel Advance <input type="checkbox"/>
Amount \$ _____

Itinerary Check if airline itinerary should be used

DEPARTURE			ARRIVAL		
Location	Date	Time	Location	Date	Time

Combined with Personal Travel? No Yes (provide dates of personal travel) _____

Meals - In the grid below, mark with X if meal was provided.

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner

PCard Used for Individual Meals? Yes No. If so, these will be marked as PCard Meal Expense and deducted from reimbursement. Receipts are NOT required.

PCard Used for Group Meals? Yes No. If so, itemized receipt required. Indicate purpose and those attending and relationship to Penn State and attach receipts.

Voluntary reimbursement reduction to adjust to actual meal cost \$ _____

Expenses Requiring Receipts

- Cash PCard Airfare - Attach priced itineraries with agent fees. (Attach comparison airfare if required)
- Travel Arranger PCard Name _____
- Bag Check Fees
- Rental Car
- Rental Car Fuel
- Taxi / Shuttles - attach receipts including gratuity amounts.
- Train or Bus (non-local)
- Parking: \$ _____ Included in Lodging receipt detail (if yes, itemize lodging in ERS)
- Lodging - Hotel / Motel Online Fees (if yes, itemize lodging in ERS)
- If paid by pcard are any charges listed non-reimbursable? No Yes (Mark so on receipt)
- Group Meals not paid on PCard - attach itemized receipt and detail on purpose and those attending.
- Other: Provide detail, receipts and costs. (If no receipts, these items are covered by \$5 per day miscellaneous expense)

Expenses Not Requiring Receipts

Lodging at Personal Residence: Name: _____
 Address _____

\$ _____ (Max \$25 per day) Dates Stayed: _____

Personal Vehicle Mileage: Total Mileage: _____
 From _____ To _____ Return to: _____ or attach travel log

Tolls: \$ _____ Local Bus / Metro / Subway: \$ _____

Notes: _____

Miscellaneous Expense - \$5 per day Amount Claiming: \$ _____
 Provide detail on expenses incurred for which receipts are not available: _____

Account to Charge			
Budget	Fund	Cost Center	Amount