

25th Annual **Outstanding** Faculty & Staff Awards



WEDNESDAY APRIL 10TH, 2024

WOMEN'S BUILDING, FORMAL LOUNGE

Ceremony & Reception



**GRADUATE
STUDENT
SENATE**



Schedule of Events



Welcome

Rachel Smith-Peirce
OFSA Committee Chair

Opening Remarks

Dr. Vijay Ramani
Vice Provost for Graduate
Education
Roma B. & Raymond H.
Wittcoff Distinguished
University Professor

Presentation Ceremony

Jordan Newton
Lauren Tueth
GSS Co-Presidents

Special thanks to

The Graduate Center Staff


Nancy Cummings
Jessica Cissell
Patricia Maurer
Rachel Pepe

GSS Co-Presidents

Jordan Newton
Lauren Tueth

GSS OFSA Committee

JR Cruise
Maria Kane
Rachel Smith-Peirce



Outstanding Staff Awards



Abby King

Administrator of
Department Operations;
RAPS PhD Academic
Coordinator
Occupational Therapy

Andy Wiegert

Director of Graduate
Student Affairs
Offices of Graduate
Students in Arts and
Sciences

Joel Dalton

Planning and Program
Manager
Office of Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion at WUSM

Johany Glen

Graduate Student
Engagement Coordinator
Offices of Graduate
Students in Arts and
Sciences

Rhiannon Amato

Academic Coordinator
Department of English



Outstanding Faculty Awards



Alexander Seidel

Professor of Physics;
Director of Graduate
Studies in Physics

Catherine Lang


Barbara J Norton
Professor of Physical
Therapy; Professor of
Neurology and
Occupational Therapy;
Associate Director of
Movement Science
Program

Joseph O'Sullivan

Professor & Dean of the
UMSL/WashU Joint
Undergraduate
Engineering Program;
Samuel C. Sachs
Professor of Electrical
Engineering

Kelly Harris

Assistant Professor of
Occupational Therapy
and Surgery (Public
Health Sciences)



Outstanding Faculty Awards




Lynne Tatlock

Chair, Germanic
Languages and
Literatures; Director,
Comparative Literature;
Director of Graduate
Studies, Comparative
Literature

Mike Strube

Professor of
Psychological & Brain
Sciences and Education;
Professor of Physical
Therapy



Randall Martin

Raymond R. Tucker
Distinguished Professor
of Energy,
Environmental, and
Chemical Engineering

Ross Brownson

Steven H. and Susan U.
Lipstein Distinguished
Professor of Public
Health

The Graduate Student Senate hosts the annual Outstanding Faculty & Staff Awards ceremony to honor Washington University in St. Louis faculty and staff members who positively impact the graduate student experience.



Outstanding staff members are selected based on evidence of exceptional graduate student community development, personal relationship building, and advocacy on behalf of graduate students. Each nominee was evaluated based on the following three criteria:

- Graduate Community Development: Makes unique contributions to the graduate student community
- Individual Support & Connection: Invests in relationship building through a sincere interest in students and their individual interests
- Graduate Student Advocate: Advocates for graduate student well-being and opportunities, and connects students to resources on and off-campus

Outstanding faculty members are selected based on evidence of exceptional contributions to graduate students' quality of life and workplace, scholarly development, and professional development. Each nomination was evaluated based on the following three criteria:

- Contribution to Quality of Life and Workplace: Demonstrates sincere interest in students' well-being and creates an inclusive environment
- Contribution to Scholarly Development: Contributes to individual scholarly interests and aids in acquiring skills, opportunities, and resources to support these interests
- Professional Development: Cultivates new perspectives, professional transitions, and the long-term development from student to a colleague, and advocates for extra-curricular activities and professional development experiences

Abby King

“Abby has been an integral part of my WashU PhD journey since Day 1-- actually before Day 1, because she was incredibly supportive while I was going through the application and interview process. She made sure I had the PhD program handbook two months before my interview (no other program offered their handbook during the interview stage) and was happy to answer any and all of the questions I had leading up to the interview. During each milestone of the PhD program, Abby is there to assist-- from qualifying exams (she ensures we have a private, clean space to take our exam, fields all questions and concerns, and promptly returns our results), to dissertation proposals (she will provide examples of required forms and files all of the paperwork with the university), to our defense (she assists with scheduling and also provides refreshments).

