

Meet Our New Graduate Student Assembly President

Fellow Graduate Students:

As incoming president to the Graduate Student Assembly, allow me to introduce myself: My full name is Jan Andreas Nicholaas van Aardt, a mouthful, but very common as a native of South Africa! I grew up in a small town near Johannesburg in northern South Africa and graduated from Stellenbosch University down south (Cape Town) with a B.S. in Forestry, in 1996. Following my first year of graduate studies (Hons. degree) in the same field, I was privileged enough to be afforded the opportunity to study towards a M.S. in Forestry at Virginia Tech – my wife, Marleen (GSA Secretary), made the trip even more exciting! You may ask yourself “Why Virginia Tech”? The answer is actually quite straightforward, as I imagine it is to many of you: Virginia Tech offers many benefits in all aspects of my graduate experience; a world-class program, professional instructors, Blacksburg’s social/cultural scene (not that we see much of that!), and the beautiful Appalachian surroundings. Well, two years later and the M.S. in the bag, I started on my Ph.D. in Forestry, with an expected completion date somewhere during summer of 2003.

During my tenure at Virginia Tech, I became involved with the Graduate Honor System as a panelist, served as my departmental Representative to the GSA, served a one-year term as Secretary, and was elected as President for 2002-2003. It is in this position that I truly want to be of as much service to graduate students and the graduate agenda as possible. As an involved graduate body we can increase the attraction of Virginia Tech for future students by ensuring positive outcomes from GSA initiatives, whether this involvement is academic, social, or governmental in nature.

There are many issues on the table before us, but I feel that as good strategists, we need to pick our “battles” carefully. The GSA recently conducted a survey to poll graduate perceptions and experience regarding many issues at the university. From the preliminary results, I feel that the following issues are key to fueling improvement of the graduate experience at Virginia Tech: Health insurance, the inclusion of graduate students in university decisions that govern outcomes at the graduate level, maintaining and possibly improving assistantships in the current fiscal environment (we are, after all, striving towards Top 30 eligibility), and increasing awareness of and participation in graduate affairs. With all of these issues at hand, the GSA will need your help - whether you do that by voicing your concerns effectively or by representing graduate students through a willingness to serve on committees and commissions.

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Our Previous GSA President Bids Farewell

GSA Family,

I, Marquee D. King, would like to formally say adieu. I am currently at the finale of my position as President of the Graduate Student Assembly and on my way out of the University officially as I conclude my doctoral degree in May. I would like to express my gratitude to my executive board, which has been my right and sometimes left arm throughout this entire year. My thankfulness goes to Melinda Pomeroy, Kasey Martin, Sharonda Meade, Ujval Gandhi, Chris Dula, and newly elected President for 02-03, Jan van Aardt. I certainly would not have been able to function without such a very supportive and cohesive group of professionals. I would also like to commend the Chairs of the various programs that the GSA promotes each semester; they have done a superb job at keeping these programs afloat, especially in times of financial distress.

I am especially pleased that I have had the esteemed pleasure of working closely with several other student leaders i.e., Ryan Hartman (Chair of CSA), Brian Montgomery (President of SGA), and Aysen Tulpar (President of CISO). These individuals have added an incredible dimension to my growth as President of the GSA and for them I have much appreciation. There are countless other individuals and organizations I have had the pleasure of working with as well.

I would like to also express my sincere indebtedness to the Graduate School staff and administration. I have been here for a little over four years and during that time I have found personal and professional support from every encounter within the Graduate School – these interactions may very well never be matched! Pat Goodrich, Martha Reifsnider (retired), Monika Gibson, Donald McKeon, John Eaton (retired), and Roger Avery have always had my best interest at heart. In regards to heart and having one full of such life, I would be remiss if I did not mention Joseph Merola (Acting Dean of the Graduate School).

