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## UNI Grad Student News, v13n1, August 2015

University of Northern Iowa. Graduate College.

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# UNI GRAD STUDENT NEWS

August 2015 • Volume 13 • Issue 1

## Message from the Dean



Hello and welcome to all of our new and returning graduate students! My name is Kavita Dhanwada, Professor of Biology, and I am the Interim Dean of the Graduate College. I began in this new position on July 1, 2015 and am following Dr. April Chatham-Carpenter who is now the Chair of the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. I am starting my 18th year at UNI; I came to campus in August 1998 as an Assistant Professor in Biology. While some things have changed (many of the buildings) since I first arrived, much has stayed the same especially UNI's focus on student success and where faculty are passionate about teaching and working with students. In my years here at UNI, I have been able to do a number of things. I have had the opportunity to teach and work with undergraduate and graduate students in doing research, as well as serving as Interim Head of the Biology Department, Graduate Coordinator of the Professional Science Masters program in Biotechnology, and for the last five years served as Associate Dean in the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

Beginning a new semester is always an exciting and exhilarating time even for those of us who have been "starting new" for many semesters. It is a time to look forward to the classes and projects that will begin, and to look forward to the many new things that we can learn and be changed by. The Graduate College, in particular, has been experiencing a lot of change this summer. Besides myself, the UNI Graduate College has also welcomed Dr. Barbara Cutter, as the new Interim Associate Dean of Graduate Academic Affairs. Dr. Cutter has been serving as graduate coordinator in the History Department since 2009. She has also served as Interim Director of the Women's and Gender Studies program in 2011-2012. We are also very excited about the new and improved Graduate College website that will allow students and faculty the opportunity to easily navigate and seek out information regarding the Graduate College. Our new website includes current news and announcements, a list of programs and degrees, online orientation for graduate students, the new student handbook, and much more. Please visit [www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu) to explore our new site!

Here is a list to help new and returning students begin a successful year as a UNI graduate student.

1. Get acquainted with the UNI campus and learn about resources and how you can access them. Ask for help when you need it by going to your department's Graduate Coordinator, your professors, or the staff at the Graduate College. Utilize valuable resources such as Rod Library, the Academic Learning Center, and the Student Computer Centers
2. Look for opportunities to present your research or creative work. The 9th Annual Graduate Student Symposium is on April 6, 2016 and information about past symposia is found on the Graduate College website ([www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu)). Faculty members are often able to direct you to additional opportunities related to your particular program.
3. Update your resume or vitae with information related to your summer experiences or learn how to transition your documents from undergraduate to graduate experiences. Contact Susie Schwieger at [susan.schwieger@uni.edu](mailto:susan.schwieger@uni.edu) in the Graduate College to set up an appointment to review your resume or vitae.
4. Find a way to get involved beyond the classroom, on campus, or within the Waterloo/Cedar Falls community. Students can participate in the Student Involvement Center's "Volunteer Tuesdays" or "Stop and Serve" opportunities, along with joining student clubs and organizations. The Cedar Valley also has many opportunities for students outside the UNI campus. Visit [www.cedarfallstourism.org](http://www.cedarfallstourism.org) to find out more!

I hope you have a wonderful semester! If you have questions about graduate school, feel free to contact me or one of the staff members in the Graduate College ([www.grad.uni.edu/staff](http://www.grad.uni.edu/staff)).

## CURRENT FACULTY PROFILE

### GABRIELA OLIVARES



Dr. Gabriela Olivares is currently an associate professor in the Department of Languages and Literatures and the new Diversity Fellow of the Graduate College. Dr. Olivares earned her undergraduate degree in English Teaching from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in 1990. In 1994, she received her Master of Arts degree in Spanish from Purdue University and then completed her Ph.D. in Spanish

