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Winter 2015

## Newsletter Winter 2015

Tyler Carter

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# Biology student expands horizons doing space research

Story by Tyler Carter

Ariel Dazart, a second-year graduate student seeking her master's degree in biology, is working with Graduate School Dean John Z. Kiss on space biology research.

Kiss, a professor of biology, said he has been impressed with Dazart's work and research.

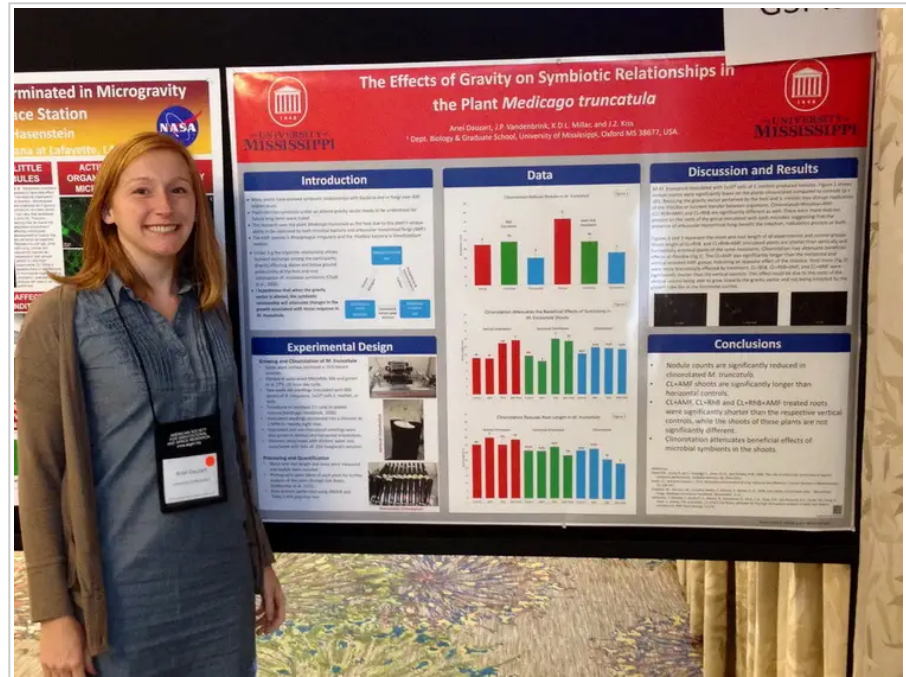
"Ariel is an excellent graduate student who has been doing a great job with her thesis research. Her work on symbiotic relationships with plants has importance and significance for NASA and future space exploration."

Dazart received her bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and had the opportunity to accompany Kiss to the American Society for Gravitational Space Research conference held in Pasadena, California. According to Dazart, the experience she gained was tremendous, and she left feeling inspired.

"The meeting was an amazing opportunity that allowed me to meet researchers in the field of space biology and learn more about my area of research. I would have to say that the high school research stood out at the conference. It was amazing the work that young scientists are doing in the field of space biology, and it inspired me."

Dazart gained her passion for science from listening to her father.

"My father was an advocate of learning science. He fostered our curiosity of the world and taught us to work through problems logically."



Dauzart is conducting her thesis on the effects of plant-microbe symbiosis under an altered gravitational vector. The research is done here on campus using a rotating apparatus called a clinostat. This machine rotates the plants and microbe slowly for a month, disorienting the plants' perception of the gravity vector. The time period of rotation allows the organisms enough time to develop a symbiosis so that Dauzart can study any changes in the symbiotic development due to the rotation.

After finishing her master's education here at the University of Mississippi, Dauzart plans to continue her research in Kiss' lab and study plant-microbe relationships grown and developed on the International Space Station.

## MBA program ranked 76th in nation by Businessweek

Story by Tyler Carter

The University of Mississippi's Master of Business Administration program has been ranked 76th nationally by *Bloomberg Businessweek*. The ranked schools are considered by *Businessweek* to offer the strongest education and best preparation for business careers.

Delvin Hawley, senior associate dean of the School of Business Administration, said that UM's MBA program offers the students amazing opportunities along with tutelage from highly regarded faculty.

"Our program embraces the holistic student," Hawley said. "We believe it is important to utilize opportunities both in the classroom and outside the class. In the classroom, students are taught by world-renowned faculty who are top researchers in their field. Their leadership in research ensures that our classes incorporate the most current and relevant information pertinent to business success.