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Graduate Student Award Recipients

Who's Who Among Students:

Jan van Aardt; Jay Khare; Marquee King; Gunnar Lucko;
Kasey Martin; Sharonda Meade; Melinda Pomeroy

GTA Commendation Award Winners:

Brad Geiger; Erika McEntarfer; Matthew McTammany;
Lisa Richardson-Calfee; Cary Williams

GSSA Commendation Award Winner:

Dennis McClain-Furmanski

Outstanding Graduate Student Award Winners:

Senay Agca

-Pamplin College of Business

Jason Anderson

-College of Architecture & Urban Studies

William Bailey

-College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Jeannemarie Beiseigel

-College of Human Resources & Education

Chris S. Dula

-College of Arts & Sciences

Sybille Klenzendorf

-College of Natural Resources

Mary Renee Prater

-College of Veterinary Medicine

Theresa Wynn

-College of Engineering

William Preston Thesis Award:

Micheal Gore

-College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Outstanding Dissertation Award:

Ralph Sandfry

-College of Engineering

Graduate Teaching Assistant Award:

Gregory Hartman

-College of Arts & Sciences

Graduate Student Service Award:

Marquee King

College of Veterinary Medicine

Meet the New GSA Executive Board

Treasurer: Hello, my name is Brandy Bratton. I grew up in a small town called Chase City, Virginia. I received my undergraduate degree in Psychology from Radford University (GO RU!) in 2000. I am currently working on my Master's Degree in Adult Development and Aging in the department of Human Development. I also plan on obtaining a Certificate in Gerontology before I graduate in May of 2003. I look forward to serving as the Treasurer of the Graduate Student Assembly for next year. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at bbratton@vt.edu.

Secretary: Hello, my name is Marleen van Aardt. And yes, my last name does not lie – I am the spouse of Jan van Aardt, also on the GSA exec board. I was born and raised in South Africa, one of the most beautiful countries in the world! I am working on a Ph.D. in Food Science and Technology, and plan/hope to graduate in May of 2003. My project involves studying the interactions between plastic food packaging and the food products itself. For fun, I play squash (almost like racquetball, just a bit nicer) and enjoy sewing. You can contact me at mvanaard@vt.edu.

Vice-President of Programs: Hello, I'm Melissa Huhn. I am a third semester M.S. student in Plant Breeding in the CSES department. I grew up on a farm in Minnesota and received my B.S. from the University of Minnesota in Science in Agriculture with an emphasis on Agronomy. I look forward to serving you and feel free to contact me at mhuhn@vt.edu.

Vice-President of Membership: Greetings!! My name is Kasey Martin and I am proud to be a HOKIE! I completed my undergraduate here at Tech and began my master's in human development this past fall. I am married to my wonderful husband Michael, and he is a Hokie too. We have only one child, our puppy Speckles, and she is our little bundle of energy. I spend most of my free time (what little there is of it) playing with my puppy as she loves to go on long walks and explore nature. My favorite time of year in Blacksburg is the fall with all the beautiful leaves and football season. If you need to contact me drop me a line at ksimmons@vt.edu.

Be the Next Graduate Student of the Month!

The purpose of the Award is to recognize outstanding graduate students at Virginia Tech. Any full or part-time graduate student may apply and self-nominations are encouraged! Applications must be submitted 10 days (by 5:00 pm) before the GSA Monthly Meeting to the GSA office in 309 Squires Student Center. The winner will be announced at the following GSA monthly meeting and will receive \$75 and a certificate of recognition. The application may be obtained at: <http://gsa.uusa.vt.edu/>

Recipients of Travel and Research Funding

The Travel Fund Program (TFP) provides Virginia Tech graduate students with funding so that they may present their research at professional events. Any graduate student who has a research paper or poster accepted for presentation or such an event is eligible to apply for the funding.

The Graduate Research Development Project (GRDP) provides support for degree contingent research conducted by graduate students. Applications are judged in a blind review by a panel of faculty members representing each college. Further information and applications for both types of funding can be obtained on the web at: <http://gsa.uusa.vt.edu/>

Travel Fund Recipients Included:

Ahmed, Farzana; Ali, Mir Farooq; Bradley, Kevin M.; Breland, Benjamin; Chittenden, Tom; Chock, Jeffrey; Christie, Israel; Chu, Hei-Lin; Conklin, Nathan; Davis, Thompson; Earl, Stevan R.; Francisco, Jenifer; Gaskins, Charla; Goyal, Vijay Kumar; Goyal, Vinay K.; Hamamouch, Nouredine; Hollander, Eran; Honeycutt, Hunter; Hu, Xiaopei; Hurley, Jimmy; Jivanuwong, Solos; Kaleth, Anthony; Korus, Jesse; Lees, Simon; Lehr, Jane; Mathai, Christina; Morse, Rick; Morton, Siykan Chen; Mousavi, Shabnam; Nix, Andrew; Olgun, C. Guney; Olgun, Selen; Otis, Jeffrey; Pathange, Lakshmi P.; Reese, Debbie; Reynolds, Greg D.; Rovniak, Liza; Santucci, Aimee K.; Sinclair, Andrea L.; Spinney, Michael; Swartz, Dana; Van Voorhees, Elizabeth; Walters, Anneke H.; Williams, David; Winstead-Allen, Cherese; Wolfe, Christy; Xu, Jun; Yang, Xu

Of the 71 TFP applications, a total of 48 were funded. Of the \$14256.56 requested, \$12589.00 was awarded. Award Breakdown by College: Agricultural & Life Sciences: 5; Architecture & Urban Studies: 2; Arts & Sciences: 21; Business: 1; Engineering: 10; Human Resources & Education: 7; Natural Resources: 1; Veterinary Medicine: 1.

Graduate Research Development Fund Recipients Included:

Abdel-Azim, Saleh; Arnado, Mary; Barthelet, Michelle; Beiseigel, Jeannemarie; Bishop, David; Borg, Randy; Bradley, Donna; Bradley, Kevin; Burdt, Amanda; Carradine, David; Cassino, Theresea; Chelf, Carole; Chittenden, Tom; Coleman, Mary Dean; Cook, Brian; Cooneu, Margaret; Cotner, Chris; Cowing, Brandy Ellen; Edgar, Nicole; Hawthorn Anya; Heracleous, Maria; Koo, Jeong-Hoi; Koontz, John; Kuo, Alice Yi-Wen; Lemus, Roque; Lewis, Amy; Lorch, Marcus; Mathur, Piyush; Miller, Larry; Morin, Craig; Neatour, Mattheu; Nourredine, Hamamouch; O'Brian, David; Olfenbuttel, Colleen; Otis, Jeff; Owens, Daniel; Park, Alexandra Hye-Young; Phibbs, Elizabeth; Quintela, Yvette; Reed, Deborah; Reed, Jason; Rentetzi, Maria; Ridgewell, Diana; Robson, Victoria; Rovniak, Liza; Simpson, Miya; Skoneczka, Jeff; Spellerburg, Amy; Steed, Keesha; Stempfen, Jennifer; Steward, Micheal; Sukkouiyah, Beshr; Varga, John; Wared, Ujwala; White, Emily; Wiles, Natasha; Woods, Mitchell; Wynn, Theresa; Yokobori, Atsuko

A total of 59 GDRP applicants were funded. Masters students were eligible to receive \$300 each and Ph.D. students were eligible to receive \$500 each. Total funding amount = \$24,300. Award Breakdown by College: Agricultural & Life Sciences: 13; Architecture & Urban Studies: 0; Arts & Sciences: 29; Business: 1; Engineering: 6; Human Resources & Education: 8; Natural Resources: 2; Veterinary Medicine: 1.

Board Of Visitors Representative Point-of-View

Dear Graduate Students,

As the end of the semester is approaching quickly, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those of you who shared your ideas and concerns with my colleagues and me during the 2001-2002 year. Recently, I chaired the search committee that selected the three finalists for the 2002-2003 Graduate Student Representative to the Board of Visitors (BOV). I would like to thank the members for their participation, Kim Mitchell, Coordinator of Student Support Programs, for her valuable help in this process, and the applicants for their time and commitment. Congratulations goes to Christian Rieser, who appointed to be the coming academic year's BOV Graduate Student Representative. Christian has already been introduced to the GSA and to the Commission on Student Affairs.

As you may have heard already, the review process for the Virginia Tech student medical insurance program will begin this fall, as the current five-year contract with GM-Southwest will expire in 2003. We (Melinda Pomeroy, myself, and other graduate students) have already had meetings with the Director of the Office of Risk Management, Fred Weaver, whose office oversees the insurance programs, and with the administration. Thanks goes to John Robertson from Student Legal Services, who served as moderator at a forum for graduate students on this topic. I would like to once again strongly encourage you to share your concerns with us and step forward this fall when student members for the review committee will be needed and when additional meetings will be held.

Congratulations to those of you who will be graduating in just a few days. Have a safe and successful summer, and I am looking forward to seeing many of you again in fall.