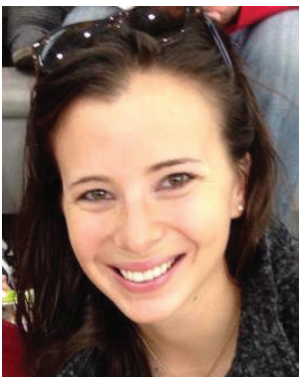
Linguistics with related area in ESL also from Purdue University in 1998. Before coming to UNI, Dr. Olivares held several positions as a teacher, graduate student, and professor. Namely, she was involved with various institutions, starting as an elementary and high school English teacher in Santiago, Chile, a Spanish teacher at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dubuque, and Maquoketa High School, then as a graduate teaching assistant at Purdue University, and later as a professor Spanish at Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio. After relocating to Iowa, Dr. Olivares sought opportunities to further her academic career, both as a teacher and researcher

in the field of second language acquisition. The position she found at UNI gave her the opportunity to pursue her interests and line of research in the fields of Spanish Applied Linguistics and pedagogy. As a professor, Dr. Olivares research activities have taken a more multidisciplinary character. For example, she is investigating the concept of learner factors from various perspectives, including concepts from the field of cognitive psychology. Many of her research interests now include: instructional strategies, cognitive psychology, non-traditional students in higher education, non-verbal education, socioeconomic variables, use of empirical methods and statistical tools, and research methodology.

As the new Diversity Fellow, Dr. Olivares shared that this position means a lot to her, as it gives her a chance to be the voice of students, faculty, and staff who like her, have a diverse background and many things to say and share about it. When asked about her future aspirations here at UNI, Dr. Olivares replied, "As a Hispanic and as a woman, I would like to help promote diversity on campus and foster a climate of tolerance and inclusion in the community. Also, I would like to be part of a larger vision that strives to create the best learning environment to graduate students at UNI."

## ALUMNI PROFILE

### CASSIE REILLY-BOCCIA



New York native, Cassie Reilly-Boccia graduated in May 2015 with a Master of Arts in Exercise Science. She is currently the Director of Research and Development at a Youth Training Facility in Pleasantville, NY. Reilly-Boccia is also the head of intern curriculum and director of softball development. Reilly-Boccia received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Alabama, where she also played softball for the Crimson Tide.

Reilly-Boccia was a four-year starter on the Crimson Tide softball team from 2009-2012. While at Alabama she played first base and outfield, leading the team to several titles including SEC Championships in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Additionally, Reilly-Boccia and her team won the Women's College World Series in her final season of 2012. In the fall of 2014, her book, *Finished It: A Team's Journey To Winning It All* was published, highlighting her teams National Championship season in 2012. Reilly-Boccia was an All-SEC team member, Academic All-American, Lowes Senior CLASS Award finalist, and was recently inducted into the New York State Softball Hall of Fame. After graduating from the University of Alabama, she was intrigued by research and decided to attend the University of Northern Iowa for her graduate work. During her time at UNI, she was able to further develop and apply

her research skills and knowledge of statistical analysis to the sport she loves [softball]. Prior to graduating she initially planned on going to complete a doctorate, however after studying softball and learning more about the swing through her studies, she began to crave coaching and wanted to apply her knowledge from her playing days at Alabama and thesis work to other youth athletes. Reilly-Boccia credits Dr. Robin Lund and Dr. Travis Ficklin for inspiring her to pursue coaching and teaching positions because they made her realize the importance of passing knowledge on to others. Having experienced their servant leadership and willingness to pour their passion into others motivated her to do the same. When asked what advice she had for UNI graduate students she said, "Dive into everything you can. If there is something you can get involved in to gain experience, now is the time to do so. There are so many aspects of doing research in a lab, working at a hitting facility, teaching classes, interacting with other classmates on group events that I use in my daily life. These opportunities outside the typical classroom lecture setting contributed immensely to my professional and personal life." Reilly-Boccia's thesis "A Description of Swing Parameters and their Relationship to In Game Batting Performance in Division I Softball Players" placed third for an Outstanding Master's Thesis. In her free time, Reilly-Boccia enjoys waking up early on Sunday mornings, making a big pot of coffee, cooking a large breakfast and sitting down with her family to enjoy the first meal of the week together.



