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**Welcome New 2017 Graduate Students**

September 11, 2017

Happy New Academic Year! We hope your semester is off to a great start. 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 7 Ph.D. students 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
- ◆ Travel policy both at the college and university level
- ◆ Spring 2018 courses
- ◆ PhD annual reviews
- ◆ Deadlines for meeting/exam requests

Along with welcoming the College’s new graduate students, we are pleased to welcome Melissa Wandrisco, administrative assistant in the graduate office.

As you all have heard, I will be retiring from Penn State on Friday, September 29. I have enjoyed working with all of you. I wish you all great success as a grad student and in your careers.

## Welcome New 2017 Bellisario College of Communications Graduate Students Ph.D. Mass Communications



**Carlina DiRusso** earned her BA from The Ohio State University in strategic communications. After working in a marketing department of a major record label in Los Angeles, she earned her MA from Cleveland State University in communication theory and methodology. Carlina is a novice painter, kickboxer, and movie buff. She intends to study communication technology as a Ph.D. student at Penn State, analyzing the influence of HCI and CMC on health and well-being.



**Jason Freeman** After earning his bachelor's degree, Jason Freeman spent three years working as an account executive in the New York City advertising industry on accounts that included Bank of America, Pepperidge Farms, and SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment. Jason earned his master's degree in communications at Brigham Young University. While at BYU, Jason participated in a variety of research projects relating to product placement, intercultural communications, and visual communications. Several of these projects have led to conference papers and journal publications. He recently co-authored a paper that was awarded top abstract in its division at the AEJMC mid-winter conference in Oklahoma. During the summer of 2016, Jason received a student scholarship to present his paper in Budapest, Hungary. Jason enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife, Ashley, and is an avid hiker and fly fisherman.



**Michael Krieger** is a first year Ph.D. student and University Graduate Fellow at Penn State. Originally from New York City, he completed his BA in Communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and his MA at Sacred Heart University, where he also taught for two years as an adjunct instructor in the School of Communication and Media Arts. His research examines the transmission of culture and ideology through mediated images and messages, how audiences engage with and appropriate culture for their own social, political and economic purposes, as well as the legal and technological frameworks that shape our mediated interaction. Beyond academics, Michael is an avid NY sports fan and enjoys spending his time reading history and watching documentaries. He also enjoys playing soccer, basketball, and baseball, all of which he played at the varsity level at Millennium High School despite it being situated on the 11th, 12th, and 13th floors of an office building on Wall Street without a gymnasium or any dedicated athletic facilities.



**Pechulano Ali** earned his bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communication (JMC) from the University of Buea, Cameroon; receiving the Cameroon Telecommunications award for outstanding graduate in JMC. While a student he served as a producer and host of culture and politics shows for local radio stations, and served as a research assistant to the head of department. After graduation, he freelanced for local and international news outlets. Through The MasterCard Foundation Fellowship, Pechulano obtained a master's degree in journalism from Michigan State University's School of Journalism. His thesis discussed the impacts of governmental controls of information on journalism practice in Cameroon. At MSU, he worked for the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism and the Global Center for Food Systems Innovation as a podcast producer and host; talking to researchers, scientists and innovators who are seeking to end world hunger. As a top graduate student in journalism he was inducted into Kappa Tau Alpha, and Phi Beta Delta for achievement in International Education. At PSU, Pechulano intends to focus his research around issues of press freedom and access to information, and media and international affairs (development and public diplomacy). In his free time, he sings Christian acapella music and writes poems. Fun fact: His name (Pechulano) means I don't care what people say, let them talk.



**Ruosi Shao** earned her B.A. in journalism and communication with an international relationship minor at Renmin University of China. She continued her master's program in communication at Renmin University of China, where she was honored to receive the Scholarship for Innovative Research. Her primary research interest lies at the intersection of health communication, social psychology, media effects, and computational social science methods. During babyhood, she loved to smile at the roses in the garden and that is why she got her name Ruosi, which is the Chinese pronunciation of Rose. It is also welcomed to call her Rose.



