



Graduate student Yifeng Cai presents at the International Conference on Sexualities in China at Renmin University of China & Harbin Medical University.

Blending Social and Life Science Research to Improve Quality of Life

Yifeng Cai's research lies at the intersection of sexuality, digital technology and health. This combination of study is made possible through Open Graduate Education, a program that allows doctoral students to earn a master's degree in a second field. Cai is studying Anthropology for his PhD and Public Health for his master's.

"Public health offers a good way to turn my anthropological findings into applicable and beneficial interventions," says Cai.

His current project explores how dating apps influence how gay men in urban China understand and establish intimate relationships, as well as how China's rapidly growing digital infrastructure produces new relationships between intimacy and currency in a post-socialist nation.

"With trainings in public health, I have been able to work with local NGOs that focus on improving the health outcomes for LGBTQ+ persons in China. As a result, the research findings are much more widely disseminated, leading to more palpable real-world impact, as well as wider social engagement with my scholarship from within and beyond academia," says Cai.

By examining his research through both an anthropological and public health lens, Cai is able to make recommendations about how to create positive life changes for those who have participated in his research and more broadly for Chinese gay men in general.

He explains that while anthropology's ethnographic approach produces fine-grained and in-depth data about a limited number of research participants, it is difficult to turn these findings into large-scale interventions for broader community. Similarly, while public health is particularly suited to study social problems from the broad population perspective, sometimes the nuances, particularities and cultural specificities are lost in quantitative data.

The Open Graduate program not only brings together new fields of study, but the participating students often describe how they think more critically about their coursework and graduate careers.

Cai also attributes his study in two fields to broadening his "scholarly world view." It has allowed him to engage in conversations with scholars in various disciplines, present at conferences, give guest lectures and publish articles he might not have with an Anthropology background alone.



DEAN'S MESSAGE

Andrew G. Campbell

With the spring 2019 semester now underway, I am excited to share this latest issue of the Graduate School Newsletter. Throughout the issue are stories that highlight innovative research and training, which our graduate students are harnessing to make profound impacts around the world.

In addition, I would like to highlight the new and continued initiatives from the Graduate School, including the renewal of the Open Graduate Education program from the Mellon Foundation, which are aimed to provide students with greater resources and flexibility to pursue their academic goals.

I am pleased to report that interest in graduate education at Brown continues to grow. We have received a record number of applications to both master's and doctoral programs to date, including increases from international students and historically underrepresented groups.

The successes of our students and alumni, combined with our investments in services and programming for all doctoral and masters students, exemplifies the many ways in which graduate education continues to thrive at Brown University.



OPPORTUNITIES AND UPDATES

Students Sharpen Communication Skills at Effective Performance Workshops

The Effective Performance workshop series introduces graduate students to performance values, drawn from improvisational and theatrical techniques.

“Each session focuses on a specific skill. I feel confident that by the end of the sessions I will have new tools I can use to be a more effective communicator both in the classroom and on the page,” says participant Stine An, an MFA student in Literary Arts.



Stine An, MFA student in Literary Arts

Guided by professional actors, students are given the opportunity to explore in a fun and interactive setting how to engage their bodies and voices to communicate in compelling ways, as well as build connections with students in other programs. Spring sessions run January - mid-March. Read more at brown.edu/gradschool/An.

Mellon Foundation Renews Support for Open Graduate Education

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded the Graduate School a \$1.675 million, five-year grant to support the University’s Open Graduate Education program. Launched in 2011 with prior support from the Mellon Foundation, the program enables doctoral students to simultaneously complete a master’s degree in a different field of study. “We are leading the way in one of the most notable movements in graduate education today: seeking to bridge fields of knowledge and types of inquiry from multiple academic disciplines,” said Andrew G. Campbell, Dean of the Graduate School.

Dissertation Writing Retreat: January 2019



Students celebrate their accomplishments at the end of the January Dissertation Writing Retreat, which included 25 new and 15 returning participants.

Master’s Student Focus: Johnny Page, Biotechnology



Johnny Page is from Storrs, Connecticut. He received his undergraduate degrees in Music and Neuroscience from Brown. While pursuing his 5th-Year Master’s, he continues to combine his passion for music and science.

Overall, this semester has been my most productive to date. I greatly enjoyed my classes and professors: I have learned a tremendous amount and made some interesting discoveries in the Fallon Lab. I am increasingly interested in how basic research discoveries can lead to life-changing therapies. I am most excited by the field of diagnostics, and I plan on going to medical school in the near future. Beyond this, I participated in MIT’s I-Corps program for a new blood testing technology. I also started a project at the Alpert Medical School combining music and medicine. I feel there is tremendous synergy among these fields. Read more at brown.edu/gradschool/Page.

English Language Support Workshops: Spring 2019

The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning offers a series of workshops during the spring semester. **Brown Bag News** is a weekly conversation group for discussions about U.S. culture, idiomatic language and English vocabulary. The **Academic Speaking and Academic Writing** workshops help participants to speak clearly and confidently and write clearly and effectively when using English for academic purposes.

