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Date: Friday, September 18, 2026

To: Department Chairs, Graduate Coordinators, Graduate Program Administrators

From: Award Services, Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Re: **2026-2027 Western Association of Graduate Schools (WAGS) & ProQuest Awards:
Distinguished Master's Thesis Award**

GPS is pleased to announce this year's WAGS-ProQuest Distinguished Master's Thesis Awards. These awards recognize distinguished scholarly achievement at the master's level in any one of the following disciplines: 1) STEM disciplines: Biological Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Engineering, or 2) Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, and Business. The 2026-2027 recipient will receive \$1,000 and a Certificate of Award presented at the annual WAGS Conference (March 29 – April 1, 2027 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho).

Eligibility

The nominee must have successfully defended and submitted the final copy of their thesis towards the master's degree within the period of **July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026**.

Nomination Process

Each eligible department may submit **one** nomination for this award to GPS via the GSMS Awards Portal by **Thursday, October 1, 2026**. Departments with no nominees are not required to notify GPS; if nothing is submitted by the deadline we consider them as no nominee. The following documents are required; nominations with materials exceeding the page limits as indicated will not be adjudicated by the GPS Graduate Scholarship Committee (GSC) and will be removed from the competition:

1. A non-technical summary prepared by the nominee (1000-1500 words) describing the research and its significance. This summary is intended for a general academic audience of non-specialists.
2. An abstract or example of the nominee's research (not to exceed 10 double-spaced pages). Appendices containing nontextual material, such as charts or tables, may be included as additional pages. All pages should be numbered, and each should bear the name of the nominee.

3. Two nomination letters (not to exceed 1 page per letter). One from the department head or major professor and one letter from additional faculty member. The letters should include information regarding the significance of the thesis, the contribution of the thesis to the program of the degree granting unit, and the impact of the thesis on the knowledge base of the discipline.
4. The nominee's CV or resume (not to exceed 5 pages).

Evaluation Criteria:

- Originality of the study
- Scope and significance of the study
- Contribution to the discipline and/or profession
- Overall quality of the summary and abstract of the thesis

Finalists will be asked to provide an electronic copy of the complete thesis.

The GPS GSC will adjudicate all nominations received. GPS is eligible to submit one nomination for each award category for the Distinguished Master's Thesis Awards to the WAGS National Office by their deadline of October 11, 2026. Successful nominees will be notified directly by WAGS.

Sincerely,

Award Services