**Lewen Wei** earned her bachelor's degree in Editing and Publishing with a minor in Computer Science and Technology at Wuhan University, where she earned the outstanding graduate of University. Then, she came to Penn State as a master student in Media studies, where she developed research interest in media effects and health communication. As a Ph.D. student, Lewen intends to further exploring how to promote health behaviors through interactive media, and in the meantime, strengthening research methodologies. A fun fact: as a fan of crime shows, Lewen feels like she is a real world example of the Cultivation Theory.



**Hyun Yang** earned her bachelor's degree with a double major in Photography and Cultural Contents Convergence at Chung-Ang University in Korea. Before joining her graduate programs, she worked for a video game company and a digital marketing agency. She went on to earn her master's degree in Media Studies from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. While she was in the master's program, she presented her research papers at the annual conferences of the International Communication Association and the Broadcast Education Association. As a doctoral student at Penn State, Hyun plans to study the effect of new media on changes in people's belief, attitude, intention and behavior.

# Welcome New 2017 Bellisario College of Communications Graduate Students

## MA Media Studies



**Aya Al Khatib** earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism and a Political Science minor at Penn State University. After that, she spent a year with UNICEF Jordan, supporting the Jordanian response to the Syrian crisis as a Communication and Social Media assistant. As a Master's student at Penn State, Aya plans to explore international communications and cross-cultural communications; with a particular focus on Middle Eastern and North African societies. She is also very interested in the news media's impact on stereotypes, specifically how Western media portrays the Middle East and its psychological effects, and vice versa (how Westerners are portrayed in Middle Eastern media etc.)



**Christen Buckley** earned her bachelor's degrees in international politics and theatre, with a minor in French and francophone studies, from Penn State University in 2012. Before returning to Penn State, Christen worked in New York City as a marketing and fundraising strategic consultant for a variety of local and national non-profits. As a Masters student at Penn State, Christen plans to study media effects and their impact on non-profit communications. Christen is a museum enthusiast, cheese lover, and an avid traveler; her favorite trips include the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Morocco, and Panama.



**Yiting Chai** graduated summa cum laude from Pennsylvania State University in 2015 with a dual degree in Advertising and Economics. During college, Chai devoted herself to an intense research on the limited access to America's higher education as well as sundry activities like Penn State Dance Marathon and marketing campaign for Aurora Museum. Out of a sheer passion for media studies, Chai tried her hand in Xinhua News Agency, and later after graduation, secured a full-time job in the Marketing Department of a large education corporation. As Chai grew increasingly spellbound by campaign planning, she opted to pursue a further study on media studies and set media effects as her target specialization. Fun fact: Born on February 29th, Chai is, technically speaking, just well past 6 since she cannot help but celebrate her birthday once every four years.



**Julia Gessner** earned her bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in public relations, a second major in political science and minors in psychology and business from Texas A&M University-Commerce, where she graduated with High Honors after successfully defending her thesis. Throughout her undergraduate education, Julia held several internships, including positions at VOX Global, the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, the American Red Cross, and the Allen Independent School District in Texas. In addition to her internships, Julia worked as a news writer for A&M-Commerce, where she wrote press releases, video scripts and social media posts for the university. As a student at Penn State, Julia plans to study strategic communications with the ultimate goal of working for a nonprofit. When she is not working or studying, Julia can be found listening to podcasts or binge watching "The Office."

# 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 September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The event was a wonderful gathering of faculty, graduate students, and their families. To keep up with future social events, please join our GSIC Facebook Page.

As a community, GSIC likes to hear from you! Please feel free to contact GSIC officers with any questions, concerns, or suggestions:

Virginia Harrison [vsh5000@psu.edu](mailto:vsh5000@psu.edu)  
Litzzy Galarza [lxg64@psu.edu](mailto:lxg64@psu.edu)  
Joe Cruz [jxc909@psu.edu](mailto:jxc909@psu.edu)

*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.