- Brown Bag News: Mondays Feb. - April, 12-1 pm, Sciences Library 520
- Academic Speaking: Wednesdays Feb. 6 - March 6, 3:30-4:30 pm, Sciences Library 520
- Academic Writing: Fridays, 9:30-11:30 am, Sciences Library, 720, Feb. 1 & 15, March 1 & 15

For more information, email english-support@brown.edu.

Graduate Student Grievance Procedures Updated

Changes to the Graduate Student Grievance Procedures, found in the Faculty Rules and Regulations were unanimously approved in the fall. The revised policy was developed by a working group comprised of faculty, staff and graduate students. Important highlights of the policy include:

- explicit time frames for responses to grievances
- student involvement in the adjudication of grievances
- clear distinctions between informal efforts and the formal grievance process
- no requirement for students to attempt to resolve the complaint directly with the respondent

Partner Profile: Joseph Meisel, University Librarian

Joseph Meisel, a higher education leader, historian and humanities scholar was appointed in October 2018 as the Jukowsky Family University Librarian at Brown. He previously served as the Deputy Provost for eight years. Hear his thoughts on the new role and ways to enhance current and future services for graduate students.



The role definitely still feels new, and I'm learning a tremendous amount on a daily basis. Although I've been closely involved with libraries and collecting institutions throughout my work as a historian and career in higher education administration, it's a very different thing to be overseeing every aspect of one of these essential and highly complex institutions.

Creating the best possible opportunities for the next generation of scholars and professionals to advance their fields is something I care about deeply. As University Librarian, I think graduate students are a vital constituency. *Building on Distinction* and, more recently, the University's accreditation review are very clear that Brown's ability to achieve its ambitions is strongly tied to the strength of its graduate programs.

Right now, the Library leadership and I are in the process of analyzing the results of the recent Library Graduate and Medical Student Survey and look forward to learning what the respondents identify as the key areas where we could be doing more and where we are meeting expectations.

I'm particularly interested in how the Library can play a more direct role in supporting graduate training through a stronger and more intentional connection between the disciplinary training that graduate programs provide and the Library staff's considerable expertise in a broad array of scholarly tools, methods and skills. I'd also like to see more graduate fellowship and proctorship opportunities in the Library, both to advance students' own research and cultivate important scholarly skills that may be beneficial for their careers.

I've been learning more about the particular needs of master's students in relation to library services. They can be quite different from those of doctoral students, so it's really important that we are positioned to support this growing category in more effective ways. Read more at brown.edu/gradschool/Meisel.

Featured Alum: Robert Thorn '18 PhD



Robert (Bobby) Thorn is a recent graduate of the Molecular Biology, Cell Biology and Biochemistry (MCB) program. He is now working at Collaborative Drug Discovery and reflects on his current work and the skills he developed as a graduate student.

On how his idea of a PhD changed while at Brown

When I joined the MCB program, I was convinced that I was going to follow the traditional role of academia – finish graduate school, complete a postdoc (or two) and then search for a tenure-track position. By about my third or fourth year I was about 50:50 on that idea versus trying to get a job in industry. By the time I defended, my plans had changed. As I went through graduate school, I did not get the same excitement from benchwork as I once had. I found my passion in teaching and discussing science.

On his current work

Collaborative Drug Discovery (CDD) offers a drug discovery and data management software called CDD Vault that aims to make drug discovery more efficient and streamlined and to allow scientists to more easily collaborate. The platform is fully web-based so it allows one user to upload and manage raw data and then another user to easily view the data within the vault. It is super exciting to be a part of a company with such a great vision. Read more at brown.edu/gradschool/Thorn.

Awards

Faet Wins Top Poetry Prize

Berta García Faet, a PhD candidate in Hispanic Studies, was awarded the Premio de Poesía Joven Miguel Hernández,



Spain's top poetry prize for poets under 31. García Faet received the award for her work "Los salmos fosforitos" ("Fluorescent Psalms").

Almeida Earns Fulbright-Hays



Thamyris Almeida, a doctoral History student has been awarded the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad

Award to continue her field research in São Paulo, Brazil.

LoVette Wins Chamberlain Award

This year's Chamberlain Dissertation Award recipient is Ashleigh LoVette, a

PhD candidate in Behavioral and Social Health Sciences. The award commemorates Dr. Mariam



Chamberlain, who shaped a legacy of leaders to advance women's issues in the realms of social justice.

Carroll Receives POD Network Award

Charlie Carroll, PhD student in History, recently won the Professional and



Organizational Development Network (POD) Career Development Award. The award was

granted by the graduate and postdoc subcommittee to support his travel to their annual fall conference.

brown.edu/gradschool



HIGHLIGHTS

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Student Awards

RECENT INITIATIVES AT BROWN

- New research, teaching and professional development programs for graduate students
- 7 new or expanded staff positions to serve graduate students
- Expanded English language support
- Strengthened child care subsidy and new-parent policy for eligible students
- Expanded support for humanities and social science PhD students
- New Graduate Student of Color Orientation
- Wernig Graduate Student Study Center
- No-cost dental insurance for eligible PhD students
- New PhD Certificates
- Transitional stipend for incoming doctoral students
- Expanded international student support
- Dedicated Commencement ceremony and awards for master's students
- New advising and mentoring resources for faculty and graduate students