Integrative Graduate Education Research and Traineeship Program: Cognitive Science Program Wins an NSF IGERT Grant

Working under the NSF IGERT grant, Dr. Fred Dyer (Zoology), Frank Bartlett (Zoology), and Monica Castelhano (Psychology) join faculty and graduate students in the Cognitive Science Program who study sequential decision-making. Story on page 4.
We are pleased to introduce in this edition of The Graduate Post a newly funded grant by the National Science Foundation under its Integrative Graduate Education Research and Traineeship program (IGERT) in Cognitive Science to Professors Fred Dyer (Zoology), John Henderson (Psychology), Tom Getty (Zoology), Fernanda Ferreira (Psychology), and Sridhar Mahadevan (Computer Science and Engineering). This is Michigan State University’s first IGERT grant and is in an area of long-standing interdisciplinary research strength.

The IGERT program was initiated by NSF in 1997 with the goal of encouraging major changes in graduate education in sciences and engineering. It was developed to “meet the challenges of educating U.S. Ph.D. scientists, engineers, and educators with the interdisciplinary backgrounds, deep knowledge in chosen disciplines, and technical, professional, and personal skills to become in their own careers the leaders and creative agents for change.” Within NSF, the IGERT program involves the Directorates for Biological Sciences; Computer and Information Science and Engineering; Education and Human Resources; Engineering; Geosciences; Math and Physical Sciences; Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences; the Office of Polar Programs; and the Office of International Science and Engineering. You can learn more about the IGERT program and IGERT awards by visiting their website at http://www.nsf.gov/igert.

The MSU IGERT in Cognitive Science focuses on the core research theme of sequential decision-making, that is, how to combine information from the environment and information from memory to make optimal decisions in the present moment. The faculty and graduate students study decision-making using animals, humans, and “intelligent” machines. Read more about this fascinating research and the participating MSU faculty and graduate students on page 4. And, congratulations to the faculty for a successful grant award that recognizes systematic and substantive collaborative efforts!

The second major feature of this edition of The Graduate Post focuses on the three MSU medical schools that train doctors for both human and animal patients. The College of Veterinary Medicine has the only teaching hospital on the MSU campus and graduates more than 100 individuals annually with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. Both the College of Human Medicine and the College of Osteopathic Medicine focus on community-based training for physicians. Both Human and Osteopathic Medicine focus on the education of physicians to treat the “whole person” using his/her history, as well as the family and social environment in which the individual lives. Read more about the education and training of MSU professional students in “The Heart of a Practice” on page 8. Rounding out MSU’s professional programs in health are the College of Nursing and the clinical psychology program, which will be described in future editions of The Graduate Post.

A new regular feature of The Graduate Post beginning with this issue is a Capital Campaign Update. MSU kicked off its Capital Campaign on September 20, 2002. A $1.2 billion dollar campaign goal was announced, the largest in the University’s history. The Graduate School has a campaign goal that is focused exclusively on graduate fellowships. Our new Development Officer, Barbara Ball-McClure is introduced in this issue of The Graduate Post.

Kevin Johnston in the Teaching Assistant Program offers observations on interdisciplinary teaching on page 12. Kevin explores the MSU integrative studies programs and their approaches to teaching undergraduates and also to training graduate teaching assistants.

As with all of our issues of The Graduate Post, we also provide a listing of all of our graduate students who received funding from the Graduate School during the spring and summer of 2002 for travel or research enhancement. Congratulations to these students for their academic achievements!

Karen Klomparens
Dean of the Graduate School
Correction

In the Spring 2002 issue of The Graduate Post, the following clarifications should be added to the article on graduate student conferences. The TROPOS conference in the Department of Romance and Classical Languages stemmed from an idea by 1998-1999 editor of the *Tropos* journal, Jason Klodt, and graduate student Alyssa Holan. With the support of RCL Chair Lawrence Porter, graduate students and editors of the 1999-2000 *Tropos* journal, Michelle Wilson and Jayne Niemann, initiated the first TROPOS conference. Candace Bosse, Alyssa Holan and Dan Nappo helped with the first conference and organized the second conference. Jessica Sturm, Stacey Makowiak, Angelica Silva, and Sandra Fernandez helped finish the second conference and are organizing this fall’s third annual TROPOS conference.