Abby makes the WashU OT PhD program a better, more inclusive place, such as by arranging welcome parties for new students, and planning holiday events and social gatherings.

Abby is always willing to go to bat for OT PhD students. Recently, she had to reach out to the student health program to make sure that we were being included in important updates about the COVID booster vaccines; thanks to Abby's advocacy, we have been receiving emails and updates from the student health program.”



Andy Wiegert

“Having received so much courage and strength from him, I am indebted to Andy’s generous and unwavering support, and my WashU life would have been incomplete without him. In addition to serving as a cornerstone of the A&S graduate student community and offering support to individual students such as me, Andy helped organize various events to foster the connection among our community. I always feel that Andy has served as a bridge that connects the graduate student community with the faculty and the university administration. To better include and hear the voices of graduate students, Andy also helped organize the A&S Graduate Student Association last year to create another avenue for graduate students to communicate and make changes within the WashU community. Andy has done so much for us graduate students of the A&S, much more than what his job has required him to do. Andy often told me that he truly wanted to help graduate students succeed, achieving both personal and intellectual growth at WashU. I feel the passion, compassion, courage, ambition, and strength from Andy all the time; with his devotion to the graduate student community, Andy has exemplified one of the best role models for me.”



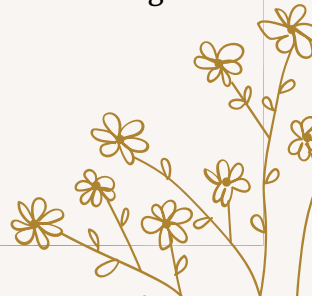
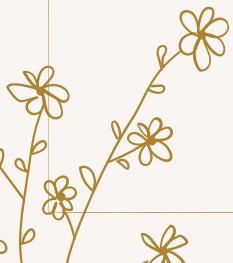
Joel Dalton

“Joel's commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment has significantly impacted the graduate student community, making them a deserving candidate for this recognition. During their tenure at DBBS, Joel played a pivotal role in crafting bias training for faculty, ensuring that laboratory spaces were conducive to the well-being of students. They also spearheaded an anti-racism student coalition, fostering a community committed to addressing systemic issues. Additionally, Joel provided crucial individual support to students through one-on-one meetings, addressing their concerns and personal struggles, and showcasing a genuine commitment to student success and well-being. Furthermore, Joel was instrumental in challenging and changing outdated graduate school practices that negatively affected students, such as advocating for fairer qualifying exam rules. Currently working in the ODEI at WUSM, they actively participate in planning programs designed to enhance inclusivity and ensure that students from all backgrounds feel welcomed and supported. Joel remains a trusted and well-known figure within the graduate student community, particularly among those from underrepresented backgrounds.”



Johany Glen

“On a personal level, Johany’s efforts in connecting students with peers and faculty across disciplines have been invaluable. For instance, Johany’s proactive approach in linking me with other Spanish-speaking individuals within the school significantly enhanced and continues to enhance my academic journey. Moreover, her presence and support during my Bouchet Graduate Honor Society recognition exemplify her commitment to celebrating student achievements. Johany’s innovative leadership in program development has significantly enriched our graduate student experience. For example, the GradWell Appreciation Picnic and the Gingerbread House Build-Off Contest are testament to her ability to create engaging, inclusive events. Johany’s consistent advocacy for graduate student well-being and opportunities is evident in her tireless efforts to connect students with valuable campus resources. For instance, the upcoming “A&S Relationships in Graduate School Dinner Panel” directly addresses the challenges graduate students face in maintaining personal relationships alongside their academic responsibilities. I feel that she has improved the way the university cares for the students’ well-being.”



