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News Release

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Winners of 2021 CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards Announced

*Awards recognize outstanding research by graduates in
the fields of Biological and Life Sciences & Humanities and Fine Arts*

Washington, DC – The Council of Graduate Schools/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards, the nation’s most prestigious honors for doctoral dissertations, were presented to Caitlin Cornell and Denisa Jashari during an award ceremony held at the CGS 61st Annual Meeting in New Orleans. Dr. Cornell received her PhD in physical chemistry and biophysics from the University of Washington in 2019; Dr. Jashari completed her PhD in Latin American History at Indiana University Bloomington in 2020.

Bestowed annually since 1982, the awards recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made unusually significant and original contributions to their fields. ProQuest, Part of Clarivate – whose ProQuest® Dissertations & Theses Global™ database (PQDT) features the world’s most comprehensive collection of dissertations and theses – sponsors the awards, and an independent committee from the Council of Graduate Schools selects the winners. Two awards are given each year, rotating among four general areas of scholarship. The winners receive a certificate of recognition, a \$2,000 honorarium, and a travel stipend to attend the awards ceremony.

“The CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award recognizes the innovative research of young scholars and their momentous impact on their disciplines and the broader graduate education community,” said CGS President Suzanne T. Ortega. “The significant contributions Dr. Cornell and Dr. Jashari have made in their respective fields continue the tradition of excellence. Their work represents the best of graduate education and research and merits recognition.”

“We’re proud to honor the incredible breakthroughs these researchers have made,” said Angela D’Agostino, vice president of product management, dissertations at ProQuest. “The past few years have been immeasurably difficult for PhD students, which makes Dr. Cornell and Dr. Jashari’s outstanding works even more impressive and well-deserving of the 2021 Distinguished Dissertation Award. ProQuest is pleased to include their research in the PQDT corpus where it can be discovered and expanded upon by other researchers around the world.”

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Dr. Cornell received the 2021 Award in Biological and Life Sciences for her dissertation, *Lipid Membranes: From Organizational Strategies in Cells to the Origins of Life*. Cornell's dissertation research "bridges the gap between synthetic model membranes, cell-derived membranes, and living yeast organellar membranes." Her work examines cell membranes, from the simplest forms to the most complex, to better understand how lipids found in cell membranes may contribute to improved protein function. In addition, she investigates the formation of the earliest protocell membranes billions of years ago. Dr. Cornell is currently a James S. McDonnell postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, Berkeley's Fletcher Lab.

The 2021 Award in Humanities and Fine Arts was presented to Dr. Jashari for her dissertation, *Cartographies of Conflict: Political Culture and Urban Protest in Santiago, Chile, 1872-1994*. Jashari's work tracks disputes over urban spaces in Santiago, Chile, beginning with the social reform period of 1872-1970, through the Marxist government of Allende and dictatorship of Pinochet, to democratic rule from 1990-1994. She "historicizes the political importance of space and moves [...] between national and street-level dimensions of social and political struggles in urban space," while expanding the period of study beyond the more narrow scope of current scholarship. Dr. Jashari is currently an assistant professor of Latin American history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Two outstanding scholars received honorable mentions: Kathleen Houlahan (nominated by the University of Toronto) for the Award in Biological and Life Sciences, and Ariana Brazier (nominated by the University of Pittsburgh) for the Award in Humanities and Fine Arts.

More information about the CGS/ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award is available at <https://cgsnet.org/2021-cgs-award-winners-announced>. For a list of past ProQuest Award Winners visit <https://about.proquest.com/en/dissertations/spotlight/>.

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About the Council of Graduate Schools (www.cgsnet.org)

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of approximately 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. The organization's mission is to improve and advance graduate education, which it accomplishes through advocacy in the federal policy arena, research, and the development and dissemination of best practices.

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