

# THE GRADUATE POST

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## FROM THE DEAN



African diaspora. Read more about them on page 2.

The Graduate School is pleased to bring you this edition of The Graduate Post. We are very proud of the two winners of the Ruth Simms Hamilton TIAA-CREF fellowship for the study of the African diaspora. These are the first fellowships awarded since TIAA-CREF generously provided the funds to MSU to recognize the work of the late Dr. Ruth Hamilton. We wish Kamahra Ewing and Alexandra Gelbard a productive summer as they pursue their research projects on the

I am also pleased to announce our receipt of an award from the Council of Graduate Schools (funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Teagle Foundation) for a two-year initiative called "Preparing Future Faculty for the Assessment of Student Learning". This is particularly good timing as MSU approaches our 10 year institutional reaccreditation, which focuses on the assessment of student learning. We have a terrific group of faculty and graduate students who are participating in this program. Over the two years we will engage graduate students and their faculty mentors in a variety of activities designed to rethink the introductory courses across campus. The goal is course design that explicitly states the objectives for student learning, content delivery and student engagement that supports learning, and assessments of student learning that align with the course objectives and MSU's overall objectives for liberal learning. Read more about this on page 2... and stay tuned! We'll bring you an update next year.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to introduce the newest member of the Graduate School staff: Melissa McDaniels, PhD. Assistant Dean McDaniels will coordinate a variety of programs that focus on preparing graduate students for faculty careers, including leadership for the Teaching Assistant (TA) Program at MSU. Melissa is also helping to direct the Preparing Future Faculty for the Assessment of Student Learning project. Read more about Melissa and see where the TAs are on campus on page 3.

*Karen L. Klomparens*

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UNIVERSITY

## TIAA-CREF GIFT EXPANDS AFRICAN GRADUATE RESEARCH

By Kristen Parker, Media Communications

<http://msutoday.msu.edu>

Thanks to a gift from financial services organization TIAA-CREF, two Michigan State University graduate students will pursue research that focuses on the migration of African people around the world.

Kamahra Ewing, a doctoral student in the African American and Africa Studies Program, and Alexandra Gelbard, a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology, will each receive \$36,000 to conduct their research.

Ewing will travel to Brazil this summer to study how Nigerian cinema is used as a sociocultural educational device within new and old African diaspora communities. Brazil is the largest African diaspora population outside of Africa.

Gelbard will spend the summer in Cuba researching the conga music genre and its role in forming identity within the African-descended neighborhood of Santiago de Cuba.

Named after longtime MSU social science professor Ruth Simms Hamilton, who died in 2003, the fellowship will provide tuition, stipends and research costs.

"Dr. Hamilton was an extraordinary educator and visionary scholar who was a leader in the study of the migrations of Africa's people," said MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon. "She expanded the frontiers of knowledge in urban, black studies and the African Diaspora. We are grateful to TIAA-CREF for this fellowship that recognizes graduate academic achievement and research at the cutting edge to carry forward Dr. Hamilton's outstanding legacy at MSU."

For decades, Hamilton worked with MSU graduate students to investigate the international presence and societal status of African descendants once they left the African continent, Simon said.

During her 35-year career at MSU, Hamilton was director and founder of the African Diaspora Research Project and a core faculty member of the African Studies Center and Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

In addition, she served as an executive board member for TIAA-CREF, also sitting on the board's corporate governance and social responsibility committees.

In 2005, TIAA-CREF established the Ruth Simms Hamilton Research Fellowship at TIAA-CREF. The fellowship supported students throughout a six-year period, awarding fellowships to one or more graduate students studying the African diaspora at an accredited U.S. college or university.

By establishing this new endowment at MSU, TIAA-CREF has brought the fellowship back to the university where Hamilton taught, conducted research and wrote.

TIAA-CREF is a national financial services organization with \$502 billion in assets under management and is the leading provider of retirement services in the academic, research, medical and cultural fields.

