

Good afternoon,

My name is Johnita Daniel. I am the President of the Graduate-Professional Student Association. First, let me start by saying thank you for the opportunity to come and speak before you. I do not take it lightly that I have the opportunity to address graduate and professional student needs to the University at large, nor can I ignore the gravity of being able to address the work that GPSA is doing on behalf of these students.

Let me start by asking for forgiveness, as I tend to speak in a more conversational style. I'm the daughter of a Baptist preacher... so unlike his sermons, I will try to make this speech like me: short and sweet. I also wish I was an expressive orator, in line with Dr. Maya Angelou or Oprah Winfrey; however, I feel like I sound more like Bobcat Goldthwait or Sam Kinnison. In any case, please bear with me.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the staff, faculty, and administration that works tirelessly to provide the space for us, as students, to learn, research, and advocate for subject matters important to us. It is difficult to put in words how much we, as graduate students, depend on your guidance. We trust you; we believe in you; we wish to follow in your footsteps. Many students have come near and far to glean from your wealth of knowledge. Allow us to learn from both your successes and your failures. As much as you count on us, we count on you. The University of Georgia will be a better place for future students due to your tireless efforts and your ability to allow us to learn how to be leaders and innovators in our fields.

GPSA and our graduate and professional students stand at the ready to make sure UGA's commitment to being and shaping leaders and innovators is furthered. Some projects we have worked on so far are:

1. Provide support and tours during Graduate School Orientation;
2. Provide opportunities for social outreach for graduate and professional students, and;

3. Work with the LGBT Resource Center on outreach projects, such as programming for underserved graduate and professional students to network.

GPSA is excited to work with Graduate and Professional Scholars (or GAPS) to provide support to our historically underrepresented students on our campus. GAPS, if you were not aware, is the lead organization who programs the Mary Frances Early lecture, as well as being the distributors of the Mary Frances Early Graduate Student Support Fund that supports scholarships for graduate and professional students of color. GAPS will be cosponsoring with the undergraduate organization, Black Male Leadership Society, the “Black Minds Matter” Forum that evaluates education of African-American men in the United States. GPSA is also looking to work with other graduate student organizations, such as Graduate Research Assistants Diversifying Science (otherwise known as GRADS) and Graduate Students and Postdocs in Science (or GSPS) in creating and supporting our STEM outreach program. This program seeks to reach out to middle- and high school students working on innovative and intelligent projects to help round out their research to make it more robust and to prepare them for the rigors of researching and communicating ideas.

Our ability to engage students, not just on campus, but across the state of Georgia, ensures the health and vitality of UGA for the future. Interactions such as these create a spark of interest in the eyes of our future leaders. From this spark, a catalysis, an idea is formed. An indelible impression is left on that child. That child wants come to the University of Georgia to foster dialogue, to connect communities to resources, to be a part of something bigger than him or herself. The idea that the smallest part is integral to the whole is the reason why this year, the theme for the Integrative Research and Ideas Symposium is “One From Many.” All research, in the humanities and in STEM, can be deconstructed in such a way to study the smallest entity’s effect on the whole. From atoms to a single word in a Constitutional clause, the very existence of that object makes or breaks the system or phrase around it. This year, IRIS seeks to highlight research of our very own graduate and professional students and how

their individual projects further the university, the state, region, nation, and the world. IRIS seeks to help students learn how to effectively communicate their ideas to those unfamiliar with their subjects; foster a sense of colocation and collaboration across the myriad colleges and schools on this campus doing similar work; and provide a social and academic network for graduate and professional students to connect with one another to bring them outside of their labs, studios, and classrooms.

GPSA would love to work with organizations and offices across the campus. Reach out to us via email at gsa@uga.edu ; you can also reach us on our website, www.graduatelstudents.org... No really, it's graduatelstudents.org. We stand ready to help all graduate and professional students, and if we can't help, we'll find someone who can!

Thank you for your time!