Engineering graduate research

April 4, 2017

Hundreds attend Sixth Annual Engineering Graduate Research Symposium

The research of more than 250 graduate students in the Michigan State University College of Engineering was featured March 30 at the Sixth Annual Engineering Graduate Research Symposium at the Breslin Center.

Satish Udpa, executive vice president for administrative services and University Distinguished Professor at MSU, offered the welcome.

The symposium included presentations by the nominees for this year’s 2017 Fitch H. Beach Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Research. Awards are based on a review of students’ academic and professional records and on an oral presentation of their research. Nominees receive a stipend, certificate, and a medal to be worn at graduation.

This year’s top prize for the Fitch H. Beach Award went to Maggie R. Williams, a graduate student in civil and environmental engineering from Greenville, Michigan. She presented her research on the Role of MicroRNAs in Host-Gut Microbiota Communication Following Dioxin Exposure.
She received a $2,000 prize. Among those celebrating with her was her advisor, Syed Hashsham, the Edwin Willits Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

The other nominees for the 2017 Fitch H. Beach Award were:

• **Francisco J. Garcés-Vega** (BAE), Quantifying Water Effects on Thermal Inactivation of Salmonella in Low-Moisture Foods; $500 honorable mention prize,

• **Margaret Young** (CHEMS), NIR-Absorbing Organic Salts for Transparent Multijunction Solar Cells; the second prize of $1,500,

• **Faraz Ahmed** (CSE), Performance Analysis and Privacy Protection of Network Data; $500 honorable mention prize,

• **Tongyu Wang** (ECE), Maximizing Performance of Photothermal Actuators by Combining Vanadium Dioxide and Single-Wall Carbon Nanotubes; the third prize of $1,000, and

• **Wu Pan Zagorski** (ME), Venous Ulcers: From Blood Pooling to Wound Formation; $500 honorable mention.

A number of other awards were presented during the 2017 symposium. Among them were the Outstanding Graduate Student Awards, which recognizes the most outstanding graduate students as selected by the faculty in each academic department. Recipients receive $500 prize and a medal to wear at commencement.

The 2017 Outstanding Graduate Student Awards went to:

• **Ata Babazadeh**, civil engineering (advisor: Rigoberto Burgueno)

• **Fariborz Daneshvar**, biosystems engineering (advisor: Pouyan Nejadhashemi)

• **Hussein Hejase**, computer science (advisor: Kevin Liu)

• **Yogendra Kaniikar**, environmental engineering (advisor: Alison M. Cupples)

• **Jie Li**, electrical engineering (advisor: Shanker Balasubramaniam)
• **David Olson**, mechanical engineering (advisor: Manooch Koochesfahani)

• **Joseph Salatino**, biomedical engineering (advisor: Erin Purcell)

• **Emily Wrenbeck**, chemical engineering (advisor: Tim Whitehead)

• **Margaret Young**, materials science (advisor: Richard Lunt)

The inaugural Engineering the Future Award, an honor established by John Papapolymerou, chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, was presented. Receiving the first-time award was Mohammed Al-Qizwini, a PhD student in electrical and computer engineering, who was recognized for his academic accomplishments and extraordinary service. Papapolymerou said Al-Qizwini is key to advancing MSU’s autonomous technology research and is an excellent and dedicated volunteer storyteller on the topic.

For more on the symposium, check out these details:

- [Poster abstracts by department](#)
- [Photo Gallery 1](#)
- [Photo Gallery 2](#)
- [Past symposiums](#)

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