"Students are engaged in a curriculum that encompasses core skills including finance, marketing, management and entrepreneurship. They are taught the latest trends and developments that are shaping the future of business. Beyond the classroom, the program provides opportunities for students to develop and hone their professional skills. Additionally, we emphasize the importance of building their professional network by offering a mentorship program, bringing in speakers from various industries and providing special events throughout the year that allow students to engage with professionals. They obtain the knowledge plus build their network – thus allowing them a competitive advantage."

Previously, the MBA program has been ranked in the 90s. The new ranking shows that the program has evolved and offers a uniqueness other programs do not.

"The University of Mississippi MBA program is an exceptional value for our students," Hawley said. "Students get an outstanding educational experience from an internationally accredited and highly



respected business school at a fraction of the cost that they would pay in most comparable MBA programs. Support from our MBA alumni board makes our program unique. The board realizes the importance of professional development and has created a series of professional development workshops to make Ole Miss MBAs stand out. As leaders and professionals, our board members understand the big picture. They want our graduates to carry a polished resume in their hand, to walk with confidence into an interview and to be a valued employee within their company. Their time and dedication to prepare our students is an asset to our program.”

Surveys administered by the School of Business were given to students to gauge their sentiments about the education they receive, as well as the investment they made in attending the school. The survey asked the question, “What was the best thing about your program?” The students responded with various responses, but one is worth noting.

“I think it was the best value I could find that was available to someone like myself, a liberal arts graduate with no idea how to make myself a more marketable asset in the business world. In a short, rigorous year, I evolved from a college graduate with no job opportunities to accepting an offer to work for a Fortune 100 company.”

While Hawley is proud of the success of the MBA program, he wants to see success continue, and he and his staff have a plan in place to keep the MBA program in the national spotlight.

“Our MBA program fosters an environment that aligns with the findings of this ranking – great leadership and collaboration are important for success,” Hawley said. “The School of Business Administration has an outstanding leader, Dean Ken Cyree, whose support is evident through his everyday involvement with our program and presence at events.

“His leadership coupled alongside incredible faculty, staff, students and alumni make our program valuable. We will continue to focus efforts on recruitment and student support. Our goal is to increase enrollment with strong candidates. While in the program, we want to equip our MBA students with tools that will make them stand out in a competitive workforce and be successful in the job market. Upon graduation, we believe our graduates will share and contribute to future growth of the program.”

Another plus of the program is that students are actively seeking and finding employment after graduating from the MBA program.

“Recently, we implemented exit interviews with each student,” Hawley said. “These interviews are relevant to give us a pulse on where the students are in their job search and what tools they used to get a job. According to interviews conducted with May and August graduates, 67 percent had jobs prior to degree completion. Studies indicate that three months postgraduation is pivotal. Therefore, we will continue to diligently track our students.”

## Graduate School

## GSC president leads pharmacy team to state competition

Story by Tyler Carter

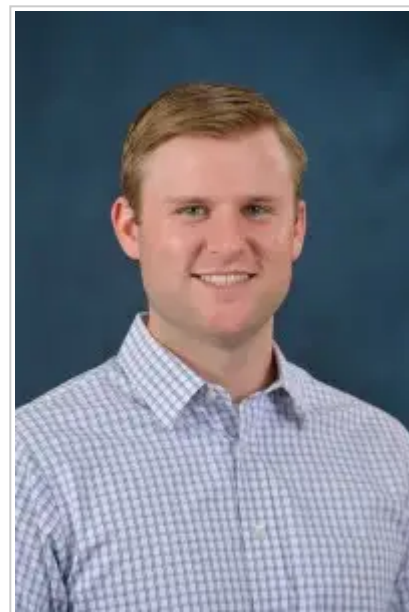
As a student, it is good to be well-versed in nonacademic endeavors on campus, but Nick Keeling makes sure he continues to lead in his arena as a pharmacy graduate student. Keeling, Graduate Student Council president, recently led a group of his pharmacy cohort to the next round of the Institutions of Higher Learning Blueprint Mississippi Social Business Challenge state competition.

Keeling is enrolled as a full-time student in the Department of Pharmacy Administration and serves as a teaching assistant for the course Pharmacy Ethics. He is actively working on his master's thesis to examine the impact of genetic testing on quality of life in patients with rheumatoid arthritis.

The purpose of the competition was to present a business plan to better combat lack of health care solutions for those in the Mississippi Delta, Keeling said.

"Being in the School of Pharmacy, the team and I wanted to address the health disparities in the rural areas of Mississippi and how pharmacist intervention could improve this situation," he said. "All of our team members agreed that some form of health education was a key aspect of what we wanted to do.