Please feel free to contact your CGF officers at any time with any questions, concerns, or suggestions:

Arienne Ferchaud [amf345@psu.edu](mailto:amf345@psu.edu)  
Lars Stoltzfus-Brown [lhs5137@psu.edu](mailto:lhs5137@psu.edu)

## 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 302 HUB-Robeson Center; the next meeting will be held September 7th in 302 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 President of GPSA:

Matt Krott [Krott@psu.edu](mailto:Krott@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](mailto:gpsanewswire@gmail.com)) for weekly updates.

# Fall 2017 Important Dates in the Graduate School

September

**Monday, September 4**

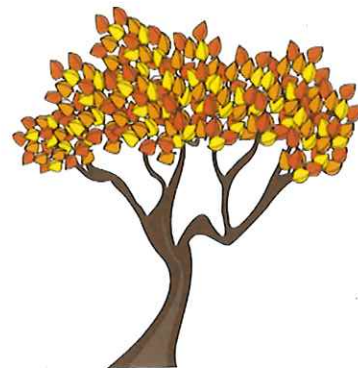
Labor Day (No Classes)

**Tuesday, September 5**

Last day for fall graduates to activate the intent to graduate in LionPATH

**Wednesday, September 27**

Ph.D. annual reviews due



October

**Monday, October 2**

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

**Monday, October 9**

Last day for fall graduates to pass final doctoral defense

**Wednesday, October 11**

6:00-7:00 pm: Grad Student Open Forum with Matt in James Building (Pizza & drinks provided)

**Monday, October 16**

Last day for fall graduates to pass final masters defense

November

**Friday, November 10**

Late Drop - Deadline

**Friday, November 17**

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

**Sunday, November 19 - Saturday, November 25—Thanksgiving Holiday (No classes)**

December

**Friday, December 8**

Classes end

**Monday, December 11 - Friday, December 15**

Final exams

**Saturday, December 16**

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

# Spring 2018 Important Dates in the Graduate School

## January

**Monday, January 8**

Classes Begin

**Saturday, January 13**

Regular Drop – Deadline

**Sunday, January 14**

Regular Add – Deadline

Late Drop begins

**Monday, January 15**

Late Registration Begins

Martin Luther King Day (No classes)

**Monday, January 22**

Last day for spring graduates to activate the intent to graduate in LionPATH.



## February

**Monday, February 12**

Last day for spring graduates to upload a draft of the doctoral dissertation or master's thesis to the eTD website for format review

## March

**Sunday, March 4 – Saturday, March 10**

Spring Break

**Friday, March 2**

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

**Friday, March 9**

Last day for spring graduates to pass MA defense

## April

**Monday, April 2**

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

**Friday, April 6**

Late Drop - Deadline

**Friday, April 27**

Classes End

**Monday, April 30**

First day of Final Exams

## May

**Tuesday, May 1 – Friday, May 4**

Final Exams

**Sunday, May 6**

Graduate School Spring Commencement Ceremony, Bryce Jordan Center, 6:30 p.m.

# COMM Graduate Course Offerings—Spring 2018

Registration begins October 11<sup>th</sup>

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## COMM 501

### Proseminar in Mass Communications

**Matt McAllister**

**Wed. 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

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

**Patrick Plaisance**

**Mon. & Wed. 9:05 – 10:20 a.m.**

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. 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. The course will provide students with a solid grasp of several methodologies, including focus groups, structured interviews, and ethnographic approaches. Students also will be introduced to some ways to effectively analyze qualitative data. Finally, students will design a qualitative research project and run a pilot study.

## COMM 516

### Introduction to Data Analysis in Communications

**Mary Beth Oliver**

**Tues. 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

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 Graduate Course Offerings—Spring 2018

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### COMM 597A

#### The Cultural Foundations of Communication

**Matt Jordan**

**Thur. 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

This course will examine the relation between forms of communication and the ways of understanding the world that these forms of technology afford. From the age of cuneiform and hieroglyphs chiseled on stone, to the era of the printing press and the linotype, and ending with our contemporary age of silicone microprocessors and touchscreens, we will trace the development of communication technology over time. Each new form of technology changed the ways that information was transmitted, exchanged and organized, shifting the ways that cultures understood themselves and constructed common meaning about the world.