Mike Nguyen is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Nguyen is from Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, in Southeast Asia. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from his home country at Foreign Trade University in International Economics, focusing on International activities and

global statistics. Nguyen chose the MBA program at UNI because of its quality program that is deeply tailored to students' needs. Faculty and staff are so dedicated and willing to provide feedback, coach, and open opportunities

for high quality students. He has learned so much not only in the field taught in the program but also in his area of interest. Nguyen remarked there are also a lot of extra activities on campus and people are so welcome. Nguyen's short term goals include making positive contributions to his internship projects, doing research in the upcoming academic year, and finally, better preparing himself for this year's UNI Career Fair. In his free time, Nguyen enjoys taking advantage of the great facilities on campus, specifically the WRC and participating in campus clubs. This summer Nguyen enjoyed driving or biking around Cedar Falls and enjoying the beautiful weather, which is less hot and humid than his home country of Vietnam.

## MBA CAPSTONE CONFERENCE

Five teams of University of Northern Iowa MBA students spent six months consulting for Iowa area businesses and presented their processes and strategies to UNI faculty and business professionals on June 23, 2015. This consulting project serves as the final requirement for MBA program, and the teams will present their written recommendation reports to their clients.

Lisa Schoborg, Reas Linder, Luhan Li, and Tony Bianchi worked with Wright Flow Technologies, a global hygienic pump solutions company that wanted to learn whether they should bring a new valve to the market, and if so, how to best go about it. Dr. Frank Thompson, professor of finance and Dr. Heminigild Mpunda, assistant professor of accounting were the team's mentors.

Mark Iehl, Benjamin Potter, Gopal Dutt, and Andrew Benesh worked with Schofield Chiropractic, a local chiropractic business that wanted a marketing strategy to increase and retain customers in the area. Dr. Matthew Bunker, professor of marketing, was the team's mentor.

Krishna Vuppala, Jason Klein, and Austin Richardson worked with the Pella Historical Society to analyze the economic and strategic impact of the organization's largest fundraiser, Tulip Time. The team's mentor was Dr. Art Cox, professor of finance.

Michael Western, Caroline Mutonyi, and Steve Claude worked with Honary Enterprises, Inc. a Grundy Center, Iowa based company that wanted to know the market potential for an innovative soy-based wood preservation product. The team's mentors were Dr. Karthik Lyer and Dr. K.N. Rajendran, professors of marketing.

Jamie Bute, Andrea Dellit, Chris Spaude, and Jean Vannier worked with the UNI Academic Master Plan Committee, which requested market environment research to assist them in creating a strategic plan for the University. Dr. Dan Power, professor of management, was the team's mentor.

The MBA Capstone Conference is an annual all-day event at which student teams present their recommendations to UNI faculty, executive reviewers, and students. Those in attendance

were able to evaluate the outcomes of their projects.

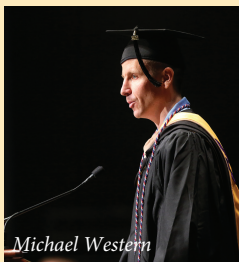
The conference's Executive Table was encouraged to ask questions and evaluate the five teams. Seated at the Executive Table were Tatum Buse, VP, Finance & Corporate Controller, Rockwell Collins, the MBA program's 2015 MBA Alumnae-in-Residence; Sascha Furst, MBA Director, Universidad EAFIT; Katherine Cota-Uyar, Associate Director, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center; and Paul Kinghorn, Director, UNI Center for Business Growth and Innovation.

University guests in attendance included Dr. Kavita Dhanwada, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and the Interim Dean of the Graduate College; Susie Schwieger, Director of Student Life; Randy Pilkington, Executive Director, UNI Business and Community Services; and Stan Lyle, Business Reference Librarian and Professor. Forty students and faculty from the MBA program at Universidad EAFIT were in attendance as well.