"With some research into more specific problems in rural health, I came upon the issue of primary medication nonadherence. This is essentially a patient not picking up [his or her] first prescription after it was written by a physician and can reach rates of almost 35 percent in rural areas. My department, Pharmacy Administration, has done research in this area in the past, but not specifically in rural areas. After a couple of brainstorming sessions, our team came up with the idea of an in-house pharmacy integrated into rural health clinics. This would allow the pharmacist to take on a medication management role with patients by educating them on how to take their medication and the benefits therein.



“Also, this would effectively prevent patients from not picking up their first prescription because they would have to pick it up before they even left the building. By promoting primary medication adherence, we hope to prevent unnecessary return trips to the physician, improve health outcomes and reduce future health expenditures to patients and the state.”

Keeling said his team members played as great a part as he did in placing first in the preliminary competition leading up to the state competition.

“As captain, I took on the responsibility of coordinating the formation of the group. I spoke with a member of my faculty, Dr. Erin Holmes, about this challenge to see if she knew of any pharmacy students who would be interested in competing. Dr. Holmes connected me with Sonja Falvey, a second-year pharmacy student, and we began to coordinate our first meeting with the other interested students. Dr. Holmes would also end up serving as our faculty adviser for the competition.

“This really was a great team effort from the beginning,” Keeling said. “In our written business plan, each of us took on the duty of writing on a specific aspect of the plan, and then I compiled and submitted the plan. I also agreed to be the presenter of the plan on the day of the competition. I must say that we all led our team to victory and that not one individual is responsible. It was a very rewarding experience to work so well with others and to see that hard work pay off.”

The statewide competition is slated for March 12, 2015, in conjunction with Universities Day at the Capitol, and Keeling is aware of how much harder the competition will be at the state level.

“Our competition plan looking forward is to examine our scores from the first competition and improve upon the aspects of our business that received the lowest scores from the judges. We met before the holiday break to plan the way forward. The competition will only get tougher at the state level, so we will have to focus our efforts on increasing the amount of detail and ensuring we have a solid business plan that can be implemented effectively and efficiently for these areas of Mississippi.”

So often with the lack of opportunities for employment after graduation, students migrate to different states to seek a better opportunity and forget the state they came from, but Keeling said his heart is deeply rooted in changing health circumstances in Mississippi.

“Having been born in Mississippi, I have been aware throughout my life of the health issues that have plagued this state for so long. This competition and the research required during the preparation process has shown me that even while still in school I can have a meaningful impact on a portion of Mississippi lives in a positive manner. I challenge others to seek out and take advantage of getting involved in ways such as this.”

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

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## MFA alumna to release poetry collection

Story by Tyler Carter

Corinna M. Schroeder, who received her Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from the University of Mississippi in 2011, will have a book titled *Inked* published this year.

Schroeder is originally from Loveland, Ohio, a suburb of Cincinnati, and attended the University of Evansville in Indiana, earning her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2008, in both creative writing and literature. Schroeder then enrolled at UM, where she was the recipient of a John and Renee Grisham fellowship and worked under the direction of Beth Ann Fennelly, director of the MFA in creative writing program.

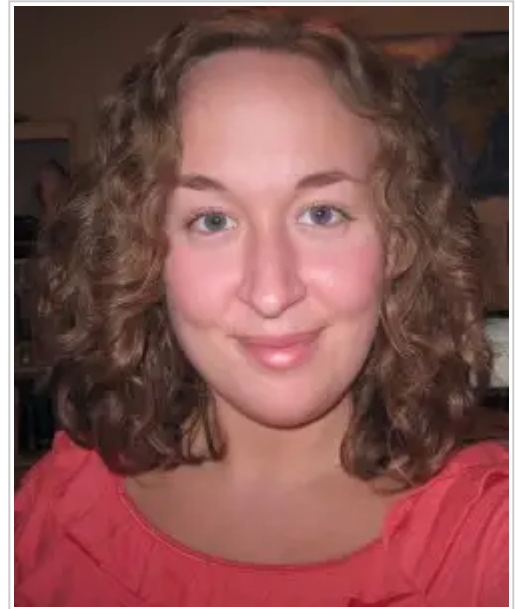
Schroeder was a special student while at UM, Fennelly said.

“During her time here, she wrote some amazing poems and won the Association of Writing Programs Intro Prize. Her thesis was one of the best MFA theses I’ve ever read, and it was a pleasure to work with her on her nuanced, intelligent, graceful poems.”

While Fennelly praised Schroeder for her work, Schroeder also praised her professors for the knowledge she gained while under their tutelage.

