



News Release

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Winners of 2011 CGS/ProQuest® Distinguished Dissertation Awards Announced

Awards recognize outstanding research by two recent doctoral graduates

Scottsdale, AZ – The Council of Graduate Schools / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Awards, the nation’s most prestigious honor for doctoral dissertations, were presented to Nathaniel Adam Sowa and Kirsten A. Weld at an awards ceremony during the CGS 51st Annual Meeting. Dr. Sowa completed his Ph.D. in Neurobiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill last year. Dr. Weld earned her doctorate in History from Yale University in 2010.

Bestowed annually since 1982, the awards recognize recent doctoral recipients who have already made unusually significant and original contributions to their fields. ProQuest, the world’s premier dissertation publisher, 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, a \$2000 honorarium, and travel to the awards ceremony.

“ProQuest is proud to join CGS in honoring these two graduates,” said Austin McLean, ProQuest Director of Scholarly Publishing and Dissertations. “Their works show the important contribution dissertations make to the advancement of scholarly research. We’re particularly impressed with the creative approaches they each took in completing and presenting their research.”

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The 2011 Award in Biological and Life Sciences was presented to Dr. Sowa for “Characterization of Ectonucleotidases in Nociceptive Circuits.” His dissertation describes his identification and characterization of two new proteins (ectonucleotidases) that inhibit pain signaling and offer new areas for research in pain therapy as well as the potential to affect other health conditions such as stroke and sleep disorders. Dr. Sowa is currently a student at UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

Dr. Weld received the 2011 Award in Humanities and Fine Arts for her dissertation, “Reading the Politics of History in Guatemala’s National Police Archives.” Her research uses the discovery of long-hidden police records in an examination of Guatemala’s postwar politics and seeks to illuminate the impact of historical knowledge, such as that documented in archives, on people’s lives. Dr. Weld is currently the Florence Levy Kay Fellow in Latin American History at Brandeis University.

More information about the CGS / ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award is available at www.proquest.com/go/scholars or at www.cgsnet.org.

About the Council of Graduate Schools

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is an organization of over 500 institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada engaged in graduate education, research, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Among U.S. institutions, CGS members award 92% of the doctoral degrees and 77% of the master’s 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.

* Based on data from the 2010 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees

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