

A Word from the Dean. . . .

All around campus, students, faculty, and staff have settled into an unusually hot and dry Fall Semester. Our graduate student community gained 1853 new students this fall, now totalling over 7,500. We welcome all of you to NC State and hope that you have a productive, enlightening, and wonderful graduate school experience! While it can be tempting to hide indoors in labs and libraries, remember to get out and take advantage of all of the opportunities that NC State and the Triangle area have to offer. In addition to NC State’s world-class faculty and state-of-the-art facilities, explore the many local parks, rivers, and lakes. Pullen Park is right next door and both



*Terri Lomax
Dean of the Graduate School*

the beach and the mountains are within a half-days’ travel. So, while you work hard for that higher degree, make sure to have fun getting there!

Our Graduate Faculty ranks have grown as well, with 105 new Associate Graduate Faculty and 36 achieving Full Graduate Faculty status. We welcome you and appreciate the essential role you play in providing excellent graduate education as advisors and committee members!

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Graduate School Profile: Dr. Michael Carter

Program Evaluation and Planning took a back seat for Dr. Carter for several weeks this summer as he biked across the Arizona desert. While he has a great passion for improving graduate education at NC State, the bicycle touring trips he takes across the U.S. clear his mind for the busy year ahead.

His first long distance trip followed the classic pilgrim route from Canterbury to Rome. It is an appropriate pilgrimage for an English professor, but it



Dr. Michael Carter

only whetted his appetite for more journeys. He started his American pilgrimage with a quick ride across the breadth of North Carolina from Manteo to Murphy. Then came a ride along the Natchez Trace that took him to his childhood home in Alabama and on to Baton Rouge. Over successive summers, the trips have taken him farther west to this year’s starting point in El Paso, TX.

When asked if he had any pictures, Dr. Carter responded that he never takes a camera on these trips as it changes the way he sees the world. Instead, he uses the trips as an excuse to write, depositing his thoughts for the day in a journal each night. This trip he was struck with the beauty of the New Mexico desert “high country.” The beautiful light green grasses and rolling

hills made him grateful that biking puts him “right in the middle of everything.” While he admits that the long distances can get boring after a while, his mental journaling helps the miles melt away.

The Arizona desert was dramatic with great stands of Saguaro cacti and stark rock formations that matched the stereotypical idea of a desert so well that it was hard for him to believe that they were real.



“Arizona feels like you are in an oven. Raleigh feels like you are in a sauna.”

Dr. Carter did admit that the temperature in Phoenix was a breathtaking 102° F, but he insisted that the high altitude, low humidity and general downward direction of travel did a great deal to moderate the temperatures. “The main difference between the heat here and in Arizona is the level of humidity. It’s extremely dry out there, but it also gets much hotter, about 115° in the summer. Arizona feels like you are in an oven. Raleigh feels like you are in a sauna.”

As Raleigh temperatures climbed into the 100’s recently, Dr. Carter shared some of his training tips “I do keep bicycling even during periods of extreme heat. My strategy is to start early, usually 6 am and keep the rides relatively short so that I will be finished before the worst of the heat sets in. And I keep hydrating.”

Along with the hot weather came an unadvertised benefit of bicycle touring - multiple lunches. Dr. Carter's daily routine was to "eat as large a breakfast as I possibly can," pack a lunch to eat around 10:30, stop in a town or store around 1:00 pm for a second lunch, and then stop for dinner towards the end of his day. The bicycle touring mantra is to "Eat before you're hungry and drink before you're thirsty." Due to the remoteness of the area, he would bike anywhere from 6 to 10 hours depending on how long it took to get to a good stopping place.

Back in the air-conditioned comfort of the NC State Graduate School, Dr. Carter was happy to discuss his mission here. He began working part-time in the Graduate School two years ago while a professor of English, however since April he is dedicated full-time to improving graduate education. Speaking with the same enthusiasm that he used to describe the desert, Dr. Carter explained his twofold plan approach towards Program Evaluation. He uses an external review to study each graduate program and an Outcomes Assessment in which internal faculty analyze their own expectations and come up with ways of measuring their programs. This information is used to assist him in developing a 5-10 year Strategic Plan. By that point, Dr. Carter hopes to be biking around Spain.

Graduate Student Profile: Odessa Marks

Odessa Marks, a doctoral student in NC State's [Comparative Biomedical Sciences](#) program, discovered a passion for science when she was nine years old and found her grandmother's explanation of how a cell exists on its own to be "insufficient." This interest has stayed with her throughout her life despite the challenges that dyslexia brings to her studies. As Marks describes her disability, the main problem is that she flips letters while reading. This can cause it to take a while to get through all the possible combinations and make sure she is reading a word correctly.