“My time at the University of Mississippi has been hugely important to me as a writer. I started the MFA program when I was only 22 and still very unsure of myself as a writer. The three years I spent at the University of Mississippi, working primarily with professors Beth Ann Fennelly and Ann Fisher-Wirth, gave me the time and the space necessary to find my voice as a poet, to hone my craft and to really immerse myself as a reader in the world of contemporary poetry.

Beth Ann and Ann are incredible writers and teachers, and I consider myself lucky to have studied with them. They gave me generous feedback and direction (as they give to all their students), helping me with the pages at hand but also helping me work through larger questions about what kind of writer I





wanted to be. In addition, I should also say that my time at the University of Mississippi was very important to my book – *Inked*, directly developed out of my MFA thesis, and many of the poems that I wrote while I was an MFA student at the University of Mississippi appear in the book.”

Schroeder said that *Inked* is about the experience of getting a tattoo, of feeling something being written on the body.

“As a title for the book, though, I think the word ‘inked’ does some larger work. The book is in many ways a coming-of-age narrative, and the speaker of the poems learns one of the oldest lessons again and again — that time takes away from us. This happens when we move away from familiar places, when we lose loved ones, when our memories prove incapable of saving everything we wish they would. As the book progresses, then, there’s an increasing sense of the inevitability of loss in our lives, and yet the poems work against that. They record, they remember, they save. *Inked* then becomes both the body’s tattoo and the poet’s work, attempting to keep experience whole even in the face of loss.”

Schroeder is pursuing her Ph.D. in literature and creative writing at the University of Southern California. She is also writing her dissertation, which consists of two projects: the first is her second book of poems, made up of historical poems set in Victorian England, and the second is a scholarly project that explores house removal in the Victorian novel and popular press.

“At USC, I am grateful to be the recipient of a Wallis Annenberg Endowed Fellowship, which provides me with five years of generous funding, including summer funding. I was awarded this fellowship based on my application and the work that I did as an MFA student — so the University of Mississippi MFA program definitely helped me reach this next stage in my education and career,” Schroeder said.

After finishing her doctorate, Schroeder intends to apply for assistant professorship positions to stay in academia as an educator.

“I have been lucky to teach undergraduate students at both the University of Mississippi and the University of Southern California, and I absolutely love working with students. I hope to teach both creative writing and literature courses, and of course I plan to keep writing! I can’t imagine my life without that.”

## Journalism students produce documentary about casino gaming

Story by Tyler Carter

The Meek School of Journalism and New Media produced a documentary over the course of the semester titled “Casino Gaming in Mississippi: Worth the Gamble?” Graduate students in professor of journalism Brad Schultz’s Multimedia Documentary course led the way in putting the documentary together along with help from associate professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham’s undergraduate students. Schultz, who led the documentary project, was satisfied with the overall production of the documentary and the students’ effort.



“I was very impressed, both with the quality of the final product and the work of the students. I believe it is one of the best projects the school has ever produced, and a lot of the credit goes to the graduate students. The grad students in the class were willing and eager to tackle the project from start to finish.”

The documentary discusses casino practices in the state of Mississippi, encompassing the good, the bad and the ugly. The documentary considers history, economics, addiction and the profits made from casino gambling. Schultz wanted this project to be something chosen by the students, not him.

“We wanted to do something that had some depth to it but also had enough facets that everyone in the class could get involved on some level. Several different ideas were kicked around, but it seemed like casinos was the topic that generated the most interest.”

The project required much patience and traveling by the students, but with the willingness to uncover the truths about casinos, students made the necessary arrangements to make sure the full story was told, Schultz said.

“I thought it went surprisingly well. We ran into a few roadblocks as you would expect with any project of this nature, but the class seemed to be able to get around them and move forward. The students’ willingness to travel and shoot video made it a smooth process.”

The documentary can be seen on the Meek School of Journalism and New Media website, or click this link to view: <https://meek.olemiss.edu/2014/12/11/meek-students-produce-documentary-on-mississippi-casinos/>.

## Office of Global Engagement seeks to internationalize university

Story by Tyler Carter

As a champion of diversity, the University of Mississippi has created a separate entity to build partnerships not only around the country but outside the country as well. The Office of Global Engagement was created to streamline international activities here at the university. Who better to head this office than well-traveled professor Nosa Egiebor?

Egiebor is senior international officer and executive director of the Office of Global Engagement and also serves as a chemical engineering professor. He obtained his bachelor's degree from the University of Benin in Nigeria and his master's degree from the University of Manchester in the UK. He holds a Ph.D. in metallurgical engineering from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.



Three UM departments were combined to create this new office: the Office of International Programs, Study Abroad and the Intensive English Program. Egiebor said he believes this consolidation will enhance the university greatly.