Submitted by: Cayle Boatman



# GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKERS



**Michael Western**, an August 2015 graduate of the Master of Business Administration program, delivered the commencement address on Saturday, May 9, in the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center. During his time at UNI, Western not only was a full time student but also a project engineer at Nestle USA in Waverly,

Iowa and was actively involved in the Wisconsin Air National Guard-128th Air Control Squadron. Through his military training, Western has also enjoyed training for marathons.

Upon graduation, Western intends to dedicate all of his professional time to his new job as the Commander of the 128th Air Control Squadron in Wisconsin. He also looks forward to spending more time with his wife, Kathryn, and kids, Owen (3) and Jaxson (2). He said he will continue to run and aspire to one day complete an Ironman Triathlon.

The following are excerpts from Western's commencement address:

"My story is about persistence and not giving up. To date, I've ran around 15 marathons, most notably a top 2% finish at the 2010 Boston Marathon; so I've been able to practice persevering many times. The fortitude required to attain this Master's degree has reminded me many times of what it takes to run a marathon. Through military training, Nestle, masters and marathons, I've found that if there is no pain, there is no

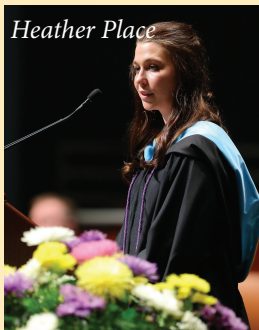
gain and if it was easy, everyone would do it. Anything that is worth anything takes effort and determination. Also, the more effort put forth and the more obstacles you have to overcome, the more rewarding it is when you hit the finish line."

"Today is certainly more enjoyable than that day I received the acceptance letter because we are finally crossing the finish line. As with any degree, valuable knowledge is imparted throughout the course work, but another byproduct of a master's degree is the ability to manage time and balance competing priorities. This journey has reminded me of the military basic training and officer commissioning programs that have provided similar challenges as their purpose is to intentionally give you more things to do than can be accomplished in the time given.....the challenge is to take what time you do have and make the best of it."

"To close, I can say that this journey has already benefited me in many ways. It has been a long road but I look forward to focusing on one job and putting my hard earned MBA to use.

To the graduate class of 2015, congratulations on making it to this point and best of luck on whatever your next marathon is...as you have already done to attain your degrees....don't ever give up and don't ever quit.....Godspeed and farewell. Thank you for your time."

To read his entire address, please visit [www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu).



**Heather Place**, a May 2015 student of the Postsecondary Education: Student Affairs program, delivered the commencement address on Friday, May 8, in the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center. During her time at UNI, Place served as a graduate assistant in the LGBT Involvement Center and held positions on the Graduate Student Advisory Board and the Northern

Iowa Student Government (NISG). Place received the Diversity Matters Award, Senate Resolution-LGBT\* Center on year anniversary honor, and the Paul C. Kelso Memorial Award. She received her undergraduate degree in Sociology, Women Studies, and Environmental Studies from Iowa State University in May 2012.

Place married Spencer Kaminsen on June 6th and they currently live in the Quad Cities. She accepted a position with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Mississippi Valley as a Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator. Her main responsibility is matching children facing adversity with one-to-one adult mentors. Place and her husband plan to move to the Minneapolis area in the fall to be closer to family and continue working in an area that allows her to work on diversity and retention initiatives.

The following are excerpts from Place's commencement address:

"I hope we continue to face challenges and that we challenge ourselves and WHEN we overcome those challenges, which we will, that we find ourselves feeling the same sense of pride and accomplishment that we feel here today in this moment.

I hope we continue to meet the people who bring out the best in us and that we strive to bring out the best in others.

I hope that we continue to connect with colleagues and we become that same mentor we found here during the course of our program.

I hope that when we go to bed tired it is because we spent all day doing things that made us feel awake, inspired, passionate, and alive.

So it is my hope that for all of us at the end of each day, each year, and each chapter in life we look back and feel like life was full, much like it was during graduate school."

To read her entire address, please visit [www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu).

