

2011 Mass Communication and Society Division Survey: Serving our Graduate Students

The survey described below dealt with how our division can better serve graduate students. Using the closed-ended and open-ended questions, division members were asked how they thought our division is doing with regard to serving and engagement thus far and what we might do better. Members were also asked for their general feeling about our division offering scholarships for doctoral dissertation and masters thesis completion. Results are highlighted in the Spring/Summer 2011 newsletter and will be discussed at the division business meeting in St. Louis. Thank you to all who participated!

Summary

In general, it looks as though our members feel we do a good job of showcasing graduate student research and providing a sense of community, although as some comments indicate, we can strengthen our efforts to provide networking opportunities for all of our members.

We have a significant problem that needs to be addressed, however. There is much less awareness of the graduate student teaching awards, there is little awareness of the Moeller paper competition awards (for research papers written for a course grade), and there is also little awareness that graduate students are eligible to apply for the division's primary \$5000 research award. Publicizing these available awards more effectively needs to be a top priority in the next years.

Regarding the idea of scholarships for masters thesis and doctoral dissertation completion, mixed support and off-line comments indicate the need to discuss specifics of the awards, concentrating on the qualifications for receiving the award payment. In general, members seem to like the idea of a doctoral scholarship more than the idea of a masters scholarship, and one can surmise from the results that there is some support for the idea that the final work (dissertation, thesis) should be submitted for review to our division journal in order to be eligible for the full award. This stipulation for full award is taken from the guidelines for our division's \$5000 research award, in which we award half of the award to the research award winners upfront and the other half of the award upon submission of their completed work to *Mass Communication and Society* within a designated time.

At our division business meeting in St. Louis, we will discuss the logic of splitting an award intended to assist with completion of a requirement for a graduate degree (e.g., does it make sense to withhold money a person needs to complete a dissertation?), realistic expectations for turning the dissertation into a journal article submission (e.g., is a two-year time limit from award to submission too short or too long?), realistic expectations for attracting masters thesis award applications, and other issues relating to these scholarships.

Also up for discussion will be suggestions from comments, including offering travel awards to graduate students and travel and conference registration reimbursement for our graduate student award winners.

Below are the results of the survey, closed-ended response results followed by open-ended responses. Please especially read the open-ended responses, as there are many great ideas and wonderful insights that our peers have provided to us.

Closed-ended Responses

Closed-ended Items	Number of Responses			Overall Scores	
	No (=0)	Yes (=1)	Total N	Percent Choosing Yes	Percent Choosing No
1. Do you feel graduate students benefit from being members of the Mass Communication and Society division?	2	46	48	95.83	4.17
2. Do you feel we do a good job showcasing graduate student research?	6	38	44	86.36	13.64
3. Do you feel we do a good job providing a supportive community for graduate students?	8	35	43	81.40	18.60
5. Are you aware that we have a specific award (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place) to recognize the top student papers written for a course grade (a class paper submitted to the conference)?	20	28	48	58.33	41.67
6. Are you aware that we have an award to recognize graduate students who demonstrate excellence and innovation in teaching?	25	24	49	48.98	51.02
7. Are you aware that graduate students can apply for our \$5000 research award?	31	18	49	36.73	63.27
8. Would you support a scholarship offered by our division to grant up to \$3000 to the top doctoral dissertation proposal? Proposal submissions would be limited to 10 pages in length. Winning proposals could represent any topic advancing mass communication research specific to the societal or macrosocial level, as well as any methodology. To be fully eligible for the award, winners would need to complete their dissertation, turn the dissertation into a journal manuscript, and submit the manuscript to our division journal, Mass Communication and Society, within two years of being granted the award. Eligibility and judging of the current \$5000 research award would not be affected by this new scholarship.	14	35	49	71.43	28.57
9. Would you support a scholarship offered by our division to grant up to \$1500 to the	20	28	48	58.33	41.67

top masters thesis research proposal?
 Proposal submissions would be limited to 10 pages in length. Winning proposals could represent any topic advancing mass communication research specific to the societal or macrosocial level, as well as any methodology. To be fully eligible for the award, winners would need to complete their thesis, turn the thesis into a journal manuscript, and submit the manuscript to our division journal, Mass Communication and Society, within two years of being granted the award.

10. Regarding the masters thesis scholarship, would you support the scholarship being awarded to a traditional masters thesis (research) if, rather than submitting a manuscript to our division journal, the student instead submitted a written manuscript about their work for presentation at the next AEJMC annual conference (submitted to our division)?

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Open-ended Responses

4. Please briefly describe the one thing you think is most important for us to immediately do to better serve our graduate student members.

I was a grad student in this division just a handful of years ago and was not aware of any particular grad student benefits or experiences offered. Now I am an asst prof, but still unaware. I may just not be picking up the clues, but perhaps more awareness might be a goal.

Provide funding. The division has tons of money. Use more of it to support graduate education.

Multiple awards for grad student papers in different methodological or theoretical categories

Scholarship/grant for doctoral and masters theses

???

I am unfamiliar with what the division does to help graduate students.

additional fellowships to allow them to attend conferences.

NO idea

Provide more detailed reviews for accepted papers.

Provide opportunities for them to share and advance their research to build toward employment.

Help graduate students feel more welcome and prominent at national/regional meetings

Interact with them more at AEJMC conventions and other meetings during the year.

Offer travel money to come to the conference.

Host more student competitions and awards

Make it cheaper for them to attend conventions.

More avenues to help each other especially at the conference.

provide senior grad students the opportunity to review conference papers. CTM does this. student reviews don't count in determining paper acceptance, but student reviewers receive copies of the faculty reviews so they can judge how well they did. it's a cv line, too.

Guide them and personally introduce them to faculty and other students who are doing research of common interest.

Allow graduate students to receive reviews from expert/established scholars in their area of research.

Higher quality paper reviewers and more substantive feedback on conference papers, especially those submitted by graduate students.

Provide them with an honest prospective of their career opportunities.

Make our student paper awards carry free registration to the AEJMC convention (conference) for that year.

A mentorship program.

stop identifying them as graduate students; expect and treat them as equal scholars.

Provide funding support for their attending the convention.

Perhaps a mixer where grad students could interact informally with faculty members of the division.