“This office provides leadership for the comprehensive internationalization of the campus, and this is the direction most major national and international universities are going. We are going to train graduates to go into the rest of the world to operate and compete. We want our graduates to have a good understanding of how the rest of the world functions. We want them to be leaders in their fields of study. That way, they can come back and be representatives of this school, state and country.”

In an ever-changing society, it is a must that students leave UM with diverse skills. Egiebor said that is why the Office of Global Engagement was created.

“We want our international students to come here to learn and bring their culture here, but we also send our students abroad to learn about different cultures and gain education,” he said. “Beyond that, the Office of Global Engagement also works with the academic units across the university to internationalize the curriculum. We want them to find ways to introduce international content into various areas so our students are exposed to a variety of international education and content. That leadership comes from here. It is my job to [collaborate] with deans and faculty to get this to work.”

While Egiebor is expected to expand international culture here at the University of Mississippi, he also knows his staff will be key in the Office of Global Engagement’s success.

“If you have ever interacted with staff from any of the three departments created to form the Office of Global Engagement, you find that they are particularly excited about what they do. They provide all of the support international students need on campus, and they are the ones who do all of the ground work. Our staff is critical to the Office of Global Engagement.”

The university has recognized the need for students to be well-rounded, and so it has mandated an increase in international students here at the University of Mississippi. Egiebor said he is up to the challenge to meet these requirements as well as implement his personal goals for the office.

“I want to lead successfully the comprehensive internationalization of the University of Mississippi over the next five to 10 years. That is my goal and objective,” he said. “If I can achieve that, I will be satisfied with everything I was able to accomplish at the University of Mississippi.”

## Graduate School

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# 3MT judges encourage students to take part in competition

Story by Tyler Carter

During the second annual Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competition, held in November, graduate students presented thesis and dissertation projects in front of a panel of judges. The goal of the contest is to condense a thesis or dissertation concisely into three minutes and explain it to a nonspecialist audience.

Harish Chander, a doctoral student in the Department of Health and Kinesiology, won the grand prize in 2013. Sujith Ramachandran, a doctoral student in the Department of Pharmacy Administration, was named grand prize winner in 2014 and will represent the University of Mississippi at the national competition in New Orleans.

While this competition highlights the students' ability to communicate, judges also take time to give constructive criticism to help students better their theses or dissertations. Faculty members Luca Bombelli, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy, and Kirsten Dellinger, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, served as two of the judges and thought this was an opportunity for students to learn about themselves while presenting.

"In general, the 3MT competition gives students a chance to present their work in front of an audience outside their own department, and all such opportunities are welcome," Bombelli said. "But more specifically, the format and type of audience in this case are very different from those in other presentations most students give, which are usually much more technical, and students in this competition need to think about what is really essential in their work and how to present it so that people in other fields will be interested in it and understand it."

Dellinger echoed the sentiments expressed by Bombelli.

"The 3MT competition is a great way for students to practice public speaking and to learn to explain the importance of their theses clearly and succinctly. It's quite a challenge to be able to do this, and having

prepared their presentations for this competition, they will be much more likely to be successful describing their work to employers and interested colleagues in the future.”

With the program being in its infancy here at the University of Mississippi, professors are being encouraged to get their students to participate. Bombelli and Dellinger said they encouraged other students to participate, although some students were required to present.

“Six graduate students from my department registered for the competition,” Bombelli said. Five graduate students from my department actually presented a talk, and three were selected for the next round. I did encourage students in my department to participate, both collectively with emails to the group and in several cases by talking to them individually. I did this mainly because participating benefits my students but also because I am proud of the work they do, and this is an opportunity for students and people in other departments to see some of it.”

“We had several students participate from the M.A. programs in Sociology and Anthropology,” Dellinger said. “They were summer grant award winners, so they were required to participate this year. We will encourage more of our students to participate next year.”

With the students only having three minutes to provide an intensive presentation and catch the judges’ attention quickly, they have to focus on piquing the interest of the judges in order to move to the next round. In his second year of serving as a judge, Bombelli discovered a key element that he believes will help students convey their research in a compelling way.

“I have not shared this yet with my students, but what struck me most, both this year and last year, is that the presentations in other fields that were most effective in catching my attention were ones in which the student told a story. In physics, with our courses and everything else we do, we usually train students to talk about their work by describing their methods and results in a clear and logically organized way. I think that we have a lot to learn from other approaches about effective ways to talk about our work. Just telling a story about it is not enough because the actual work also needs to be described, but we need to learn how to integrate that description in a context that goes beyond starting the talk with a ‘hook.’”