# UNI GRAD STUDENT NEWS

## What is the UNI Grad Student News?

*UNI Grad Student News* is a monthly newsletter featuring news and updates concerning graduate education at the University of Northern Iowa. Each issue features profile stories on graduate students, faculty, and staff, and notable alumni. *UNI Grad Student News* is unique in that it publishes news submitted directly from graduate students.

## How and what can I submit as news?

Submissions can be emailed to [gradlife@uni.edu](mailto:gradlife@uni.edu) and can include information about recent conferences you have attended, academic awards and accomplishments, or upcoming departmental events pertaining to graduate students.

We welcome your news! Submission deadlines for Fall 2015 and further contact information is included below:

September Deadline: 9/11/15

Susie Schwieger: Supervising Editor([susan.schweiger@uni.edu](mailto:susan.schweiger@uni.edu))

October Deadline: 10/8/15

Cori Austin: Co-Editor ([austicab@uni.edu](mailto:austicab@uni.edu))

November Deadline: 11/6/15

Carly Hanson: Co-Editor ([hansocan@uni.edu](mailto:hansocan@uni.edu))

December Deadline: 11/30/15

Abbie Gacke: Co-Editor ([ackeraab@uni.edu](mailto:ackeraab@uni.edu))

## Where can I access the newsletter?

All past and current issues of the newsletter can be found at:

<http://www.grad.uni.edu/uni-grad-student-news>.



# GRADUATE ASSISTANTS



Abbie Gacke

Abbie Gacke is the Graduate Assistant for Online Publication and Marketing in the UNI Graduate College. Gacke is a second year Speech-Language Pathology graduate student working towards her Master of Arts degree. She completed her undergraduate studies at UNI majoring in Communicative Disorders. Gacke's research interests include pediatric dysphagia and speech-language pathologists in the NICU. She presented her research *A Speech-Language Pathologist's Role in Feeding and Swallowing in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)* at last year's 8th Annual Graduate Student Symposium as a literature review, and plans to present the completed project this coming November at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) National Convention in Denver, Colo.

In Spring 2016, Gacke will pursue two 10-week clinical internships beginning in Sioux Falls, SD at the Sanford Children's Hospital and then in Omaha, NE at the Methodist Hospital in order to complete her requirements for graduation. She is looking forward to the internships because it will be an opportunity to build upon her education and experiences here at UNI, and also it will be one step closer to becoming a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, constructing DIY projects, and participating in hot yoga classes.



Carly Hanson

Carly Hanson is the Graduate Assistant for Online Content and Web Development. She is a first year student in the Communication Studies- Mass Communication program. In May 2014 Hanson completed her undergraduate work at Morningside College in Sioux City, IA majoring in English with minors in Psychology and Music. Following graduation, Hanson worked for AmeriCorps where she had the opportunity to work with elementary school children on a daily basis at Loess Hills Elementary School in Sioux City, Iowa. In this role, Hanson gained new insight for educators, along with some valuable networking opportunities both within the school and through the AmeriCorps program manager. Hanson also had several internships that revolved around hands-on learning and completing various projects on a schedule, and she thinks that the experience of working with professionals in their fields provided her with a foundational understanding of how to perform the job on her own. She hopes to bring this experience and to remain open to learning new things while working as a graduate assistant for the college. Hanson chose UNI because of its diverse Communication Studies Graduate Program and to be closer to her sister in Waverly. Hanson says she looks forward to working in the Graduate College because she enjoys meeting people from all over campus and learning more about what they're doing in their field of study.

After graduation Hanson hopes to find a position in public relations or another facet of communications. In her free time she enjoys playing the piano, reading, drinking tea, and playing various video games.

## 2015 RECIPIENT OF OUTSTANDING RESEARCH PAPER ON GENDER AWARD



Ms. Emily Harsch, a first year Women's & Gender Studies graduate student, is the 2015 recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Research Paper on Gender Award for her paper, *Linking Radical Feminism and Creative Nonfiction*

*"They're Both Damned by Convention Anyway"* and *Better Arguments*. The paper explores the feminist possibilities for transgression within the genre of creative nonfiction. Harsch argues that this written genre contains the most promise for radical feminist work and should be embraced in struggle for social justice. Congratulations, Emily!