*A longer version of this story originally appeared on the MSUToday website.*

## PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY WITH FOUNDATION SUPPORT

By Melissa McDaniels, PhD, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School

<http://grad.msu.edu>

In November, 2012, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), with support of the Sloan and Teagle Foundations, invited Michigan State to be one of seven institutions receiving a grant to build its capacity to help graduate students and postdocs learn to assess undergraduate learning outcomes. As a public, land-grant institution, Michigan State is particularly committed to ensuring achievement on the part of all students, and robust assessment of student learning will help to maintain our institutional accountability in undergraduate education. The other institutions receiving this award include: Cornell, Harvard, Indiana, North Carolina A&T, University of California-Merced, and the University of North Carolina at Greensborough.

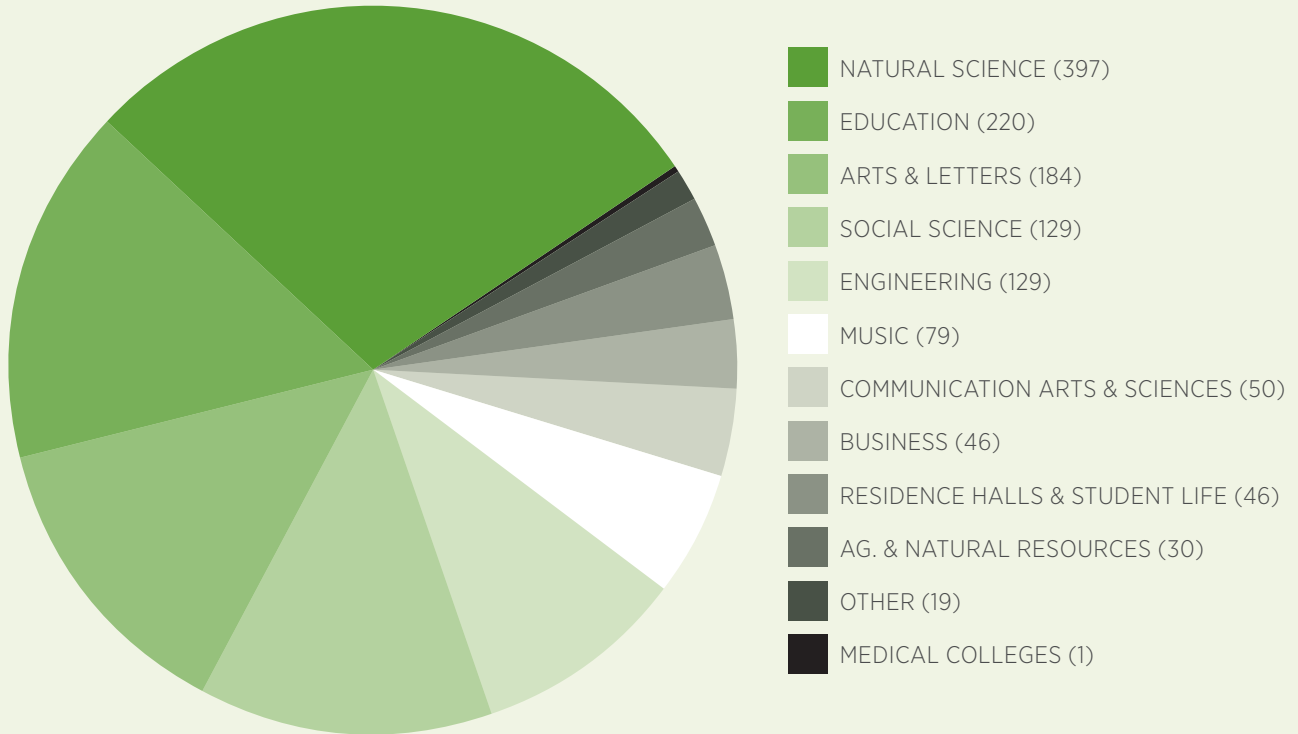
In awarding this grant to MSU, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) recognized that advancing graduate students' and postdocs' expertise in assessment will benefit undergraduate education and contribute toward the success and excellence of graduate students and postdocs as future faculty. This award recognized Michigan State's already comprehensive Preparing Future Faculty Program, within which this initiative will be integrated. Both Dean Karen Klomparens (The Graduate

School) and Dean Douglas Estry (Undergraduate Education) will be leading this effort for MSU over the next two years.