### COMM 597

#### Health and Media

**Jess Myrick**

**Thur. 11:15 – 2:15 p.m.**

The goal of this course is to provide students with the theoretical foundation necessary to understand and study health-related media effects. Because the field of health-related media effects is highly interdisciplinary, in addition to media-focused perspectives this course will also include the application of principles from other fields such as social psychology, public health, and informatics. While this course will largely focus on persuasive health messaging contexts, it will also touch on the effects of health news coverage, health information seeking, and computer-mediated health communication.

### COMM 597

#### Social Media Research

**Bu Zhong**

**Mon. 3:30 – 6:30 p.m.**

This graduate course introduces you to selected theories and concepts used in the latest social media research. It will guide you in applying the theories to exploring the social media impact on social, political and economic interactions, in particular, the social processes in online communities. Users' technology use, psychological well-being, and civic participation will also be investigated. The goal is to familiarize you with the latest social media research, practical and theoretical implications of such research, and identify areas that deem further empirical research. Part of our class time is devoted to brainstorming innovative and creative ideas concerning social media use, such as ideas for new apps and entrepreneur opportunities.

## Registration Requirements

**Spring 2018 course registration for graduate students starts in September.**

**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 the comprehensive exam is passed. The two-semester residence requirement must be 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 courses on their own. You will need to contact Melissa Wandrisco ([myw5290@psu.edu](mailto:myw5290@psu.edu)) for registration. All 600 level courses need to be registered through our office.

If a student wants to register for a 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 the college's graduate office for processing.



## Restricted Courses in Other Departments

Some courses in other programs have restrictions on who may register online in the course. For example, both English and Psychology courses 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 20--  
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 Melissa by **Wednesday, September 27.**

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 see Melissa if you have any questions.

## Deadline for Meeting and Exam Requests

The University's Graduate School requires at least two weeks' notice for the processing of paperwork for meetings and exams. It is imperative that the College's Graduate Office knows three weeks in advance of any meetings and exams. It is important to note that if the Graduate School does not receive the two weeks' notice they will not approve/process the required paperwork. The meeting/exam will need to be rescheduled. It is the student's responsibility to keep our graduate office up to date on upcoming meetings and exams.

## Meetings and Exams for Fall 2017

If you are planning to hold a meeting or exam (program plan, comprehensive exam, thesis dissertation proposal, or final exam) this fall, please let Melissa know by September 21. This is for planning purposes only. (You do not need to know the exact dates).

## 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 Diana 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 (2<sup>nd</sup>-year) Ph.D. students: \$800
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Ph.D. students: \$900
- 4<sup>th</sup>-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.)

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICY**  
**Penn State University has released updated International Travel Requirements, effective July 1, 2016. These policies apply to faculty, staff, and students traveling on university-affiliated business overseas. For information about how the new travel policies will affect your travel please visit:**

<https://guru.psu.edu/policies/InternationalTravelRequirements.html>



## 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 students for the personal 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 .545 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.**



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

**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.

# 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](http://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.

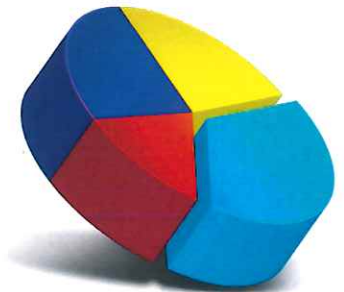
**Posters must not be laminated. Laminated posters do not adhere to foam board. If a poster is received that is laminated, the cost of the poster will be deducted from the student's travel allotment.**

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



Spring 2018  
Class Registration  
Begins  
October 11!

## Graduate Student Accomplishments Needed

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

Please send details of your accomplishments to:  
Melissa Wandrisco  
[myw5290@psu.edu](mailto:myw5290@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

- 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