*Cori Austin*

Cori Austin is the Graduate Assistant for Graduate Professional and Community Development. She is a first year graduate student in the School Psychology program. Austin completed her undergraduate degree from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas, majoring in Psychology with an emphasis in Developmental Disabilities and a minor in the Study of Youth and Adolescence in May 2015. Austin chose UNI because "the university wants to see their students succeed and the Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Kerri Clopton, was wonderful as well." She also said "I wanted to broaden my horizons and the School Psychology program here is amazing." Austin is also looking forward to working in the Graduate College. As someone who has always held a student leadership position within the college while attending school, she says she is excited to get to know the faculty, staff, and other graduate students. Austin's plans after graduate school include becoming a licensed School Psychologist. She has a great love of learning and helping students and she believes that if she can make one person's life better, then her own life has had a purpose.

This summer Austin worked as a summer program director and riding instructor at Aspire Therapeutic Riding Program that serves children and adults with disabilities. She also enjoys the outdoors. In her free time, she rides her horses, reads for leisure, paints and spends time at the lake.

## SOCIAL WORK AWARDS EVENT

The University of Northern Iowa's Department of Social Work hosted their annual Scholarship and Awards Ceremony on April 29, 2015 at UNI's Center for Multicultural Event Room. The event showcased the volunteer activities and training events coordinated by the Undergraduate and Graduate Student Social Work Associations, and as well as honored the student recipients of each scholarship and award. Several graduate students were recognized. First year MSW student Jordan Andrea was awarded the Rober Runkle Endowed Scholarship in Social Work. Dr. Runkle's widow, Susan, was present and shared a brief history of Dr. Runkle's life and his dedication to the social work field. The Outstanding Graduate Service Award went to graduate social work student Ashley Heffern and the Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Award went to graduate social work student Megan Vogt. For more information about UNI's Social Work program, please go to <http://www.uni.edu/csbs/socialwork/>.



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
**University of Northern Iowa**



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## GRADUATE COLLEGE STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION

To submit articles for consideration in the UNI Grad Student News contact [gradlife@uni.edu](mailto:gradlife@uni.edu).  
With any questions or concerns feel free to contact the Graduate College staff listed below.

**The Graduate College** | 110 Lang Hall | (319) 273-2748 | [www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu)

**Kavita Dhanwada**

Interim Dean of the Graduate College,  
Interim Associate Provost for  
Academic Affairs, Professor of Biology  
[kavita.dhanwada@uni.edu](mailto:kavita.dhanwada@uni.edu)

**Dr. Barbara Cutter**

Interim Associate Dean for  
Graduate Academic Affairs  
[barbara.cutter@uni.edu](mailto:barbara.cutter@uni.edu)

**Cheryl Nedrow**

Secretary II  
[cheryl.nedrow@uni.edu](mailto:cheryl.nedrow@uni.edu)

**Lisa Steimel**

Secretary IV, Assistantships and  
Scholarships  
[lisa.steimel@uni.edu](mailto:lisa.steimel@uni.edu)

**Janet Witt**

Clerk IV, Thesis and Dissertation Review  
[janet.witt@uni.edu](mailto:janet.witt@uni.edu)

**Susie Schwieger**

Director of Graduate Student Life  
[susan.schwieger@uni.edu](mailto:susan.schwieger@uni.edu)

**Abbie Gacke**

Graduate Assistant for Student  
Publications and Technology  
[ackeraab@uni.edu](mailto:ackeraab@uni.edu)

**Carly Hanson**

Graduate Assistant for Online Content  
[hanscan@uni.edu](mailto:hanscan@uni.edu)

**Cori Austin**

Graduate Assistant for Graduate  
Professional and Community  
Development  
[austicab@uni.edu](mailto:austicab@uni.edu)



**Graduate College**

110 Lang Hall  
Cedar Falls, IA 50614  
Phone: (319) 273-2748  
Fax: (319) 273-2243

**[www.grad.uni.edu](http://www.grad.uni.edu)**