In writing this grant, MSU proposed a multi-faceted approach that will leverage current initiatives to enhance relationships between undergraduate student learning and the preparation of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to become faculty members. Our goal is to use MSU's considerable infrastructure supporting professional development of teaching excellence to move purposefully towards a more cohesive University approach to the assessment of student learning by explicitly linking assessment to the disciplinary-specific preparation of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows as future faculty.

In May 2013, approximately sixty graduate students and faculty attended a three-day institute addressing the complexities and opportunities surrounding the alignment of robust assessment strategies with course learning goals and activities. In-person and web-based programs will be scheduled throughout the 2013-2014 academic year. These activities will be highlighted in future editions of The Graduate Post.

# TEACHING ASSISTANTS AROUND CAMPUS



DATA SOURCE: MSU Human Resources, May 2013

## MELISSA MCDANIELS, PHD, JOINS STAFF OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

*In mid-December of 2012, Dean Karen Klomparens announced the appointment of a new assistant dean and director of teaching assistant programs at MSU. Since then, Melissa McDaniels has moved her office into Linton Hall and has hit the ground running. Below she discusses her goals for her new position.*

“On January 1, 2013 I assumed the role of Assistant Dean of The Graduate School and Director of Teaching Assistant Programs. As many reading this edition of The Graduate Post know, for years MSU has been known for its exemplary TA programs. I look forward to building upon this foundation in the months and years to come in order to provide the best possible support for Teaching Assistants, as they play such a crucial role in providing high quality education to undergraduate students at MSU. With the departure of the previous Director, Dean Klomparens decided to expand this role to one of Assistant Dean. This change signifies a desire on her part to bring administrative support for all teaching-related programs at The Graduate School under one umbrella ([www.careersuccess.edu/teaching](http://www.careersuccess.edu/teaching)). In addition to directing Teaching Assistant Programs, I will be providing centralized support and coordination for the Certificate in College Teaching Programs and our new Preparing Future Faculty for the Assessment of Student Learning (PFF-ASL Initiative described on page 2 of this newsletter). This portfolio of initiatives not only supports TAs, but all graduate students and postdocs who teach during their time at MSU and/or aspire to teaching roles upon graduation. In this expanded role, I have also been tasked with integrating teaching support

with all of the other professional and personal development programs that The Graduate School offers. The enthusiasm Dean Klomparens has for this integrative approach made this position a particularly attractive one for me.

One of my priorities in the coming year is to reconnect with graduate alums of MSU that now hold teaching roles (either full or part-time) in postsecondary education. Providing current students with profiles of “real life Spartans” that have gone on to teach at the college level will provide both inspiration and ideas as they engage in their own career planning. If you are interested in being one of those profiled, please contact me directly at [mcdani73@msu.edu](mailto:mcdani73@msu.edu).”



PHOTO CREDIT: MSU COMMUNICATIONS & BRAND STRATEGY

# THE GRADUATE POST

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## TIAA-CREF FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Fellowship recipients Kamahra Ewing (second from left) and Alexandra Gelbard pose with Karen Klomparens, dean of the Graduate School, and Ron Pressman, TIAA-CREF chief operating officer, at the TIAA-CREF Fellowship reception at Cowles House on March 21, 2013.

Read more about the new fellowship program on page two.



PHOTO CREDIT: MSU GRADUATE SCHOOL

## MISSION

To serve as an advocate for graduate education to the University and beyond, and to enhance the quality of graduate education at MSU in all its diverse dimensions.

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