



2024 Award Winners

Awards Committee

Naronda Wright, Augusta University

Melanie Steele - Ursuline College

Jennifer Sayre - Bowling Green State University

Megan Murray - Georgia Southern University

Latoya Walters – University of Pittsburg

Graduate Education Research Grant Gold Winner

The Graduate Student Enrollment Management Research Grant is designed to encourage emerging knowledge and understanding of the complexities of graduate enrollment management, including all aspects of admissions and recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation in higher education.

The 2024 Graduate Education Research Grant Gold Award is awarded to Laura Look



Laura Look serves as the Director of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota where she works with students and faculty in over 175 degree and certificate programs. With over 15 years of experience in graduate education working with all stages of the graduate student lifecycle, Laura is currently focused on student success and completion. Laura holds a BBA and MS from the University of North Dakota and is currently completing her EdD in Educational Practice and Leadership where her research is focused on the doctoral mentoring relationship.

Graduate Education Research Grant Silver Winner

The Graduate Student Enrollment Management Research Grant is designed to encourage emerging knowledge and understanding of the complexities of graduate enrollment management, including all aspects of admissions and recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation in higher education.

The 2024 Graduate Education Research Grant Silver Award is awarded to Nicole Hall



Nicole Hall is a researcher, social geographer, and artist with a Ph.D. in Geography & Urban Studies from Temple University. She has worked extensively in higher education administration at the graduate level with a focus on student-centric policies and consensus building within enrollment management, curriculum development, and institutional planning. Her graduate education research utilizes spatial and community data in a

social science framework to guide enrollment management and program development in identifying key demographic indicators for strategic planning, effective marketing, and sustainable engagement with well aligned, qualified, and diverse student populations. She currently serves as Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and faculty at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Future Leader Award

The Future Leader Award is presented to an individual who has clearly exhibited leadership qualities and an enthusiasm for the graduate enrollment management (GEM) profession that distinguishes them as a rising leader in NAGAP and the field.

The 2024 Future Leader Award goes to **Alyssa Orlando**



A career professional in graduate enrollment management, Dr. Alyssa Orlando currently serves as the Director of Graduate Admission at Clark University. In this role, she manages a team of dedicated professionals committed to enrolling strong, passionate candidates who uphold Clark's mission of challenging convention and changing the world. Prior to Clark, she worked at several other New England institutions in graduate admission and marketing. Alyssa has served as a dedicated NEGAP and NAGAP volunteer since 2019 when she joined the NEGAP Professional Development committee. Since then, she has served on the NAGAP membership committee, and as NEGAP Secretary and Vice President. Alyssa will assume the NEGAP presidency on May 1 of this year.

In February, Alyssa defended her dissertation research exploring the relationship between institutional decision-making and potential bias within holistic master's admission processes. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Ithaca College, a master's degree in higher education from Boston College, and will walk in two weeks to receive her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Outside of higher education, Alyssa is a wife, mom to a 16-month old, dog mom, and nationally-ranked powerlifter.

Chapter Leader Award

The NAGAP Chapter Leader Award is presented to a current or past NAGAP chapter board member who has demonstrated a commitment to the success of their chapter community, connections between members, and strengthened chapter communications with the NAGAP leadership. The Chapter Leader Award recipient is known for exemplary service to the graduate education community

The 2024 Chapter Leader Award goes to **Kristin Smith**



Kristin Smith has a bachelor's degree in business administration marketing and management from Elizabethtown College, a master's degree in leadership and liberal studies from Duquesne University, and has been working in admissions and enrollment management for more than 20 years. She spent the first 8 years of her career in undergraduate admissions before transitioning to the GEM community in her current role of

Director of Graduate Admissions at Penn State College of Medicine.

Kristin has been an active member of NAGAP and BioGAP since 2011, serving as BioGAP's conference and events chair for 4 years, secretary for 3 years, and most recently as president from 2019 to 2023. She continues to serve the chapter as immediate past president.