Like many students with dyslexia, it took some time for her to be diagnosed. Her dedication to learning inspired her to develop several techniques on her own. The most basic technique is to "stare at the professor and memorize everything that they say without taking any notes." This impressive feat of concentration has assisted with her learning, but also caused some unintended consequences. Some teachers would become upset at the unusual attention, while others saw this as a sign of boredom. As a result, Marks was skipped several grades and graduated from high school at the age of 16.

After being diagnosed, Marks was taught several other techniques. She explained that while some techniques are more valuable than others, she has found all of them to be of some use depending on the situation. One of the simplest methods which Marks still uses today is to concentrate on reading only four words within each sentence. In this manner, she can get the main concepts that the class is discussing without being left behind. Later she can reread the article more thoroughly.



Odessa Marks checking bacteria in the lab

Many of the accommodations that Marks uses are designed to work around the fact that it takes longer for her to read. She has extra time during her written exams and many times these are done in a separate location free of distractions. In the past, she has also taken oral exams. Marks said that she initially did worse on these, but they taught her to think on her feet. "You learn to answer the question and be precise."

Although she had done well in her undergraduate studies at Eastern University (St. Davids, PA), she had questions about "how successful I can be in the more competitive environment of graduate school." She spent the year between undergrad and graduate school attending the [Duke PREP program](#). However, for her graduate school studies she chose to come to NC State. Upon arrival, she brainstormed with the [Disability Services Office](#) and the former Director of the Comparative Biomedical Science Program, Dr. Prema Arasu, in order to find the tools that would work for her. One of the most valuable tools is [Kurzweil](#), a software solution which scans print documents and reads them aloud at a user-controllable speed.

During her first year at NC State, Marks saw her main challenges as "getting through papers, doing as well as her classmates and keeping up her enthusiasm." This summer as she looks back on the previous year, she is much more confident in her abilities to complete her PhD. While the software tools have been very helpful to her during her time at NC State, she places a lot of credit with her dissertation advisor, Dr. Fred Fuller. He has not only been accepting of the necessary accommodations, but has encouraged her by providing additional software for her use. Odessa Marks is excited about the possibilities available today to pursue a career in academia and confident that she has chosen the right environment at NC State.

News Briefs

2007-2008 Graduate Student Fellowships. Graduate Student Fellowships have been announced for the 2007-2008 school year in fields of study varying from Accounting to Zoology. There were a total of 98 fellowships granted, with the largest number (61) being the NC State University Provost's Fellowships. Congratulations to all! For information about the individual fellowships and a complete list of fellowship awardees, please see <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/grad/Fellowships.pdf>.

The Eighth Annual Graduate Administrators Workshop/Retreat. One hundred and thirty participants made the Graduate School's Eighth Annual Graduate Administrators Workshop/Retreat a huge success. Held at the McKimmon Center on August 2, the day-long workshop brought together experts on everything from TOEFL to Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Highlights of the workshop included updated requirements for the Course Action Forms, new procedures for admission letters, and the Graduate School's new FAQ page. A complete copy of the Workshop handouts is available online in PDF format at http://www.fis.ncsu.edu/grad_publicns/Workshop2007.pdf.



DGP Fernando Magallanes (Landscape Architecture) chats with colleague Art Rice during break

New Graduate Student Orientation. Over 1200 new graduate students launched their programs at NC State at the Graduate Student Orientation on Tuesday, August 21. Students were welcomed by **Ling Xiang**, President of the University Graduate Student Association; **Dr. Larry Nielsen**, University Provost; and **Dr. Terri Lomax**, Dean of the The Graduate School. Hot topics were scholarship and financial aid, equal opportunity, NCSU libraries, student conduct/academic standards, student health services and insurance, and parking and public transportation. For a complete Orientation Agenda, please see <http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/grad/2007Agenda.pdf>.



New graduate students enjoy lunch during Fall 2007 Orientation

2007 Council of Graduate Schools International Graduate Admissions Survey. The CGS survey indicates a nationwide increase of 9% in applications from prospective international graduate students for fall 2007, and an 8% increase in offers of admission. This is down from a 12% increase in both categories nationwide last year. At NC State, however, we had a 21% increase in international applications and 15% increase in admissions from Fall 2006 to Fall 2007, far surpassing the national trend! The areas with the greatest increase in international interest were Business (31%), Engineering (27%), Life Sciences (17%) and Education (14%). For the complete survey, please see www.cgsnet.org/portals/0/pdf/R_IntlAdm07_II.pdf.