With best regards,

Gunnar Lucko

Graduate Student Representative to the BOV, 2001-2002

Meet the New Board Of Visitors Representative

Dear Fellow Graduate Students,

I am honored to be given the opportunity to represent you on the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors (BOV) for 2002-2003. I am currently a PhD student in the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department focusing on interdisciplinary wireless research through the Center for Wireless Telecommunications (CWT) under the direction of Dr. Charles Bostian. I received my MSEE degree from Virginia Tech in December of 2001 and received my undergraduate BSEE degree in 1999 from the University of Maryland at College Park in my home state.

My motivation for serving as the graduate student representative to the BOV is quite simple - I would like to give back to the community that continues to provide me with outstanding opportunities for research, education, and outreach. I became aware of the position in the Fall 2001 semester while participating in a disaster response technology demo for the BOV through the CWT. I decided to apply for the position after hearing the current BOV student representatives provide a voice for the student population at VT.

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18th Annual GSA Research Symposium Winners

On behalf of the Graduate Student Assembly, it was our honor to invite all graduate and undergraduate students to participate in the 18th Annual Research Symposium. The Research Symposium provides an opportunity for graduate and advanced undergraduate students to showcase their achievements in research. It was held on April 2, 2002. The top three presenters in each category were awarded a cash prize and were invited to attend a related banquet. First place winners were awarded \$300, second place winners \$200, and third place winners \$100. Posters were judged on abstract and title, experimental design, content and clarity, originality and style. The winners in each category were as follows:

Undergraduate

- 1) Jeffrey Butler
- 2) Sara Anderson
- 3) Margaret Pauls

Social Sciences

- 1) Paul S. Foster
- 2) Susan Daugherty
- 3) Amy Gershenoff

Engineering & Physical Sciences

- 1) Michael Hayes
- 2) Shankar Mahadevan and
Vara Prashanth Pushpagiri
- 3) Erik Olsen

Natural and Biological Sciences

- 1) Rebecca Roche
- 2) Ryan Burnette
- 3) Junghwa Lim

Agriculture and Animal Sciences

- 1) Martijn Fenaux
- 2) Fang-Fang Huang
- 3) Noureddine Hamamouch

Virtual Category

- 1) Ferman Konukman
- 2) Janet Arnado

Meet the New Board Of Visitors Representative, Continued

My goal as graduate student representative to the BOV is to serve as a key communicator and facilitator of students' feedback. I would encourage you to become very active in the GSA and other representative bodies. I will be using a virtual "roundtable" mechanism to keep up to date with campus leaders, but will always encourage you to provide feedback and suggestions about strengths on how to improve. This dialogue is a key component in the road to hitting VT's strategic goals as a university. I look forward to representing you next year!

Best regards,
C. J. Rieser

Current GSA President Bids Farewell, Continued

Mere words do not do him justice; his devotion to the future of graduate education here at Virginia Tech has helped to provide our graduate students with a very productive and nurturing environment.

Lastly, there are numerous other individuals, departments, colleges, and upper administration (staff and faculty) that have provided both monetary support and expert guidance in the operation of the GSA. I am at a loss for words to describe the anticipation and sorrowfulness felt for the conclusion of my presidential term. I will no doubt miss a great number of people who have made such a favorable impact on my future and will regret not continuing as a leader for such an outstanding and superior group of future researchers, educators, and professionals. With that said, I won't say goodbye, I will just say I will see you before long...

Yours in Service,
Marquea D. King
GSA President, 2001-2002

Graduate Student Assembly 2002-2003

GSA Officers

President: Jan van Aardt

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GSA Delegate Meetings

Meetings will Resume in the Fall.

For More Information, Contact the GSA

Office: 309 Squires Student Center, 231-7919

<http://gsa.uusa.vt.edu>

Meet Our New GSA President, Continued

Our studies are noble pursuits, and ultimately deserve priority status, but we are also charged with giving back to our community, in this case, our graduate student community. While the GSA Executive Board will do its utmost to advance and improve the graduate experience at Virginia Tech, I challenge you to become involved and help strive towards the creation of an even better graduate environment. While it is important to keep one's priorities in line, all of us want to be part of an enduring legacy, and this is your chance - no part is too small to play. We need departmental representatives, committees and commission representatives, chairs for various in-house activities, and most of all, we need support and dedication to make the coming year another great one at our Alma Mater.

Please feel free to contact me (jaardt@vt.edu) or any other board member with suggestions, concerns, or information. Like our university's motto states, "we are but here to serve..."

Jan van Aardt
GSA President, 2002-2003