Kristin credits BioGAP as a significant resource throughout her time in GEM and encourages everyone to get involved with their regional or special interest chapter or community.

Promotion of Excellence Award

The Promotion of Excellence Award is presented to an individual or team that has developed or implemented methodology (e.g., processes, policies, events, technologies) demonstrating best practices, creativity, and/or innovation in graduate enrollment management that could serve as a model across the GEM profession.

The 2024 Promotion of Excellence Award goes to **Stanley Kania and Joseph Paris**



Stanley J. Kania III, Ph.D, is a higher education professional with over twelve years of experience in higher education enrollment management. He currently serves as Assistant Dean of Admissions & Enrollment and Assistant Professor in the Department of Family, Community, & Preventative Medicine at Drexel University College of Medicine. Previously, he has held enrollment management positions at Temple University, Geisinger College of Health Sciences, and Marywood University. He is a peer-review published researcher who has given both

scholarly and practitioner-oriented presentations at national and regional conferences. He is also the co-editor of the NAGAP sponsored book, *A Comprehensive Guide to Graduate Enrollment Management: Advancing Research and Practice*, released in March 2024. He also serves as a member on the Editorial Board of *The Journal of Applied Professional Studies* and is the Treasurer-elect for the 2024-2026 NAGAP Governing Board. Dr. Kania holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Administration & Leadership and Master of Business Administration, both from Marywood University in Scranton, PA.



Dr. Joseph Paris is Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Delaware Valley University. As a scholar-practitioner, his research, teaching, and practice focus on the intersection of institutional effectiveness and college access and draw upon his professional experience in enrollment management and higher education marketing. His research analyzes the relationships between college admissions criteria and selection methodologies, institutional finance, and access to postsecondary and graduate education. Dr. Paris is an Experts Bureau

member of NAGAP, The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management and a Research Advisory Board member of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. He holds a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Leadership from Temple University and a Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Visionary Award

The Visionary Award is presented to an individual in the higher education community who has demonstrated unique vision in the graduate enrollment management (GEM) profession. The individual should be an established leader who has developed and executed innovative strategy or led bold, cutting-edge, and successful initiatives that have influenced their own campus, university system, or the GEM community at large.

The 2024 Visionary Award goes to **Joseph Paris**



Dr. Joseph Paris is Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at Delaware Valley University. As a scholar-practitioner, his research, teaching, and practice focus on the intersection of institutional effectiveness and college access and draw upon his professional experience in enrollment management and higher education marketing. His research analyzes the relationships between college

admissions criteria and selection methodologies, institutional finance, and access to postsecondary and graduate education. Dr. Paris is an Experts Bureau member of NAGAP, The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management and a Research Advisory Board member of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. He holds a Doctor of Education in Higher Education Leadership from Temple University and a Master of Business Administration and Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is NAGAP's most prestigious award and is presented to an individual who has contributed progressive leadership and exceptional service to the association and to the GEM profession.

The 2024 Distinguished Award goes to **Jeremiah Nelson**



Dr. Jeremiah Nelson is Assistant Professor of Management at Catawba College's Ketner School of Business where he serves as Program Director of the Ketner MBA and Bachelor of Business Administration programs. With more than 25 years of higher education experience, Jeremiah has had the opportunity to work in a wide range of leadership roles in Graduate Enrollment Management, including strategic recruitment,

admissions, retention, career and professional development, diversity and inclusion, career and professional development, and student services. He has more than 20 years of experience teaching online, in-person, and hybrid undergraduate and graduate courses in HR, entrepreneurship, and strategic management.

Jeremiah holds a BS and MS from Central Connecticut State University and an MS in Human Resources from Western Carolina University. He earned his Ph.D. in Leadership Studies at North Carolina A&T State University where he researched the intersection of human resources and innovation leadership. Jeremiah has just concluded ten years of service as a national board member of NAGAP and is co-chair of the USASBE Special Interest Group for Online Entrepreneurship Education. His love language is chocolate chip cookies, he's running half marathons in all 50 states, and he has an unreasonable obsession with dachshunds.