NIH changes diversity and child care policies for grants. The National Institutes of Health has removed race considerations for eligibility for traineeships for applicants from "disadvantaged backgrounds" and expanded it to include those from low-income and rural or urban backgrounds. For more information, see grants1.nih.gov/training/faq_diversity.htm. NIH has also revised its policies regarding when universities can use grant funding to support child care. The policy change does not affect NRSA training grants. See grants1.nih.gov/training/faq_childcare.htm for further information.

Upcoming Events

Graduate Administrators Meeting. Directors of Graduate Programs and Graduate Secretaries, mark your calendars for one of the Fall Semester Graduate Administrators meetings. Plan to attend either the first meeting on Tuesday, October 16, from 10:00 am until noon OR the second meeting on Wednesday, October 17, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. You need to attend only ONE. Both meeting will be held at the McKimmon Center.

ETD Workshops. Reminder that Fall training sessions for Electronic Theses and Dissertations are being held until November 20th in the ITTC labs at DH Hill Library. The ETD Workshops will cover format requirements, steps for thesis and dissertation submission, deadlines, use of Adobe Acrobat software and creation of PDF files for electronic submission. Please check <http://www.grad.ncsu.edu/reports/etd/etdwk.asp> for space availability and registration.

Funding Opportunities

NSF Graduate Research Fellowships. NSF is soliciting proposals for Graduate Research Fellowship (GRF) Program awards for FY 08; application deadlines cluster at the beginning of November 2007 and vary by field. GRFs provide three years of “early-stage” support for graduate students seeking research-based master’s or doctoral degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines. The funds granted for each student per year total \$40,500, including a \$10,500 tuition allowance. The program expects to award 1,100 fellowship grants in FY 08. Eligibility is limited to U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent resident aliens. More information is available at www.nsf.gov/pubs/2007/nsf07576/nsf07576.pdf.

Egypt-U.S. Science Collaboration. Applications are sought for a competitive grant program administered by the State Department’s U.S.-Egypt Joint Science and Technology Fund to support junior scientist development visits by U.S. and Egyptian scientists. The grants of up to \$15,000 would be awarded for visits between the two countries of six months or less. U.S. scientists must have a Master’s and be enrolled in a Ph.D. program while Egyptian scientists must have received their Ph.D.s in the past ten years. Special consideration will be given to proposals in areas including biotechnology, environmental or information technology, energy, geology, anthropology, and economics. Applications are due by **October 29, 2007**. More information is available at egypt.usembassy.gov/usegypt/jrgrants.htm.

Woodrow Wilson National Fellowships. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation announces two dissertation fellowships for 2008. The **Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship** supports the final year of dissertation writing for Ph.D. or Th.D. candidates in the humanities and social sciences whose research addresses ethical or religious values. Each of the 28 named Newcombe Fellows will receive a stipend of \$23,000. The application deadline is **November 5, 2007**. Also intended to assist students in the final year of dissertation writing, the **Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women’s Studies** offers \$3,000 to help defray expenses of doctoral candidates doing original and significant research about women that crosses disciplinary, regional, or cultural boundaries. The application deadline is **October 9, 2007**.

Fulbright Fellowships. The Department of Education is accepting applications for FY 2008 competitive fellowship and grant opportunities in foreign language and international studies. The Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad (DDRA) program awards grants to U.S. colleges and universities, as part of the Fulbright program, to fund individual doctoral students who are conducting research abroad in modern foreign languages and area studies with focus on several geographic areas including Africa and Asia; a competitive preference will be given to projects utilizing one of a set of critical languages. The department expects to allocate \$4.4 million for the approximately 118 new awards; average size of the awards will be \$37,000. Applications are due by **November 5, 2007**. More information can be found in the federal register notice at www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/ by searching for “page 50942”.

National Physical Science Consortium. The National Physical Science Consortium (NPSC) is accepting applications for two programs: (1) The traditional NPSC Program provides a two-phase, six-year fellowship. Initial support is for two or three years. With satisfactory progress and maintaining the conditions of the award, additional support may continue for a total of up to six years. (2) The dissertation support program provides support for graduate students conducting dissertation research. Students should apply in the year prior to the beginning of their dissertation research program, but not before they can describe their intended research in general terms. The deadline for both programs is **November 5, 2007**. For more information about these programs, visit the NPSC website at www.npsc.org.

The Grapevine Staff

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If you would like your program, students or faculty profiled in *The Grapevine*, please contact Jenn Mercer at jenn_mercer@ncsu.edu