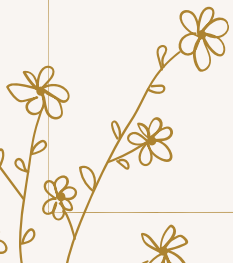
Rhiannon Amato

“Rhiannon is absolutely amazing! From keeping snacks in her office to answering all sorts of SOS questions ranging from registration to printing to travel funding, she is an incredibly valuable resource and support for graduate students. She is also fiercely encouraging and kind to us, extending emotional support as well as logistical help. Rhiannon helps facilitate emails to the graduate student listserv and also assists with the department's Culture and Climate Committee. She also helps set the tone for the department community as a whole; because she and our other office staff are so welcoming, it's not uncommon throughout the day to see graduate students hanging out in the office to talk with her and with one another. Rhiannon works with both faculty and graduate students as academic coordinator; in some ways she feels like an informal and valuable bridge in our department. She is an integral part of supporting graduate student success because of her skilled, organized maintenance of relevant materials and her execution of a variety of administrative tasks.”



Alexander Seidel

“Dr. Alex Seidel has worked on multiple committees and as Director of Graduate Studies in Physics to make the quality of life better for graduate students. He's also been very receptive to graduate student feedback, and worked to convey that feedback to the chairs or higher administration, and tried to implement changes to the department based on that feedback. He annually teaches the required PhD course (Methods of Theoretical Physics) in a way that's beneficial to all students regardless of their backgrounds, and with the energy of someone teaching a special topics course on their personal research. He has encouraged students to ask questions and supported them in office hours. Outside of the classroom, and in addition to helping his own advisees find opportunities to succeed, Dr. Seidel is also willing to give career advice to graduate students at informal meet ups or social events.”



Catherine Lang

“While Dr. Catherine Lang is not my primary mentor, I still feel like my success, and all of the other PhD students’ success, is a daily priority for her. She is so selfless and generous with her time and sets a great example of what it is to be a female scientist in an academic environment. Dr. Lang has a wealth of knowledge and scientific experience and provides constructive feedback because she wants to help improve our work and our science so that we can succeed in the field. Dr. Lang organizes structured seminars that focus on different aspects of career development such as creating a CV, learning how to negotiate, how to write a research statement, etc. She will also help us focus on the deeper aspects of career development, such as figuring out what research we want to conduct and where we want to do a post-doc. Dr. Lang will also personally connect students in the program to anyone she knows in order to help them succeed.”



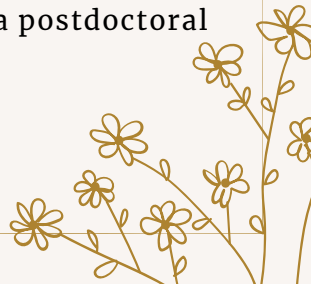
Joseph O'Sullivan

“As a co-director of the Imaging Science PhD program, Dr. Joseph O'Sullivan has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for our students by encouraging and, most importantly, implementing all student feedback. Throughout my time at WashU, he has been a champion for student involvement through support for initiatives like the Math Crash Course, which has grown to include students from many departments on both the Danforth and Medical campuses. Dr. O additionally has focused on ensuring diversity of our speakers which is especially appreciated for myself as a woman in engineering. For professional development, Dr. O helped start our Imaging Science student seminar series as a way for all students, independent of department, to share their imaging related research. This series has continued on for nearly 5 years now as a way for students to grow professionally by practicing their public speaking skills, and networking with students from other departments. Personally, Dr. O has written recommendation letters for me, even though I am not in his research lab. Overall, I think our program, and the university, is better thanks to his constant support and guidance.”



Kelly Harris

“As a native to St. Louis and having returned to complete her PhD in Education at WashU, Dr. Harris knows well the social, cultural, and economic issues that impact daily living in our community, and she has gone above and beyond to commit her professional and personal time to the bettering of St. Louis and the students that are learning in this context. She believes in, invests in, and continuously demonstrates her commitment to supporting individuals in meeting their personal and career goals: she has mentored high school students, undergraduate students from WashU and Harris Stowe, graduate OT students, and PhD students. While completing my doctoral research, Dr. Harris met with me frequently, offering invaluable insight into creating quality research while building strong connections with experts in the field and members of the local community. Her mentorship helped me build confidence in my abilities which ultimately allowed me to embrace the opportunities and open doors that I may not have considered otherwise. She presented me with opportunities to network with clinicians and researchers and was the first to present the idea of pursuing research post-graduation, whether that looked like pursuing a PhD or completing a postdoctoral experience.”



Lynne Tatlock

“With many of us coming from a different cultural background, Dr. Tatlock ensures we are met in our areas of need, offering support and insight to help us adapt to the rigorous writing demands in our field of study, as well as in the American educational setting. She recommended books on academic writing and style to me, and I spent the first summer after my first year of graduate school reading, learning and adapting, thanks to her genuine and helpful feedback. She connected me with other professors in different departments and beyond Wash U, using this as an opportunity for me to teach and reach outside of my comfort zone, in order to exercise and learn courage, adaptability and channel my passion into my teaching. I am employed at Williams College as an assistant professor with tenure track, and Dr. Tatlock’s support and selflessness has remained unwavering even after graduating. I recall how she carefully reviewed my application materials and referred me to the right resources and people on campus as I prepared for life after graduate school. She pulled her resources together to ensure I had a mock interview, while she also reviewed my interview with me to ensure I was ready for the opportunities coming my way.”



Mike Strube

“In his unique way, Dr. Mike Strube has shown unparalleled dedication to my academic journey and personal growth, fostering an environment that feels both nurturing and inclusive. Through open dialogues on a variety of topics, from personal anecdotes to wider socio-political matters, Dr. Strube demonstrates a remarkable willingness to connect on a deeper level, beyond the confines of traditional academic topics. His approachable nature and the emphasis on availability, encouraging to reach out anytime, have greatly enhanced my sense of belonging, and have contributed to a supportive and inclusive academic environment. Dr. Strube’s mentorship has been instrumental in enhancing my skill set, particularly in areas where I initially lacked confidence, such as using R for statistical analyses and applying advanced statistical concepts. His enthusiastic response, “It will be a pleasure to be your mentor,” was followed by immediate action—providing resources, sharing educational materials, and establishing a collaborative online workspace for continuous learning. This hands-on guidance has significantly advanced my proficiency and comfort with complex analytical tools and methodologies.”



Randall Martin

“Dr. Randall Martin actively supports students and creates an atmosphere where everyone feels valued and included. Dr. Martin actively engages with students, providing valuable mentorship and guidance. Dr. Martin provides an environment that fosters intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and academic excellence. He is always patient with our research progress and never expects his students to reply to his emails on weekends. He understands that curiosity and confidence are more important than making progress. Instead of disagreeing with our bad ideas, he always provides a better idea for us to try. He supports students pursuing any career path by sharing his experience in industry and academia, as well as his connections in government. He also supports me doing an internship during the summer, as this would prepare me for an industry profession.”



Ross Brownson

“Dr. Ross Brownson is a truly exceptional, one of a kind advisor and mentor. He creates ample opportunities for learning and growth, facilitates connections between trainees and other mentors and collaborators, and leads with humility and kindness. He provides mentorship and guidance that help with career paths, funding, and getting the most out of the PhD process. He serves on many PhD committees as both the chair and as a member. Dr.

Brownson is always willing to guide students to helpful partnerships and gives guidance on publication avenues. He is also willing to engage in conversations and presentations that promote professional development and guides students to do their best work. He shows genuine care for his students and mentees, is generous with his time, and provides astute input and advice. Since I first started in the MPH program and throughout my PhD, Dr. Brownson has and continues to provide thoughtful guidance and feedback from big picture career questions to in the weeds research project needs. Dr. Brownson is one of the reasons I fell in love with research and teaching and why I chose to pursue a